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Editorial

Stephen P. Dray

I recently had a conversation with an older colleague who is a senior and respected figure in European evangelicalism. He complained to me that his experience of evangelicalism in Europe is that it is run by oligarchies who often use their power-bases to bully, crush and dictate; often displaying scant evidence of integrity and rarely, if ever, acting in line with truth or righteousness. Basically, one might conclude, significant areas of European (even global) evangelicalism are sick unto death.

These comments were made by someone whom I regard as among the most gracious and generous-minded people I know; they cannot, therefore, be dismissed as the words of a bitter or cantankerous spirit. Moreover, they have been echoed in personal experience and the testimony of other internationally-respected leaders. Briefly, then, I want to explore the way these oligarchies manifest themselves and what implications might follow for European evangelical theologians.

Evangelical institutions are, frequently and almost inevitably, incestuous. Those who become the 'in' people are, often, dictated through the network of existing known contacts and friends. In and of itself, there is nothing sinister about this if it is undertaken by individuals and groups who are acting with integrity. Working with the 'devil' you know is often better than with the one you do not. However, it can become more sinister. I recently had my attention drawn to the fact that a large regional association of a British denomination had appointed to the central council of the denomination a young man in the first year of his pastorate. Many other potential and highly experienced and (at least) equally gifted candidates existed for this vacancy... but the young man's father held a senior executive role at the 'centre'. It was not difficult to detect the start of a fast-track process to senior position, irrespective of gifting or track-record. Simply the family and face fitted.

Such oligarchies then have a habit of using structures to ensure power inheres with them and to use every conceivable method to ensure others are knocked into line or removed. Secrecy and a lack of transparency is a frequent accompaniment.

I have in mind an individual who was met by a representative of a larger body, together with an intimidating 'heavy', of a large European evangelical grouping who are notorious for late and disruptive arrival at meetings and another, similarly large national denomination who seek to control the rest of Europe by dint of their considerable 'weight' and sense of gravitas... and will readily resort to lies if it suits. I think of a national Church who are marginalised and put under pressure by others on grounds of national politics. I recall the individual who was removed from an evangelical seminary for whistle-blowing on the grounds of expediency rather than justice and truth. Then there are the immoral invented structures and procedures that are devised to protect the centre and to dispose of those whose prophetic voices are uncongenial to the power-brokers or whose words threaten a breakdown of the status quo. A recent situation known to me was described as Stalinist in the way that an individual had been pursued and found guilty by the system... though an attempt to get the 'errant' individual imprisoned failed because of the integrity of the local police!

Such stories abound if the surface of European evangelicalism is but lightly scratched. No one who has had any dealings with denominational and trans-denominational or international agencies will register the least surprise. BUT this is not the Gospel of Jesus.

Western 'theology' (including its evangelical manifestation) has developed something of a scholastic 'disciplinary' character; dictated by the expectations of post-enlightenment perspectives. This has, almost inevitably, driven a wedge between the pursuit of God and the pursuit of the knowledge of God. Status and standing is grounded not in whom we know but what we know. This, I suggest, has fostered the sort of unredeemed conduct that has been described above; for our theologising has not reached the affections and the will.

Simply put, the challenge I want to put here is that unless theological and spiritual formation go hand in hand, our praxis will ape the world and, to put it bluntly, heaven help us!

Gefahren und Chancen von materiellem Besitz im Neuen Testament

Christoph Stenschke

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Aufsatz beginnt mit einem Überblick über die vielen Vorkommen von Geld, Münzen, anderem Besitz und Reichtum und die verschiedenen Zusammenhänge, in denen davon die Rede ist. Anschließend geht es um die geistlichen Gefahren, die das Streben nach Geld und sein Gebrauch mit sich bringen. Doch wird oft übersehen, dass das Neue Testament auch von den Chancen

und Möglichkeiten spricht, die sich ergeben wo und wenn man Geld richtig einsetzt: Geld, das auch mit dem Mammon gleichgesetzt wird, kann etwa Not lindern, das Reich Gottes voranbringen und selbst geistliche Wahrheiten und Bande ausdrücken. Ferner wird beleuchtet, wie man nach dem Neuen Testament zu seinem Geld kommen und es weise ausgeben soll. Am Ende stehen Reflektionen, wie Christen heute mit dem Besitz umgehen sollen, der ihnen anvertraut wurde.

* * * *

SUMMARY

This article examines statements about money and other forms of material wealth in the New Testament. After a general survey of the surprisingly numerous occurrences of money, coins, wealth and property, and the contexts in which they appear, the article describes the spiritual dangers involved in the desire for and use of money as addressed by various New Testament books. A further

section is devoted to an often neglected aspect, namely the positive potential of money well used. Money, also known as *mammon*, can be used to support those in need and to further the kingdom of God, and even to express spiritual truths and bonds. This is followed by a summary of New Testament statements on obtaining money legitimately and using it properly. A final section reflects on the way in which Christians today should use the means that have been entrusted to them.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur considère l'enseignement du Nouveau Testament sur l'argent et les biens matériels. Il fait l'inventaire des nombreuses mentions d'argent, de pièces de monnaie, de biens et de richesses en notant les contextes dans lesquels elles figurent. Puis il traite des dangers spirituels suscités par le désir d'argent et l'usage de l'argent d'après les différents livres du Nouveau Testament. Il consacre ensuite une section à un aspect de l'enseignement néotestamentaire souvent ignoré, qui

concerne les avantages que présente l'argent employé à bon escient. L'argent, par ailleurs nommé *Mammon*, peut servir à secourir les personnes dans le besoin, contribuer à l'avancement du royaume de Dieu. Il est parfois cité pour illustrer des vérités ou des engagements spirituels. L'auteur résume ensuite l'enseignement du Nouveau Testament sur les moyens légitimes de gagner de l'argent et sur son bon usage. Dans une dernière section, il indique comment les chrétiens sont aujourd'hui appelés à gérer les biens qui leur ont été confiés.

* * * *

1. Einführung

Pecunia non olet – ‚Geld stinkt nicht‘ sagten die Römer. Als der römische Kaiser Vespasian (69–79 n. Chr.) beschloss, öffentliche Toilettenanlagen zu besteuern, tadelte ihn sein Sohn Titus dafür.

Daraufhin hielt ihm Vespasian die ersten Münzen aus dieser neuen Steuer unter die Nase und fragte ihn, ob denn das Geld nach seiner Herkunft rieche.¹ Nein, *non olet*, so die Antwort, es stinkt tatsächlich nicht. Doch das allein ist kein Kriterium für

den richtigen Umgang mit Geld. Auch im Neuen Testament ‚stinkt Geld nicht‘.

2. Geld im Neuen Testament: ein Überblick

Es überrascht, wie häufig, ja wie unbefangen das Neue Testament vom Geld reden kann. So werden verschiedene Münzen und Geldsummen, Geldwechsler oder Steuerabgaben und Steuereintreiber erwähnt oder die Preise für Produkte genannt.² Als Jesus in den Vorhöfen des Jerusalemer Tempels, dem heiligsten Ort Israels, von Vertretern der jüdischen Führung provokant gefragt wurde: ‚Ist's recht, dass man dem Kaiser [als Repräsentanten der heidnischen Besatzungsmacht] Steuern zahlt oder nicht? Sollen wir die zahlen?‘, fordert Jesus sie auf, ihm eine Silbermünze zu bringen (Mk 12:15). Schnell, vielleicht schneller als es ihnen im Nachhinein lieb war, haben seine jüdischen Gegner die römische Münze herbeigebracht. Anscheinend hatte man mit dem römischen Geld, das das Bild des Kaisers trägt und ihm in der Aufschrift Göttlichkeit zuschreibt,³ kein grundsätzliches Problem. Als Jesus und alle Anwesenden die Münze vor Augen haben, fragt Jesus: ‚Wessen Bild und Aufschrift ist das?‘ Auf die Antwort, dass es sich um den Kaiser handelt, sagt er ihnen: ‚So gebt dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist, und Gott, was Gottes ist!‘ Weil Gottes entscheidender Anspruch über allem menschlichen Leben steht, kann man getrost auch dem römischen Kaiser Steuern zahlen.⁴

Diese Haltung Jesu mag die Gelassenheit im Umgang mit Geld an manchen Stellen im Neuen Testament erklären. Im Neuen Testament wird nicht einmal verschwiegen, dass einer aus dem engsten Anhängerkreis für den sprichwörtlich gewordenen ‚Judaslohn‘ von dreißig Silbermünzen Jesus verraten hat (Mt 26:15).⁵ Die Autoren des Neuen Testaments wussten, dass Geld zu den Realitäten des Lebens gehört.⁶

Auch an Stellen, wo weder konkrete Münzen noch das Wort ‚Geld‘ vorkommen, ist davon die Rede. Zum Beispiel im Gleichnis vom reichen Kornbauern (Lk 12:16-21) kommt Geld nicht vor, dennoch geht es um die Gefahren und den richtigen Umgang mit materiellem Besitz.⁷ Besitz an Gütern oder Immobilien und Geld lassen sich nicht voneinander trennen, schon gar nicht in der anders bestimmten Wirtschaft der antiken Welt.⁸ Daher werden diese Aussagen im Folgenden mit berücksichtigt.

Die vielen Vorkommen von Geld im Neuen Testament verwundern nicht, wenn man bedenkt, dass Geld an mehreren Stellen der Biografie Jesu direkt oder indirekt eine Rolle spielt. Das vorgeschriebene Reinigungsoffer im Jerusalemer Tempel nach der Geburt Jesu fällt bei seinen armen Eltern mit einem paar Turteltauben relativ bescheiden aus (Lk 2:22-24). Die Flucht des Säuglings Jesus nach Ägypten, um den Häschern des Herodes zu entkommen, wird mit dem Gold der Weisen aus dem Morgenland finanziert (Mt 2:11-15). Einige Frauen waren schon in Galiläa mit Jesus unterwegs und dienten ihm mit ihren finanziellen Mitteln (Lk 8:2-3). Sie sind die einzigen (namentlich) bekannten ‚Sponsoren‘ des öffentlichen Wirkens Jesu.⁹ Mit einem teuren Öl wird Jesus als der messianische Menschensohn für seinen Weg ans Kreuz gesalbt (Mk 14:8). Judas war der Kassenverwalter im Jüngerkreis und ein Dieb, der sich aus der Kasse selbst bedient hat (Joh 12:5). Später hat er Jesus für 30 Silberlinge verraten (Mt 26:15). Mit Josef von Arimathäa stellt ein Reicher das Grabtuch und das Grab für Jesus zur Verfügung (Mt 27:57). Noch am Ostermorgen kauften Maria von Magdala und Maria, die Mutter des Jakobus und Salome, wohlriechende Öle, um dem hastig ins Felsengrab gelegten Leichnam Jesu durch Einbalsamieren die letzte Ehre zu erweisen (Mk 16:1). Durch die Bestechung der Wachen am Grab soll die Auferstehung Jesu vertuscht werden (Mt 28:13-15).

Jesus spricht bei mehreren Gelegenheiten teilweise recht ungeniert vom Geld und von materiellem Besitz. Bei einer Gelegenheit beobachtet er ohne jede Hemmung wie Menschen im Jerusalemer Tempel ihre Spenden in den Gotteskasten einwarfen (Lk 21:1). Er schaut nicht nur zu, sondern kommentiert die einzelnen Gaben. Nicht diejenigen, die aus ihrem Überfluss viel gegeben hatten, so dass die schweren Geldsäcke dumpf am Kastenboden aufschlugen, haben viel gegeben. Nein, er hebt eine verarmte Witwe hervor, die das Wenige, was sie noch hatte (zwei ‚Scherflein‘), einwirft. Obwohl das helle Klimpern ihrer Kupfermünzen kaum zu hören war und kaum wahrgenommen wurde, hatte sie doch die entscheidende Gabe eingelegt, weil ihre Haltung vom Vertrauen zu Gott gekennzeichnet war: ‚Wahrlich, ich sage euch: Diese arme Witwe hat mehr als alle eingelegt. Denn diese alle haben aus ihrem Überfluss zu den Opfern eingelegt; sie aber hat von ihrer Armut alles eingelegt, was sie zum Leben hatte‘ (Lk 21:4).

Im Neuen Testament erscheint Geld auch ganz natürlich im Zusammenhang ‚geistlicher‘ Aussagen, ohne dass dies peinlich wäre oder als Widerspruch empfunden würde.¹⁰ So verdeutlicht Jesus durch die Geschichte von einer Frau, die eine von zehn Münzen verliert und nach intensiver Suche wieder findet, die Freude der Engel Gottes über einen Sünder, der sich ihm zuwendet (Lk 15:8-10). In der folgenden Erzählung wird der ‚verlorene Sohn‘, der sein ‚versilbertes‘ Erbe verprasst, zum Bild eines Menschen, der sich von Gott lossagt und sein Leben nach eigenem Gutdünken gestaltet (Lk 15:11-32). Zur Rehabilitation des verlorenen Sohnes gehört, dass er wieder einen (Familiensiegel)Ring an die Hand bekommt und wieder Geschäfte abschließen darf. Im Gleichnis vom barmherzigen Samariter (Lk 10:25-37) bezahlt der Samariter einem Gastwirt zwei Silbergroscen, beauftragt ihn, das verwundete Opfer eines Raubüberfalls weiter zu pflegen und will eventuelle Mehrausgaben bei seiner Rückkehr begleichen (Lk 10:35).¹¹ Jesus erzählt von einem Gläubiger, der seinen Schuldnern unterschiedliche Beträge erlässt, dem einen 500, dem anderen 50 Silbergroscen. Der, dem am meisten geschenkt wurde, wird ihn auch am meisten lieben, so das Fazit (Lk 7:41-43).

Im Gleichnis von den anvertrauten Pfunden (Lk 19:11-27) wird ein Mensch scharf getadelt, der einen ihm anvertrauten Geldbetrag lediglich ‚verwahrt‘ hat: er hatte es unterlassen, mit dem Geld Gewinne zu erwirtschaften oder es wenigstens zur Bank zu bringen, um damit Zinserträge zu erzielen. ‚Kreditvergabe und Zinsnehmen werden hier nicht als verwerflich dargestellt.¹² Der richtige Einsatz von Geld ist nicht anrühig, sondern geboten. Weil der Knecht in der Erzählung darin versagt hat, wird ihm alles genommen. Mit dieser Geschichte verdeutlicht Jesus seinen Nachfolgern, dass sie in der Zeit bis zu seiner Wiederkunft mit den ihnen anvertrauten Gaben verantwortlich umgehen sollen.

Im Gleichnis vom Schalksknecht erzählt Jesus von unermesslichen Schulden, die einem Schuldner aus Mitleid erlassen werden. Ein Neuanfang und ein Leben in Würde werden ihm geschenkt. Doch kurz danach treibt der Mann sein ausstehendes Geld von einem seiner Schuldner hartherzig ein und verspielt dadurch den eigenen Schuldenerlass, als die Sache rauskommt. Die erfahrene Barmherzigkeit und Vergebung Gottes muss sich auch im barmherzigen Umgang mit anderen niederschlagen (Mt 18:21-35).

Christen sind nicht mit vergänglichem Silber oder Gold erlöst von dem nichtigen Wandel nach der Väter Weise, sondern mit dem teuren Blut Christi (1 Petr 1:18). Hier zeigen sich die Grenzen dessen, was Geld bewirken kann. In der Offenbarung (3:19) spricht der erhöhte Christus zu der Gemeinde in Laodizäa in Kleinasien: ‚Ich rate dir, dass du Gold *von mir* kaufst‘, damit sich die Christen nicht vom Glanz dieser Welt blenden lassen, sondern Schätze im Himmel sammeln.

Es zeigt sich durchgängig, dass das Neue Testament nicht säuberlich zwischen ‚geistlichen Dingen‘ und Geld trennt; beides kann unmittelbar zusammenhängen. Wie Menschen vor Gott leben, wird sich auch in ihrem Umgang mit Geld zeigen. Wie Menschen mit ihrem Geld umgehen, verrät auch etwas von ihrer Gottesbeziehung.

Das Neue Testament warnt von den Gefahren des Geldes, spricht aber auch von den positiven Möglichkeiten finanzieller Mittel – einerseits Warnungen vor den enormen geistlichen Gefahren von Geld und Besitz und andererseits Anweisungen zum rechten Umgang damit. Es wird sowohl berichtet, dass Judas Jesus aus Geldgier verriet (Joh 12:6; Mt 26:15) als auch dass eine Spende der Gemeinde in Philippi die Ausbreitung des Evangeliums durch die paulinische Mission gefördert hat (Phil 4:10-19). Geld – es kommt darauf an, wie man damit umgeht – kann zum Einen zum Verhängnis werden; man kann ‚die Welt gewinnen‘, und dabei an seiner Seele Schaden nehmen (Mt 16:26). Zum Anderen kann es zum Guten, d. h. zur Förderung der Sache Jesu, eingesetzt werden.

3. Gefahren des Geldes im Neuen Testament

Jesus macht deutlich, dass man nicht gleichzeitig Gott und dem Geld (dem ‚Mammon‘, Geld als eine personifizierte Macht, die Gott entgegensteht) dienen kann (Mt 6:24, Lk 16:9, 11, 13):¹³ ‚Niemand kann zwei Herren dienen: entweder er wird den einen hassen und den anderen lieben, oder er wird an dem einen hängen und den anderen verachten. Ihr könnt nicht Gott dienen und dem Mammon!‘ (Mt 6:25).¹⁴ Geldgier und Gottesdienst schließen einander kategorisch aus. ‚Anders als das offizielle Judentum seiner Zeit bewertet Jesus Geld und Reichtum nicht als Zeichen der Gnade Gottes.¹⁵

Für Jesus erscheint die Habgier in denkbar schlechter Gesellschaft. Zu den Dingen, die aus

den Menschen kommen und sie verunreinigen, zählt nach bösen Gedanken, Unzucht, Diebstahl, Mord und Ehebruch auch die *Habgier*, gefolgt von Bosheit, Arglist, Ausschweifung, Missgunst, Lästerung, Hochmut und Unvernunft (Mk 7:20-22). Den frömmsten Menschen seiner Zeit wirft Jesus vor, dass sie zwar ihre Becher und Schüsseln äußerlich kultisch reinhalten, „innen aber voller Raub und Gier sind“ (Mt 13:25).¹⁶

Einmal wollte ein Mann aus der Menge Jesus instrumentalisieren, um seinen Teil eines Erbes zu bekommen (Lk 12:13) – an sich ein berechtigtes Anliegen. Doch Jesus – der sich an anderen Stellen dezidiert für Recht und Gerechtigkeit einsetzt – antwortet ihm und allen Zuhörenden: „Mensch, wer hat mich zum Richter oder Erbschlichter über euch gesetzt? Und er sprach zu ihnen: Seht zu und hütet euch vor aller Habgier, denn *niemand lebt davon, dass er viele Güter hat*“ (Lk 12:15). Besitz macht das Leben eines Menschen nicht aus und kann sein Leben nicht garantieren. Durch alles Sorgen um materielle Dinge („Sorgt euch nicht um euer Leben, was ihr essen sollt, auch nicht um euren Leib, was ihr anziehen sollt“, Lk 12:22) kann man seiner Lebenslänge keine Spanne zufügen (Lk 12:25). Die Sorgen, der Reichtum und die Freuden des Lebens können aufkeimendes geistliches Leben so ersticken, das keine Frucht entsteht (Lk 8:14).

Anschließend erzählt Jesus die Geschichte vom reichen Kornbauern (Lk 12:16-21), dem eine große Ernte zum geistlichen Verhängnis wurde, nicht Bargeld, ein Sparbuch oder ein Aktiendepot. Zunächst macht der Mann alles richtig: er hat hart gearbeitet und seine Felder bestellt – durch seiner Hände Arbeit ist er zu etwas gekommen. Mit der Rekordernte will er verantwortlich umgehen – nichts soll verkommen, im Gegenteil. Dass er nicht an andere denkt und teilt (und auf diese Weise sein Problem mit dem Überfluss löst – „Ich habe nichts, wohin ich meine Früchte sammle“, v. 17) wird nicht einmal explizit getadelt. Der Bauer nimmt richtig Geld in die Hand. Er will investieren und große Scheunen bauen und prall füllen. Damit meinte er sein Leben selbst garantieren zu können, wie Jesus seine Hörer in das zufriedene Selbstgespräch des Mannes hinein hören lässt: „Liebe Seele, du hast einen großen Vorrat für viele Jahre; habe nun Ruhe, iss, trink und habe guten Mut!“ (v. 19). An sich sind es attraktive Zukunftsaussichten. Zwar können die Vorräte in den Scheunen den Hunger auf absehbare Zeit stillen, das Leben aber können sie nicht

garantieren. Dann meldet sich Gott ungebeten zu Wort – kein himmlischer Glückwunsch zu einer Investitionsbereitschaft, sondern herbe Kritik: „Du Narr! Diese Nacht wird man deine Seele von dir fordern.“ Was er sich angehäuft hat, um sein Leben zu sichern, wird anderen gehören. Und Jesus schließt: „So geht es dem, der sich Schätze sammelt und ist nicht reich bei Gott“ (12:21). Die Tragik ist, dass man Schätze sammeln kann und dabei versäumt „reich bei Gott“ zu sein. Schätze sammeln und Reich-Sein bei Gott schließen einander aus.¹⁷

Dass Gebundenheit an Reichtum von der Nachfolge Jesu und dem ewigen Leben ausschließen kann, zeigt auf tragische Weise die Begegnung Jesu mit dem „reichen Jüngling“ (Mt 19:16-26). Auf die Frage, was dem Mann noch fehle, der doch alles richtig macht, um das ewige Leben zu haben, antwortet ihm Jesus: „... verkaufe, was Du hast, und gib es den Armen, so wirst Du einen Schatz im Himmel haben; und komm und folge mir nach! Als der Jüngling das Wort hörte, ging er betrübt davon; denn er hatte viele Güter“ (Mt 19:22).

Auch im Gleichnis vom großen Abendmahl hindert der frisch erworbene Besitz (Acker, Ochsen) zwei der ursprünglich geladenen Gäste an der Teilnahme (Lk 14:16-24). Ihnen waren ihre Produktionsmittel wichtiger. Damit verpassen sie das Abendmahl, das für die Teilhabe am Reich Gottes steht. Die Macht der vielen Güter war größer als die Sehnsucht nach ewigem Leben. Dass Reiche ins Himmelreich kommen, ist bei Menschen unmöglich; aber bei Gott sind alle Dinge möglich (vgl. auch Mk 10:23-25). Es bedarf eines Wunders, dass sich Menschen vom Geld lösen und sich ganz auf Gott einlassen können.

Paulus warnt in aller Schärfe vor der Habgier, die er am Ende einer Aufzählung von Sünden (Unzucht, Unreinheit, schändliche Leidenschaft, böse Begierde) radikal mit Götzendienst gleichsetzt (Kol 3:5).¹⁸ Wer Geld und Reichtum dient, ist – mit allen Konsequenzen – vom lebendigen Gott abgefallen und in heidnischen Götzendienst zurückgefallen. Habgier ist kein christliches „Kavaliersdelikt“, denn „Um solcher Dinge willen kommt der Zorn Gottes über die Kinder des Ungehorsams“ (Kol 3:6). Diese Sünden gehörten zum ehemaligen Verhalten, das Christen abgelegt haben.

Die Frömmigkeit ist ein großer Gewinn für Menschen, die sich genügen lassen: Denn

wir haben nichts in die Welt gebracht; darum werden wir auch nichts herausbringen. Wenn wir aber Nahrung und Kleidung haben, so wollen wir uns daran genügen lassen. Denn die reich werden wollen, die fallen in Versuchung und Verstrickung und in viele törichte und schädliche Begierden, welche die Menschen versinken lassen in Verderben und Verdammnis. Denn Geldgier ist eine Wurzel allen Übels; danach hat einige gelüftet, und sie sind vom Glauben abgeirrt und machen sich selbst viel Schmerzen (1Tim 6:7-10).

Vor der Habgier sollen Menschen, die mit Gott leben wollen, fliehen.¹⁹ Vielmehr sollen sie der Gerechtigkeit, der Frömmigkeit, dem Glauben, der Liebe, der Geduld und der Sanftmut mit allem Eifer *nachjagen*.

Habgier wird mit einem verfinsterten Verstand, Entfremdung von Gott, Unwissenheit, Verstockung des Herzens, Abstumpfung, Ausschweifung und unreinen Dingen in Verbindung gebracht (Eph 4:18-19). Dies zeigt ihre ganze Hässlichkeit und ihren Ernst. Dass Gott Menschen in ihrem verkehrten Sinn dahingegeben hat, zeigt sich auch in der *Habgier*, die an dritter Stelle einer langen Liste von Sünden auch hier in ganz schlechter Gesellschaft erscheint (Röm 1:28-29). Sie kennzeichnet Menschen, die Gott und seiner Offenbarung in der Schöpfung gegenüber ihre Ehrerbietung und Dankbarkeit verweigern.

In 1 Korinther 5:10 macht Paulus deutlich, dass es ihm in seinem Brief nicht um die Unzüchtigen, die Geizigen, die Räuber oder Götzendiener dieser Welt geht. Die Korinther sollen nichts zu schaffen haben mit Menschen, *die sich Christen nennen*, aber dennoch unzüchtig oder geizig bzw. Götzendiener, Lasterer, Trinker oder Räuber sind. Solche Menschen, auch die Geizigen, sollen aus der Gemeinde ausgeschlossen werden. Nach 2 Timotheus 3:1-2 ist die Geldgier ein Zeichen der schlimmen Zeiten in den letzten Tagen.

Geldgier und Missbrauch von Geld erscheint auch in den erzählenden Büchern des Neuen Testaments. Nur einmal während seines irdischen Lebens wandte Jesus Gewalt ein. Er sah, wie in den Vorhöfen des Jerusalemer Tempels, die gerade zur Zeit der großen Feste Israels für gottesfürchtige nicht-jüdische Pilger bestimmt waren, munter Handel getrieben und Geld gewechselt wurde. Dabei ging es immerhin auch um Opfertiere, die im Tempel benötigt wurden und mit dem gewechselten Geld musste die jährliche Tempelsteuer ent-

richtet werden.²⁰ Doch vertreibt Jesus mit einer Zeichenhandlung die Verkäufer und Käufer, stößt die Tische der Geldwechsler und die Stände der Taubenhändler um und lässt nicht zu, dass jemand etwas durch den Tempel trägt, denn „Mein Haus soll ein Bethaus heißen für die Völker. Ihr aber habt eine Räuberhöhle daraus gemacht!“ (Mk 11:15-19, detaillierter in Joh 2:13-17). Der frommen Elite, die Handel und Geldwechsel kontrollierte, waren gute Geschäfte wichtiger als die Andacht der Heiden, zumal sie selbst Zugang zum eigentlichen Tempelvorhof hatte und auf das außerhalb liegende Areal nicht angewiesen war (Mk 11:15-18). In der Tempelreinigung liegt der unmittelbare Anlass des Todes Jesu (v. 18). Später hat dieselbe religiöse Führung die Soldaten, die das Grab Jesu vergeblich bewacht hatten, mit viel Geld bestochen, damit sie die Verkündigung der Auferstehung Jesu mit der Behauptung widerlegten, die Anhänger Jesu hätten den Leichnam Jesu gestohlen (Mt 28:11-15).

Judas Iskariot kritisiert die überschwängliche Großzügigkeit einer Frau, die Jesus mit kostbarem Parfüm salbt; doch fährt das Johannesevangelium fort: „Das sagte er aber nicht, weil er nach dem Armen fragte, sondern er war ein Dieb, denn er hatte den Geldbeutel und nahm an sich, was gegeben war“ (Joh 12:5-6): Veruntreuung und persönliche Bereicherung – unter dem Vorwand der Armenfürsorge – geschah bis in den engsten Jüngerkreis hinein. Später wird Judas Jesus für Geld verraten.

Als die Besitzer einer Sklavin, die von Paulus von einem Wahrsagegeist befreit wurde, „sahen, dass damit ihre Hoffnung auf Gewinn ausgefahren war“ (Apg 16:19-22; vgl. auch 19:23-40),²¹ zettelten sie einen Aufruhr gegen die urchristlichen Missionare an. Antonius Felix, römischer Statthalter in Judäa, erwartete von seinem Gefangenen Paulus ein Bestechungsgeld für seine Freilassung. Deshalb ließ er ihn immer wieder kommen, doch Paulus kam ihm mit keinem Cent entgegen (Apg 24:26-27), im Gegenteil: mutig sprach er die Sünden des Statthalters an und sprach von dem kommenden göttlichen Gericht.²² Schon vorher hat Paulus in Milet versichert, dass er niemandes Silber oder Gold oder Kleidung begehrt hat (Apg 20:33) – im Gegenteil: durch seiner Hände Arbeit hat er sich und andere versorgt.²³

Die Gefahren des Umgangs mit Geld zeigen sich auch in der christlichen Gemeinde. Im Zusammenhang mit der urchristlichen Gütergemeinschaft und dem Verkauf von

Immobilien zugunsten der Gemeinde werden Ananias und Saphira erwähnt. Sie wollten mehr scheinen als sein. Sie behielten einen Teil des Erlöses ihres verkauften Acker zur Sicherheit ein – was in keiner Weise verboten war. Doch nach außen taten sie so, als hätten sie den ganzen Betrag zu den Aposteln gebracht, und Petrus stellt sie zur Rede (Apg 5:1-10). Für ihre Heuchelei bezahlen beide einen hohen Preis. Die erste ‚christliche‘ Sünde hatte mit Geld zu tun und zeigt, dass es dabei nicht nur um Versagen zwischen Menschen geht: ‚Warum hat der Satan dein Herz erfüllt, dass du den heiligen Geist belogen hast‘ (5:3).

Durch die fehlende Versorgung der hellenistischen Witwen der Jerusalemer Gemeinde wurde die Einheit der Jerusalemer Urgemeinde bedroht – bis Männer eingesetzt wurden, die für eine gerechte Armenversorgung in der Gemeinde zuständig waren (Apg 6:1-7).

Mit Geld wollte sich der frisch bekehrte Zauberer Simon die Fähigkeit erwerben, auch den Heiligen Geist vermitteln zu können: ‚... bot er ihnen Geld an und sprach: Gebt mir auch die Macht, damit jeder, dem ich die Hände auflege, den heiligen Geist empfangen‘ (Apg 8:18-19). Damit wollte er auch etwas können, das nicht einmal Philippus konnte und dadurch seine prominente Position in Samaria wiedererlangen. Für sein Angebot und das dahinterliegende Missverständnis wird er scharf getadelt: ‚Petrus aber sprach zu ihm: Dass du verdammt werdest mitsamt deinem Geld, weil du meinst, Gottes Gabe werde durch Geld erlangt‘ (8:20).²⁴ Seitdem heißt die finanzielle Einflussnahme auf die Vergabe kirchlicher Ämter Simonie.²⁵

Weil Geld missbraucht werden kann, ist in der Gemeinde höchste Transparenz im Umgang mit Geld geboten, um Versuchung und Misstrauen vorzubeugen.²⁶ Darauf achtet Paulus bei der Durchführung der Kollekte für die Heiligen in Jerusalem. Auf keinen Fall soll der Verdacht entstehen, dass Paulus sich persönlich bereichern will. Die Korinther sollen aus ihrer Sicht mehrere bewährte Leute auswählen, die mit erklärenden Briefen die Gaben der korinthischen Gemeinde nach Jerusalem bringen (1 Kor 16:3). Neben Titus werden zwei weitere, bewährte und bekannte Brüder nach Korinth geschickt, die die Kollekte dort voranbringen sollen (2 Kor 8). Beide wurden von mehreren Gemeinden eingesetzt, um Paulus zur Übergabe der Kollekte nach Jerusalem zu begleiten (8:23). Sie können später bezeugen, wann die Gelder an wen übergeben wurden.

Paulus begründet dieses überlegte Vorgehen wie folgt: ‚So verhüten wir, dass uns jemand übel nachredet wegen dieser reichen Gabe, die durch uns überbracht wird. Denn wir sehen darauf, dass es redlich zugehe nicht allein vor dem Herrn, sondern auch vor den Menschen‘ (2 Kor 8:20-21).²⁷

Geldgier disqualifiziert vom Ältestenamt in der christlichen Gemeinde (1 Tim 3:3; vgl. Tit 1:7: ‚nicht schändlichen Gewinn suchen‘). Den Reichen dieser Welt soll Timotheus gebieten, ‚dass sie nicht stolz seien, auch nicht hoffen auf den unsicheren Reichtum, sondern auf Gott, der uns alles reichlich darbietet, es zu genießen‘ (1 Tim 6:17).

Vor allem der Jakobusbrief findet deutliche Worte über Reiche (Christen): ‚Wer reich ist, der rühme sich seiner Niedrigkeit, denn wie eine Blume des Feldes wird er vergehen‘ (Jak 1:10). Der Glaube an Jesus Christus schließt ein Ansehen der Person, eine Unterscheidung nach arm und reich aus:

Denn wenn in eure Versammlung ein Mann käme mit einem goldenen Ring und in herrlicher Kleidung, es käme aber auch ein Armer in unsauberer Kleidung und ihr sähet auf den, der herrlich gekleidet ist, und sprächet zu ihm: Setze du dich hierher auf den guten Platz! und sprächet zu dem Armen: Stell du dich dorthin! oder: Setze dich unten zu meinen Füßen!; ist's recht, dass ihr solche Unterschiede bei euch macht und urteilt mit bösen Gedanken? (Jak 2:2-4).

Wirtschaftlicher Erfolg liegt nicht im selbstsicheren Planen von Menschen: ‚Ihr, die ihr sagt: Heute oder morgen wollen wir in die oder die Stadt gehen und wollen ein Jahr dort zubringen und Handel treiben und Gewinn machen –, und wisst nicht, was morgen sein wird. ... Dagegen solltet ihr sagen: wenn der Herr will, werden wir leben und dies oder das tun‘ (4:13-15). Was sich Menschen – hier sind in der direkten Rede wohl auch Gemeindemitglieder angeredet – mit unrechten Methoden angehäuft haben, wird keinen Bestand haben. Menschen, die auf diese Weise reich geworden sind, werden schonungslos verurteilt:

Und nun, ihr Reichen: Weint und heult über das Elend, das über euch kommen wird! Euer Reichtum ist verfault, eure Kleider sind von Motten zerfressen. Euer Gold und Silber ist verrostet, und ihr Rost wird gegen euch Zeugnis geben und wird euer Fleisch fressen wie Feuer.

Ihr habt euch Schätze gesammelt in diesen letzten Tagen. Siehe, der Lohn der Arbeiter, die euer Land abgeerntet haben, den ihr ihnen vorenthalten habt, der schreit, und das Rufen der Schnitter ist gekommen vor die Ohren des Herrn Zebaoth. Ihr habt geschlemmt auf Erden und gepirast und eure Herzen gemästet am Schlachttag. Ihr habt den Gerechten verurteilt und getötet, und er hat euch nicht widerstanden (Jak 5:1-6).

Kritik am Geld/Reichtum ist im Neuen Testament nicht ‚ökonomisch oder sozial begründet, sondern theologisch: Geld und Gut können das Heil der Seele gefährden‘.²⁸

Neben den eindringlichen Warnungen vor den geistlichen Gefahren des Geldes spricht das Neue Testament aber auch vom Heilmittel. Die Sorge um das Geld soll Menschen in der Nachfolge Jesu nicht bestimmen:

Sorgt nicht um euer Leben, was ihr essen und trinken werdet; auch nicht um euren Leib, was ihr anziehen werdet. ... Seht die Vögel unter dem Himmel an: Sie säen nicht, sie ernten nicht, sie sammeln nicht in die Scheunen; und euer himmlischer Vater ernährt sie doch. Seid ihr denn nicht viel mehr als sie?... Schaut die Lilien auf dem Feld an, wie sie wachsen: sie arbeiten nicht, auch spinnen sie nicht. ... Wenn nun Gott das Gras auf dem Feld so kleidet, das doch heute steht und morgen in den Ofen geworfen wird: sollte er das nicht viel mehr für euch tun, ihr Kleingläubigen? (Mt 6:25-30).

Jedoch gehören eigene Arbeit und das Vertrauen auf Gottes Versorgung zusammen. Es sind die Menschen, die Gott nicht kennen, die sich um die täglichen Bedürfnisse sorgen (Lk 12:30): ‚Nach all dem [Nahrungsmittel und Kleidung] trachten die Heiden in der Welt; aber euer Vater weiß, dass ihr dessen bedürft‘.²⁹ Menschen, die Gott kennen, die ihm als ihrem himmlischen Vater vertrauen, brauchen nicht nach alledem zu streben. Sie sollen und dürfen nach seiner Herrschaft streben – ihre Perspektive darf weit darüber hinausgehen. Gott wird ihnen geben, was sie zum Leben brauchen. Dabei sammeln sie einen Schatz im Himmel (dazu werden sie explizit aufgerufen: ‚sammelt euch!‘), der weder vergeht noch gestohlen werden kann.

4. Chancen von Geld im Neuen Testament

Gleichzeitig wird Geld im Neuen Testament nicht verteufelt. Es ist nicht nur gefährlich oder immer

nur gefährlich. Mit und durch Geld kann im Neuen Testament viel Positives bewegt werden. Jesus spricht vom Spenden, die so gegeben werden sollen, dass die rechte Hand nicht weiß, was die Linke tut, also ohne öffentliches Aufsehen zu erregen (Mt 6:1-4). Almosen sollen und können im Verborgenen bleiben, da ‚dein himmlischer Vater in das Verborgene sieht und Dir vergelten wird‘. Wer seine Frömmigkeit vor den Leuten übt, um von ihnen gesehen zu werden, hat keinen Lohn [mehr] im Himmel (Mt 6:1).³⁰

Jesus fordert seine Anhänger auf, sich nicht Schätze auf Erden zu sammeln (Mt 6:19). Sie sollen ihren Besitz verkaufen und den Erlös weggeben: ‚Macht euch Geldbeutel, die nicht veralten [d.h. Geldbeutel, die regelmäßig zu Gunsten der Armen geöffnet werden], einen Schatz, der niemals abnimmt, im Himmel, wo kein Dieb hinkommt und den keine Motten fressen. Sammelt euch aber Schätze im Himmel‘ (Mt 6:20). Eine erträglichere und sicherere Investition gibt es nicht. Und Umgang mit Geld zeigt ein weiteres: ‚Wo euer Schatz ist, da wird auch euer Herz sein‘ (Lk 12:33-34).

Bei aller Verantwortung für den Umgang mit Geld lobt Jesus zwei Frauen, die auf den ersten Blick und nach menschlichen Maßstäben Geld verschwendet haben. Eine von ihnen salbt aus Dankbarkeit für vergebene Schuld Jesus die Füße mit kostbarem Salböl (Lk 7:37-38). Die andere nimmt die Salbung für Jesu Begräbnis vorweg: ‚da kam eine Frau, die hatte ein Glas von unverfälschtem, kostbarem Nardenöl, und sie zerbrach das Glas und goss das Öl auf Jesu Haupt‘. Einige unter den Zuschauern wurden unwillig und sprachen: ‚Was soll diese Vergeudung des Salböls? Man hätte dieses Öl für mehr als dreihundert Silbergroschen verkaufen und das Geld den Armen geben können. Und sie fuhren die Frau an‘.³¹ Jesus weist diese Kritik zurück und stellt sich schützend vor die Frau (Mk 14:3-9). Beide drücken durch ihren nach außen hin verschwenderischen Umgang mit ihrem Besitz ihre Liebe zu Jesus aus. In der Bewertung wie Menschen mit Geld umgehen, ist wirtschaftliche Effizienz nicht der einzige Maßstab.

Durch seinen geschickten und großzügigen Umgang mit Geld (das nicht einmal sein eigenes war) wird der treulose Verwalter im Gleichnis Jesu (Lk 16:1-7) zum Vorbild für die ‚Kinder des Lichts‘, wie man sich durch die Art und Weise, mit der man *jetzt* mit seinem Besitz umgeht, die *Zukunft* sichern soll. „Macht euch Freunde mit dem ungerechten Mammon“ gibt das Motto,

Geld in den Dienst notleidender Mitmenschen zu stellen.⁴² Das Wort erinnert an das Sammeln von Schätzen im Himmel.

Eines der wenigen Worte Jesu, die nur außerhalb der Evangelien bezeugt sind, gilt dem Geld: ‚Geben ist seliger als nehmen!‘ (Apg 20:35; dabei handelt es sich wohl um ein Zitat aus der mündlichen Überlieferung der Worte Jesu, vielleicht hat Paulus aber auch eigenständig die Aussagen Jesu zum Umgang mit Geld auf diese Weise pointiert zusammengefasst.) Damit begründet Paulus die Tatsache, dass er von seiner eigenen Hände Arbeit gelebt hat und darüber hinaus noch anderen geben konnte: ‚Denn ihr wisst selber, dass mir diese Hände zum Unterhalt gedient haben für mich und die, die bei mir gewesen sind. Ich habe euch in allem gezeigt, dass man so arbeiten *und sich der Schwachen annehmen muss*‘ (20:34). Arbeit und Fürsorge für die Armen ist keine Option, sondern Pflicht. Paulus hat das in Ephesus nicht nur *gelehrt*, sondern über einen längeren Zeitraum hinweg konsequent auch *praktiziert* (siehe unten).³³

Im Rahmen der urchristlichen Gütergemeinschaft in Jerusalem verkaufen die ersten Christen, unter ihnen auch Joseph Barnabas, Äcker und Häuser und legen den Erlös den Aposteln zu Füßen,³⁴ um auf diese Weise die Gemeinde finanziell zu versorgen. Die Christen waren ‚ein Herz und eine Seele‘, was sich auch darin zeigte, dass ‚auch nicht einer von ihnen sagte von seinen Gütern, dass sie sein waren, sondern es war ihnen alles gemeinsam‘ (Apg 4:32). Daher war auch keiner unter ihnen, der Mangel hatte. Die heilsgeschichtlich nicht zu überschätzende Sammlung und Wiederherstellung Israels in der Jerusalemer Urgemeinde der ersten Kapitel der Apostelgeschichte hatte ihre materielle Grundlage in der Bereitschaft der Gemeindemitglieder ihre irdischen Güter zu teilen. Die Menschen, die damals mit ihren Häusern und Äckern ihre Produktionsmittel versilberten, haben sich der Fürsorge Gottes und der der Gemeinde anvertraut.

Eine der namentlich bekannten ersten Christinnen war die Jüngerin Tabita aus Joppe, die viele gute Werke tat (dazu gehörte das Anfertigen von Kleidung) und reichlich Almosen gab (Apg 9:36, 39).³⁵ Während einer Hungersnot hat die heidenchristliche Gemeinde in Antiochien die Christen in Jerusalem finanziell unterstützt (Apg 11:27-30).³⁶ Das Erstaunliche an dieser Sammlung war, dass sich nicht nur die reichen Christen – wie in der hellenistischen Umwelt üblich – betei-

ligt haben, sondern ‚ein jeder beschloss nach seinem Vermögen den Brüdern ... eine Gabe zu senden‘ (11:29).³⁷ Dies ist der erste Hinweis auf einen ortsübergreifenden innerkirchlichen Lastenausgleich unter Christen. Mehrere Christen und Christinnen stellen ihre Häuser der Gemeinde und der Mission als Stützpunkte zur Verfügung, so etwa die Mutter des Johannes Markus (12:12) oder Lydia (16:15).³⁸

Paulus ist bereit, seine eigene jüdische Identität und persönliche Integrität sowie seine innere Verbundenheit mit Israel in Jerusalem den Judenchristen gegenüber dadurch zu bezeugen, dass er die hohen Kosten für die Auslösung von vier Nasiräergelübden übernimmt (21:24-26, ‚und trage die Kosten für sie, dass sie ihr Haupt scheren können; so werden alle erkennen, dass es nicht so ist, wie man ihnen über dich berichtet hat, sondern dass du selber auch nach dem Gesetz lebst und es hältst‘). Durch den gezielten Einsatz einer nicht unerheblichen Summe Geldes kann die eigene Identität unter Beweis gestellt sowie Misstrauen und Vorbehalte unter Christen effektiv zerstreut werden. Paulus war auch nach Jerusalem gekommen, um (wohl sein persönliches) Almosen für sein Volk zu überbringen (Apg 24:17). Schon früh hatte Paulus in Jerusalem die Verpflichtung übernommen, der Armen zu gedenken: ‚... nur dass wir an die Armen dächten, was ich mich auch *eifrig* bemüht habe zu tun‘ (Gal 2:10). Auch dieses Geld zeigte die innere Verbundenheit des Paulus mit Jerusalem und dem Volk Israel (zur Kollektenaktion des Paulus siehe unten).

Mit der Zahlung von Steuern sollen die römischen Christen die legitimen Ansprüche der von Gott eingesetzten Obrigkeit anerkennen (Röm 13:6-7).³⁹ Durch Geld können Christen die Ausbreitung des Evangeliums unterstützen. So hat etwa die Gemeinde in Philippi mit einer Gabe die paulinische Mission unterstützt (Phil 4:10-20).⁴⁰ Die Reichen dieser Welt werden aufgefordert, Gutes zu tun, reich zu werden an guten Werken, gerne zu geben, behilflich zu sein, sich selbst einen Schatz zu sammeln als guten Grund für die Zukunft, damit sie das wahre Leben ergreifen (1 Tim 6:18-19).

Paulus ruft die von ihm gegründeten Gemeinden in Kleinasien und Griechenland auf, einen großen Geldbetrag für die verarmten Christen in Jerusalem zu sammeln (1 Kor 16:1-4; 2 Kor 8-9).⁴¹ Diese Kollektenaktion hat Paulus (und eine Reihe seiner Mitarbeiter) spätestens während der dritten Missionsreise intensiv beschäf-

tigt und seine Reisepläne beeinflusst. Obwohl das nächste Ziel seines Wirkens Spanien war, ist Paulus unter großem persönlichem Risiko noch einmal Richtung Osten nach Jerusalem zurückgelehrt, um die Kollektengelder mit einer Gesandtschaft der Gemeinden persönlich zu überbringen. Bei diesem Besuch hat Paulus beinahe sein Leben verloren und kam in römische Gefangenschaft.

Für die Christen in Galatien und in Korinth gelten dabei die gleichen Regeln. Über einen längeren Zeitraum hinweg soll systematisch gespart werden: „An jedem ersten Tag der Woche lege ein jeder von euch bei sich etwas zurück und sammle an, soviel ihm möglich ist, damit die Sammlung nicht erst geschieht, wenn ich komme“ (1 Kor 16:2). Die Gabe soll von Korinthern überbracht werden, die die Gemeinde für bewährt hält. Da Geld nicht selbstredend ist, will Paulus der Kollekte erläuternde Briefe mitgeben bzw. wenn ein größerer Betrag zusammenkommt, selbst mit nach Jerusalem reisen (1 Kor 16:1-4).

Die Christen Mazedoniens werden für ihre Beteiligung an der Kollekte überschwänglich gelobt, sehe 2. Korinther 8:1-5. In 2 Korinther 8:1 – 9:15 erscheinen neben dem anvisierten gegenseitigen kirchlichen Lastenausgleich (2 Kor 8:13-15: „Nicht dass andere gute Tage haben und ihr Not leidet, sondern dass es zu einem Ausgleich komme. Jetzt helfe euer Überfluss ihrem Mangel ab, damit danach auch ihr Überfluss eurem Mangel abhelfe und so ein Ausgleich geschehe“) noch andere Motive:

- Die gemeinsame Beteiligung an der Kollekte ist auch Ausdruck der Gemeinschaft unter den gebenden Gemeinden (8:4). Mehrere Gemeinden haben gemeinsame Gesandte gewählt, die zusammen mit Paulus und anderen die Kollekte überbringen sollen (8:19, 23). Die Kollekte bringt auch die heidenchristlichen Gemeinden unterschiedlicher Gebiete zusammen.
- Mit der Beteiligung an der Kollekte will Paulus auch die Liebe der Korinther prüfen (8:8).
- „Der Dienst dieser Sammlung hilft nicht allein dem Mangel der Heiligen ab, sondern wirkt auch überschwänglich darin, dass viele Gott danken“ (9:12). Geld kann nicht nur Not lindern, sondern auch zur Dankbarkeit vieler Menschen Gott gegenüber führen (9:13). Die Kollekte – systematisch gesammeltes Geld – führt zum Lobpreis und ist Ausdruck des Gehorsams gegenüber dem Evangelium und der Gemeinschaft unter Christen ohne

Hintergedanken (die Einfalt der Gemeinschaft).

- Ferner soll die Kollekte dazu führen, dass die Jerusalemer Christen für die Korinther beten und sich nach ihnen sehnen. Geld kann zum Grund der Fürbitte der Empfänger für die Geber werden. Durch Geld – mit lauterer Motiven gegeben und empfangen – kann Verbundenheit und Liebe über viele hundert Kilometer hinweg entstehen zwischen Christen, die sich nie gesehen haben und sehr unterschiedlich geprägt sind. Das Misstrauen muss Annahme und Versöhnung weichen.

Es geht in diesen beiden Kapiteln also um wesentlich mehr als den „fröhlichen Geber, den Gott lieb hat“ (9:7). Sie zeigen auch die enormen Möglichkeiten und Chancen von Geld nicht nur um zu helfen, sondern auch um geistliche Sachverhalte auszudrücken. Durch Geld können geistliche Anliegen unterstrichen und Prozesse ausgelöst werden.

Am Ende des Römerbriefs berichtet Paulus von der Kollekte, ohne die Römer zur Beteiligung aufzufordern. Er erklärt ihnen, warum er trotz seines dringenden Wunsches nach Rom und Spanien zu reisen, zunächst von Korinth aus nach Jerusalem aufbricht. Dort wird er den Heiligen dienen, „denn die in Mazedonien und Achaja haben willig eine gemeinsame Gabe zusammengelegt...sie haben es willig getan“ (Röm 15:26f).⁴² Die Gabe hat auch die Christen dieser beiden Gebiete zusammengebracht zu einer *gemeinsamen* Gabe. Auch das kann Geld bewirken.

Paulus erwähnt im Römerbrief eine weitere Motivation der Kollekte: die Heidenchristen sind *Schuldner* der Judenchristen (in Jerusalem), „denn wenn die Heiden [durch das Evangelium] an ihren geistlichen Gütern Anteil bekommen haben, ist es recht und billig, dass sie ihnen auch mit leiblichen Gütern Dienst erweisen“ (Röm 15:27). Mit konkreten Kollektengeldern dienen die Heidenchristen den Judenchristen; sie begleichen ihre „Schuld“. Damit bringen sie ihre Verbundenheit und Dankbarkeit für die mit dem Evangelium und durch die christliche Mission durch die Judenchristen empfangenen geistlichen Güter zum Ausdruck. Damit erkennen sie zum einen die heilsgeschichtliche Priorität Israels an, zum anderen bekennen sie Zugehörigkeit zu Gottes Volk. Auch das kann durch Geld zum Ausdruck kommen.⁴³

In diesem Zusammenhang deutet Paulus aber auch an, dass die Spenden in Jerusalem nicht angenommen werden könnten. Die Römer sollen

mit Paulus beten, dass ‚mein Dienst, den ich für Jerusalem tue, den Heiligen willkommen sei‘ (Röm 15:31). Es ist unklar, aufgrund welcher Umstände Paulus unmittelbar vor dem Aufbruch nach Jerusalem Bedenken bezüglich der Annahme hatte. Paulus geht anscheinend davon aus, dass auch den Jerusalemer Christen klar ist bzw. durch seine Ausführungen vor Ort klar werden wird, dass die Kollekte neben der materiellen Hilfeleistung mit einem weiteren Anliegen verknüpft ist, sonst lassen sich die Bedenken des Paulus und die befürchtete Ablehnung der Kollekte nicht erklären. Für Paulus war die Annahme der Spenden nicht zu trennen von der Annahme und Anerkennung der heidenchristlichen Geber. Wer sie nicht als Mitglieder am Leib Christi anerkennen kann oder will, darf und kann auch nicht die Gaben annehmen, die Ausdruck dieser Verbundenheit sein wollen.

In gewisser Weise hat Paulus mit der Kollektenaktion vor seinem anvisierten Aufbruch in den westlichen Mittelmeerraum auf die Jerusalemer Christen Druck ausgeübt und sie gezwungen, sich gegenüber den Heidenchristen im Osten aber auch im innerjüdischen Diskurs zu positionieren. Zum einen ging es ihm um die in der Sammlung und Annahme sichtbar werdende Einheit der Kirche aus Juden und Heiden, zum anderen wollte Paulus vor einer neuen Phase der Pioniermission damit sicher auch die Auseinandersetzungen mit seinen judenchristlichen Gegnern, die seinen Dienst im Osten enorm belastet hatten, endlich zum Abschluss bringen.⁴⁴

Ob sich Paulus der Brisanz der Kollekte im damaligen innerjüdischen Diskurs über die Annahme von Geldern von Heiden und des damit entstandenen Dilemmas für die Jerusalemer Judenchristen bewusst war, ist unklar.⁴⁵ Hat Paulus mögliche Schwierigkeiten für die Jerusalemer Christen bewusst in Kauf genommen, die mit der Annahme der heidenchristlichen Kollekte von Seiten der ungläubigen Juden Jerusalems auf die Gemeinde zukommen könnten? Schon im Neuen Testament wird deutlich, dass auch innerchristlich größere Summen ‚zweckgebundener‘ Mittel ihre eigene Problematik haben können, die den Gebern und ihren Protagonisten nicht immer bewusst sein müssen.⁴⁶

Bei allem Geben kommt es freilich mehr auf die innere Einstellung an, als auf die Höhe des Betrags: Eine arme Witwe, die im Vertrauen auf Gott ihre letzten Cent gab, gab mehr als wohlhabende Spender, die lediglich von ihrem Überfluss gegeben haben (Mk 12:41-44). ‚Einen fröhli-

chen Geber hat Gott lieb‘ (2 Kor 9:7). Neben der inneren Einstellung geht es im Neuen Testament immer wieder auch um die *lauteren* Motive, da mit Geld auch manipuliert oder anderweitig Macht ausgeübt werden kann.

Bei den Warnungen vor den Gefahren von Geld und anderem Besitz im Neuen Testament, überraschen diese positiven Aussagen auf den ersten Blick. Geld kann sehr viel Gutes bewirken, geistliche Wahrheiten, innere Verbundenheit bis hin zu eigenen heilsgeschichtlichen Verortung zum Ausdruck bringen. Geld *an sich* ist also im Neuen Testament kein Problem. Was wir damit machen, ist die entscheidende Frage.

5. Wie man zu Geld kommen soll

Neben der Frage, wie Christen mit Geld umgehen sollen, spricht das Neue Testament noch ein weiteres Thema an. Wie kommen Menschen zu ihrem Geld? Geht dies mit rechten Dingen zu?

Nach dem Neuen Testament leben Menschen von ihrer Arbeit.⁴⁷ Den Thessalonichern schreibt Paulus: ‚... und mit euren eigenen Händen arbeitet ... damit ihr ehrbar lebt vor denen, die draußen sind, und auf niemanden angewiesen seid‘ (1 Thess 4:11);⁴⁸ ‚Denn schon als wir bei euch waren, geboten wir euch: Wer nicht arbeiten will, der soll auch nicht essen. Denn wir hören, dass einige unter euch unordentlich leben und nichts arbeiten, sondern unnütze Dinge treiben. Solchen aber gebieten wir und ermahnen sie in dem Herrn Jesus, dass sie still ihrer Arbeit nachgehen und ihr eigenes Brot essen‘ (2 Thess 3:10-12; vgl. 3:8 und Apg 20:34).⁴⁹ Freilich weiß das Neue Testament auch von Menschen, die gerne arbeiten würden, aber keine Arbeit finden. Das Gleichnis von den Arbeitern im Weinberg berichtet von Tagelöhnern, die sich schon früh am Morgen versammeln und auf Arbeit warten (Mt 20:1-8).⁵⁰ Wer nicht arbeiten *will*, der soll auch nicht essen (2 Thess 4:10) – nicht der, der aus verschiedenen Gründen nicht arbeiten *kann*. Hier sind Christen zu Solidarität und Hilfe aufgefordert.

‚Dem dreschenden Ochsen soll man nicht das Maul verbinden‘ (5 Mose 25:4). Diese Regelung aus dem alttestamentlichen Gesetz wendet Paulus auch für Verkündiger des Evangeliums an. Sie sollen von ihrem Dienst leben können. Dass sie von diesem Recht unter bestimmten Umständen keinen Gebrauch machen wollen oder können, stellt die Berechtigung nicht grundsätzlich in Frage (1 Kor 9:1-18). Mehrfach hat Paulus in

seinem gelernten Beruf als Zeltmacher gearbeitet (etwa Apg 18:1-4; 20:35),⁵¹ zu anderen Zeiten wurde er durch die Gaben von Gemeinden unterstützt.

Neben Einkünften aus Arbeit gibt es aber auch ‚schändlichen Gewinn‘ (1 Petr 5:2; wer schändlichen Gewinn sucht, ist vom Diakonenamt ausgeschlossen, 1 Tim 3:8); Gewinn aus Betrug (1 Thess 4:6) und Menschen, die mit Magie und Zauberei Geld verdienen (Apg 16:16, 19) und mobil machen, wenn ihr Gewinn gefährdet ist (Apg 19:24-28). Unter den Jüngern Jesu war mit Judas Iskariot *ein Dieb*, denn er hatte den Geldbeutel und nahm sich, was gegeben war‘ (Joh 12:6). Diebe und Räuber werden das Reich Gottes nicht ererben (1 Kor 6:10). ‚Wer gestohlen hat, der stehle nicht mehr, sondern arbeite und schaffe mit eigenen Händen das nötige Gut, damit er dem Bedürftigen abgeben kann‘ (Eph 4:28). Kein Christ soll als ein Dieb leiden (1 Petr 4:15).

In Jakobus 5:1-6 werden die Reichen direkt angesprochen, die auf Kosten anderer reich geworden sind:

Siehe, der Lohn der Arbeiter, die euer Land abgeerntet haben, den ihr ihnen vorenthalten habt, der schreit, und das Rufen der Schnitter ist gekommen vor die Ohren des Herrn Zebaoth. Ihr habt geschlemmt auf Erden und geprasst und eure Herzen gemästet am Schlachtag. Ihr habt den Gerechten verurteilt und getötet, und er hat euch nicht widerstanden (4-6).

Freilich gilt auch: ‚Prinzipiell verwerflich ist nur *schändlicher* Gewinn (1 Tim 3:8).‘⁵²

In Offenbarung 18 wird der Untergang Babylons angekündigt und der exzessive Reichtum und die Verschwendung der Stadt angeklagt. Die Frachtliste der Kaufleute Babylons beginnt mit Gold, Silber, Edelsteinen und Perlen und endet mit *den Leibern und Seelen von Menschen* (18:12-13; wobei Handel an sich nicht verurteilt wird; vgl. etwa Mt 13:45-46 und Jak 4:13-16). Dies zeigt, dass der Reichtum der Stadt auch durch Menschenhandel und Brutalität zustande kam. ‚Dieser Eindruck wird in 18:24 bestätigt, wo Babylon als Stadt des Blutvergießens und der Brutalität verdammt wird, die durch militärische Gewalt entstand und erhalten wurde. „Babylon“ ist ein Beispiel für die Skrupellosigkeit der Habgierigen.‘⁵³

Bis heute kann man ‚die Welt gewinnen und dabei Schaden an seiner Seele nehmen‘ (Mt 16:26) und hat nichts Bleibendes gewonnen. Nichts

können Menschen geben, um ihre Seele auszulösen. Auch in der Art und Weise wie Christen zu ihrem Geld kommen, sollen sie zum Lob der Herrlichkeit Gottes werden (Eph 1:14).

Dass Geld in der Regel von Menschen verdient und zur Verfügung gestellt wird, setzen auch die wenigen Ausnahmen im Neuen Testament nicht außer Kraft. Nur einmal findet Petrus auf Jesu Geheiß hin im Maul eines Fisches zwei Silberstücke, mit denen er für Jesus und sich selbst die jährliche jüdische Tempelsteuer entrichtet (Mt 17:24-27), ansonsten haben sich Jesus und der Jüngerkreis durch die Gaben anderer (Lk 8:1-3; und eigene Arbeit?) finanziert. Dass es dennoch nicht entscheidend auf menschliche Ressourcen ankommt, zeigen die Speisungswunder Jesu: nein, nicht Brot für die von den Jüngern geschätzten 200 Silbergroschen kann der Not abhelfen (Mk 5:37),⁵⁴ sondern das wenige, was Menschen geben können, in Jesu Hände gelegt und aus seinen Händen empfangen.

6. Geld im Neuen Testament und ‚unser‘ Geld

Was machen wir mit ‚unserem‘ Geld? Zunächst sagt das Neue Testament, dass es sich eigentlich nicht um *unser* Geld handelt. Wir haben nichts, was wir nicht von Gott *empfangen* haben (1 Kor 4:7 – was entsprechende eigene Arbeit nicht ausschließt). Wir verwalten nur sorgfältig, was wir empfangen haben. Einen Teil dieses Geldes müssen und dürfen wir für unsere Bedürfnisse verwenden. Nach Paulus kann man lernen, auch mit bescheidenen Bedürfnissen zu leben (Phil 4:11). Der andere Teil ist uns zur Unterstützung der Sache Gottes und unserer Mitmenschen anvertraut (Apg 20:34-35: ‚... dass man so arbeiten und sich der Kranken annehmen muss‘). Epheser 4:28 fordert: ‚... er arbeite und schaffe mit eigenen Händen das nötige Gut, damit er dem Bedürftigen abgeben kann‘.

Wir müssen nicht viel haben, um etwas geben zu können (vgl. Apg 11:28 ‚... entsprechend dem, was die Einzelnen in der Gemeinde erübrigen konnten‘). Wie viel Geld wir behalten und wie viel wir weggeben, bleibt unsere Entscheidung. Sie wird zeigen, wo unsere Prioritäten liegen – mehr als alle unsere Worte und unsere Selbsttäuschungsmanöver.

Bestimmen wir über Geld oder bestimmt das Geld, das wir haben (oder gerne hätten), über uns? Wie viele und welche unserer alltäglichen und

großen Entscheidungen sind (nur) davon abhängig, was wir uns finanziell leisten können? Können wir auf etwas verzichten, auch wenn wir das nötige Geld dafür hätten? Ansonsten ist Verzicht keine geistliche Tugend, sondern wirtschaftliche Notwendigkeit.

„Wes das Herz voll ist, des geht der Mund über“ (Lk 6:45). Wie und wie oft reden wir über Geld? Zeigt unser „Dienen“ deutlicher als unsere Worte, ob wir Gott oder dem Geld dienen?

Als der Augsburger pietistisch geprägte Pfarrer Samuel Urlsperger (1685-1772)⁵⁵ Mittel für soziale Zwecke sammelte, rief er in einer Predigt: „Heraus, heraus, ihr Kreuzerlein, der Herr Jesus will mit euch reden.“ Das ist bis heute so: Der Herr Jesus will auch mit den Pfunden, Dollars und Euros reden und sie für seine Sache einsetzen. Lassen wir das uns und unseren Kreuzerlein gefallen oder hat der Herr Jesus strenges Redeverbot? Oder, darf er gerne mit den Kreuzerlein reden, nicht aber mit den großen Scheinen?

Der Rat, den der lutherische Liederdichter Paul Gerhard (1607-1670) seinem 14-jährigen Sohn ins Testament schrieb, fordert bis heute heraus:

Meinem einzigen hinterlassenen Sohne überlasse ich von irdischen Gütern wenig, dabei aber einen ehrlichen Namen, dessen er sich sonderlich nicht wird zu schämen haben. ... Den Geiz fliehe als die Hölle, lass dir genügen an dem, was du mit Ehren und gutem Gewissen erworben hast, ob es gleich nicht allzu viel ist. Beschert dir aber der liebe Gott ein Mehreres, so bitt ihn, dass er dich vor dem leidigen Missbrauche des zeitlichen Gutes bewahren wolle.⁵⁶

Neben der Reflexion auf den persönlichen Umgang mit Geld geht es auch um Geld in Gemeinde und Mission. Christen, die von ihrer kulturellen Prägung her gelernt haben, dass man nicht über Geld spricht, müssen (neu) lernen, vom Geld angemessen zu reden. Es ist wahrlich nicht das einzige Thema, aber vom Neuen Testament her durchaus ein *legitimes* Thema, das angesprochen und über das systematisch gelehrt werden muss. In den letzten Jahren sind einige hilfreiche Anleitungen dazu erschienen.⁵⁷ Dabei wird im Neuen Testament deutlich, dass beim Thema Geld nicht nur Wohlhabende angesprochen sind und angesprochen werden müssen. Aus der antiochenischen Gemeinde sandte *ein jeder nach seinem Vermögen* eine Gabe nach Jerusalem (Apg 11:29).

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Notes

- 1 Sueton, *Vespasian*, 23; Cassius Dio 66.14.
- 2 Vgl. die Überblicke bei M. Ernst, P. Arzt-Grabner und T. Naumann, „Geld/Geldwirtschaft 3. Geld im Neuen Testament“ in F. Crüsemann *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 2009) 193-196; J. Kegler, „Geld“ in O. Betz (Hrsg.), *Calwer Bibellexikon* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 2003) 411-413; D.H. Wheaton und S. Mittmann, „Geld II. Im Neuen Testament“ in H. Burkhardt *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Das Große Bibellexikon 1* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus / Gießen: Brunnen, 1990) 432-434; sowie S. Alkier, „Geld im Neuen Testament: Der Beitrag der Numismatik zu einer Enzyklopädie des Frühen Christentums“ in S. Alkier und J. Zangenberg (Hrsg.), *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments* (TANZ 42; Tübingen: Francke, 2003) 308-385.
- 3 „Der Erhabene Caesar Tiberius, Sohn des göttlichen Augustus“ in Kegler, „Geld“, 412. „In den Augen eines frommen Juden war dies eine Gotteslästerung, und zugleich Symbol seiner Herrschaft. Dem setzt Jesus die Herrschaft Gottes entgegen.“
- 4 Vgl. R.H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 693-700.
- 5 Zum Geldwert vgl. Ernst u.a., „Geld“, 195.
- 6 „Das Neue Testament setzt die Geldwirtschaft des Hellenismus voraus. Geldformen und Geldfunktionen des römischen Imperiums sind geläufig“: M. Honecker, „Geld II. Historisch und ethisch“ in G. Müller *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 12 (Berlin, New York: W. de Gruyter, 1984) 278-298; vgl. ferner R. Bogaert, „Geld, Geldwirtschaft“ in G. Schöllgen (Hrsg.), *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 9 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1976) 797-907; und M. Crawford, „Geld, Geldwirtschaft III. Rom“ in H. Cancik *et al.* (Hrsg.), *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* 4 (Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 1998) 877-884.
- 7 Die Aussagen des Neuen Testaments zum Geld sind im größeren Zusammenhang von Armut, Armenfürsorge und Eigentum zu sehen; zur Armut vgl. D. Michel, „Armut II. Altes Testament“ in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979) 72-76; und L.E. Keck, „Armut III. Neues Testament“ in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979) 76-80; zum Eigentum J. Ebach, „Eigentum I. Altes Testament“ in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 9 (1982) 404-407; Z.W. Falk, „Eigentum II. Judentum“ in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 9 (1982) 407-410; M. Merkel, „Eigentum III. Neues Testament“ in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 9 (1982) 410-413; und E.

- Osborn, ‚Eigentum IV. Alte Kirche‘ in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 9 (1982) 414-417.
- 8 Vgl. E. Herrmann-Otto, ‚Reiche und Arme‘ in K. Scherberich (Hrsg.), *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur 2: Familie – Gesellschaft – Wirtschaft* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2005) 86-90; und S. Alkier, ‚Das Wirtschaftsleben‘ in Scherberich, *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur* 2, 181-186; sowie etwa C. Jochum-Bortfeld und R. Kessler, ‚Wirtschaftssystem‘ in Crüsemann, *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel*, 662-667; H. Kloft, *Die Wirtschaft des Imperium Romanum* (Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie: Sonderbände der Antiken Welt; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006); und H.-J. Drexhage, H. Konen und K. Ruffing, *Die Wirtschaft des Römischen Reiches (1.-3. Jh.): Eine Einführung* (Studienbücher: Geschichte und Kultur der alten Welt; Berlin: Akademie, 2002).
- 9 Vgl. J.M. Bassler, *God and Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991); und J. Blank, ‚Frauen in den Jesusüberlieferungen‘ in G. Dautzenberg et al. (Hrsg.), *Die Frau im Urchristentum* (QD 95; Freiburg: Herder, 1983) 9-91, 49-54.
- 10 Zu Geld in den Gleichnissen Jesu vgl. D. Cowan, *Economic Parables: The Monetary Teaching of Jesus Christ* (Colorado Springs, London, Hyderabad: Paternoster, 2007).
- 11 Zum Geldwert vgl. Ernst u.a., ‚Geld‘, 195
- 12 Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 282; dort auch zu dem Agraphon ‚Werdet kluge Wechsler‘: ‚Es ist vermutlich mit 1 Thess 5:21 zu verbinden und benutzt die Tätigkeit des Münzprüfers als Gleichnis mit paränetischer Zuspitzung für das Verhalten des Christen.‘
- 13 Vgl. P.W. van der Horst, ‚Mammon‘ in K. van der Toorn et al. (Hrsg.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2. Aufl. (Leiden: Brill / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 542-543: ‚Jesus seems to regard Mammon as an enslaving force or even as a god that one can serve. ... Here Mammon is personified as an evil and superhuman power that stands in competition to God and by possessing people can even keep them from being devoted to God and make them hate him‘; ‚Dem Mammon ... haftet als Macht eine dämonische Kraft an‘, Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 281. Zu atl. Warnungen vgl. B.S. Rosner, *Warum die wahren Reichen wenig Geld brauchen* (Gießen, Basel: Brunnen, 2007) 21.
- 14 Nach Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 283 erscheint bei den Römern die *Pecunia*, das personifizierte Geld, auch als eine abstrakte Göttin. Ich konnte diesen Hinweis nicht verifizieren.
- 15 Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 281.
- 16 Nach einer späteren Überlieferung wirft Jesus den Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäern vor, dass sie zum Schein lange Gebete (in der Öffentlichkeit) verrichten und gleichzeitig danach trachten, sich die Häuser der Witwen unter den Nagel zu reißen (Mt 23:14).
- 17 Zu Jesu Warnungen vor der Macht des Geldes vgl. auch T.E. Schmidt, *Hostility to Wealth in the Synoptic Gospels* (JSNTSS 15; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); und H. Schröder, *Jesus und das Geld: Wirtschaftskommentar zum Neuen Testament*, 3. Aufl. (Karlsruhe: Verlag der Gesellschaft für Kulturhistorische Dokumentation, 1981).
- 18 Vgl. Rosner, *Die wahren Reichen*; B.S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); und B.S. Rosner, ‚Habsucht – Eine vergessene Sünde‘ in *Theologische Beiträge* 31 (2000) 75-81.
- 19 Vgl. Van der Horst, ‚Mammon‘ und K.S. Frank, ‚Habsucht‘ in Schöllgen, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 13 (1986) 226-247.
- 20 Vgl. J. Adna, *Jerusalem Tempel und Tempelmarkt im 1. Jh. v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993); ders., *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel: Die Tempelaktion und das Tempelwort als Ausdruck seiner messianischen Sendung* (WUNT II.119; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); und C. Metzendorf, *Die Tempelaktion Jesu: Patristische und historisch-kritische Exegese im Vergleich* (WUNT II.168; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).
- 21 Vgl. C.W. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT II.108; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999) 197-200.
- 22 Vgl. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait*, 227-230.
- 23 Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait*, 356-359.
- 24 Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait*, 361-366.
- 25 Vgl. W. Goetz, ‚Simonie‘ in H. D. Betz et al. (Hrsg.), *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 7, 4. Aufl. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 1328-1329.
- 26 Zur Verwendung/Verwaltung der Gelder der Jerusalemer Urgemeinde im Rahmen der Armenfürsorge soll die Gemeinde selbst Männer mit gutem Ruf und voll Heiligen Geistes und Weisheit bestimmen (Apg 6:3).
- 27 Vgl. V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Anchor Bible; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984) 506-509; P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT II.23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987); und R.F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).
- 28 Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 281.
- 29 Vgl. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait*, 57-58.
- 30 Dabei weiß das Neue Testament auch, dass man peinlich genau mit seinem Besitz umgehen kann, etwa indem man selbst die Gartenkräuter verzehntet, und trotzdem das Wichtigste im Gesetz beiseite lässt, nämlich das Recht, die Barmherzigkeit und den Glauben (Mt 23:23).
- 31 Zum Geldwert vgl. Ernst u.a., ‚Geld‘, 195.
- 32 Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 282.

- 33 Vgl. C. Schäfer-Lichtenberger und L. Schottroff, 'Armut' in Crüsemann, *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel*, 22-26; M. Brocke, 'Armenfürsorge I. Judentum' in Müller, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979) 10-14; W.D. Hauschild, 'Armenfürsorge II. Alte Kirche' in Müller, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979) 14-23; und M. Hengel, *Eigentum und Reichtum in der frühen Kirche*, calwer paperback (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1973), auch in M. Hengel, *Studien zum Urchristentum. Kleine Schriften VI*, Hrsg. C.-J. Thornton (WUNT 234; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 353-423. Bei der Armenfürsorge und anderen Ausgaben ist die primäre Verantwortung für die eigenen Angehörigen zu bedenken: 'Wenn aber jemand die Seinen, besonders seine Hausgenossen, nicht versorgt, hat er den Glauben verleugnet und ist schlimmer als ein Heide' (1 Tim 5:8). Ferner hat Jesus scharf kritisiert, wenn Leute die Versorgung, die den alten Eltern zuteil werden sollte, unter der *Korban*-Regel für andere Zwecke gespendet haben (Mk 7:11): 'Korban ... leitet im frühen Judentum die in Mk 7:11 zitierte Gelöbnisformel für Weihgeschenke ein. Mit dieser Formel konnte man den Tempel zum alleinigen Erben seines Besitzes einsetzen. Das Eigentum, das mit „Korban“ Gott geweiht war, durfte nicht mehr verkauft werden; doch hatte der Besitzer bis zu seinem Tod das Nutznießungsrecht' (Sacherkklärungen Luther Übersetzung 1984); vgl. O. Betz, 'Korban' in Betz, *Calwer Bibellexikon*, 757. Im Gegensatz dazu stand die nach anfänglichen Schwierigkeiten vorbildliche Witwenversorgung der Jerusalemer Gemeinde (Apg 6:1-7).
- 34 Damit verzichten die Spender darauf, das Geld nach eigenem Gutdünken zu verteilen. Über den Kreis der Apostel hinaus sind die Geber wahrscheinlich unbekannt geblieben. Sie verzichten darauf, durch eigene Gaben zu beeindrucken oder Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse im Rahmen antiker Patron-Klienten-Beziehungen zu schaffen. Paulus betont, dass die Christen Mazedoniens sich *in aller Einfalt* an der Kollektenaktion beteiligt haben – ohne Hintergedanken. Zudem vertrauen sie darauf, dass die Apostel das Geld richtig verwalten und verteilen werden.
- 35 Vgl. I. Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 31-69; und L.A. Brown, 'Tabitha' in C. Meyers et al. (Hrsg.), *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books and in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 159-160.
- 36 Vgl. C.R. Little, *Mission in the Way of Paul: Biblical Mission for the Church in the Twenty-First Century* (Studies in Biblical Literature 80; New York etc.: Peter Lang, 2005) 138-147.
- 37 Vgl. B.W. Winter, 'Acts and Food Shortages' in D.W.J. Gill & C. Gempf (Hrsg.), *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (AFCS 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans / Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994) 59-78.
- 38 Vgl. R.W. Gehring, *Hausgemeinde und Mission: Die Bedeutung antiker Häuser und Hausgemeinden von Jesus bis Paulus* (BWM 9; Gießen: Brunnen, 2000).
- 39 Vgl. K. Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* 3. Aufl. (ThHK 6; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006) 300-303; S. Krauter, *Studien zu Römer 13.1-7: Paulus und der politische Diskurs der neronischen Zeit* (WUNT 243, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); und M. Alpers, 'Das römische Steuer- und Finanzwesen im 1. Jh. n. Chr.' in Scherberich (Hrsg.), *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur* 2, 178-181.
- 40 Vgl. J.P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (WUNT II.159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 178-213 ('Providing for the Gospel: Mission-Commitment as Financial Assistance'); vgl. meinen Rezensionenartikel in *European Journal of Theology* 15 (2006) 125-134.
- 41 Zur Kollekte vgl. Little, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 147-170; D.J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem and Its Chronological, Cultural and Cultic Contexts* (WUNT II.248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); K. Vellguth, *Kirche und Fundraising: Neue Wege einer zukunfts-fähigen Kirchenfinanzierung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007) 41-102; und U. Beyer, *Überfluss und Mangel: Die erste ökumenische Sammlung der Christenheit* (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 2009). An keiner Stelle im Neuen Testament wird die spätere materielle Not der Jerusalemer Gemeinde mit der Gütergemeinschaft in Apg 2:44-47 und 4:32-5:11 in Verbindung gebracht.
- 42 Obwohl sich Paulus im Zusammenhang mit der Kollekte enorm rhetorisch engagiert, bleibt durchweg die Freiwilligkeit der Beteiligung gewahrt. Auch zur Höhe der Beteiligung macht Paulus keine Angaben.
- 43 Wohl auch wegen dieser Motivation werden die gesammelten Gelder von Paulus und einer Delegation von Gemeindegesandten begleitet und sicher auch vor Ort erläutert (Apg 20:4).
- 44 Zu den Gegnern des Paulus vgl. S.E. Porter (Hrsg.), *Paul and His Opponents* (PAST 2; Leiden: Brill, 2005) und J.L. Sumney, 'Servants of Satan', 'False Brothers' and Other Opponents of Paul (JSNT.S 188; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). Erklären die im Römerbrief geäußerten Zweifel an der Annahme und die hier skizzierte Situation, warum Paulus zunächst die Gelder mit Briefen durch Gemeindegesandte nach Jerusalem schicken mochte (1 Kor 16:3-4), später aber definitiv selbst nach Jerusalem aufbricht, auch wenn dies mit

- Lebensgefahr verbunden ist; so seine andere Bitte: ‚damit ich errettet werde von den Ungläubigen in Judäa‘ (Röm 15:31)?
- 45 Vgl. knapp bei Haacker, *An die Römer*, 9-10.
- 46 Im Neuen Testament ist nicht erkennbar, ob die Gabe in Jerusalem angenommen wurde. Das Schweigen erklärt sich leichter mit einer Ablehnung der Spende als mit deren Annahme. Dies zu berichten, hätte sich die Apostelgeschichte kaum entgehen lassen.
- 47 Vgl. Hengel, *Eigentum und Reichtum*.
- 48 Im Neuen Testament werden eine ganze Reihe unterschiedlicher Berufe erwähnt, z. B. Ärzte, Bauern, Bauhandwerker, Fischer, Fernhändler, Gerber, Handwerker, Händler, Hirten, Kaufleute, Magier, Pförtner, Schnitter, Silberschmiede, Soldaten, Speisemeister, Steuereinnahmer, Verwalter, Zeltmacher; vgl. J. Kegler und U.E. Eisen, ‚Beruf‘ in Crüsemann, *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel*; und dieselben, ‚Verfemte Berufe‘ in Crüsemann, *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel*, 602-604; P. Herz, ‚Die Arbeitswelt‘ und ‚Erwerbsmöglichkeiten‘ in Scherberich, *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur* 2, 186-189, 190-198; und H.F. Stander, ‚Arts and Crafts II. New Testament‘ in H.-J. Klauck et al. (Hrsg.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009) 867-870. Die Gleichnisse Jesu bieten interessante Einblicke in die wirtschaftliche Situation in Galiläa im 1. Jh. n. Chr., vgl. W. Bösen, *Galiläa als Lebensraum und Wirkungsfeld Jesu: Eine zeitgeschichtliche und theologische Untersuchung*, 2. Aufl. (Freiburg: Herder, 1990) 189-200.
- 49 Dass Arbeit und entlohnter Arbeit nicht immer Erfolg beschieden ist, zeigt sich im Schicksal einer kranken Frau (Mk 5:25-34), ‚die hatte Blutfluss sein zwölf Jahren und hatte viel erlitten von vielen Ärzten und all ihr Gut dafür aufgewandt; und es hatte ihr nichts geholfen, sondern es war noch schlimmer mit ihr geworden‘.
- 50 Das Gleichnis berichtet auch von anderen, die sich erst im Laufe des Tages auf dem Markt einfanden. Sind sie dann erstmalig gekommen, oder waren sie mit anderen Arbeiten bereits fertig?
- 51 Vgl. den Überblick über ‚Economic Aspects of Paul’s Life‘ bei Little, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 26-46. Paulus betont seine Handarbeit. Dies steht im direkten Gegensatz zur Einschätzung von (Hand)Arbeit durch die hellenistische Oberschicht; vgl. F. Hauck, ‚Arbeit A. Nichtchristlich‘ in Schöllgen, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 1 (1950) 585-590; und Stenschke, *Luke’s Portrait*, 358.
- 52 Honecker, ‚Geld‘, 282.
- 53 Rosner, *Die wahren Reichen*, 21-22.
- 54 Zum Geldwert vgl. Ernst u.a., ‚Geld‘, 195.
- 55 Vgl. H. Weigelt, ‚Urlisperger, 1. Samuel‘ in H.D. Betz et al. (Hrsg.), *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 8, 4. Aufl. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 831-832; und A. Kloes, ‚Four calls for religious reforms in the 1780s: Urlisperger, Joseph II of Austria, Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia‘, *European Journal of Theology* 21.2 (2012) 148-155.
- 56 M. Rößler, *Liedermacher im Gesangbuch: Liedgeschichte in Lebensbildern* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 2001) 468.
- 57 Vgl. etwa Vellguth, *Kirche und Fundraising*; H.H. Pompe, *Gerne geben: Mit Humor zu Kollekten und Spenden motivieren* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Ausaat, 2007); so wie A.E. Schnepfer und A.A. Junge, *Geld für Gott: Das Fundraising-Buch für Kirche und Gemeinde* (Witten: R. Brockhaus / SCM, 2008).

Lifting the Curse: Reflections on Retribution and Restoration

Gordon Leah

SUMMARY

In cursing the fig-tree, Jesus expresses anger at Israel's failure in its devotion to God. This follows God's original curse after Adam and Eve's freewill disobedience, which extends through Cain and subsequent history. Contrastingly, the Greeks attributed the curse demonstrated in their drama to supernatural forces which work retribu-

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Jesus verflucht den Feigenbaum und bringt dadurch seinen Ärger über Israels Versagen zum Ausdruck, wenn es um dessen Hingabe an Gott geht. Dies steht in einer Linie mit Gottes ursprünglichem Fluch, der Adams und Evas selbstgewähltem Ungehorsam folgt und sich durch Kain und die spätere Geschichte hindurch fortpflanzt. Im Gegensatz dazu führen die Griechen den Fluch, wie er in ihren Dramen thematisiert wird, auf übernatürliche Kräfte zurück, die durch die menschliche Natur im Sinne von

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RÉSUMÉ

En maudissant le figuier, Jésus voulait exprimer sa colère à l'égard de l'infidélité d'Israël envers Dieu. Cette malédiction s'inscrit dans la ligne de celle que Dieu a prononcée suite à la désobéissance volontaire d'Adam et d'Ève et qui a trouvé ses prolongements dans la vie de Caïn et dans l'histoire subséquente. Contrairement à cette conception, les Grecs attribuaient les malédictions à des forces surnaturelles opérant la rétribution dans la nature humaine tout en étant hors de portée d'un contrôle

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Introduction: The fig-tree

Jesus is hungry as he returns to the temple in Jerusalem that he had visited the day before. He sees a fig-tree that has nothing on it but leaves. When, according to Matthew, he says, 'May you never bear fruit again', the fig-tree immediately withers (Mt 21:18-22).¹ The original account in

tively through human nature, but beyond human control. The curse can be lifted through God's grace operating, despite the curse, from Adam's time throughout Old Testament history and fulfilled in Christ's love shown in forgiveness for inbred sin through his death and resurrection, enabling humankind to abandon retribution and to experience restoration to new life.

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Vergeltung am Werk sind, sich aber jenseits menschlicher Kontrolle befinden. Der Fluch kann durch Gottes Gnade aufgehoben werden, die nichtsdestotrotz seit Adams Zeiten an durch die Geschichte des Alten Testaments hindurch am Werk ist. Diese Gnade erfüllt sich in der Liebe Christi, die in der Vergebung der innewohnenden Sünde durch seinen Tod und seine Auferstehung sichtbar wird. Die Liebe Christi befähigt die Menschheit, von Vergeltung abzulassen und Wiederherstellung zu erfahren, die zu neuem Leben führt.

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humain, comme cela apparaît dans leurs pièces de théâtre. Selon l'Écriture, la malédiction peut être levée en vertu de la grâce divine qui est opérante, en dépit de la malédiction, depuis l'époque d'Adam et tout au long de l'histoire couverte par l'Ancien Testament. Cette grâce découle de l'amour de Christ manifesté, en vertu de sa mort et de sa résurrection, par le pardon du péché inné en l'homme. Elle rend ensuite l'humanité capable d'abandonner la rétribution et d'expérimenter la restauration par une vie nouvelle.

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Mark's Gospel has Jesus saying the same thing to the tree and returning the next day to find that it has withered. At this point his disciples believe that Jesus has cursed the tree (Mk 11:12-14, 20-21).

Jesus has already visited the temple and ejected those who were trading there. While in both gospels the cursing of the fig-tree occurs after the

incident in the temple, in Mark the clearing of the temple is sandwiched between the moment of cursing and the following day's discovery by the disciples that the tree has withered. Both gospels offer the same sequence of events, but there are some differences in emphasis in the actions and words of Jesus.

My intention in this article is to examine the importance of the curse not only in this incident but through the Old Testament and in literature written before the coming of Christ, and to suggest how Jesus lifts the curse of vengeance and retribution.

The failure of Israel

The cursing and withering of the fig-tree have given rise to many different reactions, among them the serious doubt whether Jesus would ever have wanted the fig-tree to be cursed to bear no more fruit. The feeling of sceptics is: why blame the fig-tree when 'it wasn't yet time for figs; surely Jesus was being petty and petulant, cursing the tree for doing what fig-trees always do, putting out leaves in the spring, but not yet bearing fruit'?² But many agree that the incident is inextricably linked with the cleansing of the temple and with Jesus' condemnation of the traders and money-changers. One commentator points out that 'since Mark's custom is faithfully to report what he received and to tell stories as they happened, ... we are justified ... in seeing in its starkness and destructiveness a solemn warning of what was in fact to happen in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70'.³ When Jesus, on leaving the temple, is recorded by Mark as saying 'Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down' (Mk 13:2), it is as if our Lord is making a factual statement about the future, as well as a judgement on Israel's past and present. Dennis E. Nineham also makes the point that the fate of the fig-tree symbolises the fate awaiting Jerusalem and the Jewish people and religion. 'Like the fig-tree with its leaves, the Jewish people made a fine show with their numerous ceremonies and outward observances, but when the Messiah came looking for the fruit of righteousness he found none, and the result was condemnation and destruction for Judaism, as it was for the tree'.⁴

According to Alan Cole, 'this withering of the tree is only a perpetuation of its present fruitless condition'. Extending the withering of the fig-tree to the withering of the temple as a symbol of the

fruitless religion of Israel, Cole says that 'henceforth Israel was to be withered and fruitless; the physical judgement of AD 70 was only an outward sign of this'.⁵ Recalling the words of Jesus in quoting from Isaiah 56:7, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations', Cole says that for Jesus 'the supreme blasphemy was that this place, which was to have been in God's purpose a place of prayer for non-Jewish people of every nation, instead of being an exclusively Jewish national sanctuary, should have become a business-house, and for dishonest business at that'.⁶

While the emphasis in Mark has been shown to be on the importance of taking the news of salvation to the Gentiles, Matthew does not forget the mission to the Jews. Stanley Hauerwas points out that 'Jesus' cleansing of the temple is not a rejection of the significance of the temple, rather it is an indication of its importance'. He continues:

The God of Israel, the God worshipped in the temple, is the same God who is the Father of Jesus, the Son. The people of Israel, the Jews, can never be 'left behind' because if they are left behind Christians discover that we can make no sense of Jesus.⁷

The people of Israel have had to learn their lesson and heed the warning. This is expressed strongly by Tom Wright when he considers the significance of Jesus' words on faith, visualising Jesus standing next to the mountain on which the temple stands and comparing the fate of the temple with that of the mountain which is thrown into the sea. The promise to the disciples, he says,

is not a general comment about the power of prayer to do extraordinary things. ... The promise is far more focused than that. Saying to 'this mountain' that it should be 'lifted up and thrown into the sea' when you are standing right beside the temple mountain, was bound to be taken as another coded warning about what would happen to the temple as God's judgment fell upon his rebellious people.⁸

Such a warning certainly would increase the hostility of the authorities towards Jesus.

The warning to the Jews of their failure to live up to Jesus' mission to them has already been signalled in our Lord's commission to his disciples to go to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt 10:5-6) and in his encounter with the Canaanite woman when he tells her that his mission is 'only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel', though it is very probable that she is able to remind him of

the needs of those other than the people of Israel (Mt 15:24). Both Mark and Matthew record that at the time of the visit to the temple, Jesus tells a parable about tenants who kill the son of the owner of the vineyard in their desperate attempt to get control of the vineyard. The strong implication is that the words Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22-23, that 'the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone', are a direct reference to the forthcoming rejection of Jesus by the Jews at whom his mission was originally directed (Mt 21:42; Mk 11:10). Matthew has a further brief parable at this point telling of two sons, one of whom rejects his father's commission to work in the vineyard, but then accepts, whereas the second does the exact opposite, indicating the failure of the Israelite people to carry out the covenant they had previously made with God (Mt 21:28-31). Matthew's later parable of the wedding banquet further illustrates the way in which the favoured people fail to live up to the privilege of their invitation into the Kingdom: 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come' (Mt 22:8). So the unlikeliest people are now invited. As had been said just previously, 'I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God ahead of you' (Mt 21:31). Such warnings fuel the authorities' resentment even further.

The curse in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the images of the withered vine and the fig-tree have signalled the failure of the people to fulfil the covenant and the promise to serve their God faithfully. Jeremiah says:

I will take away their harvest, declares the Lord,
There will be no grapes on the vine,
There will be no figs on the tree,
And their leaves will wither (Jer 8:13)

Later in Jeremiah, the prophet utters the dire prophecy of the Lord as follows: 'I will send the sword, famine and plague against them and I will make them like poor figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten' (Jer 29:17). Morna Hooker draws our attention to three more important Old Testament references in which God is shown as looking in vain for the early figs and the prophet expresses intense disappointment at the results:⁹

When I found Israel,
it was like finding grapes in the desert;
when I saw your fathers,

it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig-tree,
But when they came to Baar Peor,
They consecrated themselves to that shameful
idol
And became as vile as the thing they loved.
(Hos 9:10)

and just a few verses later:

Ephraim is blighted,
Their root is withered,
They yield no fruit. (Hos 9:16)

In Micah, Israel's misery is reflected as follows:

What misery is mine!
I am like one who gathers summer fruit
at the gleaning of the vineyard;
there is no cluster of grapes to eat,
none of the early figs that I crave. (Mic 7:1)

In Habakkuk, the prophet praises the Lord despite the state of the nation, as he admits,

though the fig-tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines... (Hab 3:17)

Jonah, nursing his grievance that God has forgiven the citizens of Nineveh, is more concerned that the vine under which he is sheltering has withered than he is about the fate of Nineveh. When the Lord says to him: 'Should I not be concerned about that great city?', he is telling Jonah that the mission of believers should be opened up to those whom we have neglected, distrusted or ignored (Jon 4:11). The message is that the people of Israel must enlarge their sympathies which have become withered and decayed.

While at the time of Jesus' dealings in the temple Jesus links the curse with the withering of the fig-tree, God's curse played a significant part in the early history of the human race as recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis. Because of his disobedience in succumbing to Eve, Adam becomes a victim of the curse that will pursue him throughout his life.

Cursed is the ground because of you;
Through painful toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life. (Gen 3:17)

According to Henri Blocher, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden 'represents ingratitude and rebellion against God's provision, the absurd pretension to abolish dependence and the disastrous misuse of the privilege of being accountable to God.'¹⁰ Blocher sees this as a deliberate, moral 'breaking of the cov-

enant' that God has given to Adam which 'defines ... both the generosity of the Lord and the duties he imposes' (Gen 2:15),¹¹ following the Lord's provision of the paradise of Eden and his call to Adam to cultivate it. Though one could assert that God had presumably created in Adam the free will to reject his call, the decision to do so lies at Adam's door; the consequence of the chain effect of the wiles of the manipulative serpent and Eve's surrender to temptation. Thus Adam is banished from the Garden of Eden 'to work the ground from which he had been taken' (Gen 3:23).

In the history of Cain and Abel, it is Cain who perpetuates the curse, following in Adam's footsteps as the tiller of the soil. When Abel keeps his flocks and Cain tills the soil, Cain kills his brother from jealousy. Before the murder, Cain has been clearly warned by the Lord of the difference between the right and the wrong course of action: 'If you do what is right will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you, but you must master it' (Gen 4:7) – a warning that Cain deliberately ignores. His jealousy seems to have arisen because the Lord favours Abel's offering of fat portions of his flocks as against Cain's mere offering of soil. No other reason is suggested there than the Lord's greater pleasure in Abel's offering, which enrages Cain. In Hebrews 4:11, a reason is given, namely that 'By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did.' When Cain kills his brother, he is told:

Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. (Gen 4:10-11).

By his deliberate choice Cain has brought the curse on himself.

In its full statement of the Law, Deuteronomy has it that a person is cursed for an entire series of moral infringements which are listed. These acts are entirely the fault of the individual caused through their own humanity and waywardness (Deut 27:15-26), but they have already been prefaced by the statement that 'anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse' (Deut 21:23), the punishment supposedly representing God's response to moral failure. This is echoed centuries later in the letter to the Galatians, which will be considered later.

The Greeks and the curse

What is already emerging is a dual pattern. On the one hand, the curse seems to cling inexorably to successive generations of the chosen people who appear to be almost destined to fall into sin; but on the other hand it is clear that these lapses are caused through their own fault, their personal failings of jealousy, greed or lust. This pattern finds its parallel in the most important literature of the time before the birth of Christ, the Greek tragedies, from whose works a few examples will be drawn.

One classical scholar, Charles Seltman, considering forces outside human control, distinguishes between sin and guilt when he writes:

Clearly the only sin was to commit a personal offence against a divinity. As for guilt, like the guilt of Oedipus or of Orestes, that was altogether a different matter; it had been put upon you by a Fate beyond the gods, and there was nothing for it but to be purified by a god. It was dire misfortune, but no fault of yours.¹²

This view is supported by the theologian John Austin Baker who writes: 'Here the idea of Destiny as the ultimate ruler comes into play. Neither are the gods exempt from Fate themselves, nor are they able to deliver their protégés.'¹³ However, in Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, Oedipus himself in his long speech when he is confronted with the truth of his murder of his father both admits his responsibility, 'On me is the curse that none but I have laid', and yet almost immediately places the blame on a god elsewhere:

Can it be any but some monstrous god
Of evil that has sent this doom upon me?¹⁴

This sin against a god as his personal responsibility is confirmed later when he says to the chorus:

Apollo, friends, Apollo
Has laid this agony upon me;
Not by his hand; I did it.¹⁵

This is confirmed a little later when he accepts full responsibility for his crime. He says to the chorus:

Touch me, and have no fear. On no man else
But on me alone is the scourge of my punishment.¹⁶

However, in his conversation with the chorus in *Oedipus at Colonus* he denies responsibility: 'Nothing was of my choosing'¹⁷ and he justifies his action:

He whom I killed

Had sought to kill me first.¹⁸

And he attributes this to 'an ancient grudge against our house', saying:

... if my father was foredoomed

By the voice of heaven to die by his own son's hand,

How can you justly cast it against me,

Who was still unborn when the decree was spoken?¹⁹

This brings us back to Seltman's contention that there is a higher, supernatural power, 'a fate beyond the gods' whom one can never overcome.

The attribution of responsibility to sources outside oneself is found elsewhere in Greek tragedy. In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Phaedra blames her mother for her own shameful passion for her stepson, Hippolytus, which rages within her and also destroys her sister, refusing to accept responsibility for her own feelings: 'I believe that such misfortune does not arise from inborn folly, since often those who suffer are wise and good.'²⁰ In *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra even blames their daughter, Iphigenia, who, she says, causes the death of Agamemnon and Cassandra although it is Agamemnon who murders his own daughter, Iphigenia:

That Fury,

She steered the blade

Through Agamemnon,

Not I. Not my hand.

The hand of our daughter

Iphigenia

Steadied the hand

Of that Fury.²¹

Clytemnestra has just highlighted 'The curse, the hideous/ Heritage/of the house of Atreus' that had been clinging to generations of the family, thus shifting the responsibility even further back than the innocent Iphigenia. Aegisthus, her lover, in the final scene of the play narrates the full history of the feud in the house of Atreus, a seemingly unbreakable chain of evil extending through generations. Once Clytemnestra has had her revenge on her husband, she tries to call a halt to the slaughter: 'Stop. Stop./The killing is over.'²² But we know that she in turn is killed by her son, Orestes, in *Choephori*. However, in the third play of the trilogy, *The Eumenides*, the goddess Athene, speaking with the reasonableness of Athenian values, heals the situation and banishes the curse through sweet reason and the force of argument:

The sacred power of persuasion

That makes calm the storm in the body,

The presence of God in persuasion

Draws the poison fangs of evil...²³

The exercise of the power of reason may be convincing to a certain degree, but does not, I believe, meet the deep and powerful emotions that urge human beings to exact vengeance on those who, they believe, have wronged them. In the final scene of *Choephori*, the chorus, having summarised the course of the chain of evil cause and effect thus far, ask the all-important questions:

Can the poor, scorched brains of Orestes

Figure out all the factors? Can he solve

The arithmetic of the unfinished

That shunts this curse from one generation to the next?

Who can bring it to an end?

When can it be brought to an end?

How can it be brought to an end?²⁴

Sow and reap

While in light of the coming of Christ a greater answer has been made available, at this stage in the experience and thought of the Greeks, at least willpower is needed to achieve what reason cannot. It is clear that, had Oedipus controlled his temper when confronted by the brutality of Laius, his father, on the road, he would not have murdered him. Similarly, Cain has only to control his jealousy and temper to prevent the death of his brother. In the final play of Sophocles' trilogy, *Antigone*, the blind Teiresias summarises the situation even before the final tragedies have occurred:

You cannot alter this. The gods themselves

Cannot undo it. It follows of necessity

From what you have done.²⁵

Evil consequences arise from our human actions and even higher powers cannot change the course of events. When one considers that, as H.D.F. Kitto says, 'To requite one's foes with harm was normal Greek ethics',²⁶ the problem is rather removed from the jurisdiction of the gods. Kitto further says, this time in relation to Creon in *Antigone*:

The gods are angry with Creon, their Erinyes will punish him; yet the punishment ... descends on Creon as it were automatically, out of what he himself has done. The gods are not direct-

ing events from the outside; they work *in* the events.²⁷

Hence, while the responsibility lies with the individual for the freewill decision to respond in kind, the Greeks see the ultimate cause to be in the hands of the gods who have implanted such desires in the hearts of their protagonists.

When we return to the Scriptures, we find that they too give warnings of human responsibility for events, but the responsibility for evil acts is placed firmly within the hearts of humankind following the freewill decisions recorded in Genesis. Job is warned by one of his three friends, Eliphaz:

As I have observed, those who plough evil
And those who sow trouble reap it. (Job 4:8)

And this is reiterated in Proverbs:

He who sows wickedness reaps trouble,
And the rod of his fury will be destroyed. (Prov 22:8)

In the New Testament Paul expresses the same thought when he writes:

Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked.
A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows
to please his sinful nature, from that nature will
reap destruction. (Gal 6:7)

In that most popular of morality tales, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the ghost of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's partner who had died seven years previously that Christmas Eve and who now appears to him in chains, tells Scrooge that he, Marley, also reaped what he had sown: 'I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.'²⁸ This is reiterated later in the story by Scrooge's nephew when, accompanied by the Ghost of Christmas Present, Scrooge overhears the comment about himself: 'His offences carry their own punishment.'²⁹

The conclusion that our actions result directly from our own failures brings us back to the fig-tree in another brief allusion in Proverbs: 'He who tends a fig-tree will eat its fruit' (Prov 27:18). We must bear the consequences of our actions. The same spirit of divine retribution is expressed in 1 Corinthians: 'Don't you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him' (1 Cor 3:16-17).

There is a law of cause and effect which means that a person's actions have automatic consequences. In Blocher's words when he reviews the

curse on Adam, humanity 'turns a garden into a desert'.³⁰ This is a foretaste of the response of Jesus in cursing the fig-tree that represents the history of Israel's persistent faithlessness and failure despite God's love and purpose for the nation. The ultimate responsibility for the evil lies in the human psyche, as, when recording the words of Jesus, the down-to-earth Mark argues:

What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean'. For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'. (Mk 7:20-23)

What arises out of this consideration of the relative importance of the curse of fate and human responsibility is the realisation that, while the characters involved in the chain of cause and effect see themselves as victims of the build-up of inescapable generational conflict, in biblical terms the choice lies within themselves. The chain of cause and effect can be broken by an exercise of will-power over the forces raging within us.

Lifting the curse

The Greeks saw an inscrutable fate that presided over and intervened in human fortunes, controlling human responses. Christians, while holding that behaviour is dependant on an exercise of free will, also believe that the 'curse' can be lifted by divine forces that do not depend on human responses for their fulfilment. In other words, God can act on the events in question and change the entire emphasis from the negative one of retribution to the positive course of restoration.

If we now return to Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, we find that, despite their disobedience and the suffering that Eve will endure in child-bearing, 'the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them' (Gen 3:21). God allows his children his protection and he ensures their preservation, but they continue in a limbo, in what Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes as 'twilight', a state between good and evil, wanting life yet held in a spiritual death, 'beyond God's good'.³¹ Earlier in the same work Bonhoeffer has said:

In this fate under the curse ... humankind is given the promise of victory, a victory that has to be fought for and has to be won again and

again, but one in which it tramples the serpent's head underfoot. To be sure, this battle leaves humankind wounded, for the serpent, though defeated, still bites it in the heel. ... It is this sort of battle, which humankind takes upon itself as curse and as promise and in which it fights to the end, that it is allowed to live.³²

In the final analysis God is unable to cease to be a God of love: he will always allow his children, even though he is angry with them, a possible way through with his protection. After Cain has slain his brother, he comes under God's curse and fears that he will be driven from the land as a punishment to become 'a restless wanderer on the face of the earth'. Yet 'the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no-one who found him would kill him' even though they would know and recognise him (Gen 4:13-15). Noah and his family, despite the faithlessness of their race, are given the Lord's protection from the Flood in the covenant, the sign of which is the rainbow, a recurring symbol of God's presence and favour towards Noah (Gen 9:12-16). The promise of God's favour as a prospect for the faithful is expressed later in Micah when, as an echo of Jonah's attempt to find shelter under his vine, Micah tells of God's blessing when 'the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established' (Mic 4:1). A few verses later he says:

Every man will sit under his own vine
and under his own fig-tree,
and no-one will make them afraid,
for the Lord Almighty has spoken. (Mic 4:4)

The complete picture is that of an enormous coin, one side of which depicts God's anger with disobedience and our failure to live up to his standards, while the other side depicts his mercy which, while he knows our persistent frailty, refuses to abandon his creation.

A prime example of the Lord's grace to the penitent is found in David's confession after his heinous crime in sending Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, out into the front line to his certain death:

Have mercy on me, O God,
According to your unfailing love;
According to your great compassion
Blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
And done evil in your sight. (Ps 51:1-4)

Such is the depth of David's remorse and acknowledgement of his sin that he is restored to the Lord's great love and purpose for him. This grace anticipates the saving, sacrificial love of Christ through the cross and also clearly defines what we have already seen in God's promise to cover and protect Adam and his descendants.

In the clearing of the temple and the withering of the fig-tree Jesus shows his anger with Israel. In Luke's parable of the vine grower and the man who looks after the vineyard for him, a fig-tree appears as well. This fig-tree is constantly unfruitful and the owner wants to cut it down, but the other man pleads for him to allow the tree just one more year to give it the chance to make amends and bear fruit. 'If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down' (Lk 13:9). Who knows how many more chances the man would have allowed the fig-tree in his refusal to give up on it? And while in Mark and Matthew Jesus is displeased with the evidence that there are no figs but only leaves on the tree that he curses, both evangelists use the leaves of the fig-tree in a positive context later when looking ahead to the future of the Kingdom of God: 'Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near' (Mk 13:28; Mt 24:32).

While it is clear that God provides a redemptive antidote to the poison of the curse, it is also important to see the response that his people are commanded to make.

We are not to be merely passive, though grateful recipients of his promises and grace, but to make a definite, clear response of obedience to his commands. As early as Leviticus, the command is clear:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly, so that you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord. (Lev 19:17-18)

This is echoed with the full authority of the life and character of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when our Lord says:

You have heard that it was said 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (Mt 5:43-44)

Not only are we commanded to avoid revenge, but also to make the positive move of love towards

those who would harm us, to go the extra mile, to turn the other cheek. Stanley Hauerwas extends these injunctions from the personal to the wider context of the political struggles between groups and nations, emphasizing the very topical importance of applying the teachings of the Lord to the relationships between factions and religious groups today:

If we do not learn to forgive then we will not be forgiven, we will not be part of the ... new people brought into existence by Jesus. To forgive and to be forgiven is not some crude exchange bargain to 'get on with life', but rather to participate in a political alternative that ends our attempts to secure our existence through violence.³³

But we are not only called upon to make the monumental effort to cease from violence and to forgive what may in the past have seemed to be unforgiveable. There has to be a process of dying to the past and being resurrected to new life so that the past is extinguished. As Jesus is recorded as saying in some vivid images:

No-one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins. (Mk 2:21-22)

This renewal can only be found in a complete break with the past: our tendency simply to attempt to patch up broken relationships and situations is not sufficiently radical and will fail. When at the trial of Jesus, the people say that they are prepared to 'let his blood be on us and on our children' (Mt 27:25), our Lord's answer from the cross is: 'Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' (Lk 23:34). When Jesus forgives those who crucify him, he is offering the same forgiveness to us and all people, for without his forgiveness all our efforts to reverse the curse of retribution will be of no effect. We must repent, receive forgiveness when our past and our failings are cancelled, and then we can make a new start.

Jesus forgives us, when the authorities, rather than stoning him to death as was the normal punishment in such cases, want him crucified in what was the cruellest death of all, not simply to kill him, but to fulfil the words in Deuteronomy 21:23 that anyone who is hanged on a tree is accursed. John

Austin Baker suggests the reasons why the authorities wanted Jesus crucified rather than stoned:

... their most probable motive is to be found in the declaration in the Jewish Law, that everyone who is hanged (a term taken at this period to include crucifixion) is accursed of God (Deut 21:23). They wanted to make it clear to everyone for all time that this man's teaching and pretensions were utterly rejected by God.³⁴

To all appearances, the death of Christ must have been for the disciples a total failure and defeat, even a curse visited upon their new faith. It must have seemed ironical to the disciples that he who had cursed the failure of the nation of Israel should now be sharing the same curse. Paul emphasizes this in Galatians when, in transforming the reference in Deuteronomy 21:23 that 'cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree', he sees Christ as bearing the entire curse of the sins of the nation of Israel and of the world: 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us' (Gal 3:13). It is small wonder that his disciples, not understanding what they witness on Calvary, are defeated and slink away into hiding.

The raising of Christ from the dead transforms the situation from an apparent defeat into a victory over death and our human frailty and sin. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he asks, when writing about the resurrection of the dead: 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?' He answers his own questions with the apparently puzzling remark which moves the focus back to events before the resurrection: 'How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies' (1 Cor 15:35-36). Nothing can be resurrected unless it had already died. And this brings us back to the important point that the lifting of the curse and restoration must begin with a death, the death of the old self, the old ethics of retribution and curse in which Jesus, in cursing the fig-tree, is apparently partaking, but which he is soon to annul through his own death. When Jesus, as recorded in John's Gospel, tells his disciples that his hour has come, he mysteriously deploys the image of a seed falling into the ground, illustrating not defeat but how he will be glorified:

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. (Jn 12:24)

The point has already been made vividly in the

Letter to the Corinthians when death is equated with Adam and his disobedience, and life is found in Christ: 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive' (1 Cor 15:22). The proclamation that this life is offered to all takes the message of salvation out into the world beyond Israel, just as when at the death of Christ the temple veil is torn down the middle, the good news, at the moment of its most apparent nadir, is opened up to all peoples.

So the curse has been lifted. Christ has achieved this and it is the Holy Spirit who makes this available for all people throughout all ages. It needs Christ's forgiveness and the cancellation of our sin and the curse so that a new beginning can happen. It demands a rejection of retribution and revenge, an end to retributive violence, the death of the ego that demands satisfaction for wrongs, real and imaginary. And it demands a belief that the fig leaves which are thought to promise nothing may indeed be the messengers of a new and promising future of reconciliation and regeneration.

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Notes

- 1 Biblical references are to the New International Version.
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- 5 R.A. Cole, *Mark* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Leicester: IVP, 1989) 250.
- 6 Cole, *Mark*, 252.
- 7 S. Hauerwas, *Matthew* (London: SCM, 2006) 187.
- 8 Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone* (London: SPCK, 2002) 72-73.

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- 10 H. Blocher, *In the Beginning: the Opening Chapters of Genesis* (Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984) 133.
- 11 Blocher, *Beginning*, 112.
- 12 C. Seltman, *The Twelve Olympians* (London: Pan Books, 1952) 23.
- 13 J.A. Baker, *The Foolishness of God* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1970) 23.
- 14 Sophocles, *King Oedipus*, from *The Theban Plays*, translated by E.F. Watling (London: Penguin, 1947) 48.
- 15 Sophocles, *Oedipus*, 62.
- 16 Sophocles, *Oedipus*, 64.
- 17 Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, from *The Theban Plays*, 87.
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- 21 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, from the *Oresteia*, translated by Ted Hughes (London: Faber & Faber, 1999) 75.
- 22 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 83.
- 23 Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*, from *The Oresteia*, translated by Ted Hughes (London: Faber & Faber, 1999) 191.
- 24 Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, from *The Oresteia*, 143.
- 25 Sophocles, *Antigone*, from *The Theban Plays*.
- 26 H.D.F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1966) 79.
- 27 Kitto, *Greek Tragedy*, 127-128.
- 28 C. Dickens, *A Christmas Carol and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 2003) 47-48.
- 29 Dickens, *Christmas Carol*, 87.
- 30 Blocher, *Beginning*, 184.
- 31 D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, translated by Douglas Stephen Bax (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) 140.
- 32 Bonhoeffer, *Creation*, 133.
- 33 Hauerwas, *Matthew*, 79. Also in Mt 9:17 and Lk 5:37.
- 34 Baker, *Foolishness*, 183.

Is the Saving Grace of God Resistible?

Andrew Loke

SUMMARY

This article compares two influential accounts concerning whether the saving grace of God is resistible, one offered by theologians following the Synod of Dordrecht, and the other the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account. I argue that Dort’s account is inconsistent with the love of God as manifested by the extent of the atonement, but this

problem does not arise on the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account. I show that the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account is consistent with what the Scriptures say concerning human depravity, the atonement, as well as divine sovereignty, omnipotence, freedom, election, love and grace. I conclude that the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account is to be preferred.

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RÉSUMÉ

L’auteur compare deux positions influentes sur la question de savoir si la grâce divine en vue du salut est irrésistible, celle des théologiens qui adhèrent aux canons de Dordrecht, et celle qui fait intervenir la « connaissance moyenne ». Il plaide que la position du synode de Dordrecht n’est pas compatible avec l’affirmation de l’amour de Dieu telle qu’il se révèle par la portée de

l’expiation, alors que ce problème disparaît lorsqu’on fait appel à une « connaissance moyenne ». Il tente de montrer que faire intervenir la « connaissance moyenne » est compatible avec l’enseignement scripturaire sur la corruption humaine, l’expiation, ainsi que sur la souveraineté et l’omnipotence de Dieu, la liberté, l’élection, l’amour et la grâce. Il en conclut à l’avantage de la position faisant appel à une « connaissance moyenne ».

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel vergleicht zwei einflussreiche Meinungen in bezug auf die Frage, ob man der rettenden Gnade Gottes widerstehen kann oder nicht. Die eine Meinung wurde von Theologen in Anlehnung an die Synode von Dordrecht verfasst, bei der anderen geht es um die sogenannte Darstellung vom ‘Mittleren Wissen’. Mein Argument besagt, dass Dorts Position nicht mit der Liebe Gottes im Einklang steht, wie sie sich durch die

Reichweite der Erlösung erwiesen hat. Dieses Problem stellt sich hingegen bei der These vom ‘Mittleren Wissen’ nicht. Ich werde darlegen, dass die Aussage vom ‘Mittleren Wissen’ mit dem übereinstimmt, was die Schrift über Themen wie menschliche Dekadenz, Erlösung und göttliche Souveränität, wie auch Allmacht, Freiheit, Auserwählung, Liebe und Gnade aussagt. Als Schlussfolgerung ergibt sich, dass die Darstellung vom ‘Mittleren Wissen’ vorzuziehen ist.

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Introduction

Can humans resist the saving grace of God? Theologians with different accounts of divine providence would answer this question differently. In this article I shall compare two influential accounts, one offered by theologians following the Synod of Dordrecht and the other the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account. The first account is well known among theologians. The second account has been widely discussed in recent philosophical literature¹ but there is a lack of detailed theological

and scriptural assessment of it in comparison with Dort’s account in recent non-Roman Catholic academic theological literature. This is a pity because, as I shall show in the rest of this article, the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account has important insights to offer to the academic theologian with respect to a number of difficult theological issues concerning divine providence, and it is demonstrably superior to Dort’s account. I shall argue that the Synod of Dort’s answer to the opening question of this essay is inconsistent with the love of God as manifested

by the extent of the atonement; by contrast, the answer given by the 'Middle Knowledge' account is not inconsistent. I will then go on to consider a number of objections that theologians following Dort would raise against the 'Middle Knowledge' account, in particular the objections related to human depravity, the atonement, as well as divine sovereignty, omnipotence, freedom, election, love and grace, and I shall show that these objections can be adequately addressed. My arguments will take seriously what the Christian Scriptures have to say on these issues, as Dordrecht's theologians would.

Problems with the account of Dordrecht

The Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619) was an assembly of the Dutch Reformed Church convened at Dordrecht (a city also known as Dordt or Dort) by the States-General to deal with the Arminian controversy. In addition to about 100 Dutch participants there were also some 30 representatives of churches in England, Scotland, Switzerland and the German territories. The Synod passed five articles or Canons asserting unconditional election, a limited atonement, the total depravity of humanity, the irresistibility of grace and the final perseverance of the saints.² In the English speaking world these articles have become known as the Five Points of Calvinism, although there has been some controversy as to whether they truly represent the views of Calvin himself.³ Theologians following Dordrecht hold that humans⁴ are totally depraved and worthy of eternal damnation, and that no one can freely choose to receive God's offer of salvation without God's enabling grace. As 'The Decision of the Synod of Dordrecht' (hereafter Dort) states,

Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.⁵

Dort also holds that God grants an irresistible grace to certain elected humans, but not to the 'reprobates' who would eventually perish.⁶ This grace is understood as a certain influence that compels a person to receive God's offer of salvation and that is mediated by the Holy Spirit. As

Dort explains,

In this way, therefore, faith is a gift of God, not in the sense that it is offered by God for man to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on man, breathed and infused into him. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent – the act of believing – from man's choice; rather, it is a gift in the sense that he who works both willing and acting and, indeed, works all things in all people produces in man both the will to believe and the belief itself.⁷

And Dort rejects those

Who teach that the grace by which we are converted to God is nothing but a gentle persuasion ... who teach that God in regenerating man does not bring to bear that power of his omnipotence whereby he may powerfully and unfailingly bend man's will to faith and conversion ... who teach that grace and free choice are concurrent partial causes which cooperate to initiate conversion, and that grace does not precede – in the order of causality – the effective influence of the will; that is to say, that God does not effectively help man's will to come to conversion before man's will itself motivates and determines itself.⁸

The Decision maintains that humans ultimately have no part to play in determining whether or not they accept Christ as their Saviour and that a person's coming to salvation is totally of God. In other words, God is the sole determiner of whether a person turns to him for salvation or not; this view is known as Monergism. As Dort states,

But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation.⁹

This differs from the 'Middle Knowledge' account described below, which affirms that humans have a non-meritorious part to play in determining their coming to salvation. Theologians following Dordrecht would agree that a person has to accept Christ willingly, but they would insist that the gracious influence from God is the *sufficient cause* that determines their willing acceptance of Christ. Concerning scriptural passages such as 'And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Revelation 22:17b), they would say that a person would be willing to take the water of life if and

only if God's gracious influence act upon them and this divine influence is the sufficient cause for making them willing.

The problem with Dort's account of irresistible grace is that, if this account were true, one could rightly ask: why does God not providentially apply this grace to every human so that every human would find him, given that God desires every human to find him (Acts 17:26–27)? Dordrecht's theologians, following Calvin and Augustine, would claim that the answer to the question as to why only certain people are elected is a divine mystery.¹⁰ However, such a reply would be ducking an issue that is problematic for their position, for there could only be three possibilities: the answer is either conditional on God or on humans or on creatures other than humans.

Theologians following Dort deny that God's election is conditional on anything intrinsic to humans; in particular, it is not based on any fore-known human response to God. But could it be conditional on other creatures such as angels or demons? According to the Scriptures, humans (including those who are regarded by Dort as reprobates) are the only creatures that are explicitly stated to be made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27); they are at the centre of God's purposes for creation.¹¹ Therefore, it is implausible that conditions intrinsic to other creatures could have caused God to refrain from electing a human made in his image to receive salvation.

Could the answer then be conditional on God alone? If this were so, it would be hard to square with the doctrine of unlimited atonement. According to this doctrine, God loves every single human so much that he sent his Son to die for each human. Some theologians deny this doctrine by citing scriptural passages such as Revelation 5:9, Hebrews 9:12, Titus 2:14, Ephesians 5:25, John 10:15, 15:13 and Acts 20:28, and claiming that Christ was sacrificed only for those who have been elected for salvation. In reply, these scriptural passages can be taken to mean that Christ died for the elect to make them redeemed, but these passages do not say that Christ died for the elect *only*.

On the other hand, there are Bible passages which imply that Christ died for the 'non-elect'. For example, 2 Peter 2:1 affirms that certain false prophets who would ultimately perish (and whom Dort's theologians would label as 'reprobates') deny 'the Master who bought them'. As New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham comments, Jesus is the Master who 'bought them (at the cost

of his death, it is implied – the only allusion to the cross in 2 Peter). This image of redemption as the transferral of slaves to new ownership was fairly common in early Christianity' (see 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Revelation 5:9; 14:3–4, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 1:18–19).¹² 2 Peter 2:1 therefore implies that Jesus died to pay the price of redemption for the 'reprobates'. In denying the Master, these false prophets reject the payment that the Master had made and thus they would not enjoy the benefits of the Master's payment but would have to be punished for their sins.

The doctrine that Christ died for the non-elect is also more consistent with 1 Timothy 4:10, which says that God is the Saviour of all humans, and especially of those who believe. The 'all men' in this verse clearly refers to a larger group of people than 'those who believe', i.e. 'all men' includes those who would not believe (the 'reprobates'). This verse implies that God has done something for every person such that he can be deemed as the Saviour of 'all men',¹³ although only those who believe would receive the salvific benefits of what God has done. The 'something' which God has done for every person is evidently the death of Christ, as implied by the phrase 'the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all' in an earlier passage of 1 Timothy (1 Timothy 2:5–6).

What the doctrine of unlimited atonement implies is that God deems the salvation of each human more precious than even the life of his Son. Given this doctrine, one wonders why, after giving his Son for certain people (the 'reprobates'), God would withhold from giving them his irresistible grace, as theologians following Dort asserts. What other considerations apart from those conditional on humans could God have deemed more important than even the life of his Son, such that he would refrain from granting his irresistible grace for securing their reception of his Son whom he had given for them? The answer is clearly, 'None'.¹⁴

The 'Middle Knowledge' account

The above difficulties disappear on a 'Middle Knowledge' account of divine providence. The doctrine of 'Middle Knowledge' (*scientia media*) was classically proposed by Luis de Molina (1535–1600), a Spanish Jesuit theologian of the Counter-Reformation and the author of the *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* (1588).¹⁵ However, in recent years Protestant theologians have also utilised the doctrine of 'Middle

Knowledge' while affirming (against Molina) the Reformation doctrines of *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide* and *Solus Christus*.¹⁶ According to the doctrine of divine Middle Knowledge, God knows what any particular person would freely do in any circumstance. As Molina explains, Middle Knowledge is that

by which, in virtue of the most profound and inscrutable comprehension of each faculty of free choice, He saw in His own essence what each such faculty would do with its innate freedom were it to be placed in this or in that or, indeed, in infinitely many orders of things – even though it would really be able, if it so willed, to do the opposite.¹⁷

This knowledge is 'middle' in the sense that it is conceptually between God's natural knowledge (i.e. knowledge of all possibilities, including what any free creature *could* do in any set of circumstances) and God's free knowledge (God's knowledge of what are in fact true states of affairs in the actual world). According to Molina, God freely decreed to actualise a world known by him to be realisable on the basis of his Middle Knowledge.¹⁸

Molina formulated his view against his Dominican opponents who, like the Synod of Dort, held to a view of divine providence which affirms that God is the sole determiner of a person coming to salvation. In response, Molina argues:

If the method of predestining some adults and not others was the one that has been gleaned from the theory of these authors with their pre-determinations, then I do not see in what sense it is true that God wills all human beings to be saved if they themselves do not prevent it.¹⁹

Here, Molina assumes that there is a certain sense in which God wills all human beings to be saved. This is an assumption which theologians following Dort would deny, but it is a valid assumption given what has been explained in the previous section, namely the implications of the doctrine that Christ died for the non-elect. The above quotation also highlights one of the reasons why many theologians through the centuries have found it important to object to those accounts of divine providence which make God the sole determiner of a person coming to salvation, namely that it is inconsistent with a loving God who is 'the Saviour of all men' (1 Timothy 4:10; see above).

The 'Middle Knowledge' account could agree with Dort's theologians that, given humanity's depravity, no one can freely choose to receive

God's offer of salvation without God's enabling grace. However, the 'Middle Knowledge' account would include a crucial qualification that is denied by Dort. The 'Middle Knowledge' account would hold that God's enabling grace is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition, for a person's reception of God's offer of salvation. As Molina puts it,

The assistance through which we are helped by God toward justification is not efficacious intrinsically and by its nature; rather, its being efficacious depends on the free consent of the faculty of choice, a consent that the will is able not to give despite that assistance – indeed, when it consents, it is able to dissent.²⁰

This is in contrast with Dordrecht's account, which holds that God's enabling grace is a necessary *and* sufficient condition. In other words, Dort holds that only God determines a person's acceptance of Christ, whereas the 'Middle Knowledge' account holds that both God and a person have a part to play in determining their acceptance of Christ. This distinction is important in the argument because it allows the 'Middle Knowledge' account to avoid the aforementioned problem with Dort's account while affirming the need for divine enabling grace. The enabling grace is needed to counter the negative influences of the person's depravity, such as their sinful desires, corrupted thoughts and pride. In such a depraved state the person would have no real desire for God (Romans 3:11). Hence, no one could freely turn to God and receive Christ as Lord without God's aid (John 6:44, 1 Corinthians 12:3). On the 'Middle Knowledge' account which is being defended here, the enabling grace of God would cause humans to have the necessary desire for God by exerting on them certain influences and illuminating their minds through the work of the Holy Spirit, and then they could freely determine whether to respond positively to this desire, or to resist the Holy Spirit (as the Jews did in Acts 7:51).

Thus, with respect to the notion of irresistible grace, the 'Middle Knowledge' account would affirm that, in accordance with his desire to grant humans an element of determination in their reception of salvation, God has determined that each individual can accept or reject the gracious influence that is given to them. The 'Middle Knowledge' account would say, however, that there exists an *extrinsically* efficacious grace, understood as a gracious influence that is applied to individuals whom God foreknew would deter-

mine to accept it.²¹

Against the possibility of free will, it has been argued that God's foreknowledge determines the choices of creatures such that they could not choose otherwise (e.g. if God foreknows that Peter will choose to do A tomorrow, that Peter could not choose not to do A tomorrow). As Martin Luther explains,

If he (God) foreknows as he wills, then his will is eternal and unchanging (because it belongs to his nature), and if he wills as he foreknows, then his knowledge is eternal and unchanging (because it belongs to his nature). From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently, happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God.²²

In response to this theological fatalism, one can argue that foreknowledge is dependent on what creatures will freely choose to do (not vice versa) and foreknowledge in itself has no causal influence on what creatures will freely choose to do.²³ If God foreknows that Peter will freely choose to do A, Peter will freely choose to do A, but Peter can freely choose not to do A, and if Peter freely chooses not to do A God would have foreknown that Peter would choose not to do A. But Peter will not freely choose not to do A (even though he can freely choose not to do A); rather, Peter will freely choose to do, and that is why God foreknows that Peter will freely choose to do A. There is a possible world in which Peter will choose to do A and God foreknows that Peter will choose to do A, and there is a possible world that Peter will choose not to do A and God foreknows that Peter will choose not to do A. However, there is no possible world in which Peter will choose not to do A but God foreknows that Peter will choose to do A (and vice versa).

At this point, theologians following Dordrecht might object by pointing to scriptural passages which say that the outcome of events is determined by God (Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 10:23, etc) and that these events include the future acts of individuals (Isaiah 44:28).²⁴ For example, God determined that certain people would reject Jesus, including one of the Twelve whom Jesus predicted would betray him. However, such problems can easily be resolved on the 'Middle Knowledge' account. For according to this account, God has middle knowledge such that he knows how each

person would respond in any circumstance before they were even created.²⁵ Furthermore, God is the one who determined the time and place where each person would live (Acts 17: 26). From these considerations, the 'Middle Knowledge' account would respond that God placed a person whom he foreknew would determine to reject him to be born in first-century Palestine and that this person would eventually be one of the Twelve, i.e. Judas Iscariot. In a similar way, God could direct the heart of any particular person living at any particular point in time to accomplish his predetermined plan (cf. Proverbs 21:1). Therefore, the fact that the outcomes of events are determined by God does not point in favour of Dort's account over the 'Middle Knowledge' account.

On the 'Middle Knowledge' account, Judas cannot complain that his rejection of Christ was determined by God nor by the depravity that was ultimately traced back to Adam's fall. The reason is that the enabling grace which was needed to counter the negative influences of this depravity would have been given to him at some point in time, and his rejection of Christ was determined by himself. Thus, he ought to be punished for his sin. This result is consistent not only with God's justice but also with the scriptural account of God's love. For according to the 'Middle Knowledge' account, God has not withheld any necessary condition for the reception of salvation from those who would ultimately reject him. Rather, God loves these people (as well as believers) so much that he has given all of them the genuine ability to choose whether or not to accept him. It is reasonable to think that the consideration that God would have deemed more important than even the life of his Son, whom he gave up for every human being, would be something that is intrinsic to humans. The 'Middle Knowledge' account would affirm that this consideration is the human person's genuine freedom to choose. This affirmation would be consistent with the highest purpose that God has for humanity, which is to have a love relationship with him (Matthew 22:37). Since God has determined to love every human person in giving up his Son for each one of them, a person's response to his love must be determined by that person himself in order that genuine love exists between God and that person.

Objections to the Middle Knowledge account

Theologians following Dort have objected to the suggestion that humans have a part to play in determining their acceptance of Christ, by claiming that this would imply a human contribution to salvation which can be deemed as meritorious. It would therefore be salvation by works and there would be a basis for boasting. In response, it should be emphasized that on the 'Middle Knowledge' account which I am defending here it is the merits of Christ's atoning death that cancels the wages of sin.²⁶ Persons who choose to respond positively to God's gracious influence are merely letting the merits of Christ be applied to them. Their positive responses are (merely) a condition for receiving the merits of Christ's atoning death. This is different from salvation by works, according to which human good works are regarded as having intrinsic merits for cancelling the wages of sin. Hence, according to my view salvation is by grace alone. On my 'Middle Knowledge' account, a person who chooses to receive Christ is analogous to a destitute, paralysed and dying patient who was given help by a compassionate doctor, such that he was able to move temporarily and take a permanently curative medication costing billions of dollars for which the doctor had paid. Should the patient be willing to take the medication, their willingness would not have added to the intrinsic power of the medication to cure the disease. Rather, the medication itself is efficacious for the treatment of the disease. Furthermore, one would not suppose that after recovery the patient would boast of their act of taking the medicine; even if they were to do so, no one would be impressed. Rather, what deserves boasting is clearly the amazing compassion of the doctor.

Second, it has been objected that, if God's granting of salvation is conditioned on human response, this would subject 'the activity of Almighty God to the will of man' (Synod of Dordrecht, Article 14, VIII) and God's freedom would be limited. In response, it is important to note that divine omnipotence does not imply that God could not choose to withhold the use of his omnipotent power, quite the contrary. Furthermore, divine omnipotence should not be understood to imply the ability to bring about logically impossible states of affairs (e.g. a 'shapeless cube'),²⁷ and it is a logically impossible state of affairs that God's granting of salvation is not conditioned on human

response *given that* God chooses to allow humans the genuine ability to determine whether or not to accept his salvation. That God has chosen to withhold the use of his omnipotent power and to allow his activity to be resistible by humans is plainly testified by scriptural passages such as Acts 7:51, which speaks of Israelites resisting the activity of the Holy Spirit. And it is evident that God has chosen to allow his desires to be resistible; for example, when a person sins, they are in fact resisting the desire of God. With respect to God's freedom, it should be emphasised that on the 'Middle Knowledge' account God is still the First Cause. He is the creator of humans and the one who had determined that humans could determine whether or not they respond to him, and that without his determination humans would not have the ability to determine. Thus, the existence of humans who could resist the Holy Spirit is totally dependent on the free choice of God who is pleased to bring them into existence. Hence, God is still absolutely free and sovereign in the sense that he could have chosen not to create such humans. But he freely chose to do so. In accordance to his perfect character and his desire that humanity have a genuine love relationship with him, God will gladly give his grace in a manner that is conditional on man's response without feeling any compulsion.

Third, it might be objected that Jesus' words in Matthew 11:21 ('Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes') contradict the 'Middle Knowledge' account, for if the people at Tyre and Sidon would have repented in response to miracles, then according to the 'Middle Knowledge' account, God should indeed have performed the miracles to make them repent. The 'Middle Knowledge' account can answer this objection in two ways. Firstly, it can be argued that the author's intent in this passage is not to give a literal piece of Middle Knowledge. Rather, his intent is to point out how bad the people were. This passage should be taken as a religious hyperbole. The saying that the people in Tyre and Sidon would have repented in sackcloth and ashes can be understood as an idiom for the hard-heartedness of the people in Korazin and Bethsaida. Secondly, it can be argued that repenting in sackcloth and ashes does not necessarily indicate a real change of heart. It could indicate a merely superficial repentance, as Dordrecht's theologians would say is the case for Ahab, who

once tore his clothes, wore sackcloth and mourned when he was rebuked (1 Kings 21:27-29) but died as a 'reprobate' (1 Kings 22). Although such repentance is better than no repentance at all, yet this is still not repentance unto salvation. The situation of the people in Korazin and Bethsaida was so bad that they did not manifest any indication of repentance at all.

The apparent scriptural support for Dordrecht's account

Theologians following Dort might object that the 'Middle Knowledge' account is contradicted by other scriptural passages which have been cited in support of the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement and irresistible grace.²⁸ The passages concerning the extent of the atonement have already been discussed above and the other passages will now be addressed.

1. Total depravity

Ephesians 2:1, Romans 3:10-13: These passages affirm that all humans are dead in trespasses and sin. Proponents of the 'Middle Knowledge' account concur. They could say: 'Without gracious influence from God, humans are spiritually dead; they cannot determine to respond positively to God.' They could then point out that these passages do not exclude the notion that, after the enabling grace has been given to counter the negative influences of a person's depravity, that person can freely determine whether or not to respond to God.

2. Unconditional election

Ephesians 1:4-6, 9, 11: These verses affirm that God predestined the elect to be saved according to his own good pleasure and will. But this does not exclude the notion that God's good pleasure and will is that he would apply the extrinsically efficacious grace on those he foreknew would respond positively.

Ephesians 2:4, 5, 8-9, 2 Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:4, 5: These verses affirm that the elect are not predestined to be saved because of the good works they do. But this does not exclude the notion that they are predestined to be saved because of their foreknown positive reception of God's grace and the merits of Christ's atonement.

John 15:16: This verse says that it is not the disciples who chose Christ, but Christ chose them. Proponents of the 'Middle Knowledge' account

agree that, without gracious influence from God, humans do not (and indeed are unable to) choose Christ. They argue that this verse does not exclude the notion that those whom God has chosen are those whom God foreknew would respond positively to his gracious influence.

Romans 9:13-33: This is one of the most often cited passages in support of Dort's account but the passage can also be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the 'Middle Knowledge' account, as follows:

In verse 13, which includes a passage quoted from Malachi 1:2-3, God says that 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.' However, it should be noted that 'loved' and 'hated' in this passage may refer to God's elective purposes concerning God's covenant with Israel and the roles which the nations of Israel and Edom are to play in history, rather than to their personal salvation and eternal destiny.²⁹

Verses 15-16 should be interpreted in light of verse 11 as well as one of the central themes of Romans, which is 'salvation is not of works'. Thus, what verses 15-16 affirm is that God's determination to show mercy is not based on meritorious works or willingness to do meritorious works. But this does not exclude the possibility that those on whom God will have mercy are those whom he foreknew would respond positively to his gracious influence.

In verses 17-19, Pharaoh is cited as an example of a person whom God hardened instead of showing mercy. Again, these verses, as well as other passages which speak of divine hardening of persons, such as 1 Samuel 2:25, 2 Samuel 17:14, 1 Kings 12:11, 15, Isaiah 6:9-10, Matthew 11:25-27, 13:11-14 and Revelation 17:17, do not exclude the notion that those whom God hardens are those whom he foreknew would reject his gracious influence.

Nevertheless, someone might think that the notion of divine hardening excludes human response, and he might ask 'Why does God still find fault?' (verse 19).

This question is a relevant one but in the context of Romans 9 the questioner is asking it irreverently and arrogantly. (This is suggested by the fact that Romans 9:19-21 contains an allusion to Isaiah 29:16 and 45:9, where the questioner is speaking arrogantly.) Paul proceeds to answer this question from verses 20 to 32.

First, any irreverence and arrogance needs to be corrected. Thus, verse 20, 'But who are you,

O man, to talk back to God?’ and the subsequent verses (verse 21-29) are intended to make the questioner realise that he is merely a creature whereas God is the sovereign creator. The ‘what if’ in verses 20-22 suggests that the questions posed are intended to challenge the creature’s irreverence and arrogance, rather than affirming that humans are judged and punished simply because God made them this way.³⁰ The passages of Isaiah 29:16 and 45:9, which are alluded to in these verses, are basically rebuking those who scorn God’s wisdom by thinking that they are wiser than God. Therefore, what Paul is saying is that humanity should not contend with God with the attitude of thinking that they are smarter than God. The questioner should first humbly realise that God as the creator has the authority to make people just as the potter makes pottery out of clay and that he could have borne with great patience the objects of his wrath to show his wrath and power, as well as to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, viz. those who have been called from Jews and Gentiles as Hosea and Isaiah prophesied. However, the real answer to the question, as indicated by the phrase ‘What shall we say then?’ (verse 30), is that, unlike the Gentiles who have obtained righteousness by faith, certain Israelites did not attain righteousness because they pursued it not by faith but as though it were by works. This is consistent with the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account that election is conditioned by a person’s determination to respond in faith.

3. Irresistible grace

- John 6:37: This verse says that all those whom the Father gives to Jesus will come to Jesus. This does not exclude the notion that those whom the Father gives to Jesus are in fact those who would respond positively to God’s gracious influence.
- John 6:44: This verse says that no one can come to Christ unless God draws him. This does not imply that a person cannot resist God when God draws him.
- Romans 8:14,30: These verses say that those whom God predestined he calls, but again this does not exclude the possibility that those whom God predestined are indeed those who would respond positively to his gracious influence.
- Ezekiel 36:26: This verse says that God will change the Israelites’ heart of stone to a heart of flesh. It does not say that a person cannot resist

this change. Compare Ezekiel 18:31, where God exhorts the people to get a new heart.

- Philippians 2:13: This verse says it is God who works in the Philippians to will and act according to his good pleasure, but it does not say that God is the sufficient cause of their will and act, nor does it say that they cannot resist God’s work (in the same way that the Jews are said to resist the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts 7:51).

Conclusion

It has been shown here that the Synod of Dordrecht’s account is inconsistent with the love of God as manifested by the unlimited extent of the atonement, a doctrine which is affirmed by the Scriptures. By contrast, the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account is consistent not only with the love of God but also with what the Scriptures say concerning human depravity, the atonement, divine sovereignty, divine omnipotence, divine freedom, election and grace. Therefore, on scriptural and theological grounds, the ‘Middle Knowledge’ account should be preferred to Dort’s.

Now I do not wish to argue that a Christian must hold a ‘Middle Knowledge’ account, for there might well be other (non-Dordrecht) accounts which are also consistent with the Scriptures and which do not have the problems that beset the account of Dort. What I do hope to have shown in this article is that the theological system of Dort can justifiably be rejected by Christians who hold to the authority of Scriptures. This conclusion is not without pastoral significance, for Dort’s scripturally unjustified monergistic account of predestination has troubled the conscience of many lay Christians and caused people to stumble – and surely no Christian would want to be a person through whom the stumbling block comes (Matthew 18:6-9). Consider, for example, the testimony of philosopher Edwin Curley given in a debate on Christian theism (note that in the context of the debate the ‘pre-destination’ he refers to is a monergistic account of predestination, which is different from a ‘Middle Knowledge’ account of predestination as explained above):³¹

The usual label for someone who once embraced Christianity and then rejected it is ‘heretic’. I have no objection to that label....What started me on this path was reading the prayer book my mother gave me when I was 16. At the back were printed the Articles of Religion members

of my church, the Episcopal Church, were expected to accept. ... I was disturbed that my church accepted pre-destination. Before the foundation of the world, the Articles said, God had chosen some vessels for honour and others for dishonour. ... nothing happens except by his will. So, if I end up in Hell, he will have known that from eternity, and he will have willed it from eternity. Pre-destination is not so widely accepted now as it was when my church was founded in the 16th century. I find many Christians who reject it. And I sympathize with them. Their hearts are in the right place, certainly. I cannot believe that a just and loving God would create beings he knew and had pre-determined would spend eternity in hell. But Christians can reject pre-destination only at the cost of ignoring the authority of their scriptures and the implications of their theology.

How sad it must be for Curley's mother to know that a misunderstanding of the doctrine of predestination found in a prayer book she gave her son led to his rejection of Christianity.

It is my prayer that such tragic misunderstandings can be removed by the clarification of the doctrine presented in this article and that this would lead many to a better comprehension of the infinite love of God.³²

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Notes

- 1 See for example the essays in Ken Perszyk (ed.), *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 2 'Dort, Synod of', in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 3 See Carl Trueman, 'Calvin and Calvinism' in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- 4 That is, apart from Adam and Eve, and Jesus. This qualification applies for the rest of the article.
- 5 The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine, Article 3.
- 6 One might hold the position that this irresistible grace would eventually be given to all, resulting in the salvation of every individual. This 'Christian Universalist' position is not the view of Dort's theologians nor of Calvin, who writes that 'salvation is spontaneously offered to some, while others have

no access to it' (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 3 Chapter 21). It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss this Universalist position further, except to note that it is inconsistent with the Scriptures; see Stephen T. Davis, 'Universalism, Hell and The Fate of The Ignorant', *Modern Theology* 6 (1990) 173-186.

- 7 The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine, Article 14.
- 8 The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine, Rejection of the Errors VII, VIII, IX.
- 9 The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine, Article 10.
- 10 See Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 3, chapter 2.
- 11 This does not imply that the planet on which humans are living would be at the centre of the solar system or of the universe, neither does it exclude the possibility of aliens.
- 12 Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word Books, 1983) 240.
- 13 Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 851.
- 14 It has been suggested (e.g. by Jonathan Edwards) that God desires the manifestation of his attributes, including the manifestation of his wrath on those who perish, in order that he is seen to be just, and that 'the saints will be made more sensible how great their salvation is'; see Jonathan Edwards, Sermon XI, 'The Eternity of Hell Torments', in Edward Hickman (ed.), *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 2* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988) 87. In response, the manifestation of his wrath and justice had already been accomplished through the suffering of Christ on the cross for the sins of humanity and a reflection of the incomprehensible depths of his suffering would be enough to make the saints sufficiently sensible as to how great their salvation is. For more on this line of rebuttal to Edwards, see Oliver Crisp, 'Augustinian Universalism', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 53 (2003) 127-145.
- 15 'Molina, Luis de', in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 16 See for example William Lane Craig, 'A Calvinist-Arminian Rapprochement?' in Clark Pinnock (ed.), *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (Minneapolis: Bethany Publishers, 1989).
- 17 Luis de Molina and Alfred J. Freddoso, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the Concordia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) Qu.14, Art.13, Disp.52, No.9.
- 18 William Lane Craig and James Porter Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003) chapter 28.
- 19 Molina and Freddoso, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, Qu.14, Art.13, Disp.53, Part 2, No.29.
- 20 Molina and Freddoso, *On Divine Foreknowledge*,

- Qu.14, Art.13, Disp.53, Part 2, No.30.
- 21 William Lane Craig, 'No Other Name: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on the Exclusivity of Salvation through Christ' in Philip Quinn and Kevin Meeker (eds), *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 46-47. Note that in this article 'fore-knew' refers to God's knowledge of future counterfactuals. Such an understanding is consistent with the biblical definition of 'foreknowledge' as used in verses such as 1 Peter 1:2 and Romans 8:29, which some have argued is a stronger notion that encompasses not only knowledge of future counterfactuals but also 'a self-determining on God's part to this fellowship'; see Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895) 161. It should be noted that this stronger notion does not exclude the 'Middle Knowledge' account that those whom God had a prior determination to enter into relationship with are those whom God knows would determine to respond positively to his gracious influence.
 - 22 Martin Luther, 'The Bondage of the Will', trans. P.S. Watson, in *Luther's Works, vol.33: Career of the Reformer III*, ed. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 37-38.
 - 23 Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 518-521.
 - 24 Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* 5th edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941) 222-227.
 - 25 Concerning the question how God could have known future counterfactuals, the 'Middle Knowledge' account defended here would affirm that this Middle Knowledge is conceptual rather than perceptual in nature. That is, as an omniscient being God essentially has the property of knowing all true propositions including counterfactuals, similar to the mind's knowledge of innate ideas, without having to 'see' them; cf. Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 521.
 - 26 The concept of 'wages of sin' can be found in scriptural passages such as Romans 6:23 and is consistent with Calvin's penal substitution theory of atonement which Dort's theologians hold.
 - 27 See Andrew Loke, 'Divine omnipotence and moral perfection', *Religious Studies* 46 (2010) 526.
 - 28 The Middle Knowledge account defended here does not take issue with the 'perseverance of the saints'. For an example of how a Molinist defends this doctrine, see William Lane Craig, "Lest Anyone Should Fall": A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Perseverance and Apostolic Warnings', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 29 (1991) 65-74.
 - 29 Ben Witherington III, *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism, and Wesleyanism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005) 142-143.
 - 30 Some might object by claiming that passages such as Proverbs 16:4 affirm that the wicked are made for the day of evil. In response we can say that Hebrew writers often omit mentioning secondary agents in God's plan. For example, in 2 Samuel 24:1 it is mentioned that God incites David to take the census, but 1 Chronicles 21:1 says that it is Satan who incites David to take the census. Apparently God allows Satan to incite David to take the census in his plan. Proverbs 16:4 therefore does not exclude the possibility that the wicked person is the secondary agent who determines their wickedness. In other words, this verse is not necessary affirming that the wicked are created by the LORD to be so. What it is affirming is that God will ensure that the wicked are punished.
 - 31 For the full quotation and its context, see www.reasonablefaith.org/the-existence-of-the-christian-god-the-craig-curley-debate.
 - 32 I would like to thank Professors Paul Copan and William Lane Craig for introducing me to Molinism, as well as Professor Robert Saucy and Dr Robert Price from Biola University, Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo, Mary Lim and an anonymous referee for this journal for very helpful comments on the earlier drafts of this article.

Theologia caritatis and the Moral Authority of Scripture: Approaching 2 Timothy 3:16–17 with a hermeneutic of love

Patrick Nullens

SUMMARY

The classical evangelical view of the moral authority of Scripture is being challenged by the postmodern shift. The questions asked by postmodernism make it untenable to approach Scripture as providing objective answers to a list of ethical dilemmas. In response to this challenge, we need to find a proper balance between the normative and formative character of Scripture. My claim is that scriptural authority can only be appreciated in light of Jesus' double commandment of love. We revisit the

Augustinian concept of a hermeneutics of love. In a *theologia caritatis* love is seen to precede knowledge and is used as a hermeneutical tool. Love is a lens through which we see true values. However, love is not a vague emotional notion, deprived of all normative principles. The 'covenantal relationship' narrated in Scripture provides the framework for moral authority. True love is 'obedient love'. We will apply this hermeneutic of love to 2 Timothy 3:16–17, the passage most commonly used to affirm the moral authority of Scripture.

* * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die klassische evangelikale Sicht zur moralischen Autorität der Schrift wird durch den Umschwung in der Postmoderne in Frage gestellt. Die von der Postmoderne gestellten Fragen machen einen Umgang mit der Schrift unhaltbar, der objektive Antworten auf eine Reihe ethischer Dilemmas erwartet. Als Antwort auf diese Herausforderung müssen wir eine ausgewogene Balance zwischen dem normgebenden und charakterbildenden Wesen der Schrift finden. Ich behaupte, dass die Autorität der Schrift nur im Licht des von Jesus gegebenen Doppelgebotes der Liebe gewürdigt werden

kann. Wir untersuchen hier aufs Neue das Augustinische Konzept einer Hermeneutik der Liebe. Bei einer *theologia caritatis* [Theologie der Barmherzigkeit] geht die Liebe dem Wissen voraus. Dabei ist Liebe aber kein vager, emotionsgeladener Begriff, bar aller Norm gebenden Prinzipien. Vielmehr gibt die ‚Bundesbeziehung‘, wie sie die Schrift bezeugt, den Rahmen für moralische Autorität ab. Wahre Liebe ist ‚gehorsame Liebe‘. Wir werden diese Hermeneutik der Liebe auf die Passage in 2. Timotheus 3.16–17 anwenden, jene Stelle, die am häufigsten angeführt wird, um die moralische Autorität der Schrift zu behaupten.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

La doctrine évangélique classique de l'autorité morale de l'Écriture est mise en question par l'évolution de la pensée postmoderne. Celle-ci rend en effet inacceptable de considérer l'Écriture comme une source de réponses objectives à une liste de dilemmes éthiques. En réponse, nous devons trouver un équilibre approprié entre le caractère normatif et l'effet formateur de l'Écriture. L'auteur considère que l'autorité biblique ne peut être appréciée qu'à la lumière du double commandement d'amour énoncé par Jésus. Revenons à la conception augustinienne d'une herméneutique de l'amour.

Une *theologia caritatis* considère que l'amour précède la connaissance et qu'il fonctionne comme un outil herméneutique. L'amour est une lentille à travers laquelle nous voyons les vraies valeurs. L'amour ne se réduit cependant pas à une notion émotionnelle vague, dépourvue de tout principe normatif. La « relation d'alliance » dont l'Écriture fait le récit fournit son cadre à l'autorité morale. L'amour authentique est « amour obéissant ». L'auteur applique ensuite cette herméneutique de l'amour au texte de 2 Timothée 3.16–17, qui est celui de l'Écriture que l'on cite le plus souvent pour affirmer l'autorité morale de celle-ci.

Introduction¹

At the start of the twentieth century the Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck made a rather bold claim about the Christian commitment to the Bible: 'There is no dogma about which there is more unity than that of the Holy Scriptures.'² He underlines that the authority of Scripture is not based on a 'scientific pronouncement' but on the claims of Scripture itself. Much like the dogma of Trinity, the inspiration of the Bible is a dogma 'which Christians accept, not because they understand the truth of it, but because God so attests it.'³ Most commonly, 2 Timothy 3:16 has been used to stress the fact that the Scriptures are God-breathed (*theopneustos*) and that as the Word of God they are therefore credible in themselves (*autopistis*). Bavinck's observation that this dogma brings unity among Christians is particularly true for Evangelicals; the consensus on the authority of Scripture is generally considered to be one of the unifying factors in this, in many other ways diverse and dispersed, group.⁴

One might wonder, though, whether this consensus is not merely superficial, hiding a painful diversity when it comes down to the actual use of Scripture. The relationship between the old text and our concrete, day-to-day situations is more complex and mysterious than we tend to admit. The theology of the second half of the twentieth century has been exposed to many developments in biblical scholarship, especially in the area of biblical theology. Since Wittgenstein and Gadamer one can witness dramatic changes in the views, not only of the textual source itself, but also of the reader, individually as well as collective. Charles H. Cosgroves observes:

By the close of the twentieth century, the role of the Bible in Christian Ethics had become a highly complex theological and intellectual problem. Except in fundamentalistic circles, one could no longer simply equate biblical ethics with Christian ethics.⁵

Indeed, evangelical theologians are very much aware of the importance and breadth of this challenge.⁶

This article aims to contribute to this ongoing debate, by stressing the 'hermeneutics of love'. My reflection develops in five steps. We open with summarising the traditional evangelical commitment to the moral authority of the Scriptures and the prominent role evangelicals reserve for

2 Timothy 3:16-17. In modernity, evangelicals have tended to emphasise the objective normative authority of Scripture. Recently, under the influence of postmodernism, new trends in using Scripture for ethics can be perceived. In the second part this postmodern shift will be briefly summarised. Overall there has been a strong shift from the normative to the formative role of Scripture. This inevitably leads to a question: how then does the transformative aspect relate to the normative? The third part provides general direction with reference to the Augustinian *theologia caritatis*, using love as a key conceptual model. Philosophically, the statement that 'love precedes understanding', especially moral understanding, is not an oddity. Several continental philosophers have emphasised the epistemological primacy of love. Of course, the concept of love is too vague and the word has suffered severely under an inflation of meaning. This is why in the fourth part of this article, with Paul Ramsey, I propose a covenantal understanding of love as 'obedient love'. Finally, we come back to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and re-read this text in its broader context of *theologia caritatis*.

1. Evangelical sola scriptura: objective revelation

The evangelical view of Scripture stands in the tradition of the Reformation and holds fast to the Reformation principles of Scripture being the *regula fidei* and *regula morum*. The Reformers wanted to stress above all that the authority of Scripture is a God-given authority; it is not given by humans. The Scriptures are *autopistis*, credible in themselves. It is God's Spirit who testifies in our hearts that the words are divine. The authority is based on a 'divine encounter': God speaking to us through the Scriptures. The Evangelical Alliance testifies to believing in the authority of Scripture in the first two articles of the *Symbola Evangelica*. The articles are embarrassingly short since they presuppose the theological heritage of the Reformation:

Art. 1: The Divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures; Art. 2: The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.⁷

In the course of my argument we will see that while there is a general consensus among evangelicals regarding the authority of Scripture (art.1),

the second article can become problematic when we talk about moral decisions based on Scripture.

In their bibliography, evangelical theologians have been particularly influenced by the theology and philosophy of the Old Princeton School.⁸ The leading work was Benjamin B. Warfield's *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (1927). The word *theopneustos*, which we find in 2 Timothy 3:16, played a key role in describing and establishing the authority of the Bible as divine and yet also human Scriptures. This passage has been quoted to stress the divine nature of Scriptures, together with 2 Peter 1:21, 'because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God'. A traditional evangelical understanding of the nature of the authority of Scripture can be found in the work of Carl F.H. Henry, *Revelation and Authority* (1976-1983). Henry stresses the way in which the Bible provides us with an objective standard, revealed in propositional truths. The task of theology is to systematise the information which is conveyed through biblical propositions. The task of Christian Ethics is similar, but is more specifically directed towards making moral decisions. Unsurprisingly, Henry's *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957) stresses the revelational dimension of Christian morality. The 'good' is the will of God, which he revealed to us in Scripture. Our response to this revelation should be obedience, which is the key concept in his moral theology.⁹ He sees the Bible as 'authoritative literature' since it reveals 'universally valid norms of goodness and truth'.¹⁰ It is interesting to see how he recognises the work of the Holy Spirit as a dynamic principle, which has the power to transform people,¹¹ yet warns that the dynamic work of the Spirit does not 'rid the moral life of an *objective* ethic which is mediated through prophets and apostles, supremely illuminated by Jesus, and *inscripturated* in the Bible'.¹² So the moral authority of the Holy Spirit is always in line with the written Word. 'The rule of the Spirit does not remove man from the will of God *objectively revealed* in the Bible'.¹³ This objective or factual revelation can be accessed by rational individuals as they look for moral direction in their lives.

2. The postmodern shift: the formative role of Scripture

More recently, this typically evangelical understanding of the Bible as a sourcebook of objective facts has often been considered as too modern-

istic.¹⁴ Kevin Vanhoozer, himself an evangelical, remarks in this regard: 'Evangelicals have been quick to decry the influence of modernism on liberal theology but do not see the beam of modern epistemology in their own eyes.'¹⁵ The challenges of postmodernism make us aware that applying sound exegesis to arrive at clear-cut solutions to our ethical dilemmas is not feasible. Modernistic methodologies are crashing against the walls of contemporary moral issues. We need to realise that the challenge is not just to understand and order the biblical data as if we are collecting facts and consequently to apply them to complex contemporary issues. In general terms, postmodernity has altered the way we perceive truth and authority. This general shift in our perception of authority has an immense impact on how we see the moral authority of 'Holy Scriptures'.¹⁶ One might say that there is a change in emphasis from the normative to the formative role of Scripture. The perception has changed from a book of law to a book of the gospel, from a moral blue-print to a compass which shows us the direction to go.

We observe six overlapping trends which challenge the traditional, evangelical view on the authority of Scripture.

2.1 Appreciation of diversity

Historical criticism and biblical theology have increased the awareness of the unique historical setting of the different books in the Bible. In postmodernism there is much appreciation for diversity and people are reluctant to unify the plurality of voices into one voice. The diversity of the canonical books affects the way Scripture is used in ethics. Moreover, the canon itself is considered to be a discourse in which we are invited to participate.

Indeed, diversity should be appreciated, but it has to be set in the larger framework of the one God, Creator and Saviour. The plurality of the four written Gospels does not result in four different gospel messages. The particularities and concreteness of the biblical texts are to be seen and explained against the wider horizon of God's salvation history.¹⁷

Another type of diversity which is receiving more attention is the diversity of genres within Scripture. One way to appreciate these is to relate them to the different formats of ethical argumentation. This 'matrix model' integrates the four classical types of moral reasoning with the diversity of biblical texts.¹⁸ We distinguish four types: value

ethics, commandment theory, character ethics and consequentialism. We often limit ourselves to one of those models. For instance, the search for 'principles' behind the text betrays a limitation to deontological ethics or divine command theory. The law is, of course, an important source for ethical reflection. But behind the laws lies a world of values.¹⁹ Wisdom literature then has a strong consequential bend. And the narratives are not only crucial to demonstrate value priorities, they are crucial for character formation. Nonetheless, these four models are but a manifestation of the one will of the one God as the only source of our morality.

2.2 Appreciation of pneumatology

Carl Henry already pointed to the work of the Holy Spirit as a dynamic principle at work in our moral conscience. This has become even more prominent in the past century, which has been seen as 'the century of the Holy Spirit'. This is in large part due to the growth of the charismatic and Pentecostal movements. But in the ethics of non-charismatic theologians, for example Jürgen Moltmann, the Spirit also plays a central role. The Spirit originates and preserves life; it is God at work here among us.²⁰ Another example of the renewed attention on the Holy Spirit can be found in Stanley Grenz's decision to deal with the authority of Scripture under the subheading of pneumatology.²¹

This emphasis on Word and Spirit results in a more dynamic view of Scripture. The Word of God 'happens', it is the divine encounter that makes it God's word spoken to us, not a material text of written words. This, of course, is also more in line with a Barthian and Bonhoefferian view of Scripture.²² Revelation is not so much the provision of hidden truths as it is the self-presentation of God, a form of divine presence, a self-presentation in divine mercy, a form of saving fellowship.²³ Webster refers to Barth and summarises:

Revelation is thus not simply bridging a noetic divide (though it includes that), but it is reconciliation, salvation and therefore fellowship. The idiom of revelation is as much moral and relational as it is cognitional.²⁴

2.3 Appreciation of the interpretive community

Maybe this is one of the most striking trends. The Church is seen as the primal locus of moral formation. The moral authority of Scripture is mainly

manifested in the reading of the Bible within the community of believers. It is the Church that lives out the biblical story, in the same way that Paul describes the church in Rome as 'full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another' (Rom 15:14).²⁵

One may refer to the cultural linguistic turn in Systematic Theology. Theology is in fact explicating the practice of the Church and the Bible has to be understood as the identity narrative of the interpretative community.²⁶ Stanley Hauerwas, the main proponent of this school, insists that the Bible is first of all the Church's book.²⁷ The particularities of the moral life are not grounded in some kind of understanding of all reality combined with practical reasoning. In fact, the Church has its own grammar. One may conclude that the individualistic tendency of much evangelical use of Scripture, as we see it for instance in art.2 of the *Symbola Evangelica* (1846), is under serious attack.²⁸

2.4 Appreciation of character ethics

Since Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1984) the literature on virtue ethics has grown vastly. The focus changes from the moral object to the moral subject. Ethics is not so much about principles we need and decisions we make in difficult cases. The major question in ethics has become what kind of people we want to be. Again Stanley Hauerwas was a driving force in the recovery of the virtue tradition in Christian ethics.²⁹ He advocates a more particular and concrete ethics of discipleship, rather than one of universal principles and decisions. This shift is closely related to the previously discussed turn towards community: It is in the community that traditions are embodied and the communities are the first places where character formation happens. We can only develop virtuous dispositions through communal practices and stories. Reading Scripture is therefore only one of the many practices of the Church and it should go along with the celebration of the eucharist, prayer, feeding the hungry etc.

2.5 Appreciation of tradition

In general, we observe a growing appreciation of Early Church tradition. Often this goes hand in hand with a new emphasis on catholicity. The paleo-orthodoxy school (e.g. Thomas Oden) invokes the church fathers as an essential voice in biblical interpretation.³⁰ The Wesleyan Quadrilateral, using Scripture, tradition, reason and experience as

four sources for theology, is welcomed more and more in Evangelical Theology.³¹ This new-found appreciation in itself is already quite a broadening of perspective, compared to a more strict use of Bible only. We might say, however, that the appreciation of tradition is more prominent in the area of theology, biblical interpretation and spirituality than in the more tangible and contemporary area of Christian Ethics.

2.6 Appreciation of theological interpretation

The broad school of Theological Interpretation can be helpful for creating a bridge between the Scriptures and current morality.³² Theological interpretation attempts to make the transition from descriptive data in the Bible to prescripts for use today through theological reflection in the context of the Church community.³³ The Bible provides the general 'wisdom map' that guides us in our efforts of moral reflection. Barth's commentary on Romans is a classical example of this approach. Lesser known is his posthumously published book, *Das christliche Leben* (1959-1961), in which Barth elaborates on the struggle for human justice, giving Christian social ethics the necessary theoretical content. He discusses our responsibility in the light of The Lord's Prayer and in doing so he unites prayer with ethical behaviour. The prayers 'hallowed be your name' and 'your kingdom come' stand in sharp contrast to the reality in which we live. In praying for the Kingdom of God we fight the battle for human justice. The Christian's zeal for God takes shape in fighting for human rights, freedom and peace on earth.³⁴ Similarly and expressed even more strongly, we see this process of moral reading of Scripture in the oeuvre of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.³⁵ Although educated in Berlin by Reinhold Seeberg and Adolf von Harnack, he felt that historical criticism had failed to understand the meaning of the text. His interpretation was pneumatological and christocentric. It is a continuous and dynamic search for the 'true way'.³⁶ Only through prayer can one have access to the meaning of Scripture. The fundamental question we should ask ourselves, he writes in his *Discipleship*, is: 'What did Jesus want to say to us today?'

3. *Theologia Caritatis*: Loving precedes knowing

Essentially these six trends show us a way of understanding and of moral knowledge. It is not a new

way, but all six can be incorporated in a theological interpretation that starts from the unifying theme or 'key conceptual model' of love.³⁷ Theological interpretation reads the biblical text from the perspective of the nature of God. As Vanhoozer summarizes, 'A properly theological criticism will therefore seek to do justice to the priority of God.'³⁸ Theocentric ethics cannot but start from the acting and loving God. As John writes passionately:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ... God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. (1 John 4:7-9, 16)

In this passage theological knowledge and morality merge into one. Only the one who loves can know God. In a *theologia caritatis* ethics precedes understanding. Morality is not only a result of obedience to the Word of God; it is also a condition for understanding the Word.³⁹ The righteous hear the word of God, the evil oppose it and are deaf (Isa 6:10). In this sense, an ethic of love has an epistemological status.⁴⁰

It is, however, not merely the nature of God that leads us to the priority of love. Jesus himself provided us with the key hermeneutical principle in the discussion about the greatest commandment (Mt 22:33-40). Love of God and neighbour, on 'these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (v. 40). This double love commandment demonstrates the unity and focus of Scripture and therefore it should function as our main paradigm for understanding its moral authority. All Scripture should be interpreted in light of this double love commandment.⁴¹ All of Scripture (i.e. the Old Testament) 'hangs' on the twofold commandment (Mt 22:40) and this double commandment can be considered as the 'hermeneutic programme' for the understanding and application of the Scriptures.⁴²

Using love as a hermeneutical tool has already been emphasized by Augustine in his *Christian Doctrine*. In the first book he identifies the love of God and neighbour as the purpose of Scripture:⁴³

Whoever, then, thinks that he understands the

Holy Scriptures, or any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as does not tend to build up this twofold love of God and our neighbour, does not yet understand them as he ought. If, on the other hand, a man draws a meaning from them that may be used for the building up of love, even though he does not happen upon the precise meaning which the author whom he reads intended to express in that place, his error is not pernicious, and he is wholly clear from the charge of deception.⁴⁴

In book three of *Christian Doctrine* the love commandments comes back to the fore, this time as a hermeneutical tool. When a literal interpretation goes against good morals, a text should be read figuratively. What good morals are, is defined using the double commandment. Our interpretation should fit the 'reign of love'.⁴⁵ It is only through love that we can come to the truth: *caritas quaerens intellectum* (love seeking understanding).⁴⁶

This Augustinian approach fits well with the evangelical view of biblical authority. It has been developed more in the pietistic and puritan traditions. John Wesley's theology, for example, can be summarised as one of 'Holy Love'.⁴⁷ The Wesleyan view of sanctification and perfection (similar to that of Bernard of Clairvaux) concerns growth in love.⁴⁸ Similarly, according to Jonathan Edwards for instance, it is only by a change of the affections that one is able to understand Scripture. True regeneration is a 'real circumcision of the heart'.⁴⁹ God has endowed the soul with two capacities: 'understanding, which merely perceives and speculates', and inclination, which is a capacity that 'does not merely perceive and view things, but is in some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers'. A person who 'has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion' and has therefore no 'true virtue'. On the other hand, to have the right inclination is also to have the right knowledge. There is a cognitive dimension to affections, because 'what makes the will choose, is something approved by the Understanding'. As there can be no light (knowledge) without fire (affections), neither can there be fire without light.

Not only theologically, also from the perspective of moral philosophy love is an interesting option for the grounding of our ethics. From a theocentric perspective we can say that God is love.

But from a humanistic perspective, too, we are in essence loving beings. This is not surprising since we were created in God's image. Kierkegaard's reflections on the *Works of Love* (1847) clearly make an anthropological claim. Kierkegaard understands the need to give and receive love in human relationships to be deeply rooted in human nature, having been created that way by God. Our nature has its source in the God who is love and has left his mark and who is, thus, necessarily present in all human loves.⁵⁰ Kierkegaard's love ethics grounds the equality of all human beings. For him, love is also an epistemological category: 'Only he who abides in love can recognize love, and in the same way his love is to be known.'⁵¹

Indeed, loving is a way of seeing, a way of understanding and in it is a condition for true moral knowledge. The German philosopher Max Scheler developed this Augustinian line of thought. Only through the eyes of love can one discover true values. In an ethics of love the subjective and objective merge together. The moral agent is a loving person who discovers the true values of life. The human person is neither a thinking being (Kant) nor a willing being (Nietzsche) but a loving being. As loving beings, humans are created in the image of God. Love as a hermeneutical tool discovers the world of objective values and so determines our moral knowledge. Scheler quotes Goethe:

One can know nothing except what one loves; and the deeper and more complete one desires the knowledge to be, the more powerful and dynamic must the love, indeed the passion be.⁵²

Because we are primarily loving beings, our relationships precede both the intellect and the will. Scheler uses colours as metaphors for values: The intellect is as blind to values as the ear is blind to colours. He concurs with Pascal at this point, who refers to the logic of the heart: 'Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point.' Love is the highest human capacity and forms the basis for the sympathy required to develop a moral relationship with another person. Ultimately, love leads us to God and renders us willing to accept what he desires from us. Love thus plays an important role in enabling us both to recognize values and create them. Scheler describes love as a movement that focuses on ever-higher values. Love is literally an 'e-motion'-a movement away from ourselves which transcends our ego.⁵³ Scheler's value personalism combines the anthropological

understanding of a human as a person with value theory in ethics. Somehow there is an objective match between the human person and the world of values as we experience them in our daily realities.⁵⁴

In contemporary hermeneutics the formative aspect of understanding has become more important. For Hans-Georg Gadamer philosophical hermeneutics is about 'formation', the German 'Bildung'. In the word *Bildung* there is the idea of a *Bild* which entails both 'Nachbild' (image, copy) and 'Vorbild' (model). True understanding is only possible by distancing oneself from one's private purposes and keeping oneself open to the other.⁵⁵ Paul Ricoeur has written extensively on how the text can and should transform the reader. As an entity in itself it appeals to our imagination, our feelings and our perception of human relationships. For Ricoeur, engagement with the other is necessary to overcome a narcissistic self-projection of the self into the text. Religious hermeneutics involves an encounter with the wholly other, the Divine. The sacred text causes a disrupting, disorienting and confusing effect, pointing the reader to God's otherness and the fallen state of ordinary human understanding. However, there is also a reorientation, not in the sense of recovery of a coherent world of meaning, but as a dialectical relation by which the human person is transformed. Ricoeur has described the essence and unity of biblical ethics, even if it manifests itself differently, as 'economy of the gift' (*économie du don*).⁵⁶ Ethics is the unfolding of human transformation in relation to the divine. It is an economy of faith, hope and love. All three are gifts. All three are connected limit-experiences of our dialectical relation with God. Our response to God's self manifestation and gift is obedient loving, 'une obéissance aimante'.⁵⁷ Love arises out of faith. Love is the command to give to others one's own existence, which is first given by God. This logic of superabundance is the motive for all our obedience.

4. Covenantal love

One might be suspicious about the vagueness of using love as the prominent concept in understanding biblical authority. Here we are faced with a circle: It is only by studying Scripture in its entirety as a testimony of God's saving acts that we understand more about the meaning of love. Love is initiated by God and therefore our love

is always responsive. It is a covenantal love that is revealed to the full in the cross of the new covenant. This covenantal love of the new covenant forms the basis of our understanding of the moral authority of Scripture. It is a covenant of the Spirit writing the law in our hearts. Jeremiah and Ezekiel described the covenant as a radical change of the heart (Jer 31-33; Ez 36:24-29): unresponsive hearts of stone turned into hearts of flesh. It is the covenant that changes our identity; it has changed the identity of the moral subjects, the new covenantal community and the readers of the text.⁵⁸

The human heart has changed, the affections have changed, the direction of love has changed. Love changes the heart, it is formative. At the same time, it is normative. Jesus himself has set the standard, he has demonstrated love to us (John 13:34). Paul speaks about a radical transformation that enables us to discern the will of God, that which is good and perfect (Rom 12:1, 2). Love is a broad concept that incorporates our whole being as creatures of God.⁵⁹

The American ethicist Paul Ramsey (1913-1988) asserts that agape love is the predominant concept of all Christian ethics by which it can critically interact with different types of moral philosophical models. According to Ramsey, Christian ethics is about 'love transforming natural law' or 'love transforming justice'.⁶⁰ He criticises

medieval scholasticism when a theory of natural law and the ethics of Aristotle were assigned the fundamental, Christian faith and love only the second-story, position.⁶¹

Only love can have this primacy. Ramsey's understanding of Christian love is very christocentric. The reference is always Jesus himself; he is the prototype: 'My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15:12, 13). Christian love is self-emptying (kenotic) and grounded in the divine 'condescension' or self-sacrifice toward men.⁶² The main reference for all Christian ethics is the controlling love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14). Quoting Luther, Ramsey defines love as 'being Christ to our neighbors'.⁶³ So he reminds us of the fact that love should be defined by Christ himself.

For Ramsey the biblical concept of 'obedient love' is central to a distinctive Christian ethic but it needs to be explained within the larger frame of the covenant.⁶⁴ God acted first and established a covenantal relationship. Therefore our righteous-

ness cannot be limited to respect or obedience to divine authority. It goes a great deal beyond submission to divine commandments. The biblical religion is one of 'grateful obedience' or 'obedient gratitude'.⁶⁵ God has first delivered us and therefore our attitude has totally changed. Within the wider perspective of the covenant, justice is not corrective or distributive, but redemptive.⁶⁶

The hermeneutical priority of covenantal love embraces the six tendencies I discussed above. First, covenantal love tells an all-embracing (universal) narrative, but at the same time it is manifested differently in the different biblical narratives, stylistic forms and discourses. Second, love ethics is pneumatological. It is the love of the Holy Spirit that is poured in our hearts. It is through this loving Spirit we can understand the text he inspired. Third, love is manifested in the eucharistic community of the new covenant. The main distinctive of the Church is that they love as Jesus does. Only in this context do biblical words make any sense. Fourth, since we are in essence *loving beings*, a hermeneutic of love challenges us to form our character so as to love more, as Jesus did. Fifth, the priority of love has a long tradition (even though it is mainly Augustinian). Sixth, covenantal love can be used as a key concept for theological interpretation of Old and New Testament. In this sense Scripture should be understood as the book of the covenant. As Vanhoozer stressed, it is only by participation and performance in the 'drama of redemption' that we come to a full understanding of the text. 'The church is constituted – gathered and governed – by a divine covenantal initiative that is both the source of its identity and its authoritative principle.' 'Scripture is a divine covenant document before it is an ecclesial constitution';⁶⁷ a covenant document which provides 'dramatic direction' for performing Christian wisdom.⁶⁸

5. Rereading 2 Timothy 3:16-17 from the key-concept of love

What does it really signify when Scripture says: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.' (2 Tim 3:16-17)? Without the hermeneutical principle of love we are unable to understand the actual meaning of this *locus classicus* on biblical authority to the full.

The Pastoral Epistles are completely immersed

in the concept of caring love. In his first letter Paul⁶⁹ already made very clear that the goal (*telos*) of Timothy's assignment (*parangelia*) is 'love that issues from a clean heart and a good conscience and sincere faith' (1 Tim 1:5). Those three virtues, a clean heart, good conscience and sincere faith are the sources of love.⁷⁰ As Howard Marshall puts it,

agape sums up the quality which should result from obeying Paul's command or perhaps from obedience to the gospel message as a whole. It is to some extent a criteria of true preaching.⁷¹

Love is not some kind of abstract theological concept. It is very real and personal. The personal style of this letter of Paul to his successor Timothy is well demonstrated by the opening passage (2 Tim 1:3-5). Paul remembers Timothy constantly in his prayers, he really misses his young friend, his 'beloved child' (1:2) and he remembers Timothy's tears when they separated (1:4). But the circle of love and relationships is even broader than that. The apostle Paul perceives himself as someone serving God, as did his fathers (1:3). Timothy's faith is the same faith that was in his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (1:5). So the letter starts with reference to intimate love relationships. This relational, even emotional dimension should stay in the back of our minds as we interpret different passages. Yet ultimately we are reading a prayer, which involves God himself. Paul laid his hands on Timothy, but it was God who gave the gift. God is the giver of all that is needed for ministry. This is similar to what Paul Ricoeur calls the economy of the gift. This gift is a Spirit (not spirit)⁷² of 'power, love and self-control'. All three can be related to the work of the Spirit in the New Testament.⁷³ The moral authority of Scripture should be understood within this broader framework of the gift of the Spirit (pneumatological), loving relationships and ministry (ecclesial).

It is within the context of loving relationships that Paul raises the issue of the authority and inspiration of Scripture, more specifically in the context of imitation of Paul: 'Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus' (1:13,14). Vanhoozer points out that this following in Paul's footsteps is not a mechanical movement but requires personal and creative input, so as to give direction to the theo-drama.⁷⁴ It is essential that the Spirit has the freedom to lead:

The direction doctrine provides is less a matter of moral rules than of ethical aims that pertain

to the shape our freedom must take in order to realize the good. ... Doctrine thus fosters a certain ethos, or sense of the overall shape that one's life must take in order to realize the good and the beautiful.⁷⁵

Paul's aim is not to create a copy of himself, but sincere love gives freedom within the framework of a relationship. As Jean Paul Sartre would say: 'If the beloved is transformed into an automaton, the lover finds himself alone.'⁷⁶

In contrast with the false teachers, Timothy's response to Paul is to be one of obedient love. Timothy follows Paul in everything: 'you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness...' (3:10). To better understand the contrast it might be useful to take a look at the false teachers of the last days. These can be considered as people teaching Scripture falsely. They are described as people with wrong loves (3:2-4) or wrong desires. As Max Scheler would stress, all evil is caused by the intoxicated soul of erroneous loves and the disposition of 'resentment'. Paul gives a long list of eighteen vices (3:2-4) which, as George Knight rightly observes, starts and ends with 'words expressing a misdirection of love':⁷⁷ it opens with 'lovers of self' and 'lovers of money' and ends with 'lovers of pleasure instead of lovers of God'. These false teachers value the wrong things; therefore they only have the appearance of true religion (*eusebeia*), which in fact is misleading. They are not led by the desire to serve but only to fulfil their own appetites.

The passage about the 'weak women' or 'silly women' (3:6, 7) may seem somewhat bizarre, but is very interesting in light of our topic.⁷⁸ As an important part of the audience of the false teachers, 'they are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth' (3:7). They are diligent students but never learn. What they are so enticed by is religious babbling, a love for novelty and fantastic stories. Unfortunately, this is also how Scripture is used in our churches at times. Without the gospel of true love there is only blindness and 'more Bible' will not help. A 'corrupt mind' (3:8) cannot learn.

Paul provides another example and urges Timothy to keep in mind 'from whom you learned it' (3:14).⁷⁹ The circle of knowledge is as important as the knowledge itself. It is from his childhood on that Timothy 'had known the Sacred Writings' (3:15).⁸⁰ Scripture in itself is not enough. It is only

'through Jesus Christ' that it becomes a source of wisdom and salvation.

It is in this context of relationship, tradition and community of faith that Paul makes a more general statement about the Scriptures. All Scripture is God-breathed.⁸¹ The four *pros*-clauses (for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training) come together in the one *hina* clause 'so (in order) that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work' (3:17). Paul gives the ultimate purpose of Scripture's inspiration. Scripture has a divinely intended purpose for salvation.⁸² The four prepositional clauses may be said to form two groups, the first two dealing with doctrine (orthodoxy) and the second with behaviour (orthopraxy).⁸³ Timothy and all Christians can find in Scripture everything necessary to do good works.⁸⁴ The concluding phrase underlines that the servant of God will be well equipped for every kind of good work.

The general scope of this *locus classicus* on biblical authority is less about doctrine as such than it is about morality, the servant of God being equipped for charity.⁸⁵ There is a dynamic movement of the Spirit. Through the word of God the Spirit equips the servant of God to do good works and in doing so to participate in the *Missio Deo*. Because of the Word of God we can be salt and light: 'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven' (Mt 5:16).

6. Conclusion

It has been my claim in this article that postmodernity discourages us from treating the Bible as a compilation of objective facts and from seeing the ethicist's task as finding the will of God within this collection of information that consequently directs the Christian towards obedience. We need a theology and an ethic that takes the longing for authenticity and character, the appreciation of community and tradition, the recognition of canonical diversity and pneumatology and the need for theological interpretation into account. This can be done through a hermeneutic of love.

Speaking about a *hermeneutic* of love stresses the epistemological character of love (1 John 4). Love is the lens through which we understand the world (Augustine). To loving beings, love comes first, before intellect and will (value personalism). In biblical perspective, we speak of covenantal love. The relationship between God and humanity is

initiated by God but it requires a human response: obedient love (Ramsey). Within this covenant of obedient love we find the answer to our inquiry into the nature of the moral authority of Scripture.

This broader theological framework helps us to understand the meaning of 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Bible is not so much a sourcebook of facts and principle that we have to apply in our contemporary context. It is first of all a testimony of covenantal love that we read and understand in a community of love. It is only from a desire to serve our neighbour in love by good works that we have access to the depth and richness of Scripture.

Kierkegaard rightly asserted that love is a divine and incomprehensible mystery. However, the works of love may be perceived, they form the observable fruit. Kierkegaard quotes 1 John 3:18, 'Let us not love in word and speech, but in deed and truth.'⁸⁶ Words are only the leaves of the tree: they already give some idea of its nature, but the final test is in the acts, the fruits. It is only within the wider context of our loving acts that Scripture makes sense in a moral discourse.

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Notes

- 1 This article based on a paper presented at the conference of FEET, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians, in Berlin (August, 2012). All Scripture passages are taken from the NIV.
- 2 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics I, Prolegomena* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 402.
- 3 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 436.
- 4 FEET and the Evangelical Theological Society especially; see research done by Packer and Oden: J. Packer, *One Faith: The evangelical consensus* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 2004).
- 5 C.H. Cosgrove, 'Scripture in Ethics: A History' in *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*. Kindle location 2117.
- 6 This becomes obvious in light of the vast amount of literature on this subject. Recently Joel B. Green et al., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011) was published. A few years ago FEET gave wide attention to B. Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), and an entire issue of the *EJT* (18.2, 2009) was devoted to this work about using the Psalms in the moral discourse.
- 7 'Symbola Evangelica', Evangelical Alliance, 1846, article 1. [Cf. Schirmacher in the present issue, 67 (ed.)]
- 8 Princeton theologians were influenced by the Scottish Common Sense Realism of Thomas Reid. Cf. Mark Noll, *The Princeton Theology, 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).
- 9 Carl F.H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 209-218.
- 10 Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 149.
- 11 Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 437-458.
- 12 Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 359. Italics mine.
- 13 Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 360. Italics mine.
- 14 We think particularly of the discussion about the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, on which see <http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI.shtml>.
- 15 Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005) 26.
- 16 See e.g. B. Howe, 'Authority and Power' in Green et al., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*.
- 17 See Bruce C. Birch, 'Scripture in ethics, methodological issues 6' in Green et al., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*.
- 18 Patrick Nullens, *The Matrix of Christian Ethics: Integrating Philosophy and Moral Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2010).
- 19 Patrick Nullens, 'Value Personalism as a Lens to Read the Ten Commandments' in *Das Heilige Herz der Tora. Festschrift für Hendrik Koorevaar zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Aachen: Shaker, 2011).
- 20 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).
- 21 Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).
- 22 Both theologians have grown in status among evangelical scholars.
- 23 John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 13.
- 24 Webster, *Holy Scripture*, 16.
- 25 Especially interesting in connection with Paul's former words about Scripture in Romans 15:4, 5. See also A. Verhey, *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).
- 26 Hans Frei specifically emphasises the theme of identity in his book *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).
- 27 The Church is the narrative-formed community which faithfully remembers God's care for his creation, the calling of Israel and the life of Jesus;

- see Stanley Hauerwas, 'The Moral Authority of Scripture: the Politics and Ethics of Remembering', *Interpretation* 34.4 (1980) 356–370; Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); and Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture: Freeing the Bible from Captivity to America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).
- 28 Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture*.
- 29 Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: a Study in Theological Ethics* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975); also Gilbert Meilaender (Lutheran) and Jean Porter (Roman Catholic).
- 30 See e.g. T.C. Oden, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001); C.A. Hall, *Reading Scripture With the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998); and Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).
- 31 Donald A.D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 1990); C. van der Kooi, E. van Staalduijn-Sulman and A.W. Zwiep (eds), *Evangelical Theology in Transition: Essays Under the Auspices of the Center of Evangelical and Reformation Theology (CERT)* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2012).
- 32 Theological interpretation does not buy into the traditional modernistic biblical criticism that has created an ugly ditch between biblical interpretation and theology; see Kevin Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005) 19–25.
- 33 As Richard Hays submits, we must be actively engaged in 'metaphor making' – putting the life of our community 'imaginatively within the world articulated by the texts'; see Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation. A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1996) 6.
- 34 Hays speaks of key images rather than concepts or doctrines; Hays, *Moral Vision*, 193–214.
- 34 Karl Barth, *Das Christliche Leben: Die Kirchliche Dogmatik IV.4, Fragmente aus dem Nachlass, Vorlesungen 1959–1961* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976) 356. In a note Barth refers to the fact that Calvin never advocated any form of religious war in France.
- 35 G.B. Kelley and F.B. Nelson, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theological Interpretation of Scripture for the Church', *Ex Auditu* 17 (2001) 1–30.
- 36 On the importance of Psalm 119 for Bonhoeffer's Ethics see Brian Brock, 'Bonhoeffer and the Bible in Christian Ethics: Psalm 119, the Mandates, and Ethics as a "Way"', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 18.3 (2005) 7–29.
- 37 For a discussion of the role of a 'key conceptual model' in systematic theology, see Vincent Brümmer, *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- 38 See the introduction of Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*.
- 39 E.M.W. Pedersen, 'This Is Not About Sex? A Discussion of the Understanding of Love and Grace in Bernard of Clairvaux's and Martin Luther's Theologies', *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 50.1 (2011) 15–25.
- 40 S. Pardue, 'Athens and Jerusalem Once More: What the Turn to Virtue Means for Theological Exegesis', *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4.2 (2010) 294–308.
- 41 For literature on a hermeneutical interpretation of this expression see C.H. Cosgrove, *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 158.
- 42 Birger Gerhardsson, 'The Hermeneutic Program in Matthew 22:37–40' in Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly and Robin Scroggs (eds), *Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious cultures in late antiquity: essays in honor of William David Davies* (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 129–150, quoted in D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (Word BC; Nashville: Nelson, 2004) 643.
- 43 Par. xxxv, xxxvi, see also E.L. Fortin, 'Augustine and the Hermeneutics of Love: Some Preliminary Considerations' in Richard J. Neuhaus (ed.), *Augustine Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 35–59; J.B. Pool, 'No Entrance into Truth Except Through Love: Contributions from Augustine of Hippo to a Contemporary Christian Hermeneutic of Love' in *Review and Expositor* 101.4 (2004) 629–666; Cosgrove, *Appealing to Scripture*.
- 44 Book 1, par. 36.
- 45 Book 3, par. 15; see also Cosgrove, *Appealing to Scripture*.
- 46 Pool contrasts this with the classic scholastic *fides quarens intellectum*; Pool, 'No Entrance into Truth', 633.
- 47 K.J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007); D.L. Cubie, 'Wesley's Theology of Love' in *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20.1 (1985) 122–154.
- 48 Bernard, *Saint Bernard on the love of God* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1972).
- 49 Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746); Ki Joo Choi, 'The Role of Perception in Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought: The Nature of True Virtue Reconsidered' in *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38.2 (2010) 269–296.
- 50 S. Kierkegaard, *Works of love* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2009) 27.
- 51 Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 33.

- 52 A. Deeken, *Process and Permanence in Ethics: Max Scheler's Moral Philosophy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974) 32.
- 53 This ties in with Scheler's anthropology, where the capacity for self-transcendence is characteristic of humans as dynamic beings who are able to reach beyond themselves with the capacity to love.
- 54 Eugene Kelly, *Material Ethics of Value: Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann* (Dordrecht etc.: Springer, 2011); Christine Tappolet, *Émotions et valeurs* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2000).
- 55 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen 1960); *ET Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 2006) 10-15.
- 56 J. Wall, 'The Economy of the Gift: Paul Ricoeur's Significance for Theological Ethics', *Journal of Religious Ethics* 29.2 (2001) 235.
- 57 André Lacocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Penser la Bible* (Paris: Seuil, 2003) 166.
- 58 Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) 413-417.
- 59 I am critical about Nygren's distinction between *eros* and *agape*. *Agape* love can't be disconnected from an erotic creational dimension. There is always a biological and social element. See also Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Pedersen, 'This Is Not About Sex?'
- 60 Christ transforming the natural law is the unifying theme of Paul Ramsey, *Nine Modern Moralists* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962) 3.
- 61 Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics* (New York: Scribner, 1950 / London: SCM, 1953) 184.
- 62 Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, 20.
- 63 Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, 21.
- 64 The centrality of the covenant for understanding love and even the human person is currently confirmed by the work of the Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann. The self is, as one of his books is entitled, the 'covenanted self'; Walter Brueggemann, *The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).
- 65 Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, 13.
- 66 The parable in Matthew 18:27 illustrates this well.
- 67 Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 133.
- 68 Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 104.
- 69 On authorship of Paul, see G.W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A commentary on the Greek text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 21-56; and Peter Walker, 'Revisiting the Pastoral Epistles', Part I, *European Journal of Theology* 21.1 (2012) 4-16; part II *EJT* 21.2 (2012) 120-132.
- 70 W.D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: Nelson, 2000).
- 71 I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999) 369; see also Galatians 5:6.
- 72 In relationship to the laying on of hands – the divine charisma – and similar constructions (1 Cor 2:12; Rom 8:15), we agree with Gordon Fee that it refers to the Holy Spirit and not just a human spirit (attitude); see Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994) 786-788.
- 73 The contrast is with cowardice. The Spirit gives us a courageous, loving and wise character; power of the Spirit (Eph 3:16; Rom 15:18-19); love of the Spirit (Rom 5:5; 15:30; Col 1:8; Gal 5:22). Self-control (σωφρονισμός) only appears here in the NT, but it refers more broadly to wisdom as it is manifested in moderation, discretion and discipline. It can be related to the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) (Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 372). It can also be described as 'balanced judgment' or 'clear and reasonable understanding', see R. Saarinen, *The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon & Jude* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008) 124, especially Appendix A 'Moderation of emotion', 233-241; and Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182-191.
- 74 ποτύπωσις means a 'sketch, model or pattern' of something.
- 75 Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 105.
- 76 Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956) 357, quoted and discussed by Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 160.
- 77 Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 430.
- 78 Pejorative γυναικάρια.
- 79 The 'all' includes grandmother, mother and Paul.
- 80 Referring to the Old Testament.
- 81 Passive meaning; see B.B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of Bible* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: P & R Publishing, 1948) 294.
- 82 Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 794.
- 83 Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.
- 84 Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 571.
- 85 However, we should not separate doctrine from morality. Indeed Scripture is useful for sound doctrine (*didaskalia*) but in 1 Timothy 1:10, 'the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars and perjurers' is contrary to sound doctrine.
- 86 Kierkegaard, *Works of love*, 29.

The End of Reason: New Atheists and the Bible

Yannick Imbert

RÉSUMÉ

Le Nouvel Athéisme est maintenant devenu un phénomène social et culturel. Grâce à ses principaux porte-parole, Richard Dawkins, Peter Hitchens, Daniel Dennett et Sam Harris, les « Quatre cavaliers » du Nouvel Athéisme, celui-ci est aussi devenu un phénomène appelant une réponse apologétique publique. Après une brève présentation des arguments principaux du « Nouvel Athéisme », cet article explore les représentations bibliques caricaturales souvent caractéristiques de leurs écrits. Il fait alors apparaître leur « herméneutique utilitariste » comme l'un des éléments fondamentaux

de leur critique de la foi chrétienne. Ensuite, l'article évalue la méthode de reconstruction théologique des « nouveaux athées », laquelle les conduit à remettre en question toute entreprise théologique. Cette partie indique que le manque d'arguments théologiques et logiques solides, dans la perspective critique du « Nouvel Athéisme », pourrait bien être synonyme de démission de la raison. Enfin, l'auteur conclut en mentionnant trois principaux chantiers apologétiques sur lesquels le « Nouvel Athéisme » nous convie à œuvrer : celui de la compréhension de notre société, celui de l'unité de l'Église, et celui de la défense de la légitimité du langage religieux.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Neue Atheismus ist heutzutage zu einem sozialen und kulturellen Phänomen geworden. Durch seine Hauptvertreter, die selbsternannten „Vier Reiter“ Richard Dawkins, Peter Hitchens, Daniel Dennett und Sam Harris, wurde er auch zu einer offenen apologetischen Herausforderung. Dieser Artikel legt zunächst kurz die grundlegenden Anklagen der Neuen Atheisten dar und untersucht die falsche Darstellung der Bibel, die so häufig charakteristisch für ihre Schriften ist. Dabei tritt die funktionale Hermeneutik deutlich hervor, welche die Grundlage ihrer Kritik am christlichen Glauben darstellt.

Im Anschluss daran betrachten wir die Methode der theologischen Rekonstruktion, wie sie von den Neuen Atheisten verwendet wird. Sie führt letztlich dazu, dass jegliches theologische Unterfangen in Frage gestellt wird. Als Schlussfolgerung daraus ergibt sich, dass der Mangel an soliden theologischen und logischen Argumenten, wie ihn die Kritik der Neuen Atheisten ausweist, so gut wie dem Ende der Vernunft gleichkommt. Der Artikel weist schließlich auf die drei hauptsächlichen Herausforderungen hin, die an den christlichen Glauben gestellt werden: das Verständnis der Gesellschaft, der Dienst an der Einheit der Kirche und der legitime Gebrauch religiöser Sprache.

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SUMMARY

The New Atheism has become a social and cultural phenomenon. Through its main spokesmen, Richard Dawkins, Peter Hitchens, Daniel Dennett and Sam Harris, the self-proclaimed 'Four Horsemen', it has also become an open challenge to Christian apologetics. After a brief presentation of the basic grievances of the New Atheists, this article first surveys the misrepresentation of the Bible which often characterises their writings. In doing so, their one-sided hermeneutics will clearly appear as founda-

tional to their criticism of the Christian faith. Second, we explore the method of the New Atheists' theological reconstruction which leads to their questioning of all theological endeavour. This part concludes that the lack of solid theological and logical arguments in the New Atheists' criticisms could well be synonymous with the end of reason. The article finally mentions three main challenges to the Christian faith: those of understanding our society, of serving the unity of the Church, and of legitimising the use of religious language.

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1. Introduction¹

Since the first publication, in 2004, of Sam Harris's *The End of Reason* we have witnessed the rise of a

cultural and philosophical position known as the 'New Atheism'. It rapidly became a social phenomenon with the subsequent publication of Richard

Dawkins' *The God Delusion* (2006), Daniel Dennett's *Breaking the Spell* (also 2006) and Christopher Hitchens' *God is not Great* (2007). These four books together form the English 'canon' of New Atheism.² To these we should add Harris' *Letter to a Christian Nation* (2006), Victor Stenger's *God: The Failed Hypothesis* (2007) and Dan Barker's *Godless* (2008); A.C. Grayling's *Against All Gods* (2007) had much influence in the U.K. as did Michel Onfray's *Atheist Manifesto* (2007) in France.

The four main promoters of this informal atheist movement, Dawkins, Hitchens, Dennett and Harris, were labelled by Dawkins the 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' as if to mark the end of all religion and of the Christian faith in particular.³ According to a 2007 Wall Street Journal article following the publication of Hitchens' *God is not Great*, 'atheism's newest champions have sold close to a million books'.⁴ This impressive number indicates that, at the very least, New Atheism is a cultural phenomenon not to be blindly disregarded. This, in fact, is what two authors, Bradley and Tate, have argued in their investigation of the philosophical and literary connections of the New Atheism. Exploring the reasons behind the incredible rise of the Four Horsemen in just four years, they conclude that the main reason does not lie in the realm of philosophical or scientific analysis but in the realm of social imagination.⁵ Indeed, 'it might be more convincing to see the *New Atheism* as a response to a very specific cultural and political climate: the so-called return to the religious in the supposedly secular West'.⁶ Certainly, the renewed visibility of religion in western societies forms the background of New Atheism, especially after the 9/11 attacks and the rise of Christian and Islamic fundamentalism. Indeed, the New Atheists have not missed the chance to capitalise on what they saw as the evil done in the name of inherent evil religions.⁷

Against this cultural background, some have questioned the expression New Atheism: what precisely is new: their arguments or something else? In fact, the New Atheism's novelty lies more in the social context from which it came than in the persuasiveness of the arguments. In this respect, they are children of their age, an age of emotional non-argumentation. Thus the fear expressed by some Christian thinkers regarding the strength of New Atheist writers is partly misplaced, as is the case with Peter Hitchens' statement that Philip Pullman, an atheist writer of fantasy books, was

'the most dangerous author in Britain' – as if an average work of fantasy literature could endanger one's faith.⁸ Peter Hitchens, a celebrated journalist,⁹ brother to the late Christopher Hitchens and himself *former* atheist, gives Pullman and other New Atheists writers too much credit.¹⁰

Although the necessity to engage with the New Atheists does not come from the need to respond to any cogent argument against the existence of the biblical God, the challenges posed by these writers are nonetheless serious.¹¹ Reviewers have noted that despite being received with ridicule by many theologians, the New Atheists cannot be easily dismissed. They have also pointed to the noteworthy questions that appear in the New Atheists' attacks on Christianity; questions that should in their opinion challenge every honest Christian believer.¹² Even though I agree that the questions are *at times* worthy of interest, they might not pose a threat to every Christian. As we shall see, most of the New Atheists' best attacks against Scripture, for example, are not the result of careful consideration. However, because the New Atheists have a social voice and regularly misquote Scripture, we need to consider their *use* of Scripture and the challenges before us.

2. The rise of Bible utilitarians

2.1 New Atheism's misrepresentations of the Bible

One of the most striking features of the New Atheists' use of the Bible is their almost exclusive use of the Old Testament in general, and the Book of Deuteronomy in particular, to attack the Christian faith. To the New Atheists, the God who revealed himself at the Sermon on the Mount is also the God of the Old Testament that some would describe as guilty of premeditated mass-murder. Like the other three Horsemen, Hitchens makes much use of the so-called genocides of the Old Testament, in which he finds the essential nature of the biblical God.¹³ Commenting on Numbers 31:17 ('Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that has known a man by lying with him'), a passage concerned with regulation for war against the Midianites, Hitchens concludes:

Now this is certainly not the worst of the genocidal incitements that occurs in the Old Testament ... but it has an element of lasciviousness that makes it slightly too obvious what the rewards of a freebooting soldier could be.¹⁴

Suffice to say that Hitchens never really tries to explore the meanings of the key concept of *herem*; he is merely content with quoting crude descriptions of biblical violence.¹⁵

To the New Atheists, Old Testament violence has always been an argument of choice to support the impossibility of belief in God. Under Harris' pen, even the Golden Rule becomes trivially ridiculed:

We read the Golden Rule and judge it to be a brilliant distillation of many of our ethical impulses. And then we come across another of God's teachings on morality: if a man discovers on his wedding night that his bride is not a virgin, he must stone her to death on her father's doorstep (Deuteronomy 22:13-21).¹⁶

Such violence infuriates the New Atheists and according to them justifies dismissing any positive reference to the New Testament.

In fact, the New Atheists often take the Bible's depictions of human sin to be positive accounts, as if God himself approved, even recommended, these actions.¹⁷ This use of Scripture is again *utilitarian* in nature, disregarding the obvious meaning of texts to suits their needs – as in the case of the last three chapters (19-21) of the book of Judges. Hitchens can then conclude: 'The Bible may, indeed does, contain a warrant for trafficking in humans, for ethnic cleansing, for slavery, for bride-price, and for indiscriminate massacre ...'¹⁸ Hitchens seems to blame the Bible for merely reporting and describing cruel events. If this becomes the norm, reporters and journalists should be forbidden to report on wars, famine, genocides or even poverty; maybe Hitchens himself should be blamed for reporting on wars throughout the world.¹⁹

The sheer nonsense of this proposition is obvious. It is, however, the hermeneutical method of the New Atheists: the mentioning or reporting of violence is taken to be the justification of violence. Again, Bible passages are used in a rather strange *utilitarian* way; there is no consistent presentation of the Old and New Testaments, nor is there any regard for historical developments in God's revelation.²⁰

Despite their simplistic and literalistic use of the Bible, the New Atheists are challenging.²¹ We could of course deny this by (rightly) saying that if they offer no critical interpretation of the Old Testament, they have not proven anything – they have merely quoted a few sensational, violent pas-

sages for emotional purposes. Indeed, they have successfully psychologically influenced their audience without making any cogent demonstration. Nonetheless, their use of the Old Testament needs to be challenged because their goal is to demonstrate that violence is inherent to the Christian faith. We need to re-explain those passages. We do not need to answer the New Atheists, who clearly do not care much about theological understanding, but we need to reach those attracted to their arguments and realise that for all of our talk about fulfilment in Christ, the usual explanations may not seem legitimate to most people. The New Atheists challenge us to present our biblical scholarship in contemporary and popular terms.

In fact, the New Atheists also challenge our christological reading of the Old Testament by regularly attacking Christian theologians for their selective and inconsistent reading of Scripture and of the Old Testament in particular. Sam Harris, for example, states that Christians can only argue that stoning an adulteress to death was not practised anymore because they read the Old Testament selectively. Whatever we may think of the strength of his argument, we must recognise that, at the very least, he and the other Horsemen challenge us to present a defence of our own reading. Such a defence should use the concept of history of redemption, which I take to be the most important framework for interpreting both testaments.

Interestingly, the New Atheists often present themselves as expert exegetes even though most of them never had any formal training in either Greek or biblical Hebrew. As an example, let us consider Hitchens' use of Psalm 121. He points out that

the celebrated opening of psalm 121, for example – 'I shall lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help' – is rendered in English as a statement but in the original takes the form of a question: where is the help coming from?²²

The statement that the Psalm should begin with a question is no doubt a cutting remark directed at theologians of all confessions²³ but Hitchens overlooks several crucial factors. He is unaware that most translators do actually translate Psalm 121:1 as a question; this is the case for the following translations: the ESV, the Jerusalem Bible, the NIV, the ASV, the Darby Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the New Life Version, the Wycliffe Bible and Young's Literal Translation ... among others, and only in the English language. Only the

Douay Rheims and the King James Version have translated verse 1 as a statement. Hence Hitchens' assertion that verse 1 is rendered as a statement does not stand scrutiny. Although he poses as an expert exegete, he does not even consider the actual translations worth checking.²⁴

Harris makes an even better case for evaluating the New Atheists' use of Scripture. The youngest of the Four Horsemen regularly attacks the 'God of Abraham' as if Abraham were the archetype of biblical violence and wickedness. Of course, if Harris ever wanted to misrepresent the Bible, he could have chosen a better example to suit his purposes: Moses (the choice of Dawkins and Hitchens). It is indeed a rather unusual reading of Genesis that leads him to take 'the God of Abraham' as the best example of religious intolerance. Let us, for counter-argument's sake, mention that Abraham enters into an alliance with foreign nations and that he is called to be a blessing for all nations. One should also remember that the 'God of Abraham' even blesses Ishmael and his descendants; strange indeed for a God of religious intolerance!

Harris' arguments rest on isolated quotations from disconnected texts as if a collection of verses could make a solid case against the God of Scripture. His use of the Bible can be summarised in the following manner:

- (1) the Old Testament says A
- (2) the New Testament says B
- (3) therefore the OT and the NT are false

As if there was no possible literary, logical and theological relationship between the two testaments. There is not the beginning of an argument to show, even at a distance, the relation between the premises and the conclusion. This strikingly mistaken form of reasoning unfortunately plagues the writings of all the New Atheists.²⁵

2.2 New Atheism's theological reconstruction

Based on their utilitarian reading of the Bible, the New Atheists often provide a criticism of Christian theology, which they cannot but despise – Harris calls theology 'ignorance with wings'.²⁶ The New Atheists use the same non-rational method to attack Christian theology as they use against the Bible. In Hitchens' chapter 'The Metaphysical Claims of Religion are False'²⁷ the 'proof' consists only in a random enumeration of Scripture verses summarised in the following argument: 'Another explanation is possible hence, the religious explanation is false.'²⁸ This is another logically faulty

argument: brandishing a naturalistic theory does not necessarily entail that religious explanations are false. Hitchens would first have to disprove the religious explanation and, second, prove the naturalistic one to be true.

The New Atheists' favourite theological target is the doctrine of revelation. André Comte-Sponville, the second main representative of New Atheism in France, asks rhetorically:

Which father would be content, in order to raise his children, with a word given to other people, dead for centuries, a word that would be transmitted only by equivocal or dubious texts?²⁹

But Comte-Sponville forgets to tell us what he would rather have and leaves the reader with a deconstructive argument. Moreover, his ignorance of theology blinds him to a crucial point of which every student in theology is aware: that providence, inspiration and the work of the Spirit also account for the authority and continuous relevance of Scripture. Yet despite this caricature, Comte-Sponville's assertion challenges our theological interpretation and demands that we clarify our reasons for maintaining our doctrine of revelation.

However, such theological considerations would certainly be too much to ask from the New Atheists. In fact they are satisfied with observing that there is a diversity of religious revelations. Hitchens, for example, notes that:

Since all of these revelations, many of them hopelessly inconsistent, cannot by definition be simultaneously true, it must follow that some of them are false and illusory. It could also follow that only one of them is authentic, but in the first place this seems dubious and in the second place it appears to necessitate religious war in order to decide whose revelation is the true one.³⁰

He makes three remarkable mistakes. The *first* is to posit a logical relationship between 'there is a diversity of revelations' and 'that one can be true is dubious'. Certainly, Hitchens would not reason in the same way with scientific explanations: the diversity of scientific models does not say anything about the validity of such models.

His *second* logical mistake is that his argument seems to run like this: if several revelations exist, then all of them are false; or in syllogistic form:

- (1) given A
- (2) given B

(3) therefore A and B are both false

Of course, he immediately indicates that he cannot draw such a conclusion and that the diversity of revelations might still allow for one of them to be true. However, he refutes this possibility by stating that this would necessarily entail religious war. Here is his *third* mistake: an error of categories. His conclusion, briefly stated, is that the diversity of revelations (and consequently of religions) necessitates that they eradicate each others until only one remains: if one is true, it will annihilate the competing options. Here he mistakenly takes a metaphysical and epistemological statement ('there is only one revelation') to be a socio-political one. Instead of reading this statement as meaning the certainty (epistemology) that only one revelation is true, he reads it to mean that only one must remain socially.³¹ There are other examples of the same simplistic argumentation against revelation.³²

Other kinds of arguments used by the New Atheists are psychological explanations, especially in the case of the New Testament, and of Paul in particular. In this respect, Michel Onfray is a perfect example. In his public courses on the history of philosophy given at the Popular University of Caen, Onfray draws heavily on a psychosomatic analysis of Paul's religion along Nietzschean lines. To put it simply, because Paul was, by his own account, weak and irremediably sick, he developed a theology of weakness and destruction of the body.

What is highly remarkable here is that, ironically, Onfray is one of the few New Atheists to take the New Testament texts for granted. Indeed, he has only two options to construct his account of Paul's theology. His first option is to accept the Pauline epistles as reliable. In this case, he can build a critique of Christianity based on Paul's psychosomatic obsessions. But in this case his intellectual honesty – if he has any – requires that he allows theologians to build alternative explanations based on a wider range of New Testament texts such as 1 Corinthians 13. His second option is to consider the New Testament accounts as *not* reliable. In this case, and by logical consequence, Onfray must refrain from presenting a reconstruction of Pauline theology based on non-reliable documents! But in the end Onfray chooses the inconsistent route of relying on non-receivable texts to build a biographical account of Paul's theology. In this, his Nietzschean hermeneutics proves its limits.

To conclude this first part, the New Atheists

are obvious witnesses to the rise of emotional reason.³³ As David Bentley Hart rightly summarises, 'Sensation sells better than reason.' If they gain more influence in the years to come, the challenge to the Christian faith will become more significant, but not for sound philosophical reasons. We will probably see an emotional extremism rise from the ashes of rational atheism. This new wave of atheism will be non-argumentative, willingly offensive and radically condescending.³⁴ There is no proper way to describe New Atheism other than pointing to its long and excruciatingly painful descent into triviality and narcissism.³⁵

Unfortunately, the contemporary fascination yields two alarming conclusions: first, that 'sensationalism sells better than sense'³⁶ and second that 'it probably says more than it is comfortable to know about the relative vapidness of our culture that we have lost the capacity to produce profound belief'.³⁷ At any rate, the New Atheism could well be synonymous with the end of reason.

3. Apologetic challenges

3.1 The challenge of understanding the society

In this second part I want to draw key apologetic points from the above. The first challenge is simply that of understanding our society. As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, there is considerable debate regarding whether the New Atheism adds anything new to atheistic thought. I, for one, do not think it has more to offer as criticism of religion, and Christianity in particular, than previous atheistic philosophical movements. One of its rare claims to novelty is that they advance their position on the basis of radically materialistic thought. But they do not provide, in my opinion, any consistent construction of a new atheistic philosophy.³⁸

However, we should also evaluate the importance of the New Atheism by looking at its audience. In fact, this is most likely the main novelty. The conditions of belief in our hypermodern western societies are significantly different from the context of atheist thinkers such as Albert Camus or Jean-Paul Sartre.³⁹ Previous atheist thinkers were more willing to engage with religion at an intellectual level as they were willing to debate the reality of the human predicament.⁴⁰ There was a time of erosion of certitude, but also of serious philosophical and rational investigation, as well as of social disorder. Our socio-cultural context has

dramatically changed: new generations are much less conscious of the necessity of presenting a consistent position, most likely because of the erosion of rational truth in favour of a diversity of narrative truths. Moreover, our age of cynicism and emotionalism keeps many people from engaging in critical thinking. It is therefore no surprise to find that the contemporary audience is eager to read books that offer no reasoned account for the truth of atheism or for the falsity of religion. Hence the first challenge does not come from the New Atheist writers themselves but from understanding contemporary culture, society and people. At the end, it is only because people read their books that the New Atheists are well known, and not because of their philosophical insights!

This brings us to the issue of vernacular theological language. A key thing we learn from the New Atheists is that the language we use accounts for much of our relevance in society. We have often stressed the necessity of a consistent and true worldview over against the need to be understood, even at a very basic and popular level. But I suspect that this concern of ours is not shared by most of our contemporaries. The success of the New Atheists shows that people are willing to be inconsistent as long as they *understand* that other people stand for the same inconsistency – as long as they *understand* that they belong to an accepted social community. Maybe we need an equivalent to Dawkins, who holds the Chair of the Public Understanding of Science.⁴¹ Colleagues in the area of biblical studies, we may need a Chair for the Public Understanding of Biblical Interpretation.

3.2 The challenge to the unity of the Church

Secondly, the New Atheists ironically and unwittingly appear to be a real challenge to the unity of the Church. This is not because their positions pose a serious threat to the Church but because of the answers given by theologians. Answering the New Atheism, theologians have engaged their writings in a variety of ways. Among the best responses ranks David Bentley Hart's *Atheist Delusions* which points to serious mistakes in the New Atheists' scholarship but also provides detailed answers to the main questions of the Four Horsemen. Alister McGrath has also produced several good responses to the New Atheists' challenge. Other theologians have chosen a simpler path, pointing to the limitations and inherent simplistic caricature on the part of the New Atheists.⁴²

Yet other theologians have engaged in what I

am convinced is a necessary and crucially important field: that of hermeneutical presuppositions. For example, Tina Beattie, professor of Catholic Studies at Roehampton, argues in her *The New Atheists* that the main representative atheist writers are no threat to the mainline Christian church because their attacks are directed at a specific part of Christianity, Fundamentalism.⁴³ To her, the New Atheists mistakenly read the Bible in the same way Fundamentalists do: they read the Bible as if it was historical. Her conclusion is clear: we should choose to take 'the Bible as fiction, but fiction worth reading'.⁴⁴ Beattie also reminds her readers that even though Christian theologians have successfully answered the New Atheists on their own ground, they have in doing so overlooked the real challenges internal to the Christian community. In this respect Beattie may well be correct. However, one should not revisit the nature of Scripture merely because of social challenges but on exegetical and hermeneutical grounds – biblical studies and systematic theology always go hand in hand. Yet, nothing in the New Atheists' writings necessitates revisiting the nature of Scripture.

Beattie is not the only scholar to make such claims. In *God and the New Atheism* John Haught also shows that the New Atheists have adopted the same obsolete hermeneutics as Christian Fundamentalists:

Here again it is only because he embraces a creationist hermeneutical method that Dennett can claim so triumphantly that evolutionary biology has exposed Genesis as a mere fossil.⁴⁵

I believe Haught is mistaken. If Dennett can claim that evolutionary biology has exposed Genesis – and other specifics of the Christian faith – as mere fraud or legend, it is not because of a so-called creationist hermeneutic but because Dennett has, like all other New Atheists, adopted a materialist epistemology and metaphysical foundation.⁴⁶ Moreover, Haught's reference to a 'creationist hermeneutic' is a red herring. It would seem that Haught's point is clear enough: Creationists are the chosen opponents of the New Atheists. However, to refer to a specific 'creationist' hermeneutics is misleading for it has no methodological reality. There is of course a 'creationist' reading of, say, Genesis 1-3, but there is no 'creationist hermeneutic'.

What is at stake in the New Atheists' criticism is not a particular reading of the Bible but the mere existence of the Bible as Word of God – no matter

how you explain this. Haught and Beattie are in this respect blind to the fact that the New Atheists' attacks are not prevented by claiming that only the Fundamentalists hold to such and such biblical claims. If that was the case, one would have to defend the Christian position by showing that only Fundamentalists believe God to be Creator (by supernatural or natural processes) of the universe, that Christ has ever historically existed, that he died and was raised from the dead. But I take it that not only American Christian Fundamentalists believe in these particular doctrinal points.⁴⁷ Of course, the danger here would be to warrant the New Atheists' charges on these grounds. I am convinced that Haught gives too much ground to the New Atheists.⁴⁸ In fact, we should always be suspicious when someone argues against any given position merely because of its supposed 'anachronistic' nature, as if the past could not convey truth. In many ways, what Haught rejects as 'obsolete theology' is obsolete because it never existed.

I said that the second challenge was the preservation of the unity of the Church. Indeed, Beattie and Haught are eager to separate themselves from 'Christian Fundamentalism' because they think they have found a perfect line of defence. The New Atheists attack Christian Fundamentalism, not Christianity itself. In doing so, they unintentionally but irremediably threaten the unity of the Church by ostracising one tradition of the Christian Church. In many ways Haught and Beattie's responses to the New Atheists are as much a challenge for us as the New Atheists themselves. When taking up the New Atheists' challenges, we should not forget that our words should not endanger the unity of the Church.

3.3 Feuerbach and the challenge of religious language

The third challenge is that of religious language. The New Atheists seem not to care for precise argumentation because to them religious language is not worth discussing. In this respect, some of them, particularly French New Atheists, rely heavily on Ludwig Feuerbach's theory of religion. Incidentally, it is remarkable that Hitchens does not include any text by Feuerbach in his collection of essential atheist readings, *The Portable Atheist*.⁴⁹ The absence of Feuerbach is an interesting indication of the differences between continental and Anglo-Saxon philosophical traditions, especially if one keeps in mind the more existential direction of continental atheists compared to the scientific

atheism of Dawkins and the like.

So the present challenge comes from Feuerbach's theory of the emptiness of religious language. He is a more serious influence than some Christian theologians and apologists have yet acknowledged. Moreover, of those who have hinted at the possible influence of Feuerbach, many have at times seriously misread the German philosopher. Tina Beattie, for example, thinks that Feuerbach's theory that religion is a projection of human desire can be summarised this way: 'the associations between masculinity and divinity mean that Christian beliefs about God are influenced by masculine fantasies and projections'.⁵⁰ This is a serious misrepresentation of Feuerbach's theory of 'projection' for even a superficial and cursory reading of his work shows that when he refers to 'man's projection' he does not have in mind a *gendered* notion but a *universal* one.⁵¹ Religion is the projection of humanity's desires, not masculinity's desires.⁵² As Nathan Hilberg, professor of philosophy of religion at the University of Pittsburgh, indicates:

when Feuerbach wrote about God, he was not referring to the God typically associated with the Western theistic tradition: the Creator of heavens and the earth, for example. Rather, by 'God,' Feuerbach was describing a projection of our *species-consciousness*.⁵³

Projection of desires is one of the basic tenets of his understanding of the nature and rise of religion. Desire is the origin of the gods. This particular point is clear in his *Theogony* (1857) and can be considered his most elaborate explanation of the religious phenomenon. In *The Essence of Christianity* his conclusion is even clearer: the root of religion itself is desire, not understood morally but *metaphysically*.⁵⁴ This metaphysical desire is what Neusch also calls will to live, self-development or the instinct for happiness. This desire for happiness is, according to his reading of Feuerbach, the deepest layer within humankind.⁵⁵

This clarifies what Feuerbach means when he famously concludes that 'the secret of theology is anthropology'.⁵⁶ Everything begins with his statement that 'all therefore which, in the point of view of metaphysical, transcendental speculation and religion, has the significance only of the secondary, the subjective, the medium, the organ – has in truth the significance of the primary, of the essence, of the object itself'.⁵⁷ The complexity of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* precludes the

possibility of presenting a simple summary but one thing stands out from the previous quote: everything that is predicated of God, must be predicated of the human essence. Everything that belongs to the human nature – the secondary – is in fact primary, that is, it belongs to the human nature in the primary sense. Humans possess love, goodness, etc. not by virtue of being created by God but by and in themselves. All other divine attributes are only desires to transcend the limitations of the human species (or species-consciousness).⁵⁸

Hence for Feuerbach, the essential organs of religions bear witness to the essential subject of human essence. This means that if feeling is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is an expression of feeling; but also, and more importantly, that if humanity is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is an expression of human nature. In this sense, Feuerbach has simply taken a radical anthropological understanding of the incarnation. Barth, for example, perceptively notes that when Feuerbach identifies human essence and divine essence, he merely claims to be part of the Lutheran tradition.⁵⁹ This, for Barth, is mainly the result of a Lutheran stress on the elevation of Christ's human nature.⁶⁰ If, for Feuerbach, the true nature of religion is the study of human nature, it entails that the proper object of religion is not God but something the notion of God has subjectively hidden from our view. In fact, the object of God is then nothing else than God's own nature taken objectively, and since the nature of God is nothing objectively, it must be in itself the objective subject of its originating thought process,⁶¹ that is, humanity's self-consciousness. We can then conclude that 'theology is anthropology and, therefore, the hidden meaning of Christianity is atheism'.⁶²

Some among the New Atheists use Feuerbach to suggest that the Bible is exclusively the Holy Scripture of the Christian community, and then that it is only the expression of this community's projected desires, not the expression of something universally human. In this way we can understand what Onfray says about the nature of Christian theology: it is the projection of the Christians' desires. However, we can challenge the New Atheists' reliance on Feuerbach for, in the end, his overall theory of religion relies heavily of something that is difficult to demonstrate: that religion comes from the projection of objectified human desires. This assumption has been seriously questioned. Eduard von Hartmann wrote nearly a cen-

tury ago: 'it is perfectly true that nothing exists merely because we wish it, but it is not true that something cannot exist if we wish it. Feuerbach's entire critique of religion and the proof of his atheism, however, rest upon this single argument – a logical fallacy'.⁶³ It can be rather surprising to find New Atheists like Michel Onfray openly building on such assumptions without interacting with the relevant critical scholarship.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the challenge of Feuerbach's atheism is not to be taken lightly. The New Atheists may not have taken the critical evaluations of his work into account, but this does not mean that we do not have a difficult challenge ahead of us. Certainly, the New Atheists, particularly Onfray, are open to the charge of presenting a dubious theory of religion. But I am convinced that they do not need to answer previous criticisms of Feuerbach. In fact, the New Atheists take the counter-arguments against Feuerbach to be irrelevant, which is quite a solid position given their assumption that religious language is devoid of objective meaning.

3.4 The legitimacy of theological construction

The last challenge before us is that of hermeneutics and theological construction. In fact, many remarks made by the New Atheists strike a chord. We have become so used to interpreting the Scriptures that we may have forgotten that biblical interpretation can look obscure and even illegitimate to our contemporaries. For example, the christological interpretation of the Old Testament, even if necessary, still needs to be justified in order for our contemporaries to see its legitimacy. To repeat a point already mentioned, when the New Atheists charge theologians with selective reading of the Bible, they may actually have a point. Not that their remarks are in themselves warranted, but, in the absence of clear explanation on our part, our contemporaries are left with no alternative but that of the Four Horsemen.

This particular challenge may prove one of the most difficult because of the intense theological debate regarding hermeneutics, especially regarding the New Testament's use of the Old Testament.⁶⁵ In this respect, recent comments by some biblical scholars about the rather odd use of the Old Testament by the New may well work in favour of the New Atheists. They make similar remarks regarding the non-contextual, and at times illegitimate, handling of the Old Testament by the New Testament. This argument, which

makes the point that the New Testament understands the Old Testament in ways the latter in itself does not warrant, is behind much of the New Atheists' criticism.

The real difference is that, whereas theologians are legitimately concerned with a christological reading that would respect the integrity and diversity of the Old Testament books, the New Atheists are concerned about the way theologians disregard parts of the Old Testament. This is particularly clear in their attack on religious moderation. Harris, for example, says that 'in America, religious moderation is further enforced by the fact that most Christians and Jews do not read the Bible in its entirety and consequently have no idea just how vigorously the God of Abraham wants heresy expunged'.⁶⁶ This remark, even if hopelessly superficial, illustrates what might be a problem for our contemporaries: how the Old Testament is read through the New; how some of the difficult and radical passages of the Old Testament can legitimately be read in a christological and eschatological manner.

We could of course present several answers to the New Atheists' challenge of our reading of Scripture. We could stress, in true postmodern fashion, the exclusively narrative and communitarian reading of Scripture. In doing so, we would certainly secure the possibility of reading the Old Testament through the New. However, in doing so we would partly give up our epistemological ground by making revealed truth a function of communitarian narrative. Some scholars argue that the New Testament uses the Old in creative ways; however, what do 'creative ways' precisely mean and can they be warranted as comprehensive hermeneutical methods? If we do not provide a convincing answer, we cannot expect our contemporaries to be convinced by claims about the authority of Scripture. Still others say that the New Testament does not provide a consistently legitimate reading of the Old Testament. In this case, we are on the verge of arguing that the New Testament does not provide a justified interpretative reading of the Old Testament. At best, we are again open to the charge of arbitrary and selective reading of the Old Testament.

Again, the New Atheists challenge us to provide a consistent and biblical interpretative method. In doing this, we will also position hermeneutics in the necessary metaphysical ground: that of the self-attesting and self-revealing God. They challenge us to explain *which* ground we have in reality for

the *how* and *why* of our hermeneutics. That is, they demand that we provide a *metaphysical* ground for our *epistemological* understanding of scriptural *hermeneutics*. Here probably lies another problem: that our hermeneutics, whatever its method or key concept, has not yet been explained in a manner that can be understood by our society. I would argue that we need to make a clear case for biblical theology⁶⁷ as well as for a renewed historical-redemptive reading of the whole Scripture.

3.5 Nietzsche and Onfray

I would like to end with another main influence on many continental New Atheists, Friedrich Nietzsche. Again, it is striking that Hitchens' *Portable Atheist* does not contain anything by Nietzsche. The absence of the two fathers of modern atheism strikes me as rather strange. Could it be that Hitchens finds that Harris' and Dennett's superficial writings serve his purpose better than the deep, challenging thoughts of Feuerbach and Nietzsche?⁶⁸ I have no doubt that, indeed, Harris and Dennett are better representatives of the current surge of emotional atheism than the radical position of, say, Nietzsche.

Michel Onfray has made a good case for the current relevance of Nietzsche's philosophy of the body. To Onfray, the crucial value of Nietzsche lies in the realm of epistemology. Against the numerous views that locate knowledge in one specific part of human nature, Nietzsche argues that we think, because the body thinks. Nietzsche's messianic idea is precisely that: thought does not think, neither consciousness, neither intelligence or reason, but the body alone.⁶⁹ Onfray can therefore conclude that knowledge is biography⁷⁰ and take as an example a towering figure of French literature, Michel de Montaigne's *Essays*, in which Montaigne affirms that if he speaks of himself it is only because talking about himself makes his discourse universal.⁷¹ With this example, Onfray's Nietzsche argues that a proper methodological reading (or hermeneutics) must consider that the context is never *historical* in itself, but is the *history of the body*. Thus hermeneutics becomes, properly speaking, exegesis of the body and philosophy becomes *transfigured* physiology. Onfray summarises Nietzsche's hermeneutics by saying that 'philosophy (and so theology) is always a body trying to resolve a problem coming from his idiosyncrasy'.⁷² The motto of this new epistemology is that knowledge of oneself is knowledge of one's *body*.⁷³ One can even say that knowledge of a philo-

sophical moment or of a religious tradition comes only *by and through* the personal acts of a given author. Religious texts are constituted mainly by 'the smallest door of personal experience through the hugest fortress of *Existing*'.

Again, the later Feuerbach supports this view, adding to his earlier philosophy of religion the convictions that (1) mind and body are just two aspects of one material organism; and (2) this organism is animated by an overwhelming drive for fulfilment (*Glückseligkeitstrieb*) which, in turn, manifests itself in needs and desires. Onfray's criticisms of Pauline Christianity might in this case be unwarranted. Of course, on Onfray's own basis, one may wonder how we can truly understand anything about the world or ourselves while our bodies are acting upon us *independently* of our thoughts and ideas. Can we have any control over the events of our history as well as the truth of the world surrounding us? To my mind, there is little doubt that Onfray must surrender all possibility of finding a solid ground on which to establish a proper ethical or political philosophy. His hermeneutics of the self and the world is doomed to be merely an exegesis of individual events. That is to say, we have here the opportunity not only to answer the challenge of Nietzschean hermeneutics but also to challenge this hermeneutics.

4. Conclusion

At first, the New Atheists' challenges do not appear to be as serious as one might have feared. Their crusade against religion sounds like a disorganised diatribe rather than a thoughtful confrontation of ideas and worldviews. Their arguments are like 'a meditation upon some rather arbitrarily chosen aspects of the world'.⁷⁴ As I have shown, their case is so plighted with categorical, logical and hermeneutical errors that the intellectual challenge is not much of a threat.⁷⁵ Moreover, the unfortunate nature of the New Atheists' criticisms often prevents us from engaging them in any significant way.⁷⁶ This, however, does not mean that the challenge is not real, on the contrary. Even if we can agree with Pascal when he concludes that 'atheism shows strength of mind, but only up to a certain degree', the New Atheists' refusal to engage with theological scholarship demonstrates that we have not yet taken into account that in the realm of philosophical debates, they have surrendered reason for the tyranny of emotionalism.⁷⁷ Maybe we could even consider, as Michael Novak

has done, that these books display 'an odd defensiveness ... as though they were a sign not of victory but of desperation'.⁷⁸

This myopic caricature of Christian epistemology and belief leaves us wondering in which way we could significantly engage them. As one reviewer has said,

because [the New Atheists] lack any concept of context or necessary connection, we are never offered the thorough coverage of any question, breaking down a case into simpler elements and building up the patterns of relation; rather, we are given the tracing of single elements (often a word) through different frames and contexts.⁷⁹

It is difficult to interact and establish a real dialogue with these writers. However, even the shallowness of their writings demands a serious apologetics. In order to engage the Four Horsemen, we should never review their positions on our terms but on their basis.⁸⁰ In order to engage in effective apologetic defence of the biblical faith, we need to reconsider our presentation of biblical hermeneutics and show the manner in which our biblical theology provides a consistent and epistemologically legitimate reading of Scripture. But this epistemological challenge also reveals another area in which we have to engage the New Atheists for, in the end, they take the debate within the realm of metaphysics, as Hart perceived:

The only points at which the New Atheists seem to invite any serious intellectual engagement are those at which they try to demonstrate that all the traditional metaphysical arguments for the reality of God fail. At least, this should be their most powerful line of critique, and no doubt would be if any of them could demonstrate a respectable understanding of those traditional metaphysical arguments, as well as an ability to refute them.⁸¹

Metaphysics is precisely where Christian theology has always been at its best and it can thus be the field where we should also take the challenge of New Atheism. Merely to answer the biblical challenge would be a serious mistake because it would overlook the necessity of broader apologetic responses.

To answer the New Atheists' challenge, apologetics should point to the essential inconsistencies of their endeavour. Indeed, if their cultural anthropological premises are true, if all we have left is a materialistic or Nietzschean epistemology with its corresponding view of the world, the New

Atheists must surrender all prospects of providing a global theory grounded in reality – reality being an individual body-made notion. Given the New Atheists' use of Scripture and their alliance of epistemological materialism with scientism, apologetics should demonstrate that their position can only lead to a non-existing reality. This can be achieved, I surmise, by restating our traditional understanding of the nature of God, of creation and Scripture in contemporary terms. Here, the Christian faith can demonstrate the uniqueness and necessary presence of the God of hope and salvation. After a long absence metaphysics must be brought back into the philosophical debate.

We should not grant too much ground to the New Atheists when they endanger the unity of the Church. The challenges we face require a strong biblical and theological apologetics embodied in a public understanding of biblical interpretation. This is all the more necessary because, if our biblical scholarship does not integrate the necessary epistemological and metaphysical ground for Christian knowledge, we have given the New Atheists ground for charging us with fideism and even relativism.⁸²

Two different conclusions are in order, by which I mean not a conclusion in two points but two different conclusions. The *first* is that the New Atheists' challenges are an opportunity to reassert the *unified* and *unique* metaphysical and epistemological foundation for knowledge, including knowledge of creation and Scripture (God's two revelations). In this case, we should not fear their challenges for we can find ground in the one who himself interprets his world and his Word for us. The *second* conclusion is that if we do not take our hermeneutical scholarship in the realm of public theology, if we do not embody our scholarship in contemporary and popular expressions of faith, we might already have lost the apologetic challenge.

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Notes

- 1 This is the edited version of a paper presented at the 2012 conference of FEET, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians, in Berlin.
- 2 'The best-selling books by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris form the "canon" of the new atheism, but media in the form of magazines, Web sites, blogs, online

- forums, and other books have also played an important role in driving this social phenomenon.' Richard Cimino and Christopher Smith, 'The New Atheism and the Formation of the Imagined Secularist Community', *Journal of Media and Religion* 10.1 (2011) 24-38. *Taylor Francis Online*, <http://www.tandfonline.com>, accessed August 12, 2012.
- 3 Richard Dawkins, 'The Four Horsemen', *The Richard Dawkins Foundation*, <http://richarddawkins.net>, accessed August 12, 2012.
- 4 Peter Berkowitz, 'The New New Atheism', *Wall Street Journal* July 16, 2007, <http://online.wsj.com>, accessed August 12, 2012.
- 5 Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate, *The New Atheist Novel: Fiction, Philosophy and Polemic after 9/11* (London, New York: Continuum, 2010) 2, conclude that the rise of this atheistic movement is the result of a new creation myth which emerged from a particular socio-cultural narrative beginning with the alliance of American politics with the Religious Right, and lasting well into the opening of the 21st century. If the New Atheism is 'undoubtedly surfing some sort of cultural *Zeitgeist*', the fact remains that 'unlike older models of atheism that depend on complex philosophical or theological arguments, New Atheism is intentionally designed for mass consumption. All of the authors adopt a conversational tone. They write in the first person, and try to avoid technical language. This open and personal way of addressing the reader also makes the New Atheists a remarkably emotional group. They are not opposed to religion on a purely intellectual level. Religion makes them angry.' Lightning Peter Jay, 'Misunderstanding Religion: A Critique of the New Atheists', *Wesleyan University* (2009) 5.
- 6 Bradley and Tate, *The New Atheist Novel*, 3.
- 7 Paul Copan makes the same point in the opening of his book *Is God a Moral Monster?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011) 16ff.
- 8 Peter Hitchens, *Mail on Sunday*, 2002.
- 9 Peter Hitchens was winner of the 2010 Orwell Prize for foreign correspondence.
- 10 Terry Eagleton notes that Pullman criticised a god that had little to do with the transcendent God of Judeo-Christianity.
- 11 Christian and non-Christian writers have pointed to the inherent limitations of the New Atheists: 'There are atheists, such as Richard Dawkins, whose minds are closed, and whose hatred of all religions blinds them to the range and diversity of human potential.' Vivienne Blackburn, 'Albert Camus: The challenge of the unbeliever', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 64.3 (2011) 313-326, here 312.
- 12 'I suspect that what many theists, including many Christians, find troubling about the New Atheism are not the questions that can too easily be answered but those questions that, if we are honest, we struggle to answer or simply cannot answer.

- In this regard, I find several of Hitchens' favorite attacks on Christian theism to be noteworthy ...' Jacob H. Friesenhahn, 'Evil, the New Atheism, and the God of the Trinity', *The Other Journal* 20 (July 12, 2012), <http://theotherjournal.com>, accessed August 12, 2012. The beginning of the article is also worth quoting: 'some theists, especially those of a more academic stripe, scoff at the fad of New Atheism. They speak of its intellectual inferiority and draw unflattering comparisons between today's atheist celebrities and past philosophical giants of atheism, such as Arthur Schopenhauer, Ludwig Feuerbach, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud.'
- 13 Hitchens' fourfold objection to 'religion' and to Christianity in particular often revolves around this point. See the four 'irreducible objections' to faith he claims to identify: that it wholly misrepresents the origins of the universe; that it combines the maximum of servility with the maximum of solipsism: that religions are the cause and consequence of sexual repression; and finally that they are grounded in wishful thinking.
 - 14 Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York, Boston: Twelve, 2007) 126-127.
 - 15 Regarding genocide, Walter Moberly, an OT scholar at Durham University, notes that the injunction 'to destroy them and show them no mercy' is followed by the commandment not to marry stressing the holiness of separation from other people; see Ian S. Markham, *Against Atheism: Why Dawkins, Hitchens, and Harris Are Fundamentally Wrong* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
 - 16 Sam Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation* (New York: Vintage, 2008) 49.
 - 17 See John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) 97.
 - 18 Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 102.
 - 19 Hitchens is the one Horseman who has, to his credit, consistently taken sides with the weak and the oppressed.
 - 20 Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?*, 62-66.
 - 21 The challenge also comes from the observation that the New Atheism is a form of rational fundamentalism. Hart is among those critics who have identified the position of New Atheists as atheistic fideism. He regularly attacks the New Atheists' 'invincible tendency toward fundamentalism'. They often refuse to argue and are merely content to quote self-attested authorities without decent critical reasoning; see David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009) 231.
 - 22 Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 253.
 - 23 In fact, Hitchens shows no basic interaction with recent decent scholarship. Of course he quotes from several sources including H.L. Mencken's *Treatise on the Gods* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997) and Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* (and from a secondary source!). However, Mencken was an American journalist, essayist, magazine editor, satirist and Paine a great political and social deist activist. Neither of the two was a trained theologian or exegete. Even if that were the case, one would expect more interaction with recent theological and philosophical material. Dawkins also has no understanding of basic theology, a point made by critics, Christian and non-Christian, such as Terry Eagleton in the opening lines of his review of *The God Delusion*: 'Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the Book of British Birds, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology.' Terry Eagleton, 'Lunging, Flailing, Mispunching', *London Review of Books*, <http://www.lrb.co.uk>, accessed August 12, 2012.
 - 24 It is surprising to see that Hitchens is a 'King James Only' believer since he takes the King James version to be the only Bible worth quoting from. On Psalm 53, 'The fool has said in his heart, there is no God', Hitchens remarks that 'all that we can tell for sure from the otherwise meaningless assertion is that unbelief – not just heresy and backsliding but unbelief – must have been known to exist even in that remote epoch.' Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 254.
 - 25 Another kind of biblical argument greatly favoured by the New Atheists is the differences between, or internal to, biblical books, as with the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels. Hitchens is troubled by discrepancies between gospel accounts such as the flight of Joseph and Mary to Egypt. To him, the accounts of Matthew and Luke are irreconcilable: in Matthew, Joseph was warned in a dream to make immediate escape to Egypt while according to Luke the 'holy family' stayed in Bethlehem for some days. However, to any Sunday school child these discrepancies are easily explained – not dismissed. Regarding New Testament difficulties, Hitchens even credits C.S. Lewis with intellectual honesty, referring to the apologist's famous argument (trilemma) that Jesus was either a fraud, a lunatic or indeed that he was what he claimed to be; see C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Collins, 1952) 54-56. But Hitchens rhetorically concludes: 'Either the Gospels are in some sense literal truth, or the whole thing is essentially a fraud and perhaps an immoral one at that.' (Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 142)
 - 26 Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 96.
 - 27 Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 73-84.
 - 28 Or rather, if a natural evolutionary explanation is

- possible, all other explanations are false. Dennett regularly makes the same point: 'One reader of an early draft of this chapter complained at this point, saying that by treating the hypothesis of God as just one more scientific hypothesis, to be evaluated by the standards of science in particular and rational thought in general, Dawkins and I are ignoring the very widespread claim by believers in God that their faith is quite beyond reason, not a matter to which such mundane methods of testing applies. It is not just unsympathetic, he claimed, but strictly unwarranted for me simply to assume that the scientific method continues to apply with full force in this domain of truth.' Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) 153.
- 29 André Comte-Sponville, *Présentations de la philosophie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000) 97.
 - 30 Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 97.
 - 31 Moreover, if consistency were the only criterion for validity, as his first sentence seems to imply, the whole New Atheist endeavour would soon crumble.
 - 32 To take another example, consider Harris' remark: 'The idea that any one of our religions represents the infallible word of the One True God requires an encyclopedic ignorance of history, mythology, and art even to be entertained – as the beliefs, rituals, and iconography of each of our religions attest for centuries of cross-pollination among them.' Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (London: Free Press, 2005) 16. There are several logical and categorical mistakes here. Harris affirms that to state that one's religion is the true one is to reject the reality of other religions; but no believer thinks that other religions do not exist! Harris takes a metaphysical statement to be a historical one. This confusion is surprising for it takes an ignorant philosopher to bypass so easily the distinction between these two categories! Harris' second mistake is to support the conclusion that the diversity of religions entails the falsity of all, making the same logical fallacy found in Hitchens. Finally, even if the cross-pollination of religions was substantiated, it does not in itself constitute proof that all sacred texts are false.
 - 33 As when Hitchens, *God is not Great*, 110-111, attacks the gospel accounts of Christ's crucifixion by picking a fight with Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of Christ*, as if the so-called sectarianism of Gibson's Catholicism was to be legitimately universalised.
 - 34 'Third, how dare we be so condescending? I don't have faith. I really don't. Rowan Williams does as do many of my fellow philosophers like Alvin Plantinga (a Protestant) and Ernan McMullin (a Catholic).' Michael Ruse, 'Dawkins et al bring us into disrepute: There's a schism alright, and I seem to find myself on the unfashionable side of it', *The Guardian* Monday, November 2, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>, accessed August 12, 2012.
 - 35 The most narcissist of the Four Horsemen might well be Harris, who proclaimed: 'The fact that my continuous and public rejection of Christianity does not worry me in the least should suggest to you just how inadequate I think your reasons for being a Christian are.' Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 4.
 - 36 Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 220.
 - 37 Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 220.
 - 38 This critical judgment may not apply to Michel Onfray, who is probably the most consistent New Atheist. A large portion of his works can be seen as a system of 'atheist hedonism' including ethics (*La sculpture de soi* [Paris: Grasset, 1993]), a political theory (*Politique du rebelle* [Paris: Grasset, 1999]), aesthetics (*Archéologie du présent* [Adam Biro, 2003]), epistemology (*Féeries anatomiques* [Paris: Grasset, 2003]) and metaphysics (*Traité d'athéologie* [Paris: Grasset, 2005]). His works are nonetheless often poorly written (unless one likes random successions of irrelevant adjectives) and their arguments often pointless.
 - 39 I am not talking here about plausibility structure, which is an expression often taken out of context these days, but only about the socio-cultural context in which the New Atheists are writing.
 - 40 There are crucial differences between Onfray and Camus beyond the obvious intellectual ones. For example, Camus knew Christianity well; in fact, his chosen topic for the diploma in *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures* was 'Christian metaphysics and Neoplatonism', displaying a great sensitivity to Augustine. This explains Camus' early engagement of the Christian faith from his atheist position. For him, dialogue was possible, unlike for the New Atheists. Cf. Nicholas Lash, *Theology for Pilgrims* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008) who suggests that looking for truth is not a concern of the New Atheists who identify themselves with Dawkins and the like. I give two quotes from Albert Camus, *Camus at Combat* (Princeton University Press, 2005): (1) 'No-one wants to see a dialogue between Christians and unbelievers more than we do, because we think both sides would benefit.' *Camus at Combat*, 27 March, 1945, 181-182. (2) 'Christians are taught to love their neighbour. Yet others who do not share their faith may yet hope to arrive at the same goal out of a simple concern for truth, a spirit of selflessness and an appreciation of man's greatness.' *Camus at Combat*, 8 September, 1944, 32.
 - 41 Timothy Jenkins has hinted at the possibility that we need to take Dawkins, for example, seriously, because of his ability to communicate his atheist position: 'We should consider the positive case that Dawkins proposes, for that is what moves his

- sympathetic readers ...' Timothy Jenkins, 'Closer to Dan Brown than to Gregor Mendel: on Dawkins' The God Delusion,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62.3 (2009) 269-281, here 276.
- 42 On the side of apologetics, see R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Atheism Remixed: A Christian Confronts the New Atheists* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008) or Ravi Zacharias, *The End of Reason: A Response to the New Atheists* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008). Unfortunately, often criticisms do not include questioning the deeper presuppositions of New Atheists or tracing back their philosophical background. However, an effective apologetics must account for these backgrounds in order to demonstrate the inherent contradiction within the New Atheists' worldview.
- 43 Tina Beattie, *The New Atheists: The Twilight of Reason and the War on Religion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2007) 5-6.
- 44 Beattie, *The New Atheists*, 82.
- 45 Haught, *God and the New Atheism*, 34. His quote is from an interview with Dennett who said: 'Darwin's idea has banished the Book of Genesis to the limbo of quaint mythology.' See John Brockman, *The Third Culture* (New York, Touchstone Books, 1996) 187.
- 46 Haught further suggests that the New Atheists are wrong because they equate the Christian faith with the creationist and Intelligent Design folks. But then, he also refers to the equation between Christianity and biblical literalism in the New Atheists' perspective. Biblical literalism is the mirror error to scientism because, in Haught's words: 'the religious literalist assumes that the full depth of what is going on in the real world is made evident to the true believer in the plainest sense of the sacred text' (*God and the New Atheism*, 30). The issue for Haught, then, is clearly hermeneutics.
- 47 Haught, *God and the New Atheism*, 5, also thinks that the New Atheists argue against a now obsolete theology (conservative) – over against more 'progressive' theologians. To him, an example is the New Atheists' reference to faith as propositional and narrowly intellectual, exactly as conservative believers put it. He adds: 'Theologians today understand faith as the commitment of one's whole being to God. But the New Atheists, echoing a now obsolete theology, think of faith in a narrow intellectual and propositional sense.' Haught's examples do not refer to established or influential theologians in my own evangelical Reformed tradition, even though most of the theologians referred to have a degree of theological interest and insight.
- 48 Haught, *God and the New Atheism*, 35-55, gives a helpful summary of the New Atheists' position, faulting them with a series of reductions: reducing monotheistic religions to scriptural literalists and dogmatic extremists; reducing the cultural role of theology to constant underwriting of religious abuse; reducing the meaning of faith to mindless belief in whatever has no evidence; reducing the meaning of evidence to what is 'available to science'; reducing the whole reality to what is known by science; and finally reducing the idea of God to a hypothesis.
- 49 Christopher Hitchens, *The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2007). Hitchens' only passing reference to Feuerbach puts him with the German Idealists, a debatable choice (*The Portable Atheist*, 75).
- 50 Beattie, *The New Atheists*, 127.
- 51 I use the English word 'projection' to translate the German term *Vergegenständigung*. An alternative translation might be 'objectification'. See Marx W. Wartofsky, *Feuerbach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 206-210. In fact, the feuerbachian concept of 'projection' is not easily understood, even with a solid hegelian background, since it never functions without the complementary notion of 'objectification' and can never be understood apart from its outcome, 'alienation'. The fact that Feuerbach never used the German word 'Projektion' but many other synonyms (including 'vergegenständlichen') does not help to clarify his meaning; see Van A. Harvey, *Feuerbach and the Interpretation of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 32.
- 52 Feuerbach cannot be clearer when he says: 'The fundamental dogmas of Christianity are realised wishes of the heart – the essence of Christianity is the essence of human feeling.' Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957) 140.
- 53 Nathan S. Hilberg, *Religious Truth and Religious Diversity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009) 59.
- 54 Marcel Neusch, *Aux sources de l'athéisme contemporain: Cents ans de débats sur Dieu* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1977) 61.
- 55 As Barth well summarises: 'Hence, according to Feuerbach, man could not admit natural religion but as the illusory expression of natural nostalgias and wishes of the human heart.' Karl Barth, *Dogmatique*, I/2** (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1954) 81.
- 56 Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 270.
- 57 Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 9.
- 58 'God as God, that is, as a being not finite, not human, not materially conditioned, not phenomenal, is only an object of thought. He is the incorporeal, formless, incomprehensible – the abstract, negative being: he is known, i.e., becomes an object, only by abstraction and negation.' Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 35.
- 59 Barth, *Dogmatique*, IV/2* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1968) 83-86.
- 60 Barth, *Dogmatique*, I/2**, 83. Feuerbach says that

- 'Unlike Catholicism, Protestantism is no longer concerned with what God is in himself, but only with what he is for man; hence, it knows no speculative or contemplative tendency like Catholicism. It has ceased to be theology – it is essentially Christology; that is, religious anthropology.' Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1986) 5.
- 61 'And here may be applied, without any limitation, the proposition: the object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively.' Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 12.
- 62 Harvey, *Feuerbach*, 25.
- 63 Eduard von Hartmann, *Geschichte der Logik*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1900) II:444.
- 64 Unfortunately, Onfray regularly takes recourse to sarcasm, ridicule and ignorant caricature, such as when he summarises five centuries of history of the Church and theology with the expression 'boulle patrologique' and when he refers to Jean-Luc Marion and René Girard as witnesses to the 'permanence of scholasticism', most likely conveying an exceedingly negative meaning. He forgets that philosophy, especially analytic philosophy, can in part be traced back to the scholastics. See Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Age* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1991).
- 65 See for example the debate between G.K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to the New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008) and Richard Longenecker, "'Who is the Prophet Talking About?' Some Reflections on the New Testament's Use of the Old", *Themelios* 13 (1987) 4-8.
- 66 Harris, *The End of Faith*, 18.
- 67 A significant work of biblical theology is Brevard S. Child, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (London: SCM, 1992). Works by Herman N. Ridderbos, *The coming of the kingdom* (Philippsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962) and Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (1975; repr. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003) should also be rediscovered. More recently, see Daniel J. Trier, 'Biblical theology and/or theological interpretation of Scripture?', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61.1 (2008) 16-31.
- 68 This seems to be Hart's personal conclusion: 'As a whole, Dennett's argument consists in little more than the persistent misapplication of quantitative and empirical terms to unquantifiable and intrinsically non-empirical realities, sustained by classifications that are entirely arbitrary and fortified by arguments that any attentive reader should notice are wholly circular.' Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 7.
- 69 In this, Feuerbach is close to Nietzsche when he says: 'that thought realises itself means, accordingly, that it makes itself the *object of the senses*. Thus, the reality of the Idea is *sensuousness*, but reality is also the *truth* of the Idea – hence sensuousness is the truth of the Idea.' Feuerbach, *Principles*, 50.
- 70 Michel Onfray, *Contre-histoire de la Philosophie*, vol. 11, 'Mort de Dieu, naissance des hommes' (Paris: Frémeaux et Associés, 2009).
- 71 Of course, Onfray does not talk about himself: his philosophy is not biography, hence, his philosophy, according to his own criteria, is nothing philosophical! It is pure thought, abstract thought, a model, a system without any universal relevance.
- 72 Michel Onfray, *Contre-histoire de la Philosophie* vol. 14, 'Nietzsche' (Paris: Frémeaux et Associés, 2010).
- 73 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 'Preface,' second aphorism, <http://nietzsche.holtof.com>, accessed August 12, 2012.
- 74 Jenkins, 'Closer to Dan Brown', 279.
- 75 Haught, *God and the New Atheism*, xi: 'It's not that my livelihood as a theologian is remotely at stake – although the authors in question would fervently wish it were so.'
- 76 'The most disappointing feature of *The God Delusion* is Dawkins's failure to engage religious thought in any serious way. This is, obviously, an odd thing to say about a book-length investigation into God. But the problem reflects Dawkins's cavalier attitude about the quality of religious thinking. Dawkins tends to dismiss simple expressions of belief as base superstition.' H. Allen Orr, 'A mission to convert', *The New York Review of Books*, January 11, 2007, 22-24, at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2007/jan/11/a-mission-to-convert/?pagination=false>, accessed July 23, 2012.
- 77 Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trad. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005) Fragment 225, 51.
- 78 Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?*, 16.
- 79 Jenkins, 'Closer to Dan Brown', 274.
- 80 That might be one of the rare mistakes in Terry Eagleton's review of *The God Delusion* (Eagleton, 'Lunging, Flailing, Mispunching').
- 81 David Bentley Hart, 'Believe it or not', *First Things* <http://www.firstthings.com>, accessed August 12, 2012.
- 82 As far as relativism is concerned, I thank German attendees of the 2012 FEET conference for mentioning an interesting point made by some German atheist philosophers. In their opinion, atheism has two main opponents: postmodern plurality and fundamentalism. Both are advocating the value of religion, fundamentalism in claiming the absolute necessity of the deity, postmodern plurality in merely pointing to its *possibility*. But the mere possibility for God is, logically enough, already too much for the New Atheists – and in fact for any consistent atheist. Among the German atheist philosophers, one must at least be aware of Michael Schmidt-Salomon, *Manifest des evolutionären Humanismus* (Aschaffenburg: Alibri Verlag, 2006). My apologies for omitting other significant European atheist philosophers counted among the New Atheists.

Review Article: Die Frühgeschichte der Evangelischen Allianz und ihres Einsatzes für Religionsfreiheit

Thomas Schirrmacher

Für Frömmigkeit in Freiheit: Die Geschichte der Evangelischen Allianz im Zeitalter des Liberalismus (1846–1879)

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Gerhard Lindemann

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RÉSUMÉ

Voici l'exposé le plus méticuleux et le meilleur de l'histoire des débuts de l'Alliance évangélique. L'ouvrage traite d'abord de l'histoire elle-même, s'intéressant aux conventions, aux campagnes et à l'étendue internationale du mouvement, tout en les replaçant dans le contexte historique de l'époque. Puis il considère le rôle joué par ses personnalités influentes. Enfin, il présente les principales entreprises de l'Alliance évangélique : la défense de la liberté de conscience et de religion, l'instauration des semaines de prière, l'œuvre missionnaire et les publications. Le plan détaillé et l'index permettent de retrouver des thèmes particuliers, comme par exemple l'histoire de l'Alliance évangélique jusqu'en 1879 dans

divers pays comme la Grande Bretagne, l'Allemagne, les pays scandinaves ou la Turquie.

Lindemann considère l'Alliance évangélique comme la première forme organisée de mouvement œcuménique, en fait la seule organisation œcuménique authentique, laquelle tirait son origine des mouvements de réveil du xix^e siècle. L'alliance évangélique utilisait d'ailleurs elle-même le mot « œcuménique » dans ses premiers documents. L'auteur critique l'ignorance, par les historiens du mouvement œcuménique moderne, du rôle précurseur de l'Alliance évangélique comme mouvement visant à l'unité des chrétiens. L'Alliance évangélique a participé au mouvement international qui, dans la ligne du piétisme, a été en avance sur son temps pour la défense de la liberté religieuse ou le combat contre l'esclavage.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch ist die gründlichste und beste Darstellung zur Frühgeschichte der Evangelischen Allianz. Es behandelt 1. die eigentliche Geschichte wie Versammlungen, Kampagnen und internationale Ausbreitung, die jeweils in die Zeitgeschichte eingeordnet werden, 2. die Rolle der entscheidenden Persönlichkeiten, und 3. die Arbeitsschwerpunkte der Evangelischen Allianz, vor allem Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit, Gebetswoche, Mission, Publikationen. Wer dabei eine einzelne Thematik verfolgen möchte kann dies über die übersichtliche Gliederung und den Index sehr gut tun. Auch wer die Geschichte der Allianz bis 1879 in Ländern wie

Großbritannien, Deutschland, den skandinavischen Ländern oder Türkei verfolgen will, wird hier fündig.

Lindemann sieht die Allianz als erste organisierte Form der Ökumene, als einzig wirklich ökumenische Organisation, die aus der Erweckungsbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts entsprang; sie selbst verwendete in ihren frühen Dokumenten häufig das Wort „ecumenical“. Er kritisiert, dass geschichtliche Darstellungen der modernen Ökumene die Allianz als Vorreiter der Einheit der Christen übergehen. Sie war Teil der transnationalen Frömmigkeitsbewegung nach dem Pietismus, die etwa in Fragen der Religionsfreiheit oder des Antisklavereikampfes ihrer Zeit voraus war.

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SUMMARY

This book is the best and most meticulous presentation of the early history of the Evangelical Alliance. First, it deals with its history per se, like conventions, campaigns and international scope, each embedded in the history of the era; second, with the role of its decisive personalities, and third, with the main areas of activity of the Evangelical Alliance: above all liberty of faith and conscience, prayer weeks, mission and publications. A comprehensive outline and index perfectly allow following up specific themes, for example the history of the Alliance until 1879 in countries like Great Britain, Germany,

the Scandinavian countries or Turkey.

Lindemann considers the Alliance to be the first organized form of the ecumenical movement, the only genuine ecumenical organization originating from the revival movement of the 19th century. The Alliance itself in its early documents often used the term 'ecumenical'. The author criticizes that historical presentations of the modern ecumenical movement neglect the role of the Alliance as the forerunner of the unity of Christians. It represented a part of the transnational movement following pietism which was ahead of its time with regard to questions such as liberty of religion or the battle against slavery.

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Seit meiner Dissertation zu Theodor Christlieb von 1985 und der kurz darauf erschienen Arbeit von Hans Hauzenberger hat zwar der methodistische Forscher Karl-Heinz Vogt zu Christlieb selbst und zum Thema Allianz und Religionsfreiheit einiges Neue beigetragen, aber insgesamt fehlten die großen Fortschritte in der Forschungsgeschichte zur Allianz in Deutschland seit 25 Jahren, ja für die Zeit vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg weltweit. Auch zur Frühgeschichte der Weltweiten Evangelischen Allianz ist länger nichts substantiell Neues erforscht worden. Und auch zur Geschichte der Religionsfreiheit im 19. Jahrhundert allgemein haben sich die Forscher nicht gerade überschlagen. Und nun dieses ausgezeichnete Mammutwerk! Diese Heidelberger Habilitationsschrift von 2004 wird dem Ruf, das die Deutschen die dicksten aller Bücher schreiben, gerecht. Bisweilen detailversessen, alles minutiös aus den Akten und zeitgenössischen Zeitungen belegend, wird das Buch dadurch zu der gründlichsten (und besten) Darstellung der Vor- und Frühgeschichte der Evangelischen Allianz. Die Weltweite Evangelische Allianz vertritt heute 600 Millionen Christen weltweit, davon nur noch ein Bruchteil deutscher Zunge. Schade, dass dem größten Teil dieser Menschen deswegen dieser Schatz verborgen bleiben wird, denn eine englische Übersetzung dieser Textmenge wäre zwar dringend erforderlich, ist aber leider sehr unwahrscheinlich.

Übersicht

Das Werk behandelt, soweit aus den Quellen rekonstruierbar, 1. die eigentliche Geschichte wie Versammlungen, Kampagnen und internationale Ausbreitung, die jeweils in die große Zeitgeschichte eingeordnet werden, 2. die Rolle

der entscheidenden Persönlichkeiten, und 3. die Arbeitsschwerpunkte der Allianz (dabei vor allem Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit, Gebetswoche, Mission, Publikationen). Wer dabei eine einzelne Thematik verfolgen möchte – etwa die Geschichte der internationalen Allianzgebetswoche jeweils zu Beginn des Jahres –, kann dies über die übersichtliche Gliederung und den Index sehr gut tun. Auch wer die Geschichte der Allianz bis 1879 in solch unterschiedlichen Ländern wie Großbritannien, England, Deutschland, den skandinavischen Ländern, Kanada, Australien, Südafrika, Türkei, Iran, Indien oder Japan verfolgen will, wird hier fündig.

Zu vielen Details findet sich hier erstmals ein Beleg (z. B. Einsatz der frühen Evangelischen Allianz für Tierschutz) und selbst zu Christlieb habe ich Neues gefunden, dass meine Dissertation ergänzt (Christlieb und Versöhnung mit Frankreich in New York [747–752], Christliebs Einsatz gegen Opiumhandel [856–858], Geschichte der Westdeutschen Evangelische Allianz [921–922].)

Lindemann sieht die Allianz gleich zu Beginn als erste organisierte Form der Ökumene, als einzig wirklich ökumenische Organisation, die aus der Erweckungsbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts entsprang (15). Er weist nach, dass die Allianz selbst in ihren frühen Dokumenten häufig das Wort „ecumenical“ verwendete (938 u. ö.). „Sie schuf ein Klima, das die Gründung von Vorgängerorganisationen des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen (ÖRK) ermöglichte.“ (945). Er kritisiert, dass geschichtliche Darstellungen der modernen Ökumene oft sehr spät einsetzen und sowohl die Allianz als auch einige ihrer führenden Vertreter als Vorreiter der Einheit der Christen übergehen (21).

Lindemann sieht die Allianz als Teil der transnationalen Frömmigkeitsbewegung der

Erweckungen nach dem Pietismus (25), die man nicht einfach pauschal als „antiaufklärerisch“ oder „antimodern“ beurteilen darf (25), sondern die etwa in Fragen der Religionsfreiheit oder des Antisklavereikampfes (28-29) auch ihrer Zeit voraus war. Gespeist aus Erweckungen in ganz unterschiedlichen Sprach- und Kulturkreisen zeichnete sie sich wie der Pietismus „durch ein weitverzweigtes Netz internationaler Kontakte und Verbindungen aus“ (33).

Ob man die Gründung ökumenischer Strukturen unabhängig von der Allianz wirklich allein auf die „zunehmende ‚Fundamentalisierung‘ der Allianz 1880“ (945) in Form der Ablehnung der Bibelkritik und der Zuwendung zur Heiligungsbewegung zurückführen kann, wie Lindemann ganz am Ende eher beiläufig sagt, wage ich zu bezweifeln. Ich vermute, dass eine ebenso gründliche Arbeit zur Zeit nach 1880 ebenso eine andere ‚Allianz‘ hervortreten ließe, wie die Allianz, die Lindemann bis 1879 darstellt, ebenso dem gängigen Klischee nicht entspringt. Doch Lindemann hat Recht, wenn er fortfährt: „Doch lebte das Gedankengut der Allianz in der Ökumene fort.“ (946). Überhaupt passen die Schlussworte zur Evangelischen Allianz heute, die eine gute frühe und eine schlechtere spätere und heutige Allianz andeuten, nicht so ganz zum Duktus des Buches. Aber nach 945 überaus fairen Seiten in der Darstellung der Allianz aus den Quellen sollte man diese verhaltene Kritik liebevoll beherzigen, zumal die daraus gezogenen Empfehlungen schon teilweise umgesetzt werden.

Insgesamt schreibt Lindemann aus freundlich-kritischer Distanz. So kritisiert er etwa die große Nähe vieler Evangelikaler zum herrschenden Adel in der Zeit der Revolutionen 1848-1849 (152-158), worin die Evangelikalen sich nicht von den Kirchen ihrer Zeit unterschieden.

Häufiger hilft er, positive Bilder zu differenzieren. So bestand etwa schon bei Gründung der Evangelischen Allianz Einigkeit in der Verurteilung der Sklaverei – der Kampf gegen die Sklaverei gehörte unverrückbar zur Geschichte der ‚Evangelicals‘, aber inwiefern Sklaverei duldende Gruppen und Personen Mitglied werden durften, war diesseits und jenseits des Atlantischen Ozeans umstritten (65-72, 110-129, 159). 1846 wurden sie alle ausgeladen, später teilweise zugelassen, dann mit der Abschaffung der Sklaverei in den USA endgültig verbannt (693). Noch nie wurden diese komplizierten Details im Einzelnen belegt.

Auch zur Entstehung des Glaubensbasis wird

viel neues Material geliefert. „Man verstand sich als eine Verbindung von Einzelpersonen und legte in diesem Zusammenhang auf die persönliche Glaubensentscheidung des Einzelnen Wert und betonte das Recht auf individuelle Bibellektüre. Mit diesem Grundaxiom hing auch die scharfe Abgrenzung vom Katholizismus sowie hochkirchlichen Gruppierungen im Protestantismus zusammen, die Sakramente und die Institution Kirche als objektiv vorgegebene Größen betrachteten und der Entscheidung des Einzelnen voranstellten. Hingegen galt für die Allianz in ihrer in London verabschiedeten ‚Glaubensbasis‘ die göttlich inspirierte Schrift als sakrosankt, deren freie Prüfung dem Einzelnen jedoch zugestanden wurde.“ (205)

Spannend ist die Entstehung der ersten Glaubensbasis (87-98). Meines Erachtens hätte man noch deutlicher darauf hinweisen können, dass die beiden ersten Sätze eine bis heute zentrale Spannung bewirken: „1. The Divine Inspiration, Authority, and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. 2. The Right and Duty of Private Judgement in the Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures“ (98). Einerseits ist dies eine unverrückbare Festlegung, andererseits ein extremer Pluralismus, der jeden Gläubigen verpflichtet, die Grundlage selbst ausulegen.

Exkurs: Entgegengesetzte Pole

Die Evangelikalen sind durch zwei Paare entgegengesetzter Pole gekennzeichnet und man wird ihnen nicht gerecht, wenn man jeweils nur einen der Pole sieht. Einerseits ist das die von den Evangelischen ererbte *Zentralität der Heiligen Schrift*. Andererseits ist es der aus Luthers Frage ‚Wie bekomme ich einen gnädigen Gott‘ hervorgegangene *Heilsindividualismus*. Es geht darum, dass jeder Mensch seine persönliche Beziehung zu Gott hat und daraus ergibt sich als Korrektur zur Zentralität der Schrift die Berechtigung, ja Verpflichtung jedes Christen, die Heilige Schrift selbst zu studieren und ausulegen, womit er mit jedem noch so gebildeten evangelikalen Theologen, auch seinem Pastor, gleichauf steht. So vereint die evangelikale Welt die dogmatische Enge dank der Bibelfrage mit einer enormen demokratischen Weite, weil jeder theologisch mitreden darf.

Die zweite Spannung ist die zwischen Mission und Religionsfreiheit. Aus der enormen Betonung der persönlichen Beziehung zu Jesus entstand sowohl die starke Betonung der „Zeugnispflicht“

als auch die starke Betonung der Religionsfreiheit. Das Konzept der Freiwilligkeit prägte nicht nur die Freikirchen, sondern auch den innerkirchlichen Pietismus, für den Glaube nicht nur etwas Äußerliches, Ererbtes sein dürfte, sondern etwas persönlich Erfahrenes. Dazu aber kann man niemand zwingen, ja Zwang macht die Möglichkeit zunichte, eine wirklich eigenständige, persönliche Umkehr zu Gott zu vollziehen. Also lieber eine kleinere Kirche mit überzeugten Mitgliedern, also eine große mit vielen Mitgliedern, die nur dank gesellschaftlichem, familiärem oder sonstigen Druck dazugehören.

Neubestimmung des Verhältnisses zur katholischen Kirche

Lindemann geht auf die antikatholischen Tendenzen und Aktivitäten in Großbritannien ein, in denen die Allianz zum Teil wurzelt (45-50). Allerdings weist er schlüssig nach, was mein größtes Aha-Erlebnis beim Lesen des Buches war: Es waren kaum die dogmatischen Unterschiede, die im Mittelpunkt standen, sondern die Allianz repräsentierte mit ihrem Eintreten für Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit, ihrer teilweise radikalen, teilweise noch verhaltenen Trennung von Kirche und Staat und ihrer Vorangstellung der freiwilligen persönlichen Bekehrung – was jeden Zwang in der Mission oder religiösen Zwang seitens des Staates ausschloss – das komplette Gegenteil zur ultramontanistischen katholischen Kirche, die Religionsfreiheit entschieden verwarf, den Staat als Diener der Kirche zumindest in Fragen von Religion und Ethik sah und die örtlichen Katholiken stärker denn je an die geistliche, aber auch politische Führung des Papstes band – alles Positionen, die die katholische Kirche offiziell erst im 2. Vatikanischen Konzil aufgab, aber schon nach den beiden Weltkriegen jeweils immer mehr zurückfahren musste. So wie es im bismarckischen Kulturkampf in Deutschland weniger um Glaubensinhalte, also um die Machtfrage und den politischen Einfluss der Kirche(n) ging, so stand im Zentrum der Allianz – so Lindemann –, dass der Ultramontanismus „als eine Verschwörung gegen die geistige Entwicklung und geistige Freiheit des Menschheit“ (49) erachtet wurde (321-337).

Konsequenterweise setzte man sich vom Gründungsjahr an auch für verfolgte Katholiken in protestantischen Ländern ein und unterstützte antikatholisch orientierte Regierungen nicht in ihrem Tun (205). Übrigens wurde 1846 bewusst

bei der Gründung *keine* Nichtzulassung von Katholiken formuliert (131). Als sich die Allianz 1858 mit einer Delegation gegen Schweden wandte, dessen oberstes Gericht, der Königliche Gerichtshof, sechs Frauen, die zum Katholizismus konvertiert waren, des Landes verwiesen hatte, und die Allianz Religionsfreiheit für diese Katholiken forderte, gab es europaweit einen Sturm der Entrüstung außerhalb der Allianz (295-300). Die Allianz war wesentlich daran beteiligt, dass der schwedische Reichstag die Strafen für das Verlassen der lutherischen Staatskirche 1860 abschaffte.

Lindemann schreibt: „Durch ihre Konzentration auf dogmatische und geistliche Elemente unterschied sich die Allianz von anderen anti-katholischen Gruppierungen. Überdies machte das Engagement für die waadtländische Freikirche deutlich, dass die Vereinigung sich nicht von einem blinden Katholikenhass leiten ließ, sondern sich auch gegen eine diplomatische und militärische Unterstützung von Regierungen aussprechen konnte, die das Prinzip der Religionsfreiheit nicht achteten, auch wenn sie sich mit dem Katholizismus im Konflikt befanden. Sir Culling Eardley stellte in diesem Zusammenhang klar, dass politische Freiheit ohne Religionsfreiheit undenkbar und auch nicht unterstützenswert sei – nach Auffassung des Londoner Allianzkomitees handelte es sich dabei um das ‚heiligste unter den Menschenrechten‘.“ (205-206)

„Die Evangelische Allianz erwies sich bereits in ihrer Gründungsphase keineswegs als eine rein antikatholische Bewegung. Vorrangig war das Interesse an einer Einheit unter den Christen, während aktuelle Ereignisse und Entwicklungen eher als auslösende Faktoren für den Schritt zu dem protestantischen Zusammenschluss anzusehen sind. Als wesentliche Ziele galten die Evangelisation der Welt sowie, vor allem aus amerikanischer Perspektive, auch der Wunsch, durch die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit zum Frieden unter den Völkern beizutragen.“ (205)

Neues zur Geschichte der Religionsfreiheit

Als das herausragende Thema der Allianz erweist Lindemann den Einsatz gegen Verfolgung aus religiösen Gründen und für die Religionsfreiheit, der noch nie so gründlich dargestellt wurde (bes. 141-151, 205-321, 592-645, 773-811, 858, 868-913). Besonders interessant sind auch die Erkenntnisse zum Einsatz der Allianz für die

Religionsfreiheit, die Lindemann aus den Akten des britischen „Foreign Office“ gewann. Am stärksten waren die Jahre 1849 bis 1858 vom Einsatz für aus religiösen Gründen Verfolgte im Mittelpunkt (207), da die Allianz sich zunutze machte, dass Außenpolitik Thema der Presse und der entstehenden Parlamente wurde (207).

Wählen wir als Beispiel den Einsatz für den vom Katholizismus zum Protestantismus konvertierten Italiener Giacinto Achilli (1803-1893), der deswegen lebenslänglich von der römischen Inquisition inhaftiert war und der in einem fast einjährigen diplomatischen Tauziehen unter Beteiligung des britischen und französischen Außenminister, der Medien, der eigenen Zeitung und zahlreichen Delegationen schließlich durch einen Trick von den Franzosen aus Rom befreit und nach England überstellt wurde (208-223). Vorgänge wie diese stellt Lindemann wiederholt minutiös dar. Sie wurden, wenn sie überhaupt bekannt waren, bisher noch nie in ihren einzelnen Schritten nachvollzogen und belegen, wie gut organisiert, mit Regierungen und Medien vernetzt und ihrer Zeit voraus dieser Aspekt der Evangelischen Allianz war. Lindemann schreibt: „Bei ihrem Einsatz für aus Glaubensgründen Benachteiligte profitierte die Allianz eindeutig von der zunehmenden Pluralisierung vor allem der britischen Gesellschaft und der Entstehung einer breiteren Medienöffentlichkeit, die die Einflussnahme von ‚Pressure Groups‘ auf außenpolitische Entscheidungsprozesse zuließ. Man merkte bald, dass in bestimmten Fällen das gemeinsame Agieren über Ländergrenzen hinweg noch erfolversprechender zu sein schien und, wie zum Beispiel erstmals im Fall des Italieners Achilli, zu einem gemeinsamen Handeln von Regierungen führen konnte. Zugleich konnte der Verweis auf die englische öffentliche Meinung Staaten von Repressionen auf Andersgläubige abhalten, sie beenden oder zumindest abmildern. Nicht nur durch den Gebrauch neuer Methoden in diesem Engagement hatte die Evangelische Allianz an einem Modernisierungsprozess des Protestantismus im 19. Jahrhundert einen Anteil.“ (943)

Die Britische Allianz erreichte etwa durch eine Denkschrift an den preußischen König gegen die Baptistenverfolgung, dass der aus Berlin vertriebene Führer der Baptisten Johann Gerhard Oncken nach Berlin zurückkehren konnte (235-237). Mit Schreiben der britischen Königin und des preußischen Königs setzte man 1852 dem

toskanischen Großherzog Leopold II in einer Audienz wegen der Inhaftierung eines Ehepaars namens Madiari zu. „Die Deputation stieß europaweit auf eine starke Resonanz“ (254). Und selbst der gestrenge Lutheraner Ernst-Wilhelm Hengstenberg, wahrhaftig kein Freund der Allianz, rühmte das Vorgehen, denn es habe den katholischen Vorwurf, die Protestanten seien hoffnungslos zerspalten, widerlegt. Hier habe man mit einer Stimme gesprochen (254). Die Sache weitete sich bis in die USA aus, andere italienische Fürsten wurden ebenso aktiv, wie der französische Kaiser, bis das Ehepaar Madiari schließlich nach einem Jahr 1853 freigelassen wurde. Besonders deutlich wird, wie eng der Gedanke einer Ökumene der Protestanten und der Religionsfreiheit verbunden war: Gemeinsamkeit macht stark.

Wie konfessionell großzügig man war, zeigt sich auch darin, dass man sich beim Sultan nicht nur für Konvertiten vom Islam zum Protestantismus einsetzte, sondern auch für die griechisch-orthodoxe Kirche (300). Im Iran setzte man sich für Nestorianer ein (610-613). Nach der Hinrichtung eines Konvertiten 1853 aktivierte die Allianz in Zusammenarbeit mit der Türkischen Allianz ihre Kontakte in zahlreichen europäischen Regierungen, bis schließlich 1856 Sultan Abdülmecid I. – sicher in Zusammenhang mit der komplizierten Politik zwischen dem Osmanischen Reich und der Westmächte – in einem Edikt den Protestanten größere Freiheiten zugestand und die Todesstrafe für Konversion abschaffte (300-319). 1874-1875 führte eine weitere große Kampagne eine Allianzdelegation bis zum türkischen Außenminister, Diplomaten sogar bis zum Sultan, deren Auswirkungen aber umstritten sind (879-902).

Lindemann schreibt, dass für die Niederschlagung der Prozesse gegen Pastoren im Baltikum durch den Zaren „der Londoner Vorstoß der Allianz verantwortlich gewesen“ sei (800). Das Verwirrspiel um den Versuch eines Treffens mit dem Zaren, der schließlich seinen Außenminister vorschickte, wird bei Lindemann aufgelöst (779-800). Auch die Audienzen, die die Allianz beim preußischen König erhielt, etwa 1855 in Köln oder 1857 im Rahmen der Berliner Allianzkonferenz bei Friedrich Wilhelm IV. (286f), drehten sich immer um die Religionsfreiheit in Deutschland. Dasselbe gilt für Gespräche des Allianzsekretärs, die er mit dem deutschen Kaiser Wilhelm I. und dem Reichskanzler Otto v. Bismarck 1875 führte (919).

Eine Allianzdeputation bei Kaiser Franz Joseph I. in der Hofburg und anschließende Gespräche beim Ministerpräsidenten und beim Kultusminister im Jahr 1879 führten zu spürbaren Erleichterungen für Protestanten, 1880 sogar zu deren rechtlicher Anerkennung als Kirchen, sowie fast nebenbei zu Erleichterungen für die Freikirchen in Wien (913). Dasselbe gilt auch für den Besuch der gesamten Teilnehmerschaft der New Yorker Konferenz beim amerikanischen Präsidenten Ulysses S. Grant und seinem Kabinett 1873 (755-756), nur dass die amerikanische Regierung nicht mehr von der Religionsfreiheit überzeugt werden musste.

Man bedenke, dass das alles zu einer Zeit geschah, als die angestammten Kirchen alle noch weit davon entfernt waren, ihren Staatskirchenstatus aufzugeben, geschweige denn Religionsfreiheit für alle zu gestatten, geschweige denn selbst zu fordern. Wenn Religionsfreiheit damals gefordert wurde, dann meist von Juden, religiösen Minderheiten und Atheisten, nicht aber von sehr religiösen Vertretern der vorherrschenden Religion. Welchen Beitrag die Evangelische Allianz zur Religionsfreiheit in Deutschland geleistet hat, ist bisher noch nirgends gewürdigt worden.

Grundsätzliches

Die Homburger Konferenz für Religionsfreiheit von 1853 war ein Meilenstein der Allianzgeschichte und der Toleranz in Deutschland und Europa (263-267). Zentrales Ergebnis war die Ablehnung jeder kirchlichen Gewalt gegen Separatisten und die Ablehnung jeglicher Inanspruchnahme staatlicher Gewalt durch Kirchen gegen andere (266). Dies galt zudem bewusst nicht nur für Christen, sondern für alle Religionen, was natürlich zu internen Kontroversen und zu scharfer Kritik seitens protestantischer Staatskirchen führte (267-272), ohne dass die Allianz deswegen von dem Grundsatz abrückte.

1861 stellt ein französischer Pastor erstmals eine ganz neue These auf, die sich mehr und mehr in der Allianz durchsetzte, dass nämlich „die Religionsfreiheit staatliche Ordnung und den ihr innewohnenden Frieden garantiert“ (592), Unterdrückung der individuellen Religionsfreiheit dagegen Revolution und Unfrieden nähre und dem Staat seine gottgegebene Grundlage entziehe! Interessanterweise bestätigt eine internationale wissenschaftliche Untersuchung genau dies:

Religionsfreiheit fördert eine friedliche Gesellschaft, deren Unterdrückung fördert Unruhe und Gewalt und praktisch alle religiös gefärbten terroristischen Bewegungen der Welt kommen aus solchen Ländern; vgl. Brian J. Grim & Roger Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) und meine Rezension in *European Journal of Theology* 21.1 (2012) 88-89. Lindemann schreibt: „Mit ihrem Engagement für die Religionsfreiheit leistete die Allianz, deren angloamerikanischer Flügel sich nicht mit bloßer Toleranz zufriedengab, sondern das öffentliche Bekennen des Glaubens als ein Grundrecht ansah, auch der Durchsetzung der bürgerlichen Freiheiten in den betreffenden Ländern einen bemerkenswerten Dienst und trug zur Entstehung einer europäischen Zivilgesellschaft nicht unwesentlich bei. Allerdings kam es in diesem Bereich auch zu Konflikten mit der britischen Regierung, die im Blick auf Indien vorrangig an der Beherrschbarkeit des Landes interessiert war und im Falle des Osmanischen Staats insbesondere von globalstrategischen sowie von ökonomischen und Handelsinteressen geleitet war. Letztere begannen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts die britische Außenpolitik verstärkt zu beeinflussen. Zudem lässt sich auf der Regierungsseite eine deutliche Zurückhaltung gegenüber dem evangelikalen Missionsverständnis nachweisen.... Im Unterschied zur britischen Außenpolitik mischte man sich jedoch immer wieder auch in europäische Religionskonflikte ein, während man mit Ausnahme der italienischen Einigung hinsichtlich politischer Spannungen wie den seit 1864 von Preußen geführten Kriegen analog zur Haltung der britischen Regierung Zurückhaltung übte oder sie gar wie im Falle des polnischen Aufstandes von 1863/64, der keineswegs frei von religiösen Komponenten war, ignorierte.“ (943).

Kurzum: Das Buch ist die gründlichste und beste Darstellung zur Frühgeschichte der Evangelischen Allianz, die deutlich herausstellt, dass neben der Einheit der Christen die Religionsfreiheit das wichtigste Anliegen der Allianz war.

Prof. Dr Thomas Schirrmacher is the leader of the Martin Bucer Seminar in Bonn. He chairs the Theological Committee of the World Evangelical Alliance and leads the International Institute for Religious Freedom.

Book Reviews – Recensions – Buchbesprechungen

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Joshua

Historical Commentary on the Old Testament

Hartmut N. Rösel

Leuven: Peeters, 2011; xxix + 386pp., pb, €45, ISBN 978-90-429-2592-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dies ist ein neuer Kommentar zum Buch Josua, der sich der hochmodernen „höheren kritischen“ Methode bedient. Auf diese Weise werden Fragen der Postmoderne und Ansätze der Gegenwart, wie sie gelehrte Fachleute vorlegen, zusammen mit jedwedem konservativen Kommentar ausgeklammert. Das Buch bietet dem Wissenschaftler kaum etwas Neues, während der Pastor leer ausgeht und nichts von paränetischem Wert erhält.

SUMMARY

This is a new commentary on the book of Joshua that adopts the high-modern higher-critical method. Thus, post-modernist challenges and contemporary approaches such as are furnished by literary practitioners are bracketed-out together with all conservative comment. There is little new here for the scholar whereas the pastor is abandoned with nothing of paraenetic value.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici un nouveau commentaire du livre de Josué. Il adopte la méthode moderniste de haute critique. Il en résulte que les débats suscités par les conceptions post-modernes, les diverses approches de la critique littéraire, ainsi que les traitements d'un point de vue conservateur sont simplement ignorés. Le spécialiste n'y trouvera rien de nouveau et le pasteur aucun apport ayant une valeur parénétique.

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Reading this volume conjured up the mental image of an ornithologist discovering, to his or her immense surprise, a species long believed extinct. However, what would doubtless be ground for great excitement for the bird-specialist, only provoked depression in the reviewer.

Rösel early acknowledges his indebtedness to Martin Noth, and his definition of what he considers the scholarly fraternity to which he often appeals is quickly revealed in his bibliography. While Calvin (necessarily) gets a mention, as does Trent Butler's Word BC volume, evangelicals are notable by their absence. Merely reflecting upon the Dutch scene, the absence of Goslinga and Woudstra is symptomatic as is the inclusion of the non-academic volume by the liberal Auld; conservative scholarship simply does not come within Rösel's purview. However, and equally significantly, his work has a dinosaur-quality about it (hence the above analogy): all its discussion takes place within the parameters

of an unreconstructed historical critical methodology. Modern approaches (for example, literary analyses) are, effectively, bracketed out.

On authorship and date, 'Modern scholarship has completely abandoned the view that a person of Joshua's day could have written the book'. 'Joshua' emerged through a 'long process'. Indeed, parts owe their origin to a period when the 'Pentateuch was already regarded as canonical.' Thus, the complex issues related to the ban are dismissed with the comment that it is a 'utopian and late concept ... one never realised in Old Testament times'. On history, archaeological and literary grounds indicate that 'no united people called Israel ... could have conquered the land.' Naively, Rösel notes that archaeology cannot prove historicity and one wonders who he has met who ever thought any different (but see below). However, his minimalism is apparent, as in his discussion of the fall of Jericho (93-97) and his brief dismissal of the story of Ai (109). In the latter case this is done on literary grounds and (ironically) the claim that archaeology shows no town existed on the site at the time alleged for the conquest. Consequently, too, 'Next to nothing can be said about the personality of the historical Joshua' but he was obviously 'not the great leader' depicted.

As to application, Rösel cites Calvin's conviction of the value of the 'paraenetic aspect of Joshua' but notes that 'In this he differs markedly from modern scholars'. We are left with a study that is preoccupied with the supposed pre-history of the text reconstructed by means of the historical critical method and, if not its assured results, certainly its assured methodology. The result is that the expositor is mute as to contemporary relevance of the text.

The main body of the work is divided into divisions of the text that are accompanied by five sub-sections: a translation, bibliography, a section devoted to 'Essentials and Perspectives' and two sections entitled 'Scholarly Exposition' that explore, first, introductory issues before, second, providing an exegesis. Predictably, linguistic arguments are rehearsed as a means to determine vocabulary that is early or late: the arguments contingent upon the literary reconstruction that is adopted. To the present reviewer, these are viciously circular (see, for example, 38). Similarly, the author seems confident of his superior knowledge in, for example, the realm of military tactics. Of Joshua 2 he comments, 'sending the spies was meaningless from a purely military point of view'. Again, on the basis of undefined 'inconsistencies' in the Rahab story he is able to dismiss any historical validity to the account (it is a 'folktale with only a little sense of reality') and refers it to an un-evidenced popular motif that 'enjoyed and enjoys popularity in

the literature and art of many societies – right up to Hollywood today'. With the preface of such phrases as 'of course' and 'we must assume', Rösel proceeds on his way, meanwhile demonstrating considerable naivety (and/or ignorance) when he seeks to appeal to scholarly study of the forms of folktales. His identification of genre is altogether too general to carry weight.

As with many unreconstructed historical critical studies, Rösel is able to recognise 'inconsistencies', 'contradictory motifs' and 'contradictions' in the chronology that the editorial process failed to recognise (all identified, for example, on 58-59). The final author, he confidently asserts, 'had very few concrete ideas' about the nations of Canaan. As the book proceeds, countless examples of such methodological assumptions and conclusions can be evidenced.

The nineteenth century baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, wrote a book entitled 'Commenting on Commentaries'. One entry refers to a volume that he deemed 'suitable only to housemaids for lighting fires'. He might consign the present volume to the same category; though he might consider the incendiary possibilities as, perhaps, rather expensive.

The volume is solidly bound and stitched to promote longevity but at 45 Euros, its publishers clearly expect to sell it to specialists and libraries.

Stephen Dray
Southend, UK

The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel. New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians

**Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum
Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe 282**

Rodrigo J. Morales

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, xii + 200pp., €69.00,
pb, ISBN 978-3-16-150435-8

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette thèse de doctorat, Rodrigo Morales fournit une étude éclairante de la pneumatologie paulinienne dans l'épître aux Galates en la replaçant dans le contexte de l'histoire de la tradition. Cette contribution complète utilement d'autres études récentes sur la pneumatologie paulinienne. Après avoir considéré les textes de l'Ancien Testament et du judaïsme du second temple qui associent la présence de l'Esprit à la restauration d'Israël, il examine le rôle accordé à l'Esprit dans l'argumentation de Paul, d'abord en Galates 3-4 puis en Galates 5-6.

SUMMARY

In this published version of his Duke dissertation, Rodrigo Morales provides an insightful tradition-historical study of Paul's pneumatology in Galatians, which provides a useful complement to other recent studies in Pauline pneumatology. After exploring OT and Second Temple texts that

associate the presence of the Spirit with the restoration of Israel, Morales investigates the role of the Spirit in Paul's argument in Galatians 3-4 and 5-6.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In dieser veröffentlichten Ausgabe seiner Duke-Dissertation bietet Rodrigo Morales eine kluge traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Pneumatologie des Paulus im Galaterbrief. Sie liefert eine hilfreiche Ergänzung zu anderen, kürzlich erschienen Werken im Bereich paulinischer Pneumatologie. Nachdem Morales alttestamentliche und Zweite-Tempel Texte analysiert, welche die Gegenwart von Gottes Geist mit der Wiederherstellung Israels in Verbindung bringen, untersucht er die Rolle des Geistes im Argument des Paulus im Galaterbrief in den Kapiteln 3-4 und 5-6.

* * * *

In this published version of his Duke dissertation, Rodrigo J. Morales provides an insightful tradition-historical study of Paul's pneumatology in Galatians. This work nicely complements other recent studies in Pauline pneumatology such as Volker Rabens and John W. Yates. Though not situated as a response to Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Morales' work shows how Paul's pneumatology is in direct continuity with Old Testament (OT) and Second Temple Jewish traditions, and this stands in contrast with Engberg-Pedersen's preference for a Stoa-informed understanding.

In Galatians Paul does not cite key OT texts that mention the Spirit in the context of the restoration of Israel, but Morales shows Paul's continuity with his tradition by surveying central passages in OT and Second Temple texts which provide a context for expectations regarding the Spirit and the restoration of Israel. He thus focuses on 'multiply attested collocations of themes' in order to compare Paul with other writings. As a result, this tradition-historical study helpfully situates Paul's argument in Galatians which is so centred upon the Spirit.

The monograph begins in chapter 2 with a study of OT prophetic expectations relating the presence of the Spirit with the restoration of Israel. Isaiah garners the most attention along with Ezekiel and then Joel. A monolithic tradition does not arise; rather, the presence of the Spirit is associated with a number of other restoration themes. One progression with Second Temple texts (chapter 3) is the combination of OT promises of the Spirit with concepts such as heart and blessing in Deuteronomy. In addition, they repeat other OT prophetic themes related to the restoration of Israel.

After his exploration of OT and Second Temple traditions, Morales addresses key passages in Galatians 3-4 (chapter 4) and 5-6 (chapter 5). In chapter 4 the heart of his discussion is the notoriously debated 3:10-14. He argues, following James Scott and N.T. Wright, that the constellation of ideas represented in this section fits within a similar trajectory of the restoration of Israel by way of a new exodus typology. While some may not be convinced by that argument, Morales' primary focus on

death and life as the centre of Paul's discussion helps to unlock the passage. This focus also helps to make sense of the connection between the righteousness language and the promise of the Spirit that is interspersed within 3:1-14.

The association between righteousness and the Spirit is left underexplored in chapter 4 but as Morales turns to Galatians 5-6, the connection becomes clearer. In particular, the monograph draws out the interplay of Spirit and righteousness in 5:2-6. Following his new exodus perspective on the letter, Morales interprets the freedom and slavery language in Galatians 5 as exodus typology. Importantly, just as life through the Spirit was the heart of the soteriological promise in Galatians 3-4, Morales notes how this central theme is repeated in Galatians 5-6, showing the coherence between the two sections of the letter.

This monograph is very helpful because it addresses a key Pauline theme in a well-argued and clear manner, though I will point out a couple of areas that might be sharpened. Since the relationship of the Spirit and righteousness is found in Galatians 3 and 5, more discussion of this would have been helpful, particularly in the discussion of 3:1-5. This passage situates the presence of the Spirit in the immediate context of righteousness by faith found in 2:15-21 and 3:6-9, but Morales' discussion of 3:1-5 focuses on the background of Isaiah 53 and not on the central argument of the Spirit-righteousness relationship in Galatians.

A larger question relates to the use of 'new exodus' language to interpret the 'restoration eschatology' represented in Paul. The latter category is evident, while the former is not as clear. To bolster the case it would help if the OT and Second Temple texts were more explicit in their use of 'exodus' language to describe the restoration. Also, I am more convinced by John Goodrich's recent work on Gal 4:1-7 which strongly challenges the new exodus reading of this passage. Morales importantly concedes that Paul shifts the focus from exile to death and life, and this shift problematises the new exodus reading. In support of Morales, this does not mean that Paul is merely thinking of individuals experiencing death and life: the Spirit is the evidence of participation in a reconstituted people of God, the children of Abraham. However, I find it difficult to see that this people experiences an exodus from the Law when restoration eschatology precisely expected a fulfilment of the Law in association with the end of exile.

Notwithstanding these minor points, I highly recommend this monograph for those wanting to understand Paul's pneumatology, particularly since it demonstrates his continuity with Jewish traditions. The content and argument are compelling, and Morales' succinct style supports his clearly presented thesis.

Ben C. Blackwell
Houston, USA

Jesus im Talmud

Peter Schäfer

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007; 308 pp., € 29, pb,
ISBN 978-3-16-149462-8

SUMMARY

This volume explores the references to Jesus in Rabbinic literature, especially in the Babylonian Talmud. These writings contain fragments of the life of Jesus, of his doctrines and his death. In a scholarly and comprehensible way Schäfer explains the main topics of the Rabbinic views of Jesus in their contemporary, literary and historical context. This context has also influenced the various perspectives of Jesus in both traditions of the Talmud. The author demonstrates convincingly that the Rabbinic testimonies represent literary answers to a literary text (the NT) which developed under existing historical conditions. This book represents an important study of the Jewish perception of Jesus in late Antiquity.

SUMMARY

Dieser Band untersucht die Erwähnungen Jesu in der rabb. Literatur, vor allem im babylonischen Talmud. Diese Schriften enthalten Fragmente vom Leben Jesu, seinen Lehren und seinem Tod. Fundiert und allgemeinverständlich erklärt Schäfer die Hauptthemen des rabb. Jesusbildes in ihrem zeitgeschichtlichen, literarischen und historischen Kontext, der auch die unterschiedliche Wahrnehmung Jesu in den beiden talmudischen Traditionen beeinflusst hat. Schäfer zeigt überzeugend, dass die rabb. Zeugnisse literarische Antworten auf einen literarischen Text (das NT) sind, die unter ganz konkreten historischen Bedingungen entstanden. Eine wichtige Studie zur jüdischen Wahrnehmung Jesu in der Spätantike.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage étudie les références faites à Jésus dans la littérature rabbinique, plus précisément dans le Talmud babylonien. On y trouve en effet des références fragmentaires à la vie de Jésus, à son enseignement et à sa mort. Dans ce travail académique très accessible, Schäfer éclaire les thèmes principaux abordés par les rabbins à propos de Jésus en situant leurs points de vue dans le contexte historique et littéraire de l'époque. Il montre quelle influence a exercé ce contexte sur les différentes perspectives sous lesquelles Jésus est considéré dans les deux traditions talmudiques. L'auteur démontre de manière convaincante que les textes rabbiniques constituent des réponses littéraires à un texte littéraire (le Nouveau Testament) élaborées dans des circonstances historiques particulières. On a là une étude importante de la perception que les Juifs entretenaient de Jésus à la fin de l'Antiquité.

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Das vorliegende Bändchen (11 x 18 cm) ist die deutsche Übersetzung des Titels *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). Einige Fehler der englischen Ausgabe wurden in der Übersetzung kor-

rigiert, „Darüber hinaus bin ich ... in manchen Fällen bewusst vom engl. Text abgewichen“ (ix). Schäfer will darzustellen, „wie der Talmud, das Gründungsdokument des rabb. Judentums in der Spätantike, Jesus von Nazareth, den Gründer des Christentums, wahrgenommen hat“ (1). Herausfordernd ist dabei, dass Jesus nicht in einer zusammenhängenden Erzählung vorkommt, sondern über die gesamte rabb. Literatur im allgemeinen und im Talmud im besonderen verstreut. Er wird oft ganz beiläufig und im Zusammenhang mit völlig anderen Themen erwähnt. Schäfer setzt sich in Ansatz und Inhalt durchweg mit J. Maier's *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Überlieferung* (1978) auseinander. Anders als Maier nimmt er an, dass sich die einschlägigen Quellen auf die Person Jesu beziehen, solange nicht das Gegenteil bewiesen ist (16). Dies bedeutet aber nicht, dass Schäfer die rabb. Hinweise als mögliche Quellen für den historischen Jesus versteht: „Der historische Jesus kommt in unseren rabb. Texten tatsächlich nicht vor; sie bieten keinerlei historisch zuverlässige Evidenz über ihn und ganz gewiss keine historischen ‚Fakten‘, die vom NT abweichen und darum ernst zu nehmen sind“ (17).

Vielmehr handelt es sich bei den Texten über Jesus und seine Familie um sorgfältig formulierte und überaus feingespinnene Gegenerzählungen, die die ntl. Geschichten parodieren, ganz besonders die Geschichte von Jesu Geburt und Tod (18). Dies sei die historische Aussage der späten talmudischen Evidenz über Jesus. Die rabb. Hinweise müssen als beeindruckende Zeugnisse eines kühnen Diskurses mit der christl. Gesellschaft verstanden werden, als Interaktion zwischen Juden und Christen, die in Palästina und Babylonien erstaunliche Unterschiede aufweist. Die Zusammenstellung der Texte über Jesus folgt nach thematischen Schwerpunkten.

Zunächst geht es um rabb. Aussagen zur Familie Jesu. Hier entwerfen die Rabbinen mit nur wenigen Worten eine eindringliche Gegenerzählung, die die Grundlagen der christl. Botschaft erschüttern soll: Jesus ist nicht, „wie seine Anhänger behaupten, von einer Jungfrau geboren, sondern unehelich, als Sohn einer Hure und deren Liebhaber und kann deswegen nicht der Messias aus dem Hause David sein und schon gar nicht der Sohn Gottes“ (21). Dann geht es um die Portraituren Jesu als missratenen Sohn bzw. Schüler und als frivolen Schüler. Im Kontext der rabb. Sorge um die rechte Beziehung zu ihren Schülern erscheint der Vorwurf, dass Jesus ein schlechter, missratener Schüler war. Damit sprachen die Rabbinen ihr härtestes Urteil über ihn aus. Der Vorwurf enthält zudem sexuelle Untertöne und unterstreicht damit den Vorwurf seiner zweifelhaften Herkunft.

Dem folgen Aussagen über Rabbi Elieser ben Hyrkanos, der verdächtigt wurde engen Kontakt mit einem Schüler Jesu zu haben. Auch hier spielen wieder sexuelle Vorwürfe hinein, da der christl. Kult als ein Kult charakterisiert wird, der seine Anhänger zu unzüch-

tigen und orgiastischen Ritualen verleite. „So wurde R. Elieser zum rabb. ‚Doppelgänger‘ von Jesus, der sich in sexuellen Exzessen ergiebt und dazu noch magische Praktiken ausübt“ (22). Ferner wird die Heilkraft Jesu polemisch aufgegriffen. Dabei ist nicht die magische Kraft als solche das Problem, sondern die vermeintlich falsche magische Kraft, die mit der rabb. Autorität konkurriert, indem sie sich mit Jesus und der christlichen Gemeinde auf eine andere Autorität berufen.

Auch die Hinrichtung Jesu kommt vor und wird als rechtens verteidigt. Hier geht vor allem der babylonische Talmud recht detailliert auf die Einzelheiten der halakhischen Prozedur während des Gerichtsverfahrens und bei der Hinrichtung ein. Jesus wurde verurteilt und hingerichtet wegen Zauberei und Anstiftung Israels zum Götzendienst. Dabei fällt besonders auf, dass die Rabbinen hartnäckig darauf bestehen, dass Jesus nach jüdischem Recht und nicht nach römischem Recht verurteilt und hingerichtet wurde. Schäfer sieht darin eine beabsichtigte Fehllesung des NT mit dem Ziel „Jesus für das jüdische Volk zu reklamieren und damit stolz zu bestätigen, dass er zurecht und nach geltendem Gesetz hingerichtet wurde, weil er ein jüdischer Häretiker war“ (24).

Nach der Zusammenstellung rabb. Polemik gegen die Schüler Jesu („ein überaus subtiler Kampf zwischen den Rabbinen und ihren christl. Widersachern, der den christl. Anspruch zurückweisen will, Jesus sei der Messias und Sohn Gottes, er sei nach seinem schrecklichen Tod auferstanden, und dieser Tod sei der Höhepunkt des Neuen Bundes“, 25) stellt Schäfer die Verweise auf die Höllenstrafen Jesu zusammen (auf ewig muss er in kochenden Exkrementen sitzen), bei denen er als Jude zusammen mit Titus und Bileam erscheint, den notorischen Erbfeinden des jüdischen Volkes.

Ein abschließendes Kapitel fasst zusammen und verbindet die verschiedenen Aspekte der Jesus-Erzählung in der rabb. Literatur miteinander. „Die Jesus-Passagen der rabb. Literatur, vor allem im babylonischen Talmud, bieten ein farbenprächtiges Kaleidoskop aus vielen ... Fragmenten vom Leben Jesu, seinen Lehren und nicht zuletzt von seinem Tod“ (191). Schäfer erklärt die Hauptthemen des rabb. Jesusbildes in ihrem zeitgeschichtlichen, literarischen und historischen Kontext, der auch die unterschiedliche Wahrnehmung Jesu in den beiden talmudischen Traditionen beeinflusst hat. Die rabb. Zeugnisse sind als literarische Antworten auf einen literarischen Text (das NT) zu werten, die unter ganz konkreten historischen Bedingungen gegeben wurden. Die deutlichsten, radikalsten und kühnsten Aussagen über das Leben und Schicksal Jesu stehen gerade im babylonischen und nicht im palästinischen Talmud.

Das instruktive Bändchen endet mit einem Anhang, der die spätere (christliche) Zensur der Jesus betreffenden Stellen in Handschriften des babylonischen Talmuds untersucht und deren Ausmaß aufzeigt. Bibliographie (285-99) und Register beenden den Band.

Schäfer ist eine umfassende und überzeugende Dar-

stellung der talmudischen Wahrnehmung Jesu gelungen. Trotz Schäfers dezidiert Absage wäre es spannend, dieses Bild noch konsequenter mit den kanonischen und apokryphen Evangelien und der zeitgleichen christologischen Diskussion zu vergleichen. Nicht angesprochen wird die Frage, welche Bedeutung dieses Jesusbild für die jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen über ihre unmittelbare Entstehungszeit hinaus hatte bzw. hat. Während man christlicherseits sich zuweilen im Aufspüren möglicher antijüdischer Tendenzen im NT gegenseitig übertrifft, wäre interessant zu wissen, wie die verschiedenen Strömungen des Judentums mit derartigen Aussagen in ihren verbindlichen Schriften umgehen. Könnte das hier vorgetragene Wissen um den zeitgeschichtlichen und literarischen Kontext den Weg zu einer Verständigung bahnen?

Christoph Stenschke
Wiedenest / Pretoria

The New Cambridge History of the Bible: The Bible from 600 to 1450

Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (eds.)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, xxii +1045 pp, £125, hb; ISBN 978-0-521860062

SUMMARY

This volume is the first to appear in the *New Cambridge History of the Bible* series. It traces the geographical and intellectual journey of the Bible from its Middle Eastern homelands to the entire Mediterranean area and into Northern Europe. It covers eastern and western biblical traditions, processes of transmission and ways of interpreting the Bible among Christians, Jews and Muslims, and also addresses the role of the Bible in medieval interreligious dialogue. The volume includes the various translations of the Bible during this era and surveys the influence of biblical texts and themes on vernacular poetry, prose, drama, law and the visual arts. In short, it is a mine of information on the significance, reception and influence of the Bible in a formative period of European history and culture.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band ist der erste in der Reihe *New Cambridge History of the Bible* [Die Neue Cambridge Geschichte der Bibel]. Er verfolgt die geographische und akademische Reise der Bibel von ihren Ursprüngen im Mittleren Osten bis in den gesamten Mittelmeerraum und nach Nordeuropa. Das Buch deckt biblische Traditionen des Ostens und Westens ab sowie Übermittlungsprozesse und Deutungsmöglichkeiten der Bibel unter Christen, Juden und Muslimen. Es befasst sich ebenfalls mit der Rolle der Bibel im mittelalterlichen interreligiösen Dialog. Das Werk beinhaltet die unterschiedlichen Bibelübersetzungen während dieser Periode und untersucht die Einflüsse biblischer Texte und Themen auf Volkspoesie, Prosa, Schauspiel, auf Gesetzestexte und die bildenden Künste. Kurz gesagt, es ist

ein Schatz an Information zu Bedeutung, Aufnahme und Einfluss der Bibel in einer entscheidenden Epoche europäischer Geschichte und Kultur.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce volume est le premier d'une série sur l'histoire de la Bible. Il est consacré à la période moyenâgeuse. Il retrace le parcours géographique et intellectuel de la Bible, des contrées du Proche-Orient à l'ensemble du bassin méditerranéen, et jusqu'à la partie nord de l'Europe. Il traite des traditions bibliques orientales et occidentales, des processus de transmission et des manières d'interpréter la Bible chez les chrétiens, les Juifs et les musulmans. Il considère aussi le rôle joué par la Bible dans le dialogue inter-religieux. Il présente les diverses traductions bibliques et fait le tour des influences des textes et thèmes bibliques sur la poésie, la littérature, le théâtre, le droit et les arts picturaux. Il fournit une mine d'informations sur l'importance, la réception et l'influence de la Bible au cours du moyen âge pendant lequel se sont façonnées l'histoire et la culture de l'Europe.

* * * *

For several decades the three volume *Cambridge History of the Bible*, published between 1963 and 1970, has been a rich source of information. Now these volumes are being revised and expanded in focus. The revision is also due to the change of climate in theology and biblical studies. Some scholars have referred to recent shifts in interest as a 'cultural turn': while the focus used to be on the Bible itself, now it is on its long history of reception and influence not only in scholarship and the believing community, but also on the arts, literature, other religions and so forth. The present volume is the first to appear of a four-volume *New Cambridge History of the Bible*. It aims to trace 'its geographical and intellectual journey from its Middle Eastern homelands to all parts of the Mediterranean and into northern Europe'; it provides

a balanced treatment of eastern and western biblical traditions, highlighting processes of transmission and modes of exegesis among Roman and Orthodox Christians, Jews and Muslims, and illuminating the role of the Bible in medieval interreligious dialogue (i).

The forty-four essays of this volume aim to take the study of the medieval Bible history beyond the concerns of the monastic cloister and ecclesiastical school to consider the influence of biblical texts on vernacular poetry, prose, drama, law and the visual arts of East and West.

In the Introduction R. Marsden introduces the five parts of this volume and the individual essays. *Part one*, 'Texts and versions', addresses the linguistic plurality characteristic of the medieval period, during which the primacy of the scriptural languages was tested by the vernaculars of both East and West. It contains essays on the Hebrew Bible, the Greek Christian Bible, Jewish Greek Bible versions, the Latin Bible (600 to 900 and

900 to the Council of Trent) as well as on translations into Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, Germanic, English, the languages of Scandinavia, French, Italian, and Spanish and Catalan.

Part two is devoted to the format and the transmission of the medieval Bible and 'surveys the evolution of production techniques and changing fashions in the presentation of the sacred text' (xvi). It consists of nine essays on 'The Bibles of the Christian East', 'Carolingian Bibles', 'The Latin gospelbook, c. 600-1200', 'The Glossed Bible', 'The thirteenth century and the Paris Bible', 'Romanesque display Bibles', 'Latin and vernacular Apocalypses', 'The Latin psalter' and 'Illustration in biblical manuscripts'.

The ways in which the Bible was interpreted in the Middle Ages are the focus of *part three* which

examines the exegetical legacy of the fathers and the challenge to this from a new sort of interpretation, fostered by monastic and cathedral schools and based on grammar and dialectic; it explores, too, the vigorous dialogues which developed between Christians and Jews and Muslims, all of whom had different and sometimes competing interests in the Bible (xvi).

The contributions are on Byzantine Orthodox exegesis, the patristic legacy, the early schools (c. 900-1100), the Bible in medieval universities, reform movements, Jewish biblical exegesis, the Bible in Jewish-Christian dialogue and the Bible in Muslim-Christian encounters.

Part four, 'The Bible in use', 'addresses the most important of the liturgical, devotional and secular roles of the Bible in the medieval practice of Christianity, as well as its contribution to the formation of the Qur'an' (xvi). To achieve this there are essays on 'The Bible in the medieval liturgy', 'The use of the Bible in preaching', 'The Bible in the spiritual literature of the medieval West', 'Literacy and the Bible', 'The Bible and canon law' and 'The Qur'an and the Bible'.

The essays in *part five* explore 'the mission to communicate the Bible to the less educated, which so characterised our period and was accomplished by an increasing diversity of visual and dramatic means' (xvi); they are on the Bible in public art, icons, verse paraphrases, and stage versions of parts of the Bible. Detailed bibliographies, indexes of biblical manuscripts and scriptural sources, and a detailed general index round off the well-produced volume. *The Bible from 600 to 1450* is an excellent collection and a mine of information. It has all the potential to become the standard for years to come. The present volume was the first to appear of this project. The other volumes of *The New Cambridge History of the Bible* are *From the Beginnings to 600* (eds. J. C. Paget and J. Schaper); *From 1450 to 1750* (ed. E. Cameron) and *From 1750 to the Present* (ed. J. Riches).

With a narrower focus on interpretation, Alan Hauser and Duane F. Watson (eds) have started with *A History of Biblical Interpretation I: The Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003). Volume

2 is devoted to *The Medieval Through the Reformation Periods* (2009). Another related multi-volume study on the history of interpretation is H. O. Old's seven volume survey *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998-2010). A summary of readings from the history of Bible interpretation is provided by William Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation: A Reader* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004; see my review in *Religion & Theology* 11 [2004] 358-363). Particularly devoted to medieval Bible interpretation is the new series *The Bible in Medieval Tradition* (BMT) (Grand Rapids; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans; Edinburgh: Albans); the volume in Galatians has appeared (I. C. Levy, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 2011).

Christoph Stenschke
Wiedenest / Pretoria

The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism

J.J. Collins and D.C. Harlow (eds.)

Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2010; xxxvii + 1360 pp., hb., \$95, ISBN 978-0-8028-2549-0

RÉSUMÉ

Ce dictionnaire bien à jour constitue une excellente présentation de l'histoire et de la théologie du judaïsme ancien et des débats académiques sur le sujet au cours des trente dernières années. Il s'appuie sur des sources littéraires et archéologiques et couvre les ouvrages datant de cette période, les figures, les thèmes, les événements et les lieux importants. Il permet de bien appréhender la période intertestamentaire, l'arrière-plan juif du Nouveau Testament et du judaïsme rabbinique plus récent. Treize articles introductifs développés y sont aussi consacrés à l'ensemble des facettes du judaïsme de 350 av. J.-C. à 135 ap. J.-C.

SUMMARY

This up-to-date international dictionary provides an excellent survey of the history and theology of early Judaism and of its scholarly discussion of the past thirty years. It is based on literary and archaeological sources and covers the works written during this period, important figures and themes as well as events and places. The volume gives guidance for understanding the period between the Testaments and the backgrounds of the New Testament and of later rabbinic Judaism. It includes thirteen comprehensive introductory essays on all facets of Judaism between about 350 BC to AD 135.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses internationale Wörterbuch befindet sich auf dem letzten Stand und bietet einen ausgezeichneten Überblick über die Geschichte und Theologie des frühen Judentums und seiner wissenschaftlichen Diskussion der letzten dreißig Jahre. Es fußt auf literarischen und archäologischen

Quellen und deckt die Werke ab, die während dieser Zeit verfasst wurden. Es befaßt sich mit herausragenden Persönlichkeiten und Themen, Ereignissen und Schauplätzen. Der vorliegende Band gibt Anleitung für das Verständnis der zwischentestamentlichen Epoche und dem Hintergrund des Neuen Testaments so wie des späteren rabbinischen Judentums. Er umfasst dreizehn umfangreiche Aufsätze zur Einführung in alle Bereiche des Judentums von ungefähr 350 v.Chr. bis 135 n.Chr.

* * * *

For several centuries, the study of the history and theology of early or Second Temple Judaism was the domain of a few specialists in Jewish Studies. This has changed drastically over the past thirty years. In the wake of several developments, including the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the so called 'new perspective' on Paul, early Judaism has become a storm-centre of scholarly interest in biblical studies. The number of text editions, monographs, articles and new journals devoted to early Judaism is ever increasing. So far, there was no comprehensive resource tool to summarise and readily make available the results of this intensive study; precisely this is achieved by the very welcome *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*. Early Judaism is understood as

the period between Alexander the Great in the late fourth century B.C.E. and the Roman Emperor Hadrian and the Bar Kochba Revolt in the early second century C.E. It is impossible to study this period, however, without taking some account of the Persian period and the postexilic biblical books, on the one hand, and of the subsequent development of rabbinic Judaism on the other (vi).

The *first part* of this dictionary consists of thirteen substantial introductory essays which synthesise major aspects of Judaism in this period, each with a detailed bibliography: J.J. Collins, 'Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship'; C. Seeman & A.K. Marshak, 'Jewish History from Alexander to Hadrian'; J.C. VanderKam, 'Judaism in the Land of Israel'; E.S. Gruen, 'Judaism in the Diaspora'; E. Ulrich, 'The Jewish Scriptures: Texts, Versions, Canons'; J.L. Kugel, 'Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation'; L.T. Stuckenbruck, 'Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha'; E. Tigchelaar, 'Dead Sea Scrolls'; K. Berthelot, 'Early Jewish Literature Written in Greek'; J.K. Zangenber, 'Archaeology, Papyri, and Inscriptions'; M. Pucci Ben Zeev, 'Jews among Greeks and Romans'; D.C. Harlow, 'Early Judaism and Early Christianity' and L.H. Schiffman, 'Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism'.

The *second part* of the volume consists of the 520 alphabetical dictionary entries (293–1360). To give an idea of the range of this dictionary (the brief preface on page vi is far too short on the scope and selection of the entries), I list all the entries for two letters of the alphabet:

Babatha Archive, Babel, Tower of, Babylonian Cul-

ture, Babylonians, Babylonian Talmud, Barki Nafshi (4Q434-438), Bar Kokhba Caves, Bar Kokhba Letters, Bar Kokhba Revolt, Baruch, First Book of Baruch, Second Book of Baruch, Third Book of Baruch, Fourth Book of, Baths, Beatitudes (4QBeatitudes), Behemoth, Belial, Ben Sira, Book of, Berakhot (4Q286-290), Berossus, Biblical Antiquities (Pseudo-Philo), Bickerman, Elias, Birth, Miraculous, Blasphemy, Boethusians, Bousset, Wilhelm, Burial Practices.

Tales of the Persian Court (4Q550), Tanhumim (4Q176), Targum, targumim, Tcherikover, Victor, Temple, Jerusalem, Temple Scroll (11QTemple), Temple Tax, Testaments, Testimonia (4Q175), Text Types, Hebrew, Thallus, Theaters, Theodicy, Theodotus, Therapeutae, Tiberias, Tiberius Julius Alexander, Tithing, Tobiards, Tobiah, Tobit, Book of, Tohorot (4Q274, 276-278), Torah and Tradition, Tosefta, Transjordan, Tribute and Taxes.

The entries are cross-referenced and all contain select bibliographies. There are 130 illustrations, including photographs, drawings and plans. The 266 Jewish, Christian and other international authors involved come from twenty countries. Throughout, the volume combines literary and non-literary (archaeological and epigraphical) evidence. The New Testament writings are included as evidence for Judaism in the first century AD (vi). This dictionary is a user-friendly and much needed resource for scholars and students alike; no theological reference library can do without it.

Unfortunately the twenty-four maps are of poor quality. The map of Egypt in the early Roman period (564) is almost useless; it only locates Alexandria, Memphis and Thebes, but not Leontopolis/Heliopolis (see G. Bohak, 'Heliopolis', 721-723). For excellent maps see S. Mittmann, G. Schmidt (eds.), *Tübinger Bibelatlant: Auf der Grundlage des Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO) / Tübingen Bible Atlas: Based on the Tübingen Atlas of the Near and Middle East* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2001).

In its entries on early Judaism, some of the material in this dictionary has also been covered ten years earlier in C.A. Evans and S.E. Porter (eds), *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000). There is also some overlap with the recent *Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine* edited by C. Hezser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); for the significance of travelling see Hezser's *Jewish Travel in Antiquity*. TSAJ 144 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

Christoph Stenschke
Wienedest / Pretoria

Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann
Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20

Anders Gerdmar

Leiden: Brill, 2009; viii + 675 pp, cloth, € 150; ISBN 978-90-04-16851-0

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese umfangreiche Studie bietet einen informativen Überblick über antisemitische Tendenzen in der neutestamentlichen Exegese in Deutschland zwischen 1750 und 1950. Der schwedische Autor erforscht, was bekannte Exegeten über die Juden und das Judentum gesagt haben, wie Geschichtsschreibung angewandt wird und wie man mit dem Problem der Kontinuität und Diskontinuität umgeht. Er analysiert ebenfalls, weshalb sie sagten, was sie sagten, wobei er versucht, die Ansichten über die Juden und das Judentum innerhalb der symbolischen Welt eines jeden einzelnen Wissenschaftlers zu verstehen. Gerdmar berücksichtigt auch eine mögliche Beziehung zwischen der symbolischen Welt und einer Legitimierung des kollektiven Umgangs mit den Juden und dem Judentum. Das vorliegende Werk ist eine bedeutende Studie zur Geschichte neutestamentlicher Wissenschaft und, etwas allgemeiner, zur Rolle und zu den Gefahren von Ideologie in der Theologie.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude très complète et érudite fait le tour de la question des tendances antisémites dans les études consacrées au Nouveau Testament entre 1750 et 1950. L'auteur, un Suédois, considère ce que d'éminents exégètes ont dit sur les Juifs et sur le judaïsme, comment ils ont utilisé l'historiographie et comment ils ont abordé la question de la continuité et de la discontinuité. Il cherche à déterminer pourquoi ils ont dit ce qu'ils ont dit et tente de comprendre le point de vue de chaque spécialiste sur les Juifs et le judaïsme en fonction du monde symbolique de celui-ci. Il examine aussi le lien susceptible d'exister entre monde symbolique et légitimation du traitement réservé aux Israélites et au judaïsme dans la société. C'est là une contribution importante à l'histoire de l'étude académique du Nouveau Testament. De plus, l'ouvrage met en évidence, de manière plus générale quel rôle jouent les idéologies en théologie et quels dangers elles représentent.

SUMMARY

This comprehensive study offers an erudite survey of anti-Semitic tendencies in German New Testament exegesis between 1750 and 1950. The Swedish author inquires what prominent exegetes said about Jews and Judaism, how historiography is used and how the problem of continuity-discontinuity is dealt with. He also examines why they said what they said, attempting to understand the views on Jews and Judaism within the symbolic world of each scholar. Gerdmar also considers the possible link

between symbolic world and the legitimation of societal treatment of Jews and Judaism. This is an important study of the history of New Testament scholarship and, more generally, of the role and dangers of ideology in theology.

* * * *

A number of recent studies have focused on the role that national and Nazi ideological lore played in New Testament scholarship during the period of the German Third Reich and the two decades previously. The scope of the present substantial monograph by Swedish scholar Anders Gerdmar is more comprehensive. Gerdmar focuses on a wider era and places what happened under the influence of nationalism and the ideology of the *Deutsche Christen* in the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century in a larger context.

In an introductory chapter Gerdmar discusses definitions of anti-Semitism, explains the choice and delimitation of materials and the purposes of his study. His quest is to find out 'how various positions on Jews and Judaism were theologically justified, and how Jews and Judaism were constructed in the biblical interpretation of German Protestantism, from the dawn of modernity to the years after the Holocaust' (2). He goes on to say:

The focus is... on the overarching paradigms, thought structures and models used in exegesis, such as characterisations of Jews and Judaism, historiographical models used to describe the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity, and the place of Jews and Judaism in the respective world-views or symbolic worlds (4).

The study consists of three stages:

Firstly, it looks at what the exegetes said about Jews and Judaism, especially the characterisation of Jews and Judaism, how historiography is used and how the problem of continuity-discontinuity is dealt with. Secondly, it examines why they said what they said, attempting to understand the views on Jews and Judaism within the symbolic world of each scholar. Thirdly, it considers the possible link between symbolic world and legitimation of societal treatment of Jews and Judaism (577, detailed description on 9–12).

Part one is devoted to Enlightenment exegesis and the Jews. After a survey of developments from Deism to De Wette, Gerdmar covers Johann S. Semler, Johann G. Herder, Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher and Wilhelm M. L. de Wette. This is followed by a brief survey of the Jews in Enlightenment exegesis from Baur to Ritschl and then a detailed treatment of Ferdinand C. Baur, David F. Strauss and Albrecht Ritschl. Under the heading 'The History of Religions School and the Jews – a Historical Turn?' Johannes Weiß and Wilhelm Bousset are discussed.

Part two describes exegesis from the perspective of salvation history and the Jews, covering Friedrich Tholuck, Johann T. Beck, Franz Delitzsch, Hermann L.

Strack and Adolf Schlatter. In this tradition, Jews were seen as objects of conversionist activities, although, at the same time, the strongest defenders of the Jews often came from the missionaries themselves. Gerdmar observes that 'the fact that Jews of a heroic, biblical history are given a prominent place does not guarantee a positive attitude to contemporary Jews' (193).

Part three examines the positions that prominent German form critics (Karl L. Schmidt, Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann) held vis-à-vis the Jews. The *fourth part* surveys Nazi exegesis and the Jews. After a brief introduction, the discussion includes Gerhard Kittel and Walter Grundmann ('Towards a non-Jewish Jesus'). These two exegetes may have been those most influenced by nationalism and National Socialism, but they were by no means the only exegetes to be 'seduced' by Nazi ideology.

This instructive volume closes with an analysis. Gerdmar argues that there is ample evidence

that these exegetes' views on Jews and Judaism are a complex combination of research tradition, theological currents, cultural conceptions of Jews as well as political ideas and considerations; and ultimately the views are formed out of the personal symbolic world and ethos of the exegete (577).

Gerdmar concludes:

Hence none of the research traditions is innocent when it comes to legitimising anti-Semitism. However, the study does not justify tainting entire traditions with anti-Semitism, whether they be Enlightenment or salvation-historical, liberal or conservative. What is essential is to understand the thought structures that open or close the door to anti-Semitism, since there is often a link between the place of the 'symbolic Jew' and the social and political treatment of the 'real Jew' (578).

Gerdmar has covered a wide field and offers a sensitive and, by and large, persuasive analysis of latent and open anti-Judaism in German theology, which also had a strong influence on theology elsewhere. Obviously, other scholars with similar tendencies had to be omitted in this broad survey. By closing his examination with Kittel and Grundmann (about 1950), it is easy to assume that theological anti-Judaism has been overcome. While this is by and large true in German theology under the impact of the Holocaust and the post-war Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is still necessary to inquire whether anti-Judaism (albeit in different, more subtle forms) still lingers on.

Editor: See also Jochen Eber, 'Das „Volkstestament der Deutschen“: „Die Botschaft Gottes“ – ein deutsch-christliches Neues Testament im Dritten Reich', *European Journal of Theology* 18 (2009) 29-46.

Christoph Stenschke
Wiedenest / Pretoria

Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart Band 4: Ereignisse, Dekrete, Kontroversen
Wolfgang Benz (ed.)

München: Saur; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011; xv + 492S.,
hb, €119,95; ISBN 978-3-598-24076-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Band vier dieses neuen Handbuchs des Antisemitismus behandelt Ereignisse, Dekrete und Kontroversen rund um den Antisemitismus, aber auch um seine Überwindung. Der zeitliche Schwerpunkt liegt auf Neuzeit und Gegenwart. Eine Reihe von Einträgen gilt Formen von Antisemitismus, die eine spezifisch christliche Komponente haben. Der Band hilft dabei den gegenwärtigen Antisemitismus sowie die Holocaust in einen größeren Rahmen zu verorten.

SUMMARY

Volume four of this new manual of Anti-Semitism deals with events, decrees and controversies concerning Anti-Semitism, but also with overcoming it. The time frame concentrates on modernity and the present. A series of articles deals with forms of Anti-Semitism which have specifically Christian elements. The present volume enables placing both present Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust within a larger frame.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce quatrième volume d'un nouveau manuel consacré à l'antisémitisme traite aussi bien de l'antisémitisme que des efforts faits pour le contrecarrer, en présentant des événements, des décrets et des controverses relatives à ce phénomène. Il se concentre sur l'époque de la modernité et l'époque actuelle. Une série d'articles consacrés aux formes prises par l'antisémitisme révèle des éléments spécifiquement chrétiens. Ce volume permet de replacer l'antisémitisme actuel ainsi que la shoah dans un cadre plus large.

* * * *

Nach den Bänden *Antisemitismus in Ländern und Regionen* (Band 1), zu *Personen* (Band 2) und zu *Begriffen, Theorien und Ideologien* (Band 4) widmet sich der vorliegende vierte Band des Handbuchs des Antisemitismus konkreten *Ereignissen, Dekreten und Kontroversen*. Er „informiert über Ereignisse und Affären, über legislative Maßnahmen und politische Proklamationen, über Skandale, Exzesse, Debatten, Prozesse, die Manifestationen von Judenfeindschaft waren, die darauf bezogen oder dadurch ausgelöst wurden ...“ (v). Dazu gehören legislative Judenfeindschaft und auf Juden bezogene Gesetzgebung, öffentliche Debatten, etwa über das Schächten, verschiedene Ritualmordvorwürfe und unterschiedliche Formen von Gewalt gegenüber Juden:

Exzessive Gewalt gegen Juden wurde in der Geschichte Europas oft geübt und ideologisch vor-

bereitet. Die Kreuzzüge des Hohen Mittelalters, die Armleder-Pogrome und der Fedtmilch-Aufstand in der frühen Neuzeit gehörten lange vor den Pogromen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts im Russischen Reich und schließlich im deutschen Raum im November 1938 mit der „Reichskristallnacht“ zur allgegenwärtigen Bedrohung der jüdischen Lebenswelt (vi)

Daneben geht es um das Wirken der Justiz in Sachen Antisemitismus, dazu gehören auch die Anstrengungen, den Holocaust juristisch aufzuarbeiten und andere unterschiedliche Bemühungen, den Antisemitismus zu überwinden.

Unter den repräsentativen 230 Stichwörtern dieses Bandes, die 110 Autoren verfasst haben, geht es auch um *Ereignisse, Dekrete und Kontroversen*, die einen spezifisch christlichen Hintergrund oder Zusammenhang haben, etwa der Anderl-vom-Rinn-Kult, der Ansbacher Ratschlag von 1934, das Autodafé in Cartagena de Indias, die jüdische Erklärung *Dabru emet* aus dem Jahr 2000, das Darmstädter Wort, die EKD Erklärung zur Judenfrage, das „Erlanger Gutachten“, verschiedene Inquisitionsmaßnahmen, das Laterankonzil 1215, Marienkult und Judenfeindschaft in Polen, verschiedene Passionsspiele, die Rintfleisch-Verfolgungen (im Zusammenhang des Vorwurfs des Hostienfrevels, unterschiedliche Ritualmordlegenden, das Speyerer Judenprivileg von 1544, das Stuttgarter Schuldbekenntnis von 1945, Talmudhetze, Talmudverbrennungen (unter „Bücherverbrennungen“), antisemitische Volkspredigten im Mittelalter, Zwangsdisputationen und Zwangstaufen sowie die Neubestimmung in *Nostra aetate* des zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils (hier auch Verfluchungstheorie und Verwerfungstheorie).

Unter den wichtigen Dekreten zur christlichen Neubestimmung gegenüber dem Judentum vermisst man den Synodalbeschluss der Landessynode der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland zur Erneuerung des Verhältnisses von Christen und Juden aus dem Jahr 1980. Ferner ließe sich über *Ereignisse, Dekrete und Kontroversen* im Mittelalter hinaus auch in der Alten Kirche manches identifizieren, was heute unter dem Stichwort Antisemitismus verhandelt wird und verhandelt werden muss (vgl. die Artikel „Antisemitismus/Antijudaismus“ in *RGG I*, 4. Aufl., 556–574). Das Eisenacher deutschchristliche Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben wird vermutlich in Band 5 des *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Organisationen, Institutionen, Bewegungen* behandelt werden; vgl. dazu O. Arnold, „Entjudung“ – Kirche im Abgrund: Die Thüringer Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen 1928–1939 und das „Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben“ 1939–1945, Studien zu Kirche und Israel 25,1+2 (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum – Zentrum für Christlich-Jüdische Studien an der Humboldt – Universität zu Berlin, 2010) und A. Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical*

Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann, Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20 (Leiden, Brill, 2009). Die widersprüchlichen Judenschriften Luthers erscheinen wahrscheinlich erst in Band 6: *Publikationen*; vgl. dazu T. Kaufmann, *Luthers „Judenschriften“: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer historischen Kontextualisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Dass es im Kontext des Islam kein nennenswertes Ereignis, Dekret oder eine Kontroverse zu den Juden und den Umgang mit ihnen gibt, ist schon angesichts der frühen Auseinandersetzungen Mohammeds mit den Juden Medinas unwahrscheinlich. Hier erweist sich die im Vorwort zum ersten Band (W. Benz (Hrsg.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart Band 1: Länder und Regionen*; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter Saur, 2008) beschriebene Eingrenzung nur als bedingt hilfreich: „Ohne historische Aspekte (Mittelalter, Frühe Neuzeit) zu vernachlässigen liegt der Schwerpunkt auf der Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart. Alle Erscheinungsformen (religiös motivierter christlicher Antijudaismus, rassistisch begründeter Antisemitismus, sekundärer Antisemitismus, Antizionismus) werden berücksichtigt“ (dort S. 5). Zu *allen* Formen gehört gewiss auch der religiös motivierte *islamische* Antijudaismus!

Zudem ist zu fragen, ob verschiedene Dekrete der britischen Mandatsverwaltung in Palästina, die die Zuwanderung von Juden beschränkt haben oder Bestimmungen, die die Einwanderung von Juden in andere europäische Länder im Zusammenhang des Holocaustes beschränkt haben, nicht auch in diesen Band gehören würden.

Der instruktive Band zeigt die verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen von Antisemitismus. Die aufgeführten Artikel stellen den Antisemitismus im spezifisch christlichen Zusammenhang in einen größeren Rahmen, ohne ihn damit zu relativieren. Die vielen anderen Einträge zeigen, in welchem Umfeld christliche Erscheinungsformen entstanden sind und welche anderen Motive und Begründungen Judenfeindschaft hat. Zum Thema ferner E. Kessler, N. Wenborn (Hrsg.), *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Christoph Stenschke
Wiedenest / Pretoria

Philosemitism in History

Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe (eds.)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011; xiii + 348 pp. \$28.99 pb.; ISBN 978-0-521-87377-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Trotz zahlreicher anti-semitischer Tendenzen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, hat es auch viel Sympathie mit den Juden und dem Judentum gegeben. Der vorliegende Band widmet sich diesem Phänomen vor allem in seinen

modernen und europäischen Gestaltungsformen. Auf diese Weise lenkt er die Aufmerksamkeit auf diese bedeutende, aber weit vernachlässigte Facette jüdisch-nicht-jüdischer Beziehungen. Nach einem kurzen geschichtlichen Abriss zum Philosemitismus, der als „Idealisierung der Juden und des Judentums“ verstanden wird (i), befassen sich 15 Aufsätze mit unterschiedlichen Gesichtspunkten zu diesem Thema. Das Werk greift wichtige Anliegen auf und bietet neue Blickwinkel.

SUMMARY

Despite many anti-Semitic tendencies in the past and the present, there has also been great sympathy towards Jews and Judaism. The present volume is devoted to this phenomenon, mainly in its modern and European forms, thus drawing attention to this important but widely neglected facet of Jewish – non-Jewish relations. Following a brief history of philosemitism, understood as ‘the idealisation of Jews and Judaism’ (i), fifteen essays address various aspects of the subject. The volume raises important issues and offers fresh perspectives.

RÉSUMÉ

Malgré de nombreuses tendances antisémites dans le passé et le présent, de nombreuses sympathies envers les Juifs et le judaïsme se sont exprimées. Le présent ouvrage est consacré à ce phénomène, en s'intéressant principalement aux formes qu'il prend dans l'Europe moderne. Il attire ainsi l'attention sur cet aspect important mais souvent ignoré des relations entre Juifs et non Juifs. Après une brève histoire du philosémitisme, vu comme une « idéalisation des Juifs et du judaïsme », quinze articles traitent de divers aspects relatifs au sujet. Ce livre soulève des questions importantes et propose de nouvelles perspectives.

* * * *

For many centuries anti-Judaism has been a stock ingredient in Christian theology and assertions of its own identity. On many occasions this attitude led to open hostility against Jews. About three decades ago anti-Judaism rightly became a subject in the scholarly discussion. Its origins, developments and the possibilities of overcoming it have been explored in some detail. Less attention has been given to its opposite: there was not only anti-Semitism, but also time and again in the history of the Church, in philosophy and elsewhere, great sympathy towards Jews and Judaism, and that for a variety of reasons and in different forms. The present volume is devoted to this phenomenon mainly in its modern and European forms. ‘The book underscores both the endurance and the malleability of philosemitism, drawing attention to this important but widely neglected facet of Jewish – non-Jewish relations’ (i).

The editors set out with an introductory yet thorough ‘Brief History of Philosemitism’ (1–26). Philosemitism in this context is understood as ‘the idealisation of Jews and Judaism’ (i). The editors argue that philosemitism should therefore not simplistically be misunderstood as merely anti-Semitism ‘in sheep’s clothing’. The essays

of this volume underscore collectively

the inadequacy of interpreting Jewish–non-Jewish relations only through the prism of an all-pervasive anti-Semitism. The multifaceted and intricate history of laudatory responses to Jews and Judaism is indubitably a real and significant subject. Without a clear-sighted analysis of this philosemitic tradition we are liable to fall into a distorted understanding not only of the past, but also of the present (26).

The volume intends to survey the phenomenon from antiquity to the present, highlighting its rich complexity and broad impact on Western culture. *Part one* is devoted to medieval and early modern frameworks and contains: R. Chazan, ‘Philosemitic Tendencies in Medieval Western Christendom’; A. Melamed, ‘The Revival of Christian Hebraism in Early Modern Europe’ and A. Sutcliffe, ‘The Philosemitic Moment? Judaism and Republicanism in Seventeenth-Century European Thought’.

Part two examines three European philosemites: A. Shear, ‘William Whiston’s Judeo-Christianity: Millenarianism and Christian Zionism in Early Enlightenment England’; A. Goldstein Sepinwall, ‘A Friend of the Jews? The Abbé Grégoire and Philosemitism in Revolutionary France’ and H. Lupovitch, ‘Ordinary People, Ordinary Jews: Mór Jókai as Magyar Philosemite’.

Part three addresses the cultural politics of philosemitism in Victorian Britain and imperial Germany. It contains: N. Valman, ‘Bad Jew/Good Jewess: Gender and Semitic Discourse in Nineteenth-Century England’; L. Fischer, ‘Anti-‘Philosemitism’ and Anti-Antisemitism in Imperial Germany’ and A.T. Levenson, ‘From Recognition to Consensus: The Nature of Philosemitism in Germany, 1871–1932’. *Part four* looks at some forms of American philosemitism: J. Karp, ‘Ethnic Role Models and Chosen Peoples: Philosemitism in African American Culture’; J. Levinson, ‘Connoisseurs of Angst: The Jewish Mystique and Post-War American Literary Culture’ and Y. Ariel, ‘“It’s All in the Bible”: Evangelical Christians, Biblical Literalism, and Philosemitism in Our Times’.

Two final essays address philosemitism in post-Holocaust Europe: W. Kansteiner asks ‘What Is the Opposite of Genocide? Philosemitic Television in Germany, 1963–1995’ and R. E. Gruber contributes ‘“Non-Jewish, Non Kosher, Yet Also Recommended”: Beyond ‘Virtually Jewish’ in Postmillennium Central Europe’. An index rounds off this collection of essays by specialist historians, anthropologists, literary scholars and scholars of religion.

It would have been interesting to extend the analysis of philosemitism to the early and late ancient Church. While it has become fashionable to charge the New Testament – although itself a product of early Judaism – with anti-Semitism, many of its passages are staunchly philosemitic and cannot be understood apart from Judaism. The slow process of the ‘parting of the way’

between Judaism and nascent Christianity in the first centuries AD also provides many traces of philosemitism that deserve attention. One should also ask to a greater extent than done in some of the essays of this volume, to what extent the manifold uses of the Old Testament in defining Christian identity in different Christian traditions (perhaps particularly developed in the Reformed tradition) fall somewhere in the category of philosemitism. The essays of this volume survey and open an interesting field for further inquiry.

Christoph Stenschke
Wien / Pretoria

Niederländische Religionsgeschichte

Joris van Eijnatten und Fred van Lieburg

Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011; 488 S.
mit 40 Karten, Tab. und Graphiken; gebunden
€ 79,99; ISBN 978-3-525-54004-6

SUMMARY

This book brings together many details of the history of religions within the borders of today's Netherlands. It is helpful to get an overview of the Dutch history of religion. Beginning with the Roman Empire in northwest Europe, the authors describe the period until 2005 in four parts. On the one hand it is an advantage that they omit religious philosophy ideas and only outline history. On the other hand the reader sometimes wishes for more interpretation of the many details. More than 40 clear charts, timelines and graphics help to get a overview.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce livre traite de nombreux aspects sous lesquels l'histoire des religions est abordée aux Pays Bas actuellement et en donne une présentation utile. Les auteurs traitent en quatre parties de la période qui va de l'empire Romain, dans la partie nord-occidentale de l'Europe, jusqu'à 2005. D'un côté, l'ouvrage présente l'avantage d'omettre les idées de la philosophie religieuse pour se cantonner à l'histoire. D'un autre côté, on aimerait pouvoir y trouver plus d'interprétation des nombreux détails abordés. Des schémas bien clairs, des tableaux chronologiques et des graphiques, plus de quarante au total, permettent de se faire une idée d'ensemble.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch fasst viele Einzelheiten der Religionsgeschichte zusammen, die sich innerhalb der Grenzen der heutigen Niederlande ereignet hat. Es ist hilfreich, einen Überblick über die niederländische Religionsgeschichte zu erhalten. Beginnend mit dem Römischen Reich im Nordwesten Europas beschreiben die Autoren die Epoche bis 2005, die sie in vier Abschnitte einteilen. Zum einen ist es von Vorteil, dass sie Gedankengut aus dem Bereich der Religionsphilosophie ausklammern und nur Geschichte darstellen. Zum anderen mag sich der Leser bisweilen eine

ausführlichere Deutung der vielen Details wünschen. Mehr als 40 übersichtliche Tabellen, Zeittafeln und Grafiken helfen, einen Überblick zu vermitteln.

* * * *

Dass die *Niederländische Religionsgeschichte* fünf Jahre nach ihrer Erstveröffentlichung in den Niederlande nun auch in deutscher Sprache vorliegt, zeigt etwas von dem Rang, den sie in Zukunft einnehmen kann. Wer immer das besondere Verhältnis der Niederländer zur Religion vor ihrem geschichtlichen Hintergrund verstehen will, wird nicht enttäuscht werden. Die Autoren, Joris van Eijnatten als Professor für Kulturgeschichte und Fred van Lieburg als Professor für die protestantische Kirchengeschichte, haben sich dazu entschlossen, den Rahmen der heutigen Landesgrenzen für ihre Untersuchung auf eine darüber hinausgehende Nordwesteuropäische Religionsgeschichte zu legen und ihre Betrachtung – für die Frühzeit nicht ganz konsequent – auf diesen Ausschnitt zu beschränken. Man mag sich fragen, welchen Sinn es haben soll, eine Religionsgeschichte für ein Land zu schreiben, dessen kulturelle Identität und Grenzen für den betrachteten Zeitraum vom Zusammentreffen der römischen Kultur mit der friesischen um die Zeitenwende bis zur Gegenwart sich vielfach veränderten und eigentlich erst rund 250 Jahre lang einigermaßen homogen sind. Dass das Ergebnis jedoch überzeugen kann, liegt wohl daran, dass die Mitte dieser Religionsgeschichte naturgemäß eine feingewebte christliche Kirchengeschichte darstellt, die am Anfang und Ende ausgefranst erscheint.

Wie stark den Autoren daran gelegen war, zu verhindern, dass der ganze Entwurf bei der gegebenen Materialfülle zerfranst, sieht man bereits daran, dass sie ihre ganze Religionsgeschichte in vier Teilen darstellen: 1. Schmelztiegel der Religionen bis 1000 n. Chr. auf ca. 65 Seiten; 2. Christliche Allgegenwart 1000 – 1580 auf ca. 100 S.; 3. Anschein von Einheit 1580 – 1850 auf ca. 120 S.; 4. Variiertes Bürgertum 1850 bis heute auf ca. 140 S. Jeder Teil ist in drei Kapitel unterteilt, die wieder aus drei Untereinheiten bestehen. Es darf die Frage gestellt werden, ob bei dieser strengen Ordnung und Begrenzung nicht die Wirklichkeit über Gebühr in einen literarischen Entwurf gepresst wird. Das ist aber eindeutig nicht der Fall. Vielmehr haben die Autoren so viele Beobachtungen in ihrem Raster untergebracht, dass man merkt, wie sehr sie sich bemühen, alles, was eine Religionsgeschichte betrifft, auch zu nennen. Das ist eine Stärke des Buches, aber zugleich auch eine Schwäche, weil es nicht immer gelingt, die zahlreichen Wendungen der Geschichte auch einzuordnen. Manches findet nur einmalig Erwähnung und wer mehr wissen will, muss in anderen Veröffentlichungen weitersuchen.

Beim Verständnis von Religionsgeschichte liegt die Betonung eindeutig auf der Geschichte der religiösen Erscheinungen innerhalb der Profangeschichte. Die Autoren enthalten sich von hergeholten Vergleichen und lassen der tatsächlichen Erscheinung religiösen Denkens

und Lebens den Vorrang vor religionsphilosophischen Ideen. Sie wollen die Wirklichkeit darstellen und keinen Religionsentwurf liefern. Nur gelegentlich scheint stärker durch, dass jeder Forscher auch Kind seiner Zeit ist; so etwa, wenn die Behandlung der Hexenverfolgung ein relativ zu großes Gewicht bekommt.

In den einzelnen Hauptteilen bemerkt man jeweils ein vorrangiges Deutungsmuster. Für die Zeit zwischen 1000 und 1580 rückt so etwa die Frömmigkeitsgeschichte in den Vordergrund. Das erscheint als eine gute Wahl und begründet auch eine Unterscheidung von einer rein kirchengeschichtlichen Darstellung. Am Ende des dritten Teils und dann weiter im vierten Teil deuten die Autoren die Aufspaltung der reformierten Kirchen ab 1834 konsequent als eine Erscheinung der Emanzipation des Bürgertums. Der mündige Bürger beteiligt sich nicht nur an der Gesellschaft im Allgemeinen, sondern auch speziell in Fragen der Religion stärker, was nicht in erster Linie zu einer Pluralisierung der Auffassungen führt – die hat es früher auch gegeben haben –, sondern zu einer Organisation von zahlreichen Gruppen unter der jeweiligen religiösen Auffassung. Eine konservative Kirchengeschichte würde die gleiche Entwicklung vielleicht stärker als Auflösungserscheinung des rechten Glaubens durch Aufklärung und Liberalismus sehen.

Die Autoren beweisen eine sehr gute Detailkenntnis und machen gerade im Blick auf die Moderne auf viele Einflüsse aufmerksam, die man leicht übersehen könnte. Ihre Deutung der Entwicklung als eine Ambivalenz zwischen „standesbewussten“, „vielfarbigen“ Bürgertum und dem Einfluss starker Persönlichkeiten erscheint durchaus treffend. Dass sich die *Niederländische Religionsgeschichte* bei der Darstellung der modernen religiösen Vielfalt mit Deutungen sehr zurückhält, ist einerseits sympathisch, andererseits hätte man sich etwas mehr Deutungsmuster wenigstens als Angebot zum Verständnis gewünscht. Die Beschreibung auch zahlreicher evangelikaler Kirchen und Initiativen zeigt weitgehend gerechte Kenntnisnahme. Leider führt hier die abwechselnde Benutzung von „evangelikal“ und „evangelisch“ teilweise zu Unklarheit.

Überhaupt sind Übersetzungsfehler im Buch keine Ausnahme. Um nur ein paar Beispiele zu nennen: S. 184 „Evangelismus“ soll „Protestantismus“ heißen; S. 346 Tabelle 29 „Nicht-christliche Vereinigungen“ meint „Nicht-kirchliche Vereinigungen“; S. 404 muss es statt „Entkirchlichung“ besser „Säkularisierung“ heißen. Durch die Nähe der Sprachen Niederländisch und Deutsch kommt es nicht nur wiederholt zu „Niederlandismen“, sondern auch zu verwirrenden Übersetzungen (*zullen* heißt nicht nur „sollen“, sondern auch „werden“ S. 101; *ontkennen* bedeutet nicht „verkennen“, sondern „abstreiten, leugnen“ S. 304; *betrekkelijk* muss auf Deutsch „verhältnismäßig“ heißen und nicht „beträchtig“ S. 313; *het betrekken* ist nicht „die Betroffenheit“, sondern „der Bezug“ S. 403). Manchmal wirkt die Kommasetzung eher zufällig und ab Seite

400 kommt es zu einer sehr störenden Häufung von Druckfehlern. Aber das sind Äußerlichkeiten.

Hilfreich und vielseitig ist die Ausstattung des Bandes. Da sind 40 Tabellen und Grafiken, die viele Information übersichtlich darstellen. Hier findet man fast alle älteren Kirchengeschichtswerke der Niederlande ebenso wie die Niederländischen Glaubensbekenntnisse der Mennoniten, Liederbücher des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts oder Koranübersetzungen. Aber es wird auch versucht, das unübersichtliche Zueinander der zahlreichen protestantischen Kirchen und Kirchenbünde darzustellen. Diese Grafik hätte allerdings besser gestaltet sein dürfen (die bei Wikipedia zugängliche ist deutlich übersichtlicher). Weiterhin wird jedem der vier Teile eine hilfreiche Zeitleiste vorangestellt mit wichtigen Jahreszahlen und Ereignissen.

Es lohnt sich also die *Niederländische Religionsgeschichte* zur Hand zu nehmen, wenn man einen Einblick und Überblick über die religiöse Entwicklung der Niederlande bekommen will. Um allerdings die gegebene Materialfülle zu bewältigen, mussten die Autoren sich durchweg tiefergehender Betrachtungen enthalten.

Thomas Jeising
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*On the Way to the Living God: A Cathartic
Reading of Herman Bavinck and an
Invitation to Overcome the Plausibility Crisis of
Christianity*

Willem J. de Wit

Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2011; x + 216 pp,
pb, ISBN 978 90 8659 586 0 Available in pdf format
via <http://willemjdewit.com/english>

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de doctorat comporte deux parties principales, dont la première propose une lecture « cathartique » de l'œuvre de Herman Bavinck. Ce théologien est présenté comme ayant vécu, vers la fin de sa carrière, une crise mettant en question la plausibilité de la foi chrétienne. La seconde partie est une invitation à dépasser cette crise. L'auteur propose une vision du monde binoculaire combinant des perspectives naturelles et religieuses. Ce qui le conduit à une quête d'une foi chrétienne crédible que l'on peut peut-être caractériser comme post-post-chrétienne. L'auteur de la présente recension trouve cette approche bien trop statique et, pour cette raison, problématique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch stellt die Doktordissertation des Autors dar und besteht aus zwei Abschnitten: Der erste versucht, eine „kathartische“ Lesart von Herman Bavinck zu vermitteln. Dabei wird jener als ein Theologe dargestellt, der gegen das Ende seiner Karriere einen drohenden Erklärungsnotstand des christlichen Glaubens nahen sieht. Der zweite

Abschnitt kommt einer Aufforderung gleich, diese Krise zu überwinden. Das Buch vertritt eine duale Weltanschauung, die physikalische und religiöse Perspektiven miteinander verbindet. Dies führt zu dem, was man eine "post-post-christliche" Suche nach einem glaubwürdigen christlichen Glauben nennen mag. Der Rezensent hält diese Anschauung für überaus statisch und somit problematisch.

SUMMARY

This book, the author's PhD thesis, is divided into two sections, the first of which attempts to provide a 'cathartic' reading of Herman Bavinck. He is presented as a theologian who, towards the end of his career, felt an impending plausibility crisis of the Christian faith. The second section is an invitation to overcome that plausibility crisis. The book argues for a binocular worldview which combines natural and religious perspectives. This leads to what can perhaps be called a post-post-Christian quest for a credible Christian faith. The reviewer finds this perspective to be overly static and, as such, problematic.

* * * *

This book, the author's PhD thesis, first presents (in six essays) a 'cathartic' reading of Herman Bavinck. De Wit pictures Bavinck as a theologian who, towards the end of his career, felt the plausibility crisis which the author's own theology has to face nowadays. Following this, the book is an invitation to overcome the plausibility crisis of Christianity. Crucial to the book is the acceptance of the naturalist assumption and a binocular worldview: the combination of natural and religious perspectives. We find in it the author's own quest for a renewed plausibility for the Christian faith that is post-post-Christian. The result is an invitation to go on the way to the living God.

In this personal quest, Herman Bavinck is the central dialogue partner. Whereas Bavinck is in high esteem in the Anglo-Saxon world, not least due to the recent English translation of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, De Wit presents him in two essays as a *tragic* hero of faith. His cathartic reading aims at a *catharsis*, a purification, to free ourselves from problematic patterns of thought and piety and to create a new openness for the Christian faith. De Wit suggests a picture of Bavinck as a faithful and loyal Christian who attempts to serve the gospel with an open, catholic-reformed mind. At the same time, Bavinck was struggling with Scripture and the Reformed heritage, which he tried to defend against the modern worldview, while at the same time increasingly feeling that the building of his theology was shaking. In the end, Bavinck sensed the coming plausibility crisis. De Wit concludes: '[H]is theology seems to lead us to a dead end' (88). Still, it remains an open question what is left over for us once the temple of Reformed theology is destroyed.

In the picture of Bavinck suggested by De Wit, unpublished materials play an important role: not only the texts published in "*Als Bavinck nu maar eens kleur*

bekende" (1994), but also a piece of scrap paper written by Bavinck which lists 'difficulties'. This list leads De Wit to conclude 'Perhaps the building of his theology is shaking indeed' (86). However, such a piece of paper can be interpreted in very different ways. Unfortunately, this is not the only place where De Wit offers more suggestions than arguments for his interpretation of Bavinck.

De Wit continues by sketching a way of doing theology as a quest for truth about the living God and his relation to the world. He does so in a kind of thought experiment, accepting the naturalist assumption. By this, he means a weak ontological naturalism that leaves open the question whether God exists but claims 'that God is superfluous as an explanation for any state of affairs in the world' (160). Still, in theology as a quest for truth, God in his relationship to his creation should be object of scholarly research. De Wit proposes a 'binocular worldview': a natural eye searching for natural explanations and a religious eye. The religious eye offers complementary 'x-planations' and invites one to see (broken) references to God in worldly phenomena. In this way, De Wit hopes to have shown that the naturalist assumption no longer implies atheism.

Apart from the problem of God's redundancy, the author also deals with the problem of evil. The invitation to sing Psalms in the face of evil, in particular, offers an alternative to the atheist answer to the problem of evil. When 'we understand the world and our own life in relationship to the living God' (163), we can deal better with these two problems than as atheists.

De Wit realises that the invitation to believe in God in the context of the plausibility crisis of Christianity could be strengthened by elaborating more on the invitation to believe that we find in Jesus Christ. However, this can never take away 'the folly of Christ crucified' (164). Consequently, the book's final invitation is the invitation to die with Christ to our religion and worldview. Here for us the plausibility crisis is overcome.

This book is written with existential involvement. However, while I appreciate its invitation to go on the way towards the living God, De Wit's route does not convince me. The binocular worldview presents the natural and the religious perspectives in a static way as two complementary views of reality. De Wit does not consider the consequences of sin for our knowledge and interpretation of reality, nor the impact of salvation on them. In the light of the gospel of truth, one could at least hope that the perspective of faith does not leave the natural perspective unchanged. More reflection on the interaction between both perspectives would show that the metaphor of binoculars is too static.

Further, the binocular worldview brings the author to a double interpretation of the resurrection stories: these stories 'can be explained in a natural way, even though we do not know the explanation'. At the same time, these stories evoke the complementary 'x-planation' that God has raised Jesus from the dead in a new

creation, that is, in another universe (158). It seems to me that the author has to pay too high a price for his binocular model: this universe, which does not 'seem to be able to exist forever' (158), is left unchanged and unsaved. Salvation has to be understood in an other-worldly way. In my understanding of salvation in Christ, however, the gospel causes serious problems for the binocular view presented in this book.

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***Five Studies in the Thought of Herman Bavinck,
A Creator of Modern Dutch Theology***

John Bolt (ed.)

Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012, xi + 196, pb,
\$20.00; ISBN: 0773425748

SUMMARY

This book comprises a selection of prize-winning postgraduate essays presented at the conference *A Pearl and a Leaven: Herman Bavinck for the 21st Century*, held in Grand Rapids in 2008. The essays cover an interesting and worthwhile range of topics – Bavinck in relation to Thomistic epistemology, natural law, Hegel, the *Pactum Salutis* and the role of women in contemporary society – and are of a good standard throughout. However, they are already four years old, and in the past four years the field of Bavinck studies has witnessed a remarkable level of output. It is perhaps unfortunate that these essays have appeared after, rather at the outset of, this period of widespread engagement with Bavinck.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage comporte une sélection de textes primés dont le contenu a été donné à la conférence qui s'est tenue à Grand Rapids en 2008 sur le thème : « Une perle et un levain : Herman Bavinck pour le XXI^e siècle ». Ces textes de bonne teneur couvrent un large champ de manière intéressante et fort utile : Bavinck et l'épistémologie thomiste, la loi naturelle, Hegel, le *pactum salutis*, et le rôle des femmes dans la société contemporaine. On doit cependant regretter que leur publication ait attendu quatre ans car, pendant ce temps, de nombreuses études de valeur ont paru sur Bavinck et il aurait été préférable de voir ces contributions publiées au début de cette période marquée par un large intérêt pour Bavinck.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch umfasst eine Auswahl preisgekrönter Aufsätze auf fortgeschrittener akademischer Ebene, die zur Konferenz *A Pearl and a Leaven: Herman Bavinck for the 21st Century* [Perle und Sauerteig: Herman Bavinck im 21. Jahrhundert] erschienen sind, welche in Grand Rapids im Jahr 2008 abgehalten wurde. Diese Aufsätze decken eine interessante und bedeutende Reihe von Themen ab – Bavinck und die thomistische Epistemologie, das

Naturgesetz, Hegel, der *pactum salutis* [Heilspakt] und die Rolle von Frauen in der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaft. Alle weisen durchweg einen hohen Standard auf. Allerdings sind sie bereits vier Jahre alt, und in diesen vergangenen vier Jahren sind in dem Bereich der Studien zu Bavinck viele Beiträge veröffentlicht worden. Es ist vielleicht etwas unglücklich, dass diese Aufsätze eher am Ende jener Zeit erschienen sind, in der man sich ausführlich mit Bavinck auseinandergesetzt hat.

* * * *

In 2008, a conference celebrating the English translation of Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* was held at Calvin College, Michigan. Entitled *A Pearl and a Leaven: Herman Bavinck for the 21st Century*, the conference was preceded by a pre-conference event at which a group of postgraduate students presented papers, with responses by a group of senior Bavinck scholars. This book, published in 2012, comprises the five prize-winning essays presented on that day.

The first essay, 'Herman Bavinck's Thomistic Epistemology: The argument and sources of his *principa* of science' by David Sytsma, is a thoroughly researched piece of work. Sytsma helpfully navigates the sense in which Thomas Aquinas' thought influenced Bavinck's approach to epistemology. Furthermore, the depiction of Bavinck as representative of historic Reformed dependence upon Thomas' epistemology provides a helpful reminder that in combating both the neo-Thomism and rationalism of his day, Bavinck was drawing on the common Christian heritage of *patres* and *doctores* of whom, he wrote, 'the whole Christian Church stands under obligation'. Also helpful is that Sytsma's article includes as an appendix an English translation of Jerome Zanchi's *De operibus Dei intra spacium sex dierum creatis*, 'De actionibus intellectivae', perhaps Bavinck's principal source on realism.

The second essay, Theodore Van Raalte's 'Unleavened Morality: Herman Bavinck on Natural Law', makes a helpful and thorough contribution to an area of much recent debate: that of the pro-natural law Reformed 'Two Kingdoms' school (most closely associated with Westminster Seminary California) and the burgeoning neo-Kuyperian movement linked to a host of cultural-renewal emphases. Van Raalte's paper is perhaps an interesting mediating work in these debates. As happens often when a book is published long after its completion, however, this paper comes across as somewhat dated in relation to these debates, particularly where it reads: 'David Van Drunen [sic] also wrote (Dec. 2007) that in a new work he will present the natural law and two kingdoms views of: Calvin, Vermigli, Zucchini...' (62 fn 15). The work in question, David VanDrunen's *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* (Eerdmans), appeared in 2010, two years prior to the present book.

The third essay, 'Trinity and History: Bavinck, Hegel and 19th Century Doctrines of God' by Adam Eitel, presents the interesting thesis that Bavinck's thoroughgo-

ing trinitarianism is strongly influenced by the thought of G.W.F. Hegel. Eitel begins with a critical perspective on the normative 'two Bavincks' hermeneutic applied by most Bavinck-readers until a series of publications beginning in 2011 demonstrated the fundamental flaws in this hermeneutic. (See for example James Eglinton, 'How many Herman Bavincks? *De Gemeene Genade* and the "Two Bavincks" Hypothesis' in *The Kuyper Center Review Vol. 2: Revelation and Common Grace*, ed. by John Bowlin [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011] 279-301; James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism* [London: T&T Clark, 2012] 27-49; and Brian Mattson, *Restored to our Destiny* [Leiden: Brill, 2012] 17-18). While Eitel's willingness to critique a paradigmatic reading of Bavinck was, in 2008, a bold and highly promising move, it is unfortunate that its 2012 publication has not been updated to include significant developments in this direction.

The fourth essay, Mark Jones' 'Covenant Christology: Herman Bavinck and the Pactum Salutis', provides a helpful and comprehensive discussion of Bavinck's covenant theology in relation to his historic Reformed sources. Bearing in mind that much of the emphasis in recent works on Neo-Calvinist theology has tended to focus on cultural issues, Jones' work is useful in encouraging more balance in that regard.

The final essay, 'The Status of Women in Contemporary Society: Principles and Practice in Herman Bavinck's Socio-Political Thought' by Niels van Driel, provides a fascinating overview of Bavinck's theological and political understanding of the changing role of women in his lifetime. This paper strikes a good balance between examining Bavinck's theological commitments (particularly regarding a theology of culture in relation to general revelation) and the historical circumstances relating to his involvement in the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

It is worth noting that although the papers were written in 2008, the authors do seem to have been given the chance to update their contributions, albeit in 2010. Various footnotes refer to works published in 2009-2010 (see pages 46 fn 144, 63 fn 16, 71 fn 39, 92 fn 109). It should be acknowledged that these are strong essays, but upon reading them it is hard not to conclude that they would have been stronger had this book appeared a few years ago.

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Once Out of Nature: Augustine on Time and the Body

Andrea Nightingale

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, ix+244,
\$39, cloth, ISBN 978-0-22-658575-1

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser faszinierende Band ist bemüht, die vernachlässigte Rolle des Leibes in den Ausführungen von Augustinus über die Zeitlichkeit zurückzufordern. Das Ergebnis ist ein frischer Ansatz zu Augustins Ansicht über die Zeit. Eingeschlossen zwischen Eden und Eschaton finden sich die Menschen wieder zwischen der Erfahrung der Zeit durch ihren Leib als ein stets vorübergehendes „Jetzt“ und dem Sich-Ergehen ihrer Seele in Erinnerungen, Betrachtung und Erwartung. Diese Arbeit eröffnet sich durch eine sorgfältige Exegese von Augustins Spätwerken und wird gestützt durch Exkurse in seine Ansichten zu Büchern, zur Askese und zum Märtyrerkult. Als Ergebnis präsentiert sich ein fesselnder und originaler Bericht über Augustins Phänomenologie der Zeit im Licht des Sündenfalls.

SUMMARY

This fascinating volume attempts to reclaim the neglected role of the body in Augustine's account of temporality. This results in a novel approach to Augustine's view of time. Stuck between Eden and eschaton, humans find themselves between the body's experience of time as an ever-passing 'now' and the soul's swelling into memories, attention and anticipation. This thesis is unpacked through careful exegesis of Augustine's later works and substantiated via forays into his view of books, asceticism and the cult of the martyrs. The result is a compelling and original account of Augustine's phenomenology of time in light of the fall.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage fascinant traite d'un aspect ignoré de la théologie de Saint Augustin en s'intéressant au rôle joué par la conception du corps dans le traitement de la temporalité chez l'évêque d'Hippone. Il en résulte une approche novatrice du point de vue de Saint Augustin sur le temps. Situés entre l'Éden et l'état final, les humains se trouvent pris entre l'expérience corporelle du temps vécue comme un maintenant perpétuellement en train de passer et l'âme qui tend vers les souvenirs, l'attention et l'anticipation. L'auteur élabore cette thèse à partir d'une exégèse soignée des dernières œuvres de Saint Augustin, et l'étaye en considérant certains aspects de son point de vue sur les livres, l'ascétisme et le culte des martyrs. Il rend ainsi compte de manière originale et convaincante de la phénoménologie du temps à la lumière de la chute chez Saint Augustin.

* * * *

Andrea Nightingale teaches classics and comparative literature at Stanford University. Trained as a Plato scholar, her career travelling between Hellenistic philosophy and interdisciplinary studies has made her uniquely qualified

to navigate Augustine within both his ancient context as well as in light of modern and late-modern interests.

The title of the volume, 'Once Out of Nature', is from a line in Yeats' poem *Byzantium* where an old man speaks of the yearnings to perfect what is merely human by being transposed into an eternal world. For Nightingale, this desire to leave our current temporality resonates with Augustine's understanding of the human condition: to be a human is to be an embodied soul travelling in two distinct types of time – 'earthly time' and 'psychic time'. The former refers to the experience of the constant transition of our bodies in the 'food chain' (her words, 11). Bodies continually morph as they ingest, grow, excrete, mature, procreate, decay and die. The body is stuck within the ever-passing 'now'. The latter refers to Nightingale's view of Augustine's famous *distentio animi*. On Nightingale's reading of *Confessions* 11, the soul in time swells away from the present into past memories and future expectations. Thus Nightingale argues for an Augustine who sees our current state as a conflicted disarticulation – trapped between two temporalities we find ourselves 'resident aliens' (again, her words) unable to coincide with God, the world, others and ourselves.

The first three chapters of the volume refine this thesis. Chapter one examines Augustine's view of temporality before the fall and after redemption. Humanity's initial state entailed Adam and Eve participating in a pristine version of earthly time; they were in time but not subject to it. Similarly, the eschaton for Augustine will involve resurrected saints rescued from earthly time and equipped with spiritual bodies that keep perfect cadence with their corresponding resurrected souls. The second chapter explores Augustine's concept of humanity's fall into duelling temporalities. Her detailed exegesis of recollections and memory in *Confessions* 10, alongside a treatment of the body's own economy, substantiates her reading of Augustine's understanding of time in *Confessions* 11. In chapter three Augustine's discourse of interiority in the *Confessions* is unfolded in light of humanity's discordant temporality. As the body grounds the self in the 'now' the mind distends the self from the 'now', thereby problematising the self such that it is unable to coincide apart from God.

The final two chapters apply the preceding discussion to two adjacent queries. In the fourth chapter Nightingale explores Augustine's view of the relationship between textuality and embodiment. Like the body's own dual temporality, Nightingale argues that Augustine viewed books as existing in psychic and material time. Drawing on a surprising parallel between the skins given to Adam and Eve and the Bible itself, she suggests the centrality of the text (as we find in Augustine's own conversion narrative) was reinforced by the close association Augustine made between bodies and books. In chapter five asceticism and the cult of the martyrs are analysed as ritual practices that reinforced the unearthly temporality implicit in Augustine's eschatology. Night-

ingale suggests Augustine's growing embrace of the cult of the martyrs was fuelled by an attempt to link divine presence with the body's dissolution from our current temporality. Similarly, she claims Augustine's rejection of food and sex served as a protest against the unending cycles implicit in fallen time.

This is a delightful reworking of traditional discussions of Augustine's view of time in light of what Nightingale sees as an overlooked development in his doctrine of the body. Her style is accessible, often restating the argument in fresh ways such that complex themes are simultaneously clarified and enriched. Thankfully, her use of terms that find their provenance in modern discussions and her interweaving of contemporary texts and writers serve to awaken the discussion, rather than hijack the development or mask a flimsy exegesis of Augustinian texts. Furthermore, although she is writing as a classicist rather than a theologian, she does not shy away from an unashamedly theological account of Augustine's view of time: St. Paul is given more attention than Aristotle and Augustinian time is developed as a distinctly *post lapsus* dynamic.

Yet her claim that Augustine believed the body had its own temporality is a bold one. The extensive and enduring debate on Augustine's view of time ensures her thesis steps onto a busy field with hard won positions clearly drawn. Two things are needed to help buttress her novel and intriguing thesis. First, in addition to her work on Paul, some will want more clarity on how the body's temporality relates to the temporal embeddedness of Augustine's Christology. Secondly, in spite of her insistence that Augustine placed body and soul in a deep inter-dependency, it is questionable if her transhumanist Augustine is a bit too ascetic. (Although the resurrected body is out of time, is it *completely* 'out of nature'?) These concerns notwithstanding, Nightingale has done a tremendous service to Augustine studies such that any future work on his anthropology must take into account this evocative case for a robustly Augustinian awareness of the phenomenology of embodiment.

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Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths Matthew Levering

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011; hb, 288 pp.,
\$110; ISBN: 978-0-19-960452-4

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch eines römisch-katholischen Theologen greift den weithin belächelten Begriff der Prädestination auf mit dem Argument, dass der Leser mit Prädestination in der Schrift selbst konfrontiert wird. Levering hebt zwei scheinbar gegensätzliche Konzepte hervor: zum einen, dass Gott alle Menschen liebt und ihre Errettung will, und zum anderen, dass Gott in Wirklichkeit nur einige errettet. Der

Autor zeigt auf, dass durch die gesamte Kirchengeschichte hindurch Theologen versucht haben, diese Spannung aufzulösen. Seine eigene Position stützt sich auf jene der Mystiker Katharina von Siena und Franz von Sales. Das Werk ist sehr hilfreich durch seinen Überblick zum Thema Prädestination in der historischen Theologie. Die zu erwartende Kritik aus dem reformierten Lager ist jedoch, dass es die Themen Verwerfung und Gottes Beziehung zur Sünde nicht angemessen behandelt. Nichtsdestoweniger ist es ein sehr empfehlenswertes Werk.

SUMMARY

This book by a Roman Catholic theologian tackles the much derided notion of predestination on the grounds that the reader is confronted by predestination in Scripture. Levering highlights two seemingly contradictory notions: that God loves all and desires their salvation, and that God effectively saves only some. He shows that throughout church history, theologians have attempted to resolve this tension. His own position is reached with support of the mystics Catherine of Sienna and Francis de Sales. The book is very useful in its overview of predestination in historical theology. The most obvious Reformed critique of it, however, is that it does not grapple adequately with the issues of reprobation and God's relationship to sin. It is, nonetheless, a praiseworthy work.

RÉSUMÉ

Matthew Levering, théologien catholique, traite dans cet ouvrage d'une notion fort décriée, celle de la prédestination, en partant du constat qu'on la rencontre dans l'Écriture. Il met en évidence deux enseignements qui paraissent contradictoires : d'une part, Dieu aime tous les humains et désire leur salut, de l'autre, il ne sauve effectivement que certains d'entre eux. Il montre comment les théologiens ont tenté, tout au long de l'histoire de l'Église, de résoudre cette tension. Il trouve un soutien pour sa propre position dans la mystique de Catherine de Sienna et de François de Sales. Le livre est très utile par sa présentation de l'histoire de la doctrine de la prédestination. Du point de vue réformé, la critique la plus évidente surgit du fait que la question de la réprobation et celle de la relation de Dieu au péché ne reçoivent pas un traitement adéquat. L'ouvrage présente cependant de grands mérites.

* * * *

The Roman Catholic systematic theologian Matthew Levering has written a rich book on an unpopular topic. He starts with the observation that the doctrine of predestination is on trial, but argues that Christian theology cannot ignore it since it arises from the Bible itself. We have to deal with two (seemingly) contradictory biblical affirmations. On the one hand the Bible says that God loves each and every rational creature and wants all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4); on the other hand God effectively saves only some and permits others to rebel against his love eternally. It seems that one cannot hold both propositions at the same time.

Levering shows that throughout history theologi-

ans tend to take one of these positions and therefore cannot do justice to both biblical affirmations. The early Church provides representatives of three positions: Origen taught universal salvation, John Damascene formulated predestination on the basis of foreknowledge of future merits and Augustine taught predestination out of sheer grace, but only for some – which limits the extent of God's love. These positions recur in one way or another throughout the history of theology, which saw an almost general agreement on universal salvation among theologians in the twentieth century (Bulgakov, Barth, Maritain and Von Balthasar).

Levering himself takes recourse to an apophatic solution. According to him, we have to affirm both affirmations but we should not try to resolve the tension between them. We have to bear this until the final revelation in the eschaton. He uses two mystical writers to support his position: Catherine of Sienna (1347-1380) and Francis de Sales (1567-1622).

Levering starts with an overview of the biblical doctrine of predestination, especially in Paul, based on the most recent scholarship. His discussion of different theologians is well informed, well balanced and ecumenical in outlook. As such I would recommend the book as a good historical introduction to the doctrine of predestination and a guide to recent secondary literature and the primary sources.

The author's own position deserves sympathy as well, especially among evangelical theologians. His primary interest is to do justice to the biblical testimony. Reading as a theologian in the Reformed tradition, however, I got the impression that Levering sometimes too easily jumps over the difficult questions concerning the other side of predestination: reprobation. He seems to regard reprobation merely as non-election, the permission to remain in sin. He disagrees with Calvin that God's permission of sin is wilful and active, so that the deepest ground of damnation is not the rebellion of God's creatures but God's own will to condemn them, although the effective cause of their condemnation is their own will. In Levering's view, Calvin cannot do justice to texts in which God mourns about his people's rejection of his love such as Ezekiel 18:23 and Matthew 23:37 (109). After all, he already wanted to condemn them. Levering himself, however, does not really attempt to come to terms with texts that give ground to Calvin's position. In the concluding chapter he quotes such texts, e.g. Exodus 7:3-4 (God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart) and 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 ("God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false"), but he seems to deprive them of their weight by stating:

Jesus guides us in interpreting such passages. He urges us to imitate God, who far from causing the downfall of sinners, loves them and serves them... He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good... Any crimped account of God's love for each and every rational creature deviates from the perfection that Jesus teaches (187).

This is, however, not an interpretation of the aforementioned texts but only a restatement of Levering's idea that God loves all rational creatures in the same way and wills the salvation of all. It would have strengthened his argument if he had paid more attention to these texts.

Levering's disagreement with Calvin touches upon a deeper theological question. Does reprobation have a goal? Does God, in a certain way, use those who rebel against him in order to fulfil his purposes? It seems that in Levering's account of reprobation the answer is 'no': the sins of humankind (and other evils in the world) are only permitted by God (190). Why? We can only answer apophatically, like God taught Job to do. The element of truth in this is that most of the time we do not understand God's purpose in permitting evil. This does not mean, however, that God does not have a purpose with it and cannot will it actively, although he is not the efficient cause of it. If we say, as I think we should, that God's ultimate goal in history is the manifestation of his virtues through all of his creatures, then those whom he permits to rebel against him also serve that goal. This does apply to hell; it is a place where God manifests his justice, but also his abiding mercy. It also applies to human history and the Christian life. Paul says that God gave him an angel of Satan to buffet him, in order that he would not pride himself on his revelations (2 Cor 12:7). God wilfully allowed Satan to buffet Paul, in order to make Paul more humble, in order to serve God's mercy in Paul. If we formulate God's relation to sin only in terms of permission, we cannot make clear how God uses even sin for the good of his people.

To conclude, Levering has written a very useful book in which he is not ashamed to take another road than mainstream twentieth century theology. He writes in a wonderfully balanced way about positions with which he does not agree. However, with regard to God's relation to sin, he could perhaps have dug deeper.

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*Trinity, Freedom, and Love: An Engagement
with the Theology of Eberhard Jüngel*

Piotr Malysz

London & New York: T & T Clark, 2012; 245 pp.,
£65.00, hb; ISBN 978-0-567-57235-6

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage de Piotr Malysz a tout pour devenir un incontournable dans le monde académique. Il s'intéresse à deux lignes directrices de la pensée de Jüngel sur la doctrine de Dieu, à la relation entre la liberté et l'amour. Au bout du compte, il trouve l'approche de Jüngel peu satisfaisante parce que celui-ci opère avec une « logique de l'amour » qui met l'accent sur une conception problématique de la liberté avec pour conséquence que Dieu apparaît en fait

comme n'étant pas libre. Malysz propose de résoudre le problème en ayant recours à une « logique de la liberté » qui ne laisse pas la « logique de l'amour » limiter de manière trop fâcheuse la conception de la liberté divine. Cette approche de la doctrine de Dieu aura vraisemblablement d'immenses conséquences pour la manière d'aborder à l'avenir le sujet des relations trinitaires.

SUMMARY

In *Trinity, Freedom, and Love*, Piotr Malysz has produced what is sure to become a key text within the scholarship. The book concerns two trajectories of Jüngel's doctrine of God: the relationship between freedom and love. Ultimately, Malysz finds Jüngel's doctrine of God unsatisfactory in that it operates with a 'logic of love' which prioritises a problematic account of freedom in which God actually appears to be 'unfree'. The remainder of the work offers Malysz's solution to this problem in the form of the development of a 'logic of freedom' which prevents the 'logic of love' from impinging too awkwardly upon divine freedom. This approach to the doctrine of God is likely to have wide-reaching consequences for future understanding of the trinitarian relations.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Mit *Trinity, Freedom and Love* [Dreieinigkeit, Freiheit und Liebe] hat Piotr Malysz ein Werk geschaffen, das ganz gewiss eine Schlüsselfunktion in der Fachwelt einnehmen wird. Das Buch dreht sich um zwei Hauptlinien in Jüngels Lehre über Gott, und zwar um die Beziehung zwischen Freiheit und Liebe. Letztlich stellt Jüngels Lehre über Gott Malysz dahingehend nicht zufrieden, dass sie sich innerhalb jener „Logik der Liebe“ bewegt, die einen problematischen Freiheitsbegriff hochhält, bei dem Gott „unfrei“ zu sein scheint. Im übrigen Buch bietet Malysz eine Lösung für dieses Problem in Gestalt einer „Logik der Freiheit“ an, die verhindern soll, dass eine „Logik der Liebe“ die göttliche Freiheit auf eine allzu seltsame Weise beschränkt. Dieser Ansatz der Lehre über Gott dürfte weitreichende Auswirkungen haben auf das künftige Verständnis der trinitarischen Beziehungen.

* * * *

The perennial attraction of the scholarship of Eberhard Jüngel is not hard to determine on a quick glance through his theological writings. Combining a sharp perceptiveness with a seemingly limitless breadth of knowledge, the result is never dull and more often than not stunning. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for much of the secondary literature which has a repetitious tendency to reduce Jüngel to nothing more than a disciple of Karl Barth. In *Trinity, Freedom, and Love*, Piotr Malysz has eschewed the standard repetition of *Jüngelstudien* and produced what is sure to become a key text in the scholarship. By re-locating Jüngel in closer proximity to Martin Luther, Malysz offers a careful resolution of the glaring lacuna in the prevailing readings of Jüngel's theology: what does it mean to call Jüngel a 'Lutheran theologian'?

As Małysz clarifies at the outset of the work, 'this study explores freedom: God's as well as human. But, insofar as its focus is on freedom, is it also an investigation of love' (1). Within this quotation are contained the two trajectories of the book: on the one hand, explicitly, the relation between freedom and love; on the other, implicitly, the anthropological relationship between divine freedom (and, subsequently, love) and human freedom (and, subsequently, love). Primarily, Jüngel's doctrine of God involves the dual concerns of a commitment to freedom, or 'divine spontaneity and creativity', and love, or 'intersubjective vulnerability'. But alongside this concern runs an anthropological concern: that there must be a correspondence between divine freedom and love, and human freedom and love.

However, lest the work be read as a simple piece of hagiography, Małysz's investigation involves a criticism of Jüngel's project. Despite emphasising the centrality of freedom and love within the doctrine of God, Małysz argues that ultimately Jüngel has not sufficiently clarified the inter-relationship of the two concepts. In his attempt to relate the two concepts (by means of the 'logic of love', as Małysz terms it), it appears that Jüngel's account of the inter-subjectivity of divine love becomes 'swallowed up' by the proclivities of divine freedom so that, in due course, God, in his freedom, begins to look very much like the human person in her unfreedom. It is Małysz's ambition through the flow of the argument to rectify this asymmetric association of love and freedom through the incorporation of an additional logic, the logic of freedom, so that 'the two subjective structures introduce clarity into the doctrine of God, while at the same time doing justice to all of Jüngel's concerns' (15).

The four main chapters follow this progression. In the first two, Małysz analyses the concepts of divine and human freedom as they appear in Jüngel's oeuvre. With respect to human freedom, he highlights Jüngel's complete rejection of the modernist conceptions of anthropological freedom, typified by accounts of self-securing, on the one hand, or a detachment from the world in which one's life appears so vulnerable. In response to this, Jüngel's construal of God's freedom eschews the self-serving 'freedom' of post-enlightenment philosophy for an intersubjective 'logic of love' in which God's self-determination on the cross is not merely the activity of a self-assured agent, but a 'successful togetherness' (Jüngel) involving both the divine and the human. However, despite this 'logic of love', Małysz avers that the concept of freedom underpinning this logic shows the divine to be 'a subject who merely determines God's self in relation to the other and incorporates the other into God's self-relatedness' (14).

In response to this problem, Małysz suggests a parallel logic to the 'logic of love' termed the 'logic of freedom'. These two logics constitute the two subjective acts of the divine in his own self-determination. Following this, chapter three returns to an examination

of the anthropological so as to determine how freedom and love are related in Jüngel's account of the human person. In so doing, Małysz distinguishes between the two acts of being within human existence: the passive and the active – being and becoming. Using these findings, he embarks upon an ambitious final chapter in which the two logics of divine being are brought into relation.

In essence, his concern is to show how neither logic is possible without the other. Without the logic of love, there could be no possibility for a genuine free relationship between the human and the divine. Similarly, without the logic of freedom, there would be no possibility for a genuinely inter-subjective relationship between the human and the divine in which both parties render themselves vulnerable in some way. Both of these logics are, therefore rooted in Trinity as each emphasises the tri-polarity of the divine, albeit in different ways.

In summary, Małysz's treatment of Jüngel's theology is complex yet compelling, offering a new approach to the doctrine of God which pushes the debate forward. For as Małysz elucidates, in asking precisely what it means for God to be free, any answer to the question must proceed with recourse to divine love.

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Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry

Hans Boersma

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011; 224pp, \$20.00; ISBN: 978-0802865427

SUMMARY

Hans Boersma's new volume on sacramental theology makes a good case for thinking that the creation is suffused with the presence of God, in keeping with historic Christian Neoplatonism. Drawing on the *Nouvelle Théologie* theologians like Henri de Lubac, Boersma commends this sacramental tapestry to evangelical readers. However, his book does raise a question about how God is present sacramentally in the created order apart from his being omnipresent. This question is not really addressed in the book, though it would be a fruitful project for future research on this topic.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce nouvel ouvrage sur la théologie sacramentelle défend de manière bien argumentée la thèse de la présence divine baignant la création, dans la ligne du néoplatonisme chrétien historique. S'appuyant sur la *Nouvelle théologie* de théologiens comme Henri de Lubac, Boersma recommande cette texture sacramentelle aux lecteurs évangéliques. Son livre suscite cependant une question quant à la manière dont le mode de la présence sacramentelle de Dieu dans la création diffère du mode de son omniprésence.

sence. Boersma ne répond pas vraiment à cette question ; ce serait pourtant un projet de recherche fructueux pour aller plus loin.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Hans Boersmas neuer Band über sakramentale Theologie vertritt mit guten Argumenten die Idee, dass die Schöpfung durchdrungen ist von der Gegenwart Gottes, und dies in einer Linie mit dem historischen christlichen Neoplatonismus. Boersma bezieht sich auf Theologen der Richtung Nouvelle Théologie wie Henri de Lubac und empfiehlt dieses sakramentale Wandbild evangelikalen Lesern. Zwar stellt sein Buch die Frage darüber an, wie Gott „sakramental“ in der Schöpfungsordnung anwesend ist unabhängig von seiner Omnipräsens. Jedoch geht das Buch auf diese Frage nicht wirklich ein, obwohl das ein fruchtbares Vorhaben für die künftige Forschung zu diesem Thema wäre.

* * * *

Adolf von Harnack famously argued that Christianity had been Hellenized. As a consequence, Christian theology was held in a sort of Babylonian captivity to modes of philosophical thought alien to its biblical roots. The first task of modern theology, according to the Harnackian, must be to throw off the bonds of Greek thought and return to more productive ways of thinking and doing dogmatics. Thus goes the story of much modern theology borne out of the classical liberal project. Its vestiges are still with us today, not least among evangelicals (strange bedfellows!) who think that they can leap across the span of tradition to return to the plain doctrine of the world inhabited by the apostles.

Boersma's book shows that such naiveté in theology is deeply mistaken. The Christian tradition (which he calls "The Great Tradition") is not an obstacle in the way of doing theology but a source of authority for making theological judgments. Although it is subordinate to Scripture as divine revelation, the Great Tradition is nevertheless a means by which our theological judgments may be interrogated, nuanced and developed. Taken together with Scripture we might think of these as two important threads that run through a tapestry, which was woven by patristic and medieval theologians, and which portrayed a complete picture of the created order suffused with the sacramental presence of God. Boersma sets out this vision, using the motif of the tapestry, how it has been torn and marred in early modern and modern theology, and how we might repair it by retrieving aspects of this medieval worldview mediated by the *Nouvelle Théologie* of Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar and others.

According to the Great Tradition (as understood by de Lubac *et al.*!) the creation is not something remote from God but something saturated with his presence. The Neoplatonic philosophy baptised by Augustine of Hippo was not a perversion of true doctrine but the means by which to underpin Christian theology with a metaphysical worldview that was conducive to much

of what Christians already believed. For the world only exists as it participates in the divine life: it is radically dependent upon God's continued sustenance, and it finds its apogee in union with the Creator who has made it.

The book is carefully researched and Boersma is a winsome and sympathetic writer. His argument in favour of a more sacramental account of the creation and his appeal to Christian Neoplatonism are attractive – some might think, beguiling. But if that is so, it is a way of construing Christian theology that has had many enthralled, including many Protestant theologians in the Augustinian tradition. Recent research has shown how John Calvin's work was much more enamoured of a high sacramentalism and an understanding of participation and union with Christ than a previous generation had allowed. The same has been argued to some extent for Luther's work and legacy amongst the so-called Finnish School. But it is also true of American evangelical theology mediated via Jonathan Edwards, who was nothing if not misty-eyed about the way in which the whole creation exists in, through, and by the power of God. These Protestant thinkers do not feature as the main focus of Boersma's work. He has other fish to fry.

That said, it is worth noting that his project is part of a wider, on-going reassessment of much of our theological heritage, whether Protestant or Roman. A number of modern theologians, concerned amongst other things with the *rapprochement* of different theological traditions, of moving beyond the fissures of the Reformation to an age of new ecumenical understanding and healing, are encouraging the churches to reconsider their historic divergences. This work might be seen as a contribution to this wider scheme. Its irenic tone and catholicity of approach, as well as its emphatic refusal to bend the knee to the altar of secularism, are commendable.

But such a book raises an important question: *just what does it mean to say the whole of creation is sacramental?* In what sense is God's presence in, say, my cup of tea, different from his presence in the Eucharist? How is God more present in some situations than in others, or more manifest in certain sorts of liturgy, ritual, ecclesiology than elsewhere? If God is an omnipresent spirit, it is difficult to see how we can quantify his presence so that he is somehow more present here than there, or especially present in this symbol or element, and not there in some non-sacramental context. He is present with all things by his omnipotent power and knows all things immediately and completely. Just so he is present with every point in space and time. Perhaps the issue is not whether we do participate in God via the created order, but rather how we receive or perceive the presence of God in the world. As Calvin so eloquently puts it, God is given in the creation but only apprehended by faith. It would be interesting to see how Boersma might deploy his Reformed sacramentalism to address this concern.

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Protestant Metaphysics after Karl Barth and Martin Heidegger

Timothy Stanley

London: SCM, 2010; 288 pp., £50.00, pb; ISBN 978-0-334-04347-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Was ist Protestantismus? Jeglicher Versuch, diese Frage zu beantworten, bedarf einiger ontologischer Hingabe seitens des Fragers, welche die folgende Diskussion einer Lösung näherbringt, die zwangsläufig durch diese Hingabe beeinflusst wird. Timothy Stanley untersucht dieses unlösbare Problem mittels der Beiträge zweier herausragender intellektueller Persönlichkeiten: Karl Barth und Martin Heidegger. Er führt ihre geistige Herkunft auf einen gemeinsamen Vorfahren zurück, nämlich Martin Luther, und ist dadurch in der Lage, Ähnlichkeiten zu entdecken, aber interessanterweise auch Unterschiede. Die letzteren treten als ein Ergebnis der unterschiedlichen „Kreuze“ zutage, die ihren Vorhaben zugrundeliegen. Auf diese Weise entfaltet Stanley eine Deutung protestantischer Metaphysik, dessen Schicksal nicht notwendigerweise darin besteht, sich in der anti-metaphysischen Nicht-Aussagbarkeit post-moderner Theologie zu erschöpfen.

SUMMARY

What is Protestantism? Any attempt to answer this question necessitates some form of ontological commitment on the part of the questioner which will propel the ensuing discussion towards a solution which cannot but be influenced by this commitment. Timothy Stanley explores this aporia by means of a close reading of two important intellectual figures: Karl Barth and Martin Heidegger. In relating them to a shared common ancestor in Martin Luther, Stanley is able to detect similarities but, more interestingly, differences between the two, occurring as a result of the different ‘crosses’ evident at the heart of their projects. In this way, Stanley develops an account of Protestant metaphysics which is not necessarily fated to end in the anti-metaphysical apophaticism of postmodern theology.

RÉSUMÉ

Qu'est le protestantisme ? Toute tentative de réponse nécessite, de la part de celui qui se pose cette question, une forme ou une autre de présupposé ontologique qui orientera sa démarche pour trouver une solution, laquelle ne pourra qu'être influencée par ce présupposé. Timothy Stanley examine cette aporie à l'aide d'une lecture attentive de l'œuvre de deux figures intellectuelles importantes, Martin Heidegger et Karl Barth. En les situant dans la ligne d'un ancêtre commun en la personne de Martin Luther, il parvient à détecter des similitudes mais aussi, ce qui est plus intéressant, des différences entre les deux qui découlent des différentes « croix » dont on constate la présence évidente au cœur du projet de chacun d'eux : Heidegger met une croix sur l'être, tandis que Barth a une compréhension de la croix théologiquement plus parlante, dans la mesure où il fait une place plus grande à l'ontologie,

mettant l'accent sur la différence ontologique entre le divin et l'humain situés dans l'être de Jésus-Christ. Ainsi, Stanley élabore une présentation d'une métaphysique protestante qui n'aboutit pas nécessairement à l'apophatisme anti-metaphysique de la théologie postmoderne.

* * * *

What is Protestantism? Despite its apparent simplicity, the question folds back on itself augmenting the 'is' at its heart. That is to say, any attempt to answer the question necessitates some form of ontological commitment on the part of the questioner which will propel the ensuing discussion towards a solution which cannot but be influenced by this commitment. Timothy Stanley introduces his book on Protestant metaphysics with an evaluation of this aporia, unpacking Graham Ward's claim that, 'Protestantism is one of the key developments in modernity and, to the extent that postmodernity offers itself as a critique of modernity, then the ethos it fosters is antithetical to Protestantism' ('The Future of Protestantism: Postmodernity' in *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism*, ed. McGrath and Marks [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004] 453). At the heart of Ward's assertion is a simple equivalence between Protestantism and modernity. In taking issue with this overly-straightforward appraisal of their affiliation, Stanley discloses the itinerary of the remainder of the work: 'The possibility which opens itself out before us is that Protestantism plays a much more pervasive role in the philosophical narration of the metaphysics of Postmodernity than Ward's analysis allows.' (4) In other words, the 'is' of Protestantism is not reducible to the 'is' of modernity whatever Protestantism is.

Stanley chooses to explore the possibilities of Protestantism through two intellectual figures in particular: Karl Barth and Martin Heidegger. In both, he detects a shared recognition of 'the value and importance of the ontological intrigue at the heart of the theology of Protestant progenitors' (4). Principal among these 'progenitors' is Martin Luther, whose influence is easily perceptible between the lines of the book. Beginning with Luther's notorious metaphysical pronouncements in the *Heidelberg Disputation*, Stanley is able to propose a loosely 'Protestant metaphysic' which allows enough consistency to be serviceable but enough equivocality to differentiate various permutations of the general class. By utilising Luther in this way, he links the post-Heideggerean anti-metaphysics of postmodernity to a shared common ancestor with Karl Barth, allowing Stanley to broaden Protestantism beyond the limits of modernity, but also allowing him a framework through which to offer an alternative to the post-ontological apophaticism arising in the wake of Derrida.

Ultimately, as the argument progresses, Stanley finds a cross punctuating the ontologies of both Barth and Heidegger. For Heidegger, being is 'crossed out', that is completed evacuated from the ontic realms so that 'by leaving metaphysics to itself, he [could] understand the

being of beings all the more fully' (194). Barth's cross, however, encompasses a far more ambitious account of the ontological difference between the divine and human, located within the being of Jesus Christ. As Stanley puts it, 'Barth's understanding of the cross is far more vibrant theologically than Heidegger's, and this is in no small part because of Barth's more ontologically rich interpretation of Luther.' (194) In conclusion, Stanley diagnoses Heidegger's problem as the obverse side of Barth's achievement: an inability to engage with thesis 20 of the *Heidelberg Disputation* and its claim that, 'He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.' By dealing theologically with the 'manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross', Barth was able to develop an ontology which avoided the pitfalls Heidegger discerned with an 'onto-theology', but which did not simply 'cross out' being, as Heidegger did. In the end, Protestantism can be seen as developing its own unique elucidation of the 'is' at the heart of the question, 'What is Protestantism?'

The book is an impressive work of Protestant theology and post-Heideggerean philosophy. Stanley offers exciting new approaches to both Heidegger and Barth, maintaining more nuanced readings of their ontologies than are often found in theological works. The capacity to read Heidegger faithfully without deferring to the pervasive readings of Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion is highly laudable in this regard. That said, the second half of the book, on Karl Barth, is even more breath-taking, arguing against the standard readings of Barth which are instantiated in the work of Bruce McCormack and the over-emphasis on 'analogy' in the wake of Von Balthasar's engagement with Barth. In place of these standard accounts, Stanley begins with Barth's early doctrine of God, expressed through the maxim 'God is God', before tracing its development through the Anselm book (*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*) through to the latter volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*. As Stanley sees it, the underlying ontology evinced in this progression is a concept of ontological difference articulated not as 'dialectic' or 'analogy' but christologically, finding its apogee in Barth's late essay, *The Humanity of God*.

In light of this impressive reading of a particularly Protestant metaphysic, the book offers itself as an essential text for anyone interested in plotting the development of Protestant theology, but also the particularities of the interplay between philosophy and theology at a general level. All in all, this book could well be the most important work of creative Protestant metaphysics of recent decades, recommending Timothy Stanley as an exciting new prospect in the Anglo-American theological sphere.

Jon Mackenzie,
Cambridge, England

Christ the Stranger: The Theology of Rowan Williams

Benjamin Myers

New York: Continuum, 2012; x + 135 pp, \$24.95, pb;
ISBN 978-0-567-59971-1

SUMMARY

Benjamin Myers offers a beautifully composed, clear summary of the theology of Rowan Williams. To achieve this, he draws out the influence of Wittgenstein, Hegel and Freud, as well as Augustine, Vladimir Lossky, Sergius Bulgakov, T.S. Eliot and Donald MacKinnon. In conjunction with biographical details, Myers demonstrates Williams' unique apophatic and poetic methodology. The theology that emerges is not only a picture of an untamed, unpredictable Christ, but an unconventional, unsuspected faith marked by a discontinuity and alterity that, although finding resonance with Karl Barth, offers its own unique vision.

RÉSUMÉ

Benjamin Myers livre ici un résumé clair et bien écrit de la théologie de Rowan Williams. Il montre que se sont exercées sur sa pensée les influences de Wittgenstein, Hegel et Freud, ainsi que de Saint Augustin, Vladimir Lossky, Serge Bulgakov, T.S. Eliot et Donald MacKinnon. En rapport avec des détails biographiques, il présente l'approche apophatique et poétique unique de Williams. Il en découle, non seulement une théologie qui dépeint un Christ insaisissable et imprévisible, mais aussi une foi non conventionnelle et inattendue, caractérisée par la discontinuité et l'altérité, qui, tout en trouvant quelques résonances chez Karl Barth, apparaît comme une vision tout à fait unique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Benjamin Myers präsentiert eine wohl aufgebaute, klare Zusammenfassung der Theologie von Rowan Williams. Zu diesem Zweck legt er die Einflüsse von Wittgenstein, Hegel und Freud dar, wie auch die von Augustinus, Vladimir Lossky, Sergius Bulgakov, T.S. Eliot und Donald MacKinnon. Anhand von biographischen Einzelheiten zeigt Myers Williams' einzigartige apophatische [nicht aussagbare] und poetische Methodik auf. Die Theologie, die dabei herauskommt, zeigt nicht nur das Bild eines ungezähmten, unberechenbaren Christus, sondern auch einen unkonventionellen, unvermuteten Glauben, der von einer Diskontinuität und Andersartigkeit gezeichnet ist, die – obwohl sie einen Widerhall bei Karl Barth findet – ihre eigene, einzigartige Sichtweise bietet.

* * * *

While some volumes are written merely to inform or defend, *Christ the Stranger* is composed with an eye to delight. In sixteen brief chapters – vignettes more than expositions – this slim volume offers a clear and compelling sketch of the views of Rowan Williams, the previous archbishop of Canterbury, of sociality, tragedy, language, boundaries, tradition, growth, mission, saints, desire, hope, prayer, fantasy and renunciation. The

result is a beautifully composed introduction to one of the richest theological minds of our generation.

Short enough to be read in a single sitting, the volume is perhaps best read as a series of brief, lunch-break sized meditations. A prologue at the beginning and interlude in the middle of the chapters describe Williams' poetic grappling with the strangeness of Christ in three famous paintings: *Resurrection*, *Christ Pantocrator* and *Our Lady of Vladimir*. These serve not only to frame and embellish the chapters, but also to reinforce Myers' presentation of Williams as an apophatic and poetic theologian invested in teasing out the boundaries of language. This impulse is further intimated with a pithy line from one of Williams' poems introducing each chapter. Equally important for framing these chapters, Williams' theology is said to fall into three broad periods: an early period dominated by a Wittgensteinian question regarding language and sociality, a middle period dominated by a Hegelian question regarding social order, and a later period dominated by a Freudian question regarding human desire. These questions emerge roughly within the early, middle, and late chapters, thereby connecting the chapters to developments within Williams' thought.

In what way, then, does Williams' theology sketch not only Christ as a stranger, but, indeed, a faith that is characterised as strange? Among the numerous ways Myers elicits this theme in Williams' work are the following: Williams replaces the familiar Western autonomous self with an odd, vulnerable apophatic humanity (18); God is portrayed as working through the tragedy and the foolishness of the cross, not the familiar logic of natural law or objective norms (27); the resurrection is seen as a permanent disturbance, something distinct from normal history (30); the Church is characterised as born in trauma and existing in rupture and discontinuity (31); the light of Christ is depicted as making one a stranger to a flimsy, constructed self (32); the work of Christ is seen as estranging us from a fallen world (33); Christ appears on the cross not as someone familiar, but as a stranger who robs us of our standard use of language (34, 121); rather than supporting an uncritical repetition of formulae, orthodoxy brings out the strangeness of familiar Scripture and tradition (46); at every stage of the church's journey, the gospel is said to become 'stranger and more difficult' (49); saints are put forward as unbalanced individuals whose 'weirdness' demonstrates the strange world of God (77, 104); eschatology suggests something radically new, a future that is 'strange and unforeseen' (96); prayer is a 'stammering, hopelessly inefficient language' where we are saturated with meaning such that God's nearness makes God strange (101, 103); in confession we recognise our tendency to make ourselves strangely distorted (108); art is credited with opening up the strangeness of the world, thereby overthrowing our idolatrous fantasies (111); holiness is claimed to be recognising the 'strange objectivity' of God (112); Christ's presence in this

world involves a 'strange hiddenness' (113); and writing is not for assertion or comprehension, but put forward as a way to open oneself up to what is strange and unfamiliar (122).

As the above litany suggests, Myers tells the story of a theology that arrives at the same alterity and discontinuity as Karl Barth's, yet in a journey that works from the puzzles of ordinary human relationships up rather than from a Trinitarian logic down (6). However, in spite of these resonances, Myers is not interested in reconciling Williams with Barth; on the contrary, at one point he shows where Williams misreads Barth. Rather, the Williams Myers presents suggests a mind too original to be framed in light of any one theologian. Theologians such as Augustine, Sergius Bulgakov and Vladimir Lossky must play important roles in the discussion, as well as the influences of Dostoevsky, T.S. Eliot, Donald MacKinnon, Iris Murdoch and Gillian Rose.

Equally embellishing the volume and accenting the theme are Myers' introductory comments and occasional narrative smatterings of Williams' unconventional life. Born and raised in the off-beat town of Swansea, Wales, an illness prevented a normal childhood. At Cambridge he was drawn to an overlooked, unusual mentor (Donald MacKinnon) and chose to study the unconventional theology of Russian Orthodoxy. In debates within the Anglican Communion, Williams strives to rethink matters, offering unusual, controversial stances. Behind all of this, Myers detects the development of a poetic methodology in Williams – a habit of examining things until what was familiar becomes strange (xiii, 2). Even the picture on the cover of the book plays into this biographical theme, presenting a curiously bearded cleric with overgrown eyebrows and a rather large wooden cross around his neck.

Although not all will be in agreement with the various elements of Williams' theology (this reviewer was not), undoubtedly readers will be delighted by this graceful and clear portrait of one of the most significant contemporary theologians.

Robert S. Covolo
Pasadena, California

Religion and the Public Order of the European Union

Ronan McCrea

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; hb, 314 pp,
£54.99; ISBN 978-0-19-959535-8

SUMMARY

This book explores the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in the various member states of the European Union. Ronan McCrea provides thoughtful and helpful answers to the questions provoked by this topic. Recognising that a variety of different approaches exists within the European Union – from the established

Churches of Greece and Denmark on the one hand to the aggressive secularism of France on the other –, McCrea highlights that two traditions play prominent roles in the relationship of religion and politics in EU countries: secularism, and a set of historic European Christian traditions. McCrea supports the equal treatment of religions within the EU but opposes strict secularism on the grounds that religion, Christianity included, has contributed profoundly to European cultural identity.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das vorliegende Buch erforscht das Wesen der Beziehung zwischen Religion und Politik in den verschiedenen Mitgliedsstaaten der Europäischen Union. Ronan McCrea bietet wohlüberlegte und hilfreiche Antworten auf die durch dieses Thema aufgeworfenen Fragen. Er weiß wohl, dass es viele unterschiedliche Ansätze innerhalb der Europäischen Union gibt – von den etablierten Kirchen in Griechenland und Dänemark bis hin zu einem aggressiven Säkularismus in Frankreich. Der Autor betont, dass zwei Traditionen eine herausragende Rolle in der Beziehung zwischen Religion und Politik in den Ländern der EU spielen: zum einen Säkularismus und zum anderen eine Reihe historischer christlicher Traditionen in Europa. Er unterstützt die Gleichbehandlung der in der EU vertretenen Religionen, lehnt aber einen strikten Säkularismus mit dem Argument ab, dass Religion – das Christentum eingeschlossen – einen weitreichenden Beitrag zur europäischen kulturellen Identität geleistet hat.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce livre a pour but d'explorer la nature de la relation entre la religion et la politique dans les divers États membres de l'Union Européenne et apporte des réponses bien réfléchies et pertinentes aux questions que ce sujet suscite. McCrea prend en compte la diversité qui existe à cet égard dans l'Union Européenne, de la Grèce ou le Danemark dont l'Eglise est liée à l'État d'un côté, à la France caractérisée par une sécularisation agressive d'un autre. Il montre que deux traditions jouent un rôle prééminent dans les pays de l'Union Européenne : celle de la sécularisation et un ensemble hérité des traditions de l'Europe chrétienne historique. Il se fait l'avocat d'un traitement égalitaire des religions au sein de l'Union, mais s'oppose à un esprit de sécularisation strict en faisant valoir que la religion, christianisme compris, a profondément contribué à l'identité culturelle européenne.

* * * *

Religion and the Public Order of the European Union is an interesting account of the relationship between religion and politics in the countries of the European Union and in the European Union in general. Avoiding undifferentiated generalisations, Ronan McCrea gives a thoughtful answer to a complex question. Among the 27 member states of the European Union there is no consensus regarding the best arrangement between church and State. Some countries have State Churches, such as the Lutheran Church in Denmark and the Greek

Orthodox Church in Greece. Some other countries have a pluralistic model. The Netherlands do not have a State Church, but religious schools have the same rights as state schools and receive a considerable level of state funding. Finally, there are also countries with a state policy of strict secularism. In France there is no attachment of religion to public institutions; headscarves, for example, are banned from French schools.

According to McCrea, two traditions are influential in the current policy of the European Union towards religion. On the one hand there is the secularist tradition. Thanks to the rise of humanism, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and secularisation, Europe is the most secularised continent. On the other hand, Europe's Christian tradition is still influential. Although Christianity has lost its hegemonic position in Europe due to secularisation, many EU member states maintain their Christian traditions. Christianity has a continuing role in the national identity of some countries: think of the State Churches but also of the national flags of some countries, which contain symbols linked to the crucifix. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church has not given up its political ambitions, especially when the so-called 'life-world' questions (such as euthanasia, abortion and homosexuality) are discussed. Finally, religion has much influence on national educational systems and on healthcare provision.

McCrea pays much attention to the polarised discussion about the preamble to the European constitution in 2003. The first draft of this preamble contained no reference to either God or Christianity as a source of Europe's cultural heritage, only to religious inheritance in general, although the civilisations of Greece and Rome and the Enlightenment were explicitly mentioned. Some countries and religious organisations were therefore very critical about this first draft. In the final version the references to Greece, Rome and the Enlightenment were deleted. Conservative Christians and some staunch secularists were dissatisfied, the latter because the final draft still contains a reference to 'religious inheritance'.

McCrea makes interesting observations about the selective use of secularist arguments in some European legislation. Some legislators are very concerned about Islam and 'islamisation', and it seems that their secular law-making is aimed solely against the Muslim population. In 2006, the centre-right Dutch Balkenende Administration introduced an immigration test with accompanying video. The test requires immigrants to answer some questions about the Netherlands and also about Dutch norms. Immigrants are asked whether female circumcision and smacking women are acceptable practices, and how they would react if they would encounter a kissing gay couple. Furthermore, the instructional video shows footage of two men kissing and of female topless bathing. The claim that this immigration test is aimed at Muslims is strengthened by the fact that 'Western' immigrants (from the USA, Canada,

Australia and New Zealand) are exempt. Left-wing politicians and opinion leaders were, of course, very critical.

The Dutch approach influences other European countries: the German states of Baden-Württemberg and Hessen introduced similar immigration tests, both focusing on issues seen as particularly relevant to Muslims, such as a question about 9/11, Israel and the Holocaust. Left-wing politicians were critical of these tests; Volker Beck, a member of the Green Party, said that the Christian democratic interior minister of Baden-Württemberg himself would likely fail the test because of his anti-gay policy. Besides, the state government of Baden-Württemberg openly admitted that the targets of the new immigration policy were Muslims.

The European Union and its member states are less secular in their approach when Christianity is at stake, as became very clear in the case *Lautsi v Italy*. Initially, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the

obligatory display of crucifixes in Italian state schools violates the rights of non-religious parents. In 2011, however, this decision was overruled by the Court's Grand Chamber. The member states have the right to uphold their Christian traditions. Islam, as a foreign religion, apparently has fewer rights.

McCrea fundamentally supports equal treatment of the different religions. He therefore opposes law-making that discriminates against Islam and favours Christianity. On the other hand, he also opposes staunch secularism because religion (including Christianity) has contributed to the cultural identity of Europe. His approach is very thoughtful and his study should be recommended to everyone with interest in questions about Church-State issues.

Ewout Klei
Kampen, Netherlands

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Editorial

Lines of influence – hypothetical and real

Pieter J. Lalleman

In this preface I want to take up a point which is mentioned in the review article by Christoph Stenschke which you find in this issue. He relates how some contemporary scholars, David Dockery and now Dieter Sänger, argue that the proselyte baptism practised by Jews in the time of the New Testament, probably originated later than the baptism of John the Baptist. The way for this view was prepared a long time ago by my famous predecessor as tutor of New Testament at Spurgeon's College, George R. Beasley-Murray, who in his *Baptism in the New Testament* (1962) showed that neither Philo nor Josephus nor any contemporary Jewish writing mentions proselyte baptism (18–19). Dockery and Sänger now go so far as to suggest that the line of influence may in fact have been the other way round: the practices of John and the earliest Christians may have influenced the development of the Jewish use of ritual washing.

This suggestion reminds me of something I discovered as a by-product of my PhD research. In the Christian apocryphal text that I was studying, the *Acts of John*, I had come across the suggestion that the apostle John healed persons by merely touching them, that is to say, without use of further rituals or aids. Our Lord Jesus had of course done the same (Mark 6:56 // Matthew 14:36; Mark 5:27 // Matthew 9:20–21 // Luke 8:44) and Paul had followed in his footsteps (Acts 19:11–12). But it was suggested that this element of the *Acts of John* showed Hellenistic influence. I found that on the basis of Otto Weinreich's *Antike Heilungswunder* (1909), it was generally stated in the commentaries that the idea that a simple touch can have healing power originated with the Greeks and had been adopted by the Christians. I was not immediately convinced, however, and checked Weinreich's evidence - or rather, what turned out to be the absence of evidence. In fact I was unable to find any Greek cases of healings by a mere touch before the rise of Christianity. The Greek material collected by Weinreich and others after him

contains no pre-Christian parallels to the idea of 'to touch for healing'. So I concluded that this form of healing likely originated with the Christian proclamation about our Lord Jesus, or indeed with our Lord himself, and that the Hellenistic stories about healing by touch were derived from the preaching of the gospel by the early church.

The same is probably true of the idea of resurrection. Liberals have long suggested that the 'Easter myth' has pagan roots, that is to say, that the story of the resurrection of Jesus was modelled on Greek stories about dying and rising gods and heroes. Once again we can legitimately ask who influenced whom, because the influence may in fact have been the other way round. Read more closely, the pre-Christian pagan stories about rising persons differ in important respects from the gospel of the resurrection. On the other hand, in the Greek novels from the second century AD onwards we suddenly find heroes rising from the dead. Why is this so and why exactly at this moment in history? The reading of G.W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1994) helped me to see that it is not unscholarly to suppose that the Christian gospel early on had considerable influence on the surrounding culture. What this Jewish deity did, the Greek heroes easily and swiftly imitated!

Suggestions like the ones I am making here are necessarily tentative. We should always remain open to new discoveries and we must avoid generalisations. Each case has to be studied on its own, and lines of dependence can in principle point in either direction. It would also be wrong to assume that the oldest or most original conception is necessarily the best or the most reliable. Our God would have been quite capable of revealing himself in a reworking of existing materials, as indeed often seems to have been the case in Old Testament times. Yet the picture which arises from the three cases of baptism, healing and resurrec-

tion suggests that Christianity was not always on the receiving end. The History of Religions School was often correct to see similarities but its presuppositions about lines of influence were not necessarily accurate. I would suggest that more research in this area is required.

I have great pleasure that the present issue contains two articles on very diverse countries of Europe, Russia and Belgium. Each article in its own way makes an important contribution to the authentic flavour of our journal. May many more follow.

STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY AND THOUGHT

Protestant Nonconformity and Christian Missions

Martin Wellings (ed.)

The aim of the book is to explore some of the contributions made by Protestant Nonconformity to Christian missions. The occasion of the conference which gave rise to this volume was the centenary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, but the topics treated here deliberately range more widely, covering missions in Britain and the wider world from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.

'Martin Wellings is to be warmly thanked for gathering such an informative and stimulating collection of papers. They are scholarly and accessible, and deserve to be widely read.'

Alan P.F. Sell, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

'These essays examine with freshness and vigour the changing motives and attitudes, methods and strategies of the various mission agencies and focuses on many of the men and women who carried the Gospel overseas and into the homes and institutions of Britain.'

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Did Matthew Know He was Writing Scripture?¹

Part 1

Roland Deines

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Beitrag geht der Frage nach ob es historisch vorstellbar ist, dass Matthäus sein Evangelium von Anfang an mit der Absicht geschrieben hat, dass seine Adressaten dasselbe als (Heilige) Schrift verstehen sollten. Ausgangspunkt für diese Überlegung ist ein Verständnis von (Heiligen) Schriften, das diese primär als Kondensat von Offenbarung versteht. Dazu wird gezeigt, dass in den biblischen Texten das vorrangige Offenbarungsgeschehen dem Bericht darüber vorausliegt (vgl. Mt 16,16-17). Weiter wird darauf hingewiesen, dass Texte im Altertum nur überdauern konnten, wenn sich

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SUMMARY

The article seeks to demonstrate the possibility that the Gospel of Matthew was written from the outset with the intention to function as Scripture for those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God revealed by the Father to his people (Mt 16:16-17). The argument is based on an understanding of Scripture as deposit of divine revelation. It first demonstrates that God's revelatory activity, according to the biblical texts, precedes the written

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur cherche à démontrer qu'il est possible que l'Évangile de Matthieu ait été rédigé dès l'origine avec l'intention qu'il fonctionne comme Écriture pour ceux qui croient en Jésus comme le Fils de Dieu révélé par le Père à son peuple (Mt 16.16-17). Il se fonde sur une conception qui voit dans l'Écriture un dépôt de la révélation divine. Il montre tout d'abord que, d'après les textes bibliques, l'activité par laquelle Dieu communique sa révélation précède sa mise par écrit pour en conserver la mémoire. Il note ensuite que, dans l'anti-

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irgendjemand für ihren Erhalt einsetzte und dafür bereit war, Zeit, Energie und Kosten aufzuwenden. Religiöse Texte wurden jedoch nur dann Teil der akzeptierten Tradition einer Gemeinschaft, nachdem und weil sie ihre Fähigkeit bewiesen hatten, auch unabhängig von ihrem primären historischen Kontext das Verhältnis zu Gott hilfreich gestalten zu können. Bevor dieses Verständnis von Offenbarung und Schriftwerdung im 2. Teil an zwei Beispielen demonstriert wird, wird der verbreitete Topos vom „Aufhören des prophetischen Geistes“ in der Zeit Esras und seine irreführende Funktion in der Frage nach dem Abschluss des (alttestamentlichen) Kanons diskutiert.

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memorisation of it. It then refers to the fact that texts and traditions were not preserved in antiquity unless there was a group willing to invest time, energy and costs to do so. In the case of religious texts they became part of a spiritual legacy only if they proved their ability to facilitate meaningful encounters with God beyond their primary historical circumstances. Before approaching the case studies in Part 2 the concept of the 'cessation of the Spirit' in the time of Ezra is discussed as misleading if used as an argument for the closing of the canon.

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quité, les textes et les traditions n'étaient conservées que s'il se trouvait un groupe de personnes ayant la volonté d'investir du temps et de l'énergie dans cette entreprise et d'en supporter le coût. En particulier, les textes religieux n'entraient dans un patrimoine spirituel que s'ils manifestaient leur capacité à contribuer à des rencontres avec Dieu pleines de sens, au-delà des circonstances historiques qui les avaient fait naître. L'auteur soutient qu'il est erroné de s'appuyer sur l'affirmation de « la cessation de l'œuvre de l'Esprit » à partir de l'époque d'Esdras pour en déduire l'idée de la clôture du canon. Dans sa seconde partie, il se livre ensuite à des études de cas.

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Introduction

The main question asked here is whether it is possible that the New Testament authors thought of themselves as authors of Scripture, or at least as authors of texts they expected to be read alongside, and in the manner of, the existing Jewish Scriptures of their time. This question arises from the simple observation that Matthew's Gospel is clearly written in a biblical style. But does this mean that he intended to write Scripture? I am inclined to give – tentatively – a positive answer even if Lee Martin MacDonald, one of the leading contributors to the current lively and productive debate on Scripture and canonisation,² leaves little room for such a possibility among the New Testament authors.³ I would even suggest that Matthew was not alone among his contemporaries in being aware that he was going to write what could and should be regarded as Scripture, nor was he the first to write in this way. 1 Maccabees (in contrast to 2 Maccabees), certain texts from Qumran and the many apocalyptic and prophetic writings related to the Hasmonean Revolt or the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70 exhibit the same biblical style that allows for these newly written books to be placed alongside the existing Holy Scriptures. Is it conceivable, therefore, to imagine someone sitting down, collecting his sources and memories, and after sharpening his quill, to start writing with the intention – or at least the hope – that what he produces will be regarded as Holy Scripture by others, not just at that time but for centuries to come? Should such an endeavour not start with 'a sound like a violent wind blowing from heaven' as in Acts 2:2, when the Holy Spirit appeared on the day of Pentecost? Or at least with the 'soft whisper' (1 Kings 19:12) Elijah experienced when God spoke to him at Mount Horeb? It is, after all, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that marks the categorical difference between mere human writing and inspired Scripture.⁴ But even if we allow inspiration or divine guidance to be part of the production process, the question of the nature of inspiration still stands: What does 'inspired' mean? How does inspiration happen? What is the 'historical' element of divine inspiration that one can describe by using an historical approach? This leads to the related question: Why would some authors want to write Scripture in the first place? What is it that might urge them to write not just something spiritual, theological or edifying but actually something that readers are

encouraged to regard in line with existing Holy Scriptures? To approach these questions I want to make three foundational suggestions:

1) Scripture is perceived in Judaism and Early Christianity primarily as a record of an extraordinary revelatory event or experience whereby 'revelatory experience' is understood either as a *communicative act* between God and a person or a group of persons, or as an *event* in which God's active involvement was experienced in an extraordinary way. Here I use the adjective 'extraordinary' to distinguish such an event from the daily experiences a believer might have of God's guidance, governance and help (e.g. the answering of a prayer). The written text is the deposit or memorandum of such an extraordinary event; it is based on and witnesses to this revelatory experience.⁵ As deposits of revelatory events such texts can be descriptive (historical narratives), prescriptive (Torah, prophetic and sapiential paraenesis), or responsive (psalms, prayers, laments, liturgies), the latter of which enables direct encounter with the divine from the side of the human partner.⁶

2) From there it follows that the urge to write is based on the conviction – shared by the author and the community receiving such writing – that God has revealed something or someone of lasting importance. Writing Scripture can accordingly be regarded as a *reaction* to God's revelatory *action* and, therefore, as the continuation of the *process of recording* God's actions and that of his people's reactions believed to have started with Moses.⁷

3) Jesus' life and death were perceived among those around him as a revelatory event of a 'biblical' scale, to which the only appropriate response was to bear witness to them in the form of Scripture.⁸

A corollary of this understanding of Scripture as deposit or record of revelation is the claim that the idea of a closed canon is somehow alien to the concept of a God who makes himself known through revelation. However, I will suggest at the end why the concept of a canon can become necessary at certain points.

1. Revelatory experiences as the beginning of Scripture

The biblical authors themselves give only some hints of what caused them to write, but these are clear enough for the question at hand: Moses was commanded by God to write what he taught him, and the prophets encountered the 'word of God' as something that happened to them in such a way

that they had to preach it and eventually also write it down.⁹ In the case of Moses the original author is even God himself. God is described in Exodus 24:12 as the one who has written on the two tablets.¹⁰ The tablets later provided by Moses and supposedly stored in the ark of the covenant, after he had destroyed the first tablets, contained a copy of God's own writing. Leaving aside all historical questions for the moment, it is clear that such a narrative, with God's own writing at the beginning of the *Torah*, would lend authority to whatever was regarded as written by Moses and his successors, the prophets.¹¹ Hosea 8:12 takes this up when the prophet 'quotes' God with the words: 'I write for him [= Ephraim] the multitude of my instructions (*torati*), but they are regarded as something foreign.' Before the human messenger of God comes to write, God has already written something. It is further noteworthy that before any writing took place God made himself known and accessible to Abraham, Moses, the people of Israel at Mount Sinai etc. by a self-revelatory action. These self-disclosing events or epiphanies precede anything of that which becomes Scripture which consequently testifies to and narrates these events.

The genre of prophetic call stories ('Berufungsgeschichten') can be added here as well. These stories demonstrate a further element of what can be described as an ongoing 'scripturalisation' of the relation between God and his messengers. When Samuel, as a young boy, was called by God to be his prophet, he only heard a voice (1 Sam 3:1-14, cf. v. 1: 'The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread'), and he is not described as writing anything during his whole ministry (aside from the late reference in 1 Chr 29:29). When God called Ezekiel, by contrast, the prophet had to eat a scroll, written on both sides, which was given to him in a vision by a hand outstretched from heaven (Ezek 2:8-3:3).¹² This clearly implies that God is regarded as the author of this scroll and that the prophet needed to fill his belly with God's writing before he could start his preaching (and later also his writing). The prophet Zechariah, who may have been familiar with the prophecies of Ezekiel (see Zech 1:4-6), had a similar vision of a flying written scroll originating with God. It was sent because proper punishment for misdoings in relation to property was not administered among God's people. The heavenly scroll performs God's judgement because the Books of the Law were not applied.¹³

Undoubtedly the most complete illustration of

prophetic writing is Jeremiah 36. After the first scroll written by Baruch was burnt by the Judean king Jehoiakim, God ordered the prophet to write down everything a second time and, in addition, a word of judgement addressed to the king: 'And the word of YHWH happened to Jeremiah after the king burnt the scroll and the words, which Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, saying: "Take for you another scroll and write on it all the previous words which have been on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim, king of Judea, has burnt. And concerning Jehoiakim, king of Judea, you shall say ..."'" (36:27-29). At the end of the chapter we read (v. 32): 'And Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah, the scribe, and he wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had burned by fire; and many similar words were added to them.' This last short sentence is quite revealing: It demonstrates that prophetic oracles were collected and edited according to similarity. It is also noteworthy that this is a passive construction and the subject(s) making these additions is (are) not named which is in stark contrast to the precision with which both Baruch and the King are addressed with name and title in the same chapter. It reveals in an unsurpassed way *how* the word of God as revealed to the prophet and proclaimed by him becomes part of a written collection by a multistage development: Proclamation; first written collection and second oral proclamation; rereading of the text in the presence of the king; destruction of the scroll; rewriting with additions; further additions. Even if nothing in the text indicates that we see here *Holy Scripture* in the making it is nevertheless exactly this: The scroll is the deposit and memorandum of God's word revealed to Jeremiah, and – as can be assumed from the simple fact that Jeremiah is still available today (in contrast to the words of his colleague Hananiah, see Jer 28, but also Ezek 13:1-16¹⁴) – these words were preserved and studied, because their claim that a revelatory experience of Israel's God stands behind them, was regarded as justified by a wider audience. If a prophetic message or a text about a revelatory experience does not find hearers and readers who 'believe' it (with all its related consequences) it would fall into oblivion very quickly.

The preservation and redaction are further indicative of an understanding that these texts, based on the words of the prophets, were not just seen as a testimony or witness to a past history but intended to become guidance for future genera-

tions as well. Thus in Isaiah 30:8 the prophet is urged to write one of God's messages to him 'for the last day as a witness forever' (similarly also Dan 12:4).

2. The acceptance of the testimony of revelatory experience by a community as the beginning of a canon

I have argued in a previous paper that the decisive element for the transgenerational transmission of a message or established knowledge, be it written or oral, was a support group willing and able to provide the required means to preserve this content and pass it on to a future generation.¹⁵ This would very often have involved not just a mechanical act of preservation or transmission but the additional labour of adaptation, interpretation, and – if necessary – even translation. In the case of religious texts, their support is based on their value for the life of that particular religious community which was not only willing to accept the message but also acted to preserve and transmit it. One has therefore to differentiate carefully between texts that display an unbroken chain of transmission – like the canonical texts – and texts which become accessible only through the work of historical and archaeological research. That lucky finds of ancient literature collections like the Dead Sea scrolls or the Nag Hammadi codices include texts which have a scriptural character and lay claim to divine authority/inspiration can obscure the fact that these writings had already lost their support group in antiquity.¹⁶ This might (but need not!) point to the fact that their claimed revelatory quality was not accepted by a large enough social body to sustain them over time. To shorten a long argument, the books that made it into the biblical canon did so because their claim to be the deposit of divine revelation was accepted and, as a result of this, sustained by a large enough and long-enduring community.

But what does 'acceptance' mean in this context, and what might have been the reasons for a text being accepted? If one takes the dispute between the prophets Jeremiah and Hananiah as a model, one reason for being accepted by a community is quite obvious: A prophetic announcement that is falsified by later events can hardly make a lasting impact except perhaps as a bad example. The book of Ezra provides a further illustration: It presents itself as a testimony of the fulfilment of God's word through Jeremiah

(Ezra 1:1) which presupposes an understanding of Jeremiah's message (most probably already a book at that time) as a 'word of God' whose fulfilment was to be expected in the future (which explains why it was preserved in the first place). Similarly, the two post-exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah are justified as true prophets ('they prophesied in the name of God') because what they prophesied (5:1) came true (6:14-15), which is the proof that prophets have been sent by God (Deut 18:21-22; Jer 28:9; Ezek 13:1-16).

However, the criterion of fulfilment is applicable only to a limited range of biblical texts: Commandments, historical narratives, wisdom literature or psalms cannot be proven right or wrong in that way. One has to look for additional criteria for acceptance and preservation of religious texts, and foremost of these is their *ability to facilitate meaningful encounters with God even after being detached from the primary historical circumstances*.¹⁷ It is the ongoing *impact on a community* of something written-to-be-received-as-God's-word that provides a text with a status that can be labelled as 'potentially Scripture'. The further redactional processes that integrate such a document (e.g. a single psalm, an existing wisdom collection or a historical narrative) into larger collections are part of what it means 'to become Scripture' or the 'canonical process'. The original meaning is thereby not lost but widened, for which reason a text that functions as Scripture is not understood properly as such if it is re-isolated to its assumed original shape and meaning. Therefore canonical exegesis is justified not only on account of theological or ecclesial reasons but on historical grounds as well.¹⁸

I am confident that, using the framework outlined above, one can describe the historical process that lead to the formation of the Hebrew Scriptures without excluding the divine element within it. I am further confident that on the basis of this assumption it is possible to explain why the time of Ezra was regarded as the closing period for the writing of Scripture: The book of Ezra is no longer a book about what God has revealed but about how to apply revealed knowledge of God to a given situation. Ezra is no longer a prophet but a *sofer*, a scribe, an interpreter of the Law of Moses, the prophetic and the liturgical (Davidic) books.¹⁹ The book itself does not claim to be based on revelation; it is not God's word that happened to Ezra. The same can be said with regard to Chronicles. It is a form of commentary on an

already existing narrative of Israel's kings, it is already based on Scripture and it is not by accident that in Chronicles we find the first clear examples of the use of the Hebrew word *kakatur* or κατὰ τὴν γραφήν, 'according to what is written', as a reference to an older, existing written document that is invoked as a divinely sanctioned authority (1 Chr 15:15; 2 Chr 30:5, 18; Ezra 6:18).²⁰ What becomes clearly visible from the time of Ezra onwards at the latest is a movement away from *writing* Scripture towards *applying* Scripture to a given situation. This application of Scripture and the accompanying developments – namely final redactions aiming to integrate larger portions of Scripture into more unified master narratives; commentaries or commentary-like writings such as the *peshtarim* or the genre of 'rewritten Bible'; the translation of Scripture (LXX, Targumim) to address an increasing and more diverse audience; liturgical readings and integration into worship patterns; private meditation on Scripture (Ps 1:2; 119; 1 Macc 1:56-57; Sirach Prologue; Acts 8:29); and related to the last two developments: production of copies of Scripture to facilitate such uses – all these related factors finally lead to what is called a canon of Holy Scriptures, that is a list of accepted and recognized books in which one can hear the Word of God.

3. The 'cessation of the Spirit' and the writing of Scripture

If the road to an established canon started with Ezra at the latest and – depending on which date for the closing of the canon one regards as likely – came to a conclusion sometime between the second century before Christ and the second century after, how then is it possible to write Scripture after Ezra? The orthodox Jewish answer to this question is: It is not possible at all. This is expressed with the quasi-doctrinal statement that prophecy ceased after this time which meant that divine inspiration, and therefore the writing of Scripture, was no longer possible.²¹ But to make such a point one has first to accept something that is not straightforwardly presupposed by all the biblical texts up to this time, namely *that the writing of Scripture is primarily based on inspiration by the Holy Spirit*. I have avoided so far the topic of inspiration (see endnote 3) and I will do my best to avoid it even further. But it must be considered that the two Jewish authors who defined most clearly the idea of inspiration for the cen-

turies to come up to our own time, that is Philo of Alexandria and Josephus, did so with a specific apologetic agenda in mind: They used the theory of inspiration to provide authority to what they wanted to tell their audiences on the basis of the Jewish Scriptures. Connected to the idea of inspiration is, furthermore, a development away from a *God-focused perspective* to a stronger *anthropological* one. In Philo and Josephus the biblical authors, first of all Moses, are turned into the true heroes. The notion of authorship, foreign to a large extent to the Old Testament books, becomes central, and with it the intellectual and spiritual qualities of the biblical authors. It is their superlative virtue, their command of earthly passions and their unrivalled understanding that make them the appropriate writers of God's words. They were attributed with foresight and knowledge far above their contemporaries and successors as a result of God's spirit being given to them. Inspired Scriptures are therefore the result of a perfect match: God's spirit guides the most perfect of all men and the outcome of this, obviously, is the most perfect of all human achievements.²²

The key text for the concept of inspiration and its limitation to a period in the past is Josephus' *Against Apion* 1.37-44.²³ Josephus did not write much about the prophets' inspiration or that of any other biblical author besides Moses, to whom God 'dictated' (ὑπαγορεύειν) what he should write (*Ant.* 3.84; see also 4.183, 193; and 4.118, 121-122 about Balaam's inspiration), such that he wrote the laws 'based on the dictate and teaching of God' (*Ant.* 17.159; cf. 3.213). It is clear, however, that Josephus saw the biblical authors as gifted not just with the ability to look back into the past but also into the future. He was further convinced that what God had revealed to them could now be found as trustworthy reports in their books.²⁴ The limited number of inspired books among the Jews is a further argument of their reliability in light of the contradictory and therefore numerous books which were current amongst the Greeks (*Ag. Ap.* 1.15-27). The apologetic angle is clearly visible: The biblical books and their authors are more reliable than Greek and Roman historians and authors, because only the former were empowered by God's spirit. Josephus allows for a kind of time-transcending mechanism that enabled Moses and the prophets in his succession to write precise history about the events long before their time, but also about events that lay in the future.²⁵ The superior quality of the Jewish writ-

ings is for Josephus further evinced by the fact that whereas no Greek ‘would suffer ... on behalf of his own writing’ (1.44), Jews had proven their willingness to die for their unchanged and unaltered ‘writings’ on many occasions, because they ‘regard them as decrees of God’ (τὸ νομίζειν αὐτὰ θεοῦ δόγματα, *Ag. Ap.* 1.42-43). This last qualification is made after Josephus has presented his readers with the list of 22 books of Jewish Scriptures, clearly indicating that all of them need to be understood in this way as ‘decrees of God’.²⁶

The problematic aspect of these fascinating passages from Josephus is not so much that he increased the element of ‘dictation’ within the Sinai-revelation but that in *Against Apion* he treats all 22 books of the Hebrew Bible in the same way as ‘decrees of God’ and insinuates that the inspiration of Moses is the model for all other authors of Scripture as well. This leaves hardly any room for human testimony to God’s revelation beside the faithful repetition of what was dictated, and this model is not at all able to capture the plurality of genres and perspectives preserved in the Hebrew Bible. One can see how easily such an understanding of verbal inspiration lends itself towards the notion of infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, and one can also understand why James Barr insisted against such a perception of Scripture on the grounds that the biblical texts present themselves less as the direct object of God’s dictate but rather as human testimony and response to ‘the acts of God in history’.²⁷ But this is not so much the point at issue here. It is rather the consequence which Josephus draws from his canonical concept:

From Artaxerxes to our own time every event has been recorded, but this is not judged worthy of the same trust, since the exact line of succession of the prophets did not continue (*Ag. Ap.* 1.41).

This passage is regularly taken as evidence that Josephus held to the opinion of the cessation of the Spirit, although Barclay has shown in his commentary that this is not necessarily the case.²⁸ The opinion of the cessation of the Spirit is clearly expressed for the first time only in the rabbinic literature, where the statement ‘With the death of the last prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the holy spirit departed from Israel, but the Bath Qol was available to them’ can be found more than once.²⁹ The consequences are obvious: When inspiration by the Holy Spirit is seen as the main element in the formation of Scripture, it is evi-

dent that no Scriptures (and therefore no future canonical books) could be written after Ezra. This seems to be a powerful argument against all those attempts made by authors or groups in the later Second Temple Period to claim divine authority for their writings. But the pure fact of so many Scripture-like writings after Ezra (and even Josephus himself can be described as attempting to continue or imitate the prophetic historiography and to write with a prophetic claim of authority³⁰) tells us that the concept of the cessation of the Spirit was either not yet formulated or, at least, not accepted by many groups within Judaism, one of these being the followers of Jesus. Indeed D. Moody Smith describes this period ‘as the Age of Scripture – scripture being written as well as fulfilled – and not just for nascent Christianity but for Judaism as well’.³¹

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Endnotes

- 1 I thank Peter Watts (Nottingham) for his many helpful comments and editorial support for this article. The article is based on my contribution to the FEET conference in Berlin in 2012.
- 2 It is not possible to give here an exhaustive overview of this debate; the following titles provide a first glimpse into questions and contributors: Jean-Marie Auwers and Henk Jan de Jonge (eds.), *The Biblical Canons* (BETL 163; Leuven: University Press, 2003); Craig Bartholomew et al. (eds.), *Canon and Biblical Interpretation* (The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 7; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006); John Barton and Michael Wolter (eds.), *Die Einheit der Schrift und die Vielfalt des Kanons / The Unity of Scripture and the Diversity of the Canon* (BZNW 118; Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2003); Michael Becker and Jörg Frey (eds.), *Qumran und der biblische Kanon* (BThSt 92; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009) – for a concise introduction to the discussion and a substantial bibliography see in this book J. Frey, ‘Einführung’, 1-63; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Ivan Z. Dimitrov, James D.G. Dunn, Ulrich Luz and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (eds.), *Das Alte Testament als christliche Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Sicht: Zweite europäische*

- orthodox-westliche Exegetenkonferenz im Rilakloster vom 8.-15. September 2001* (WUNT 174; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov (eds.), *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Christine Helmer and Christof Landmesser (eds.), *One Scripture or Many? Canon from Biblical, Theological, and Philosophical Perspectives* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (3rd updated and corrected ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007); Lee Martin McDonald, *The Origin of the Bible: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark Guides for the Perplexed; London, New York: T&T Clark, 2011); Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002); Mladen Popovic (ed.), *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (JSJSup 141; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010); Einar Thomassen (ed.), *Canon and Canonicity: The Formation and Use of Scripture* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2010; for a helpful review see Tomas Bokedal, *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 63 [2012] 692-697); Luc Zaman, *Bible and Canon: A Modern Historical Inquiry* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 50; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008).
- 3 Lee Martin McDonald, 'Wherein Lies Authority? A Discussion of Books, Texts, and Translations' in his *Exploring the Origins of the Bible*, 203-239 (205). Support for my position can be found in D. Moody Smith, 'When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000) 3-20 and Martin Hüneburg, 'Das Matthäusevangelium als heilige Schrift. Vom Anspruch eines Textes', *Quatember* 71 (2007) 144-155, both of whom strongly defend the assumption that Matthew wanted to write Scripture. For Paul as an author of Scripture, see Francis Watson, 'Gospel and Scripture: Rethinking Canonical Unity', *Tyndale Bulletin* 52 (2001) 161-182. Watson mentions in passing, dealing with Galatians, that 'Paul here testifies to the gospel by way of a written text of his own, whose claim to scriptural or proto-scriptural normativity is everywhere overwhelmingly evident' (167). I make a similar case with regard to First Thessalonians in my article 'Revelatory Experiences as the Beginning of Scripture' (forthcoming).
- 4 The concept of inspiration by God's spirit as characterisation of *all* biblical writings is fully developed in the first century AD with Josephus *Against Apion* 1.37-38 as key text along with 2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Pet 1:20-21. The idea of prophetic 'inspired' historiography can be traced back as far as 1 Chr 29:29-30 (see also 2 Chr 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 20:34; 32:32; 33:19), but the idea of God's spirit guiding the prophets (see e.g. Num 11:17, 25, 29; 27:18; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Isa 34:16; 59:21; 61:1; 63:11; Ezek 11:4-5; Dan 5:11-12; Micah 3:8; Zech 7:12) and other 'authors' of the Jewish Scriptures like David (see 2 Sam 23:2-3; 1 Chr 28:12; for Solomon see 1 Kings 3:24; 5:9-14) is occasionally found already in the Bible and accepted within the Early Christian literature from early on. But the fact that God placed his words in the mouths of the prophets needs not to be mixed up with the inspiration of the prophetic books; cf. also Jonathan Whitlock, *Schrift und Inspiration: Studien zur Vorstellung von inspirierter Schrift und inspirierter Schriftauslegung im antiken Judentum und in den paulinischen Schriften* (WMANT 98; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2002) 56-67.
- 5 This description does not exclude a longer tradition history before the witness of an event was written down and received its final form, which in the case of Old Testament texts could happen centuries after the event itself; see H. Gese, 'The Biblical View of Scripture' in Gese, *Essays on Biblical Theology* [ET by Keith Crim of *Zur biblischen Theologie*, München: Kaiser, 1977] (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981) 9-33. The situation is different in the New Testament, where eyewitnesses played a crucial role and the gap between the revelatory event and its fixation as foundational tradition (which very quickly turned into texts) is extremely short.
- 6 A different tripartite division is suggested by Rolf Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* [ET by D.E. Orton of *Theologie des Alten Testaments: Ein kanonischer Entwurf*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001] (Tools for Biblical Studies Series 7; Leiden: Deo, 2005) 6-7, who divides the OT canon into a first part, where God is mainly depicted as acting (Torah), a second where he is mainly speaking (Prophets) and a third (Writings) where people speak to God.
- 7 Cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* Band 1 (München: Kaiser, 1957), ET *Old Testament Theology* vol. I: *The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962) 355-356, and more often. A highly readable collection, which contains a kind of vademecum of von Rad's thoughts about God as present and active in Israel's history, is his *God at Work in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980).
- 8 Revelatory language can be found throughout the New Testament: ἀποκαλύπτειν (*to reveal*, literally *to uncover*) and ἀποκάλυψις (*revelation*) is used in this sense in Mt 11:25, 27 par. Lk 10:21-22; Mt 16:17; Lk 2:32; Rom 1:17-18; 2:5; 8:19; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:10; Gal 1:12, 16; 3:23; Eph 1:17; 3:5; Phil 3:15; 1 Pet 1:5, 12; Rev 1:1 (for personal 'inspiration' in a time of crisis see Mt 10:26); of similar importance is φανερώω (*to make known, to reveal*): Jn 2:11; 3:21; 7:4, 16-17; 9:3; 17:6; Rom 1:19; 3:21; 16:26; 2 Cor

- 2:14; Col 1:26; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 1:2-3; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 Jn 1:2; for further terms see H. Balz, 'Offenbarung IV. Neues Testament', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 25 (1995) 134-146 (134-135); relevant passages include further Mt 13:10-17, 35 (Mk 4:10-12; Lk 8:9-10; 10:23-24); 17:1-13 (Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36, see also 2 Pet 1:17-21); Jn 1:1-18; 3:12-13; 5:19-30 etc.; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:1-6; Eph 3:3-10; Col 1:25-28; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:10-12; 1 Jn 1:1-3; Heb 1:1-2 (cf. with reference to God's revelatory actions in the past 3:7-10). For the Gospel of Matthew see especially Frances Shaw, *Discernment of Revelation in the Gospel of Matthew* (Religions and Discourse 30; Oxford, New York: P. Lang, 2007 [no attempts are made in this study to connect revelation with Scripture writing]), and for John's Gospel, Saeed Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 2.120; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 344: 'Truth is revelation and revelation is the manifestation of the reality of God's saving work in the world through the Word', and 345-357, his chapter on 'Revelation of Truth in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ'. A fairly comprehensive overview of revelation in the New Testament according to the individual books is provided in Marco Frenschkowski, *Offenbarung und Epiphanie* Vol. 1: *Grundlagen des spätantiken und frühchristlichen Offenbarungsglaubens* (WUNT 2.79; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995) 351-403; see further H. Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* Vol. 1: *Prolegomena* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 172-239; and, especially for Paul, Markus N.A. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (WUNT 2.36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990). An impressive combination of biblical scholarship and systematic theology is Michael Welker, *Gottes Offenbarung: Christologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2012).
- 9 For the imperative 'write!' given to Moses and the Prophets, see Exod 17:14; 34:27; 31:19; Isa 8:1; 30:8; Jer 30:2; 36:2-4, 27-28; Ezek 24:2; 43:11; Hab 2:2, cf. also Jer 25:13 where God binds himself to the words Jeremiah has written at his command. See also R. Deines, 'The Term and Concept of Scripture' in Karin Finsterbusch and Armin Lange (eds.), *What is Bible?* (CBET 67; Leuven: Peeters, 2012) 235-281 (271-273).
 - 10 See also Exod 31:18; 32:15-16, and Stephen G. Dempster, 'Torah, Torah, Torah: The Emergence of the Tripartite Canon' in Evans and Tov, *Exploring the Origins of the Bible*, 87-127 (92-94, 98-99).
 - 11 See Deut 18:15. The text is not to be understood primarily as a messianic promise (even if read as such in John 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22; 7:37) but as the legitimization of the chain of prophets after Moses during Israel's history; the people of God will never be without the living word of God. A good discussion of Deut 18:15 in light of the Christian misuse of the passage can be found in R.W.L. Moberly, 'The Use of the Old Testament in Pope Benedict XVI's *Jesus of Nazareth*' in A. Pabst and A. Paddison (eds.), *The Pope and Jesus of Nazareth* (London: SCM, 2009) 97-108. For Mosaic authorship as element of tradition history see Gese, 'The Biblical View of Scripture', 21.
 - 12 G.W. Anderson, 'Canonical and Non-Canonical' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* Vol. 1: *From the Beginnings to Jerome* (ed. P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 113-159. Anderson provides helpful observations on the elements within the prophetic texts which point towards written preservation based on the divine character of their genesis.
 - 13 For intertextual references of Zech 5:1-4 to Jer 36 and Ezek 2:9-3:3, see Holger Delkurt, *Sacharjas Nachtgesichte: Zur Aufnahme und Abwandlung prophetischer Traditionen* (BZAW 302; Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2000) 226-235. The question remains whether there is a connection between the heavenly scroll executing judgement and the record books that were kept in heaven according to Exod 32:32-33; Mal 3:16; Dan 7:10; 10:21; 12:1; Ps 87:6; 139:16; Acts 10:4; see also the frequent references to a related heavenly 'book of life/the living' in Isa 4:3; Ps 69:28; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27. For a recent discussion see Leslie Baynes, *The Heavenly Book Motif in Judeo-Christian Apocalypses, 200 B.C.E.-200 C.E.* (JSJSup 152; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012).
 - 14 Ezek 13:9 mentions 'a book of the House of Israel' in which the false prophets shall not be enlisted. The commentators (e.g. W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* [Hermeneia], Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, 294) discuss whether this is a reference to a citizen list (like in Jer 22:20; Ezra 2:62) or the 'book of life' which is kept in the presence of YHWH (see previous endnote). It might be possible to see in the book instead a list of the 'prophets of Israel' who are regarded as 'true' prophets and therefore a first form of a canon list. The threat would then be that the false prophets will not become part of Israel's hallowed tradition.
 - 15 Deines, 'Term and Concept of Scripture', 273-278.
 - 16 For a list of 'books' mentioned in the Hebrew Bible but no longer extant, see McDonald, 'Canon', 785.
 - 17 Deines, 'Term and Concept of Scripture', 279.
 - 18 See *inter alii* A. Behrens, 'Kanon: Das ganze Alte Testament ist mehr als die Summe seiner Teile', *Keryma und Dogma* 53 (2007) 274-297, and, without doubt most prominently, Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* 2 Vols. (London: SCM Press, 1992; reprint in one volume

- Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011); Rendtorff, *Canonical Hebrew Bible*.
- 19 The Law of Moses is mentioned in Ezra 3:2; 6:16-18; Neh 1:7-10; 8:14-18; 9:3; 10:30; 13:1; the prophets in Ezra 1:1; 5:1; 6:14; Neh 9:26, 30, 32 (whereas contemporary prophets are despised, Neh 6:10-14); the Davidic legacy for the cult in Ezra 3:10-11; Neh 11:23; 12:36, 45-46. On Ezra's 'office', see Ezra 7:6, 10-12, 21, 25-26; Neh 8:1-6, 9, 13; 12:26, 36; for Nehemiah as founder of a 'biblical library' in Jerusalem see 2 Macc 2:13. For literature and further discussion see my 'Term and Concept of Scripture', 277-278.
 - 20 For a full list of scriptural quotes or allusions in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles see Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature* (JAJS 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) 215-224.
 - 21 For a comprehensive treatment see now L. Stephen Cook, *On the Question of the 'Cessation of Prophecy' in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 145, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).
 - 22 Already the *Letter of Aristeas* 121 highlights the extraordinary knowledge of the translators of the Torah (see also 187-292) and the exact translation is a satisfying final product because of their scholarly scrutiny (310-311), not yet the result of divine inspiration. It is Philo, a century or more later, who introduces this element. In his view, the 'most eminent Hebrews ... wrote in a prophetic manner and as though under divine motivation ... as though one inspiration dictated invisibly in each' (*Mos.* 2.32, see also 2.37, 40). Christian authors starting with Justin were keen to use and further increase the miraculous elements in support of their use of the Septuagint, see Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of the Canon* (London, New York: T&T Clark 2002), 25-28, 36-41. For Josephus on the excellency of Moses see *Ant.* 2.267-268; 4.328-331 (on Moses), for Philo see *Mos.* 1.1-4; 2.1-11, 25-52; *Opif.* 1-2; *Praem.* 52-56 etc. A full treatment of the relevant passages is Helmut Burkhardt, *Die Inspiration heiliger Schriften bei Philo von Alexandrien* (Basel: Brunnen, 1988) 171-213; cf. Helmut Burkhardt, 'Inspiration der Schrift durch weisheitliche Personalinspiration: Zur Inspirationslehre Philos von Alexandrien', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 47 (1991) 214-225.
 - 23 See my fuller discussion in 'Term and Concept of Scripture', 269-271.
 - 24 See for example *Ant.* 4.303 about Moses' prophetic writings for the future; *Ant.* 10.35; 11.5-7 about Isaiah; *Ant.* 10.180-182; 11.1-2 about Jeremiah; *Ant.* 10.210; 11.337 about Daniel; and *Ant.* 11.35 about the Twelve Minor Prophets.
 - 25 For prophetic historiography as a peculiar element of the Jewish world see J.M.G. Barclay, *Against Apion* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary 9; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 28.
 - 26 Cf. *Ant.* 1.13: The history of 5000 years is 'revealed through the sacred writings' (τὰ δηλούμενα διὰ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων).
 - 27 So in one of his earliest publications, a review of J.K.S. Reid, *The Authority of Scripture* (Methuen, 1957), *Scottish Journal of Theology* 11 (1958) 86-93 (88). See further James Barr, *Escaping from Fundamentalism* (London: SCM, 1994) 20-32, 124-130, and more often in his numerous writings. To refer positively to Barr means not to accept everything he has written about Scripture but to pay heed to his cautioning in these questions. From a very different angle, namely the study of medieval theology, the former Pope Benedict XVI argued similarly in favour of a distinction between revelation as a divine act and Holy Scripture as condensation of the received revelation; see Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger, *Aus meinem Leben: Erinnerungen (1927-1977)* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998) 84.
 - 28 Barclay, *Against Apion*, 31, sees the motive in Josephus' statement rather as an attempt 'to emphasize, by comparison, the unimpeachable authority of the 22 books'. For a defence of the traditional view see now again Cook, 'Cessation of Prophecy', 123-148.
 - 29 Cant. Rab. 8.9 § 3. These and other texts are cited in Cook, 'Cessation of Prophecy', 5-9.
 - 30 See Whitlock, *Schrift und Inspiration*, 159-162.
 - 31 Smith, 'When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?', 16.

The *Apostles' Creed*, the God of Israel and the Jew Jesus of Nazareth

Christoph Stenschke

SUMMARY

After some preliminary notes on the significance, use and origin of the *Apostles' Creed*, this paper argues that there are two significant elements lacking in the *Creed*:

(1) The *Creed* moves directly from God the creator to the incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ without giving any weight to God's dealings with the nations and Israel between Genesis 3 and Matthew 1, as if these were of no significance. This raises the important question as to the

role and importance of God's revelation in history prior to the incarnation of Christ.

(2) The *Creed* is also silent on Jesus' Jewish identity and his ministry in and primarily for Israel. Both aspects are essential in the New Testament presentation of the gospel. Moreover, in view of the devastating consequences of excluding Israel and Jesus *the Jew* for Jewish-Christian relations in much of church history, additions are overdue. Concrete suggestions are provided.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Nach einigen vorausgehenden Bemerkungen über die Bedeutung, den Gebrauch und Ursprung des *Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses*, vertritt dieser Aufsatz die Meinung, dass zwei wesentliche Bestandteile im *Glaubensbekenntnis* fehlen:

(1) Das *Glaubensbekenntnis* bewegt sich direkt von Gott, dem Schöpfer, hin zur Fleischwerdung seines Sohnes Jesus Christus, ohne dass es Gottes Plänen mit den Nationen und Israel zwischen Genesis 3 und Matthäus 1 irgendwelche Bedeutung beimisst, so als wären sie unbedeutend. Da stellt sich die wichtige Frage im Blick auf

die Rolle und Bedeutung von Gottes Offenbarung in der Geschichte vor der Inkarnation von Christus.

(2) Das *Glaubensbekenntnis* schweigt ebenfalls über die jüdische Identität von Jesus und seinen Dienst in und vor allem für Israel. Beide Aspekte sind von wesentlicher Bedeutung für die Darstellung des Evangeliums im Neuen Testament. Darüberhinaus sind Zusätze längst überfällig angesichts der zerstörerischen Folgen, die der Ausschluss Israels und *des Juden* Jesus in großen Teilen der Kirchengeschichte für die jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen hat. Konkrete Vorschläge dazu werden gemacht.

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RÉSUMÉ

Après quelques préliminaires sur la signification, l'usage et l'origine du *Symbole des Apôtres*, l'auteur attire l'attention sur deux points significatifs qui en sont absents. Premièrement, le symbole passe directement de la mention du Dieu créateur à celle de l'incarnation de son Fils Jésus-Christ sans mentionner l'action divine envers les nations et Israël qui se trouve relatée à partir de Genèse 3 jusqu'à Matthieu 1, comme si cette action ne revêtait aucune importance. Il néglige ainsi le rôle et

l'importance de la révélation divine dans l'histoire qui a précédé l'incarnation. Deuxièmement, le symbole ne dit rien de l'identité juive de Jésus et de son ministère essentiellement consacré à Israël. Ces deux points constituent pourtant des éléments essentiels de l'exposé néotestamentaire de l'Évangile. Lorsqu'on considère les conséquences regrettables de ces omissions sur les relations entre Juifs et chrétiens au cours de l'histoire de l'Église, il paraît très nécessaire de combler ces manques. Des suggestions concrètes dans ce sens sont ici proposées.

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1. Introduction

In many liturgies and church services the *Apostles' Creed* – probably the oldest, the most significant and most widely known Christian confession of faith – is regularly used by Christians to confess their faith. As a summary of the essential contents of the Christian faith, this confession cannot be overestimated:¹ its contents are in people's minds – at least people within the church. Contents of the Christian faith that are *not* mentioned in the *Creed* should be attended to in the proclamation and catechesis of the church lest they be marginalised or forgotten.

In past centuries the *Apostles' Creed* was generally understood as an apt summary of the faith. A few examples suffice. One of the systematic theologians of Lutheran Orthodoxy, Georg Calixt (1586–1656), claimed that since the *Apostles' Creed* 'served in the patristic era as a baptismal confession, it should be considered as the quintessence of apostolic teaching and therefore an expression of the faith that unites all Christian churches'.² The Protestant theologian and leading representative of Neology (1740–1790), Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791), argued with regard to the reservations of some of the radical Enlightenment theologians that '[w]hat seems to be lacking in the *Apostles' Creed* is either implicitly included or is not a fundamental article of first order'.³ With regard to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's (1729–1781) assessment, H.M. Barth states: 'What the New Testament contains over and above the Apostles' Creed, is according to the opinion of the Ancient Church not necessary for salvation, it could be true or false, or can be understood in various ways.' The positive assessment of the *Apostles' Creed* led at the same time to a reduction of the Christian statements of faith.⁴

This reduction of the wealth of Christian doctrine to the minimal statements of the *Apostles' Creed* surely also accounts for the intensity and – at times – the vehemence with which this 'rest' has been debated and continues to be debated.⁵ This observation also applies to the significance of the *Apostles' Creed* in current ecumenical dialogue, since the ecumenical consensus regarding this *Creed* is closely linked with a reduction in Christian statements of faith.

Despite these positive evaluations of the *Apostles' Creed*, I want to argue for additions to the *Creed* in two areas. These additions are required by the witness of Scripture and by the – at times devastat-

ing – *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the neglect of important biblical truths in the *Creed*.

I want to begin with some reflections on the origin and significance of the *Apostles' Creed* and on Christian confessions in general.⁶ The Berlin church historian and patristic scholar, C. Marksches, summarises the intensive debate of the past hundred years regarding the origin and development of the *Creed* as follows:

The plethora of relatively similar Western forms in the fourth century A.D. ... and their relationship to Eastern forms of the *Creed* is best explained by the hypothesis that in the course of the third century the *Romanum* [the precursor of the *Apostles' Creed*] merged from a Trinitarian and a Christological part, perhaps also at an earlier stage – due to the lack of information no certainty can be reached. The exceptionally artistic structure of the *Romanum* argues against a gradual growth of its basic Trinitarian structure.⁷

In what follows we need to take note that the *Apostles' Creed* was not produced by a committee of theologians intending to draft a comprehensive and systematic summary of the Christian faith. Rather, like with many other confessions of faith, its content was determined by its origin and development.⁸ Its emphasis is on the second article on Christology. Students of the *Creed* reach different conclusions regarding the third article, which is introduced by a repetition of the formula *credo* (I believe). Is this third article a combination of different contents and statements or does it also follow a discernible and meaningful structure? In more recent discussion, the second view seems to be gaining ground. Marksches, for example, speaks of its 'exceptionally artistic structure'.

In more recent discussions, different elements of the *Apostles' Creed* have drawn criticism.⁹ My case, however, does *not* involve criticism of existing elements of the *Creed*. Rather, I want to suggest essential additions. Before doing so, allow me two preliminary notes,¹⁰ in the good German tradition in which massive volumes on a particular subject used to be called *Prolegomena*. Firstly, if creeds and confessions of faith are to be used widely and are to be suitable for liturgical and catechetical use, they must be formulated succinctly and precisely. In this regard it is problematic to propose additions to the perhaps most important confession of Christianity, as almost all confession of the Church – even the longer confessions and

catechisms in the Reformed tradition¹¹ – could be supplemented and explicated in meaningful ways.

Secondly, many confessions originated under particular circumstances and were responses to concrete challenges to the doctrine of the Church. Against this background confessions were formulated to distinguish sound doctrine from heresy and to express the orthodox faith of the Church in such concrete circumstances, but not to comprehensively describe Christian doctrine. This is the task of the larger catechisms of the Church, of its proclamation and catechesis and of its academic reflection in theology. For example, the *Barmer theologische Erklärung*, the *Barmer Declaration* of 1934, arguably the most important German language confession of the twentieth century, had its origin in the confrontation of the *Bekennende Kirche* holding fast to historic Christianity, the so-called *Confessing Church*, with the German national and Nazi alienation of the Christian faith by the so-called *Deutsche Christen*, the ‘German Christians’.¹² Under these particular circumstances the *Barmer Declaration* formulated central contents of the Christian faith and provided orientation. However, it did not comprehensively lay out all of Christian doctrine. As the *Apostles’ Creed* derives from an old Roman baptismal confession, the *Romanum*,¹³ which summarises the faith, the second observation is perhaps not as critical as the first.

I cannot provide a nuanced appreciation of the *Apostles’ Creed* against the backdrop of its origin and development here.¹⁴ It is used here merely as the wide-spread summary of the fundamental contents of the Christian faith which is almost unanimously accepted in the Western churches. Under this premise several well-known contemporary theologians, among others¹⁵ my fellow Bavarian, Joseph Ratzinger, the previous Pope of the Roman Catholic Church,¹⁶ have written introductions to the Christian faith on the basis of the *Apostles’ Creed*.¹⁷ Such summaries are indispensable for the *Sprachfähigkeit des Glaubens*,¹⁸ the ‘ability of the faith to articulate itself’, which is conjured up by a number of recent European ecclesial documents on sharing the faith. Under this abstract expression, evangelism – long belittled and ridiculed by many ‘proper’ theologians – is currently receiving new attention in European theology (not always out of deep conviction but in view of the rapidly decreasing numbers of church membership).

My proposed additions derive from the primacy of Scripture over all doctrine;¹⁹ I am pursu-

ing a deeply Protestant concern (*sola Scriptura*). However, I also acknowledge concerns that are of significance in more recent Catholic theology, although, as far as I can see, my concerns are still underdeveloped in the realm of the Orthodox churches.

The two additions that I want to propose address subjects which – until recently – have only been treated inadequately in theological reflection and confessional formulation in the Protestant tradition.²⁰ My additions take up two subjects that have, arguably, been neglected in the history of theology and address two deficits that have had a devastating *Wirkungsgeschichte*.

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

From thence he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

2. God’s dealings with Israel as an integral part of the Christian understanding of God

Owing to its trinitarian basic structure, the *Apostles’ Creed*²¹ begins its first article with God: ‘I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.’²² Next to statements regarding the *nature* of God (‘the Father Almighty’), the description of God’s action focuses on creation in the beginning: ‘the maker [or creator, as in some versions] of heaven and earth’. This statement takes up a central conviction of the Old Testament,²³ which confesses God in the creation narrative, in the worship of Israel²⁴ and in many other places as the ‘Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in

them' (Ps 146:6).²⁵

After referring back to the creation account in Genesis 1-2, with its far-reaching theological implications, the second article of the *Apostles' Creed* immediately addresses the Son and his incarnation: 'And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord ...' This means that the remainder of the Old Testament, the history and story between Genesis 2 and the memorable events in the temple of Jerusalem, when the angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah and later to Mary the miraculous birth of the Messiah, does not feature in the *Apostles' Creed*.²⁶ This is surprising in view of the widespread Old Testament confessional tradition which confesses God not only as the creator of heaven and earth, but speaks of him time and again as the 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob',²⁷ as the God who chose Israel and acted on Israel's behalf as her Saviour, and of his dealings with this people: God is the one who delivered Israel from the house of slavery,²⁸ who promised and gave to Israel the land, and so on.²⁹ For example, the introduction to the Decalogue states: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me' (Ex 20:1-3) or, as a further example, Hosea 13:4: 'But I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Saviour except me.' Psalm 136 opens with praise of God the creator (v. 1-9). This praise is directly followed by a reference to God's salvation in and from Egypt (v. 10: 'to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt') before Israel's wanderings in the wilderness and the giving of the land to Israel are mentioned (v. 16-22). Even the commandments of the so-called *Holiness Code* are connected back to God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (Lev 18:1-5).³⁰ Even up to the late period of Israel, the outstanding significance of God's saving acts in the exodus – the encounter with the Saviour-God at the beginning of Israel's history – is remembered and forms part of its confession and identity (Neh 9:9-15; Judith 5:9-11).

The lack of reference to these foundational confessions of Israel in the *Creed* is surprising in view of the role that the Old Testament plays in manifold ways in the New Testament³¹ and in view of the fact, that – despite various questions, challenges and attacks – from the second century onwards the Church retained the Old Testament without deductions.³²

Are there explanations of this exclusion? The formation of Christian doctrine was initially strongly

influenced by the acute needs of the congregations and by christological issues.³³ Early Christianity before AD 66 and beyond was strongly shaped by early Judaism. In this setting, the Old Testament understanding of God and the history of Israel were presupposed as a matter of course. That the Old Testament and the actions of God on behalf of Israel and the people to which it testifies had a significant role in early Christianity is evident from the many quotations, allusions and echoes of the Old Testament and the references to the history of Israel in the New Testament. As early as the end of the first century, the first Jewish war, which climaxed with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and other factors led to an increasing separation and estrangement between synagogue and Church and to a Christian demarcation from Judaism.³⁴

In addition to these and other diverse *historical* developments, we should also note the reduction inherent in the traditional Christian perception of the Old Testament as primarily a christological testimony which is already to be discerned in the New Testament itself. Although it is in its full extent part of the Christian canon, the Old Testament appears in the New Testament and in the theology of the Church not for its own sake, but in its nature as a promise and pointer to its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, in the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the Church, its universal mission and the eventual consummation.³⁵ The allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, which started as early as the second century AD (typology already appears in the New Testament³⁶), led to a diminished interest and even neglect of its literal sense and of its reference to Israel as the people of God.³⁷ Already at that early stage, there existed the claim of the Church that it now was God's chosen people; theories of supersession in various forms began to develop. (The German term *Enterbungstheorie* is even more drastic, as it contains the word *Erbe*, German for heritage, which is used in the Old Testament for the land as Israel's inheritance and in other Israelite contexts.³⁸) This mixture of historical and theological factors helps to explain why the Old Testament, Israel and references to Israel played no direct role in the formulation of confessions such as the *Apostles' Creed*.

In view of the biblical testimony and of the developments just outlined, I wish to argue that it is mandatory to add to the *Apostles' Creed* statements on God's universal history with humanity in the *Urgeschichte* of Genesis 4-11 and, above

all, on the election of Israel and God's dealings with his chosen people for his own and their sake and for their significance for the Christian faith. The words chosen by the former Tübingen New Testament scholar, Peter Stuhlmacher, in his *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* point in the right direction.³⁹ He summarises the message of the New Testament as follows:

The one God who created the world *and chose Israel to be his covenant people* has accomplished eschatological salvation once and for all, for Jews and Gentiles, in the sending, the ministry, the vicarious propitiatory death and the resurrection of his Son.⁴⁰

Drawing on this designation of God – the one who created the world and chose Israel to be his covenant people – the following addition to the *Creed* would be sensible:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, who following and next to his dealings with all humanity, chose Israel and revealed himself to this people through his word and acts in grace and judgment, displayed his covenant faithfulness to her and prepared Israel for the coming from her midst of the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles.

Deficiencies in the first article of the *Creed* have been observed and addressed on several occasions;⁴¹ for example, the *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch: Agenda für die Evangelische Kirche der Union und für die Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands* (2000)⁴² contains a confession based on the *Apostles' Creed* in which the first article reads:

We believe in the one God who created heaven and earth and us humans in his image. *He has chosen Israel, has given her his commandments and granted his covenant with them for the blessing of the nations.*

One should add to this confession the particular character of the Old Testament as pointing forward and beyond itself, which guides not only the *Christian* understanding of the Old Testament but which is also significant in the various eras of Judaism, even though to a lesser degree.⁴³

Before I turn to the second article, let me briefly sketch the implications of this first addition. With the additions here proposed, the significance of Israel and the Old Testament for the Christian faith would become intelligible and would remain in view of the Church confessing

her faith. Furthermore, Jesus as the Messiah of *Israel*, but also of the Church consisting of Jews and Gentiles – the content of the second and third articles of the *Creed* – would appear in a broader salvation-historical perspective.

In addition, Christians whose confession includes Genesis 3 – Malachi 3, God and his people Israel – in the words which I propose or otherwise –, express that they are not the *first* and – with regard to Romans 9-11 – not the *only* people chosen by God. In this context we refer with pleasure to the progress made in Jewish-Christian dialogue in the past five decades, including both the actual dialogue between Jews and Christians and – as its foundation and in its wake – the new and positive consciousness and repositioning of the Church with regard to Israel.⁴⁴

The additions which I am proposing also indicate and remind those confessing their faith that there is no biblically founded Christian faith without God's special relation to Israel. A Christianity without Israel, without the *Jew* Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah for the world, is not *biblical* Christianity, whatever else it might be.⁴⁵ A general faith in God as some higher being, an 'allgemeine Gottgläubigkeit', as it was propagated in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany – among others by Nazi ideologists – as a deliberate alternative to the confession of the Christian Church, with or without creation, by-passing Israel and God's revelation in Jesus Christ, is far off any Jewish-Christian understanding of God. Nazi henchman Adolf Eichmann's last words before his execution in Jerusalem in 1962 are telling: 'Gottgläubig war ich im Leben, und gottgläubig sterbe ich' (I believed in god in my life, and I die believing in god), even though they are not necessarily representative or indicative of a compelling connection.⁴⁶

3. Jesus the Jew and his earthly ministry in Israel

In view of the Jew Jesus of Nazareth just mentioned, at least two additions would be necessary to the second article of the *Creed*.⁴⁷ It confesses in this regard: '... and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried ...' This article does not allow for a comprehensive appreciation of these statements against the backdrop of New Testament Christology. However, I

would like to propose the following additions and consider their implications.

3.1 The Jewish identity of Jesus

In addition to the mention of divine sonship and the birth of Jesus by the virgin Mary, a clear reminder that the Son of God was born by the *Jewess* Mary of Nazareth as a *Jew* would be important: '... born of a woman, born under law ...' (Gal 4:4).⁴⁸ According to his human origin, Jesus was from the House of David (Mt 1:7-16; Lk 1:27; 2:4; Acts 13:22-23; Rom 1:4)⁴⁹ and, as this Son of David – and only as such – he fulfils important Old Testament promises. In order to do justice to the witness of Scripture and in order to express explicitly what it implicitly says, should we confess something like this: '*Born as Jew* (or as part of God's people Israel) *in Israel* by the virgin Mary, *from the House of David and living under Jewish law*'?

The *Maasai Creed* drafted in 1960 in East Africa shows that such an addition would not be without precedent.⁵⁰ This creed draws on the second article of the *Apostles' Creed* and formulates: 'We believe that God made good his promise by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh,⁵¹ *a Jew by tribe*.'⁵²

The twentieth century provides ample evidence that Jesus' Jewish identity and, in particular, a high esteem of it, is not self-evident for Christians but requires regular reminders. Recent history included attempts of German theologians in the late thirties and early forties, influenced by German nationalism and Nazi racial anti-Judaism, to reconstruct the *Jewish* Jesus into a pure-bred Aryan of the favoured Nordic race.⁵³ Unfortunately, until recently, Jesus' Jewish identity hardly played any role in Christian theology as much as his human nature was emphasized in orthodox Christology.⁵⁴

The lack of such reference in the *Apostles' Creed* can be explained by its origin and development and in the attitude of the Early Church towards Judaism:⁵⁵ if, for example, the church has fully inherited the privileges and promises of Israel anyway, then the *Jewish* identity of Jesus is, at best, mere *accidence*, but no longer inherent *substance* of the Gospel.

3.2 The Jewish character of the earthly ministry of Jesus

The *Apostles' Creed* reduces the earthly ministry of Jesus to his birth, suffering, death and resurrection. The emphasis on the death of Jesus *under Pontius Pilate* – placing the event solidly in his-

tory⁵⁶ – and on the historical nature of his actual suffering, death, burial and resurrection derives from the anti-docetic agenda of the orthodox Early Church.⁵⁷ In view of that agenda (and of some recent post-modern challenges that reduce history to 'good story'), should we not add to the statements on the death and resurrection of Jesus the *location* of these events (if Pontius Pilate even deserves to be mentioned by name!) in order to point out that they took place at a particular and, moreover, a special place, with a special role to play in salvation history – therefore: 'suffered under Pontius Pilate *in Jerusalem*'?

Another important issue is whether creedal statements should also include statements on how Jesus and the early Christians *interpreted* the significance of these *bruta facta*, this death, burial and resurrection, in view of the Old Testament and Early Judaism. After all, 'Jesus was delivered over to death *for our sins* and was raised to life *for our justification*' (Rom 4:25).

However, at the moment my concern is neither with Jesus' death (which is at least mentioned in the *Creed*) nor with its interpretation. I am concerned about his earthly ministry which does not appear in the *Creed*: from the birth of Jesus through the virgin Mary, it moves directly to his suffering and death by crucifixion, as if the approximately thirty years of his life and in particular the period of his public ministry in between these events were and are of little or no significance. That the earthly life of Jesus is indeed meaningless for the Christian faith has been argued by prominent theologians in the twentieth century.⁵⁸ But, following the second article of the *Apostles' Creed* and adding significantly to it, the *Maasai Creed*, which we have already mentioned, continues the above quotation: '... born poor in a little village, *who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing the meaning of religion is love*'. Although I would formulate differently in view of New Testament terminology, this creed at least refers to the deeds and teaching of Jesus between his birth and passion.

In terms of genre, the Gospels are essentially passion-, death- and resurrection narratives that have been 'projected forward' to include aspects of the identity and ministry of the person who experienced the events of particular interest. But this 'forward-prolongation' is *comprehensive*. Of what importance is the life and ministry of Jesus between his birth and suffering? After all, thanks

to its relatively broad presentation in the four gospels, the description of this period of Jesus' life constitutes a major part of the New Testament.⁵⁹ What is the significance of his deeds and his teaching for the Christian faith⁶⁰ and, in particular the fact that this ministry occurred *in Israel*? How important is it for the Christian faith that Jesus understood his calling and his ministry first and foremost to be the eschatological gathering and restoration of Israel? Can we understand his *whole* ministry and, in particular, his proclamation of the reign of God, but also the events in Jerusalem, apart from this context?⁶¹

3.3 Pointers in the early Christian kerygma

The early Christian proclamation of the Gospel provides important clues.⁶² In Jerusalem, Peter summarised the ministry of Jesus – with which the audience was familiar – from the perspective of divine affirmation: 'Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did among you through him' (Acts 2:22). In Peter's sermon before Cornelius in Caesarea, the portrayal of the ministry of Jesus is more detailed, although even there the audience was familiar with it:

You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem (Acts 10:37–39; see also 13:27, 31).

Here and in the other missionary speeches of Acts – in particular in the sermon in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (13:16–41) – the extent to which the *Jewish* context of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth is emphasized is noteworthy: '... throughout Judea ... in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem'.⁶³ These references concern the following issues:

Firstly, the *Jewish identity* of Jesus the Saviour. Jesus comes from Nazareth (2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9). His ministry began in Galilee after the baptism that the *Jewish* prophet John the Baptist preached and practised in all the country around the River Jordan (10:37; Lk 3:3). Jesus appeared to those who had travelled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem (13:31). From David's

descendants God has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus (13:22–23).

Secondly, *Judea and Jerusalem as the location of the ministry of Jesus*: His ministry took place throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee (10:37). Jesus ministered in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem (10:39). The people of Jerusalem and their rulers condemned Jesus (13:27). Following his resurrection, Jesus appeared in Jerusalem (13:31).

Thirdly, *the Jews as the primary address of God's salvation*: When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to the Jews to bless them (3:26). God gives repentance and forgiveness for sins to Israel (5:31). 'God sent the message to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ' (10:36).⁶⁴ The apostles received the commission to preach to the people [of Israel] (10:42). Before the ministry of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel (13:24). 'What God promised to our fathers, he has fulfilled for us, their children' (13:32–33). Jesus proclaims light to his own people and to the Gentiles (26:23). In this primary focus on Israel, God's promises to the fathers came to fulfilment (13:23, 32–33).

The missionary speeches of Acts indicate the thoroughly Jewish origin of Jesus, his ministry throughout Judea, Galilee and Jerusalem and the Jews as the primary addressees of salvation. Only after God's salvation had come to Israel and after she had been gathered and restored in the ministry of Jesus and of the apostles, did this salvation venture forth also to the Gentiles. Throughout the whole of Book of Acts, this salvation and its recipients remain bound to Jerusalem.

Through the mention of the patriarchs (3:13), of Moses (3:22; 13:39; 26:22) and of David (2:25, 29, 34; 13:22, 34–36) in the context of references to Jesus, he is placed in the wider context of God's saving actions on Israel's behalf; he is clearly set in salvation history which so far is the history of Israel. The Norwegian exegete, Jacob Jervell, has rightly observed that Luke 'did not write the history of a religious movement or sect, but the final part of the history of the people of the God of Israel'.⁶⁵ To play on Jervell's words: Luke wrote neither a biography of Jesus nor the history of early Christianity (as many have suggested). Rather, Luke wrote a further chapter in the history of the people of the God, Israel. The present and the future of Israel and of the nations are now determined by the risen Christ.

3.4 Implications

The implications of this Jewish emphasis for evangelism and mission are remarkable: Despite all the necessary and certainly legitimate efforts in contextualising and acculturating the Gospel, the Jewish origin and identity of Jesus and of this Gospel, as well as the salvation-historical priority of Israel, must not be neglected. Apart from the Jewish Saviour from and for Israel and the nations, there is no *Christian* Gospel. Neither the 'de-judaised', 'aryanised' (*entjudet, arisiert*) Jesus of Nazi- ideology and national German Christian lore (where the systematic deconstruction of the Jewish identity of Jesus probably had its all-time low!⁶⁶) nor the 'Jesus' constructed by other ideologies or of secularism, nor the decidedly African, Asian or Latino Jesus is the Saviour of the world, but *the descendant of David, Jesus of Nazareth, first sent by God to the people of Israel*, 'for salvation is from the Jews' (John 4:22).⁶⁷

A popular worship song from the 1980s addresses Jesus as follows: 'From heaven you came, helpless babe, entered our world, your glory veiled.'⁶⁸ But even under these particular circumstances his human identity was clearly determined: this helpless babe entered the world through a Galilean Jewess Mirjam of Nazareth, he was born and spent the first days of his life in Bethlehem, the city of David, he was circumcised on the eighth day, as demanded by covenant and law⁶⁹ and received the common Jewish name Jesus (Lk 2:21), which embodied the Jewish hope, anticipation and yearning for God's salvation for his people Israel (Mt 1:21). Shortly thereafter Jesus was taken to the temple in Jerusalem in order to be consecrated, 'as it is written in the Law of the Lord ...' (Lk 2:22-23). No doubt, Jesus will be a light for revelation to the Gentiles (2:32). However, Simeon's canticle links this light inseparably with 'glory for God's people Israel' (2:32; 'a light of revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel').⁷⁰ As such, Jesus came to Egypt, to Africa, before he returned to Nazareth and to the temple in Jerusalem (2:39-51).

Therefore Jesus cannot and must not be *incarnated* in African, American, Asian Australian or European soil, as has occasionally been demanded.⁷¹ Jesus is not the 'helpless babe' which the peoples of this earth can adopt and – thoughtlessly or consciously – shape into one of their own. He was incarnated on *Jewish* soil (and was born as the Son of God) in *Bethlehem* (Lk 2:4-7);

he 'was born of a woman, born *under law*' (Gal 4:4). However, as such – and only because of this identity as God's Saviour for Israel – he is and he can be the universal Saviour and Lord of all (Acts 10:36). As such, and only as such, the peoples of this world must adopt him. No doubt, the good news of his coming, of his present and of his future ministry can be and must be 'sown' on the various 'soils' of this world (Lk 8:11).

The whole earthly life of Jesus up to his ascension took place in Israel and there, on Mount Zion, the apostle Paul expects his *parousia* as 'the deliverer from Zion' (Rom 11:26). This country is in between the continents as they were known in the ancient world; it is an area which, many centuries before, had become the Promised Land for Abraham and his descendants. Therefore one might say that Africa, Asia and Europe had Jesus in their midst, *together* to behold, to hold and to cherish, to worship and to follow him and to wait for his coming in glory, but not to turn him into one of their own. Where people and the peoples of this world seize him, divest him of his Jewish identity and assimilate him as theirs, he no longer is the Christ of God for Israel and the nations.

4. Conclusion

In view of the deficits which we identified, we understand the practical theologian Henning Schröer when he demands that '[t]he factual monopolisation of the *Apostles' Creed* has to be cancelled'.⁷² Schröer further demands: 'Not a repeal of the *Creed*, but its intensive *exposition* is required.' I have pleaded for a different way forward, since one can only *exposit* what actually occurs in a given text. In view of the additions for which I have argued, I question Schröer's conclusion that the *Creed* cannot serve as an authoritative pattern.⁷³

After the long history of the *Apostles' Creed*, including the various discussions and arguments regarding its content and in view of the futile attempts of churches past and present to agree on the exact wording of the *Apostles' Creed*, it would be naïve to expect that much will become of the additions to the *Creed* which I am proposing.⁷⁴ Yet in order to articulate itself inside and outside of the walls of the church, the Christian faith needs confessions which summarise its essential contents and keep them in the thoughts and daily lives of the Church. That was the case in Early Christianity and has led to the formation of confessions early

on.⁷⁵ In this sense, confessions are the 'emergency portion' of Christian faith. With their use in services, in catechesis but also in the mission of the church, essential contents of the faith are and remain alive. For this purpose the additions which I have suggested would be helpful; we may certainly also consider others.

These additions entail a new orientation but also a fresh self-assertion vis-à-vis the Old Testament, the Jews and Israel and – closely linked to this – the re-discovery and adequate understanding of the Church's relationship with the roots that support it (Rom 11:17-24; '... consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you', 18). They also entail a fresh appreciation of the salvation-historical place of our Christian existence and of the Christians' place in the grand narrative for which they and many of our post-modern contemporaries are yearning.

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Endnotes

- 1 This applies only to the Western churches. In the Orthodox churches the *Apostles' Creed* is of lesser significance. For a recent scholarly assessment of the *Apostles' Creed* see C. Marksches, 'Apostolicum' in H.D. Betz et al. (eds), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart [RGG]* 1 (4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) 648-649, the entries 'Bekenntnis I.-V.' in *RGG* 1, 1246-1264 and F.E. Vokes, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I. Alte Kirche und Mittelalter' in H.R. Balz et al. (eds), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie [TRE]* 3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978) 528-554.
- 2 H.M. Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II. Reformations- und Neuzeit', *TRE* 3 (1978) 554-566, 558.
- 3 'Was im *Apostolikum* zu fehlen scheine, sei entweder *implicite* enthalten oder es handle sich nicht um Fundamentalartikel ersten Grades', Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 559.
- 4 Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 559.
- 5 Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 562.
- 6 See the entries 'Glaubensbekenntnis(se) V.-X.', *TRE* 13 (1984) 399-446 and 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis', *TRE* 3 (1978), 528-571.
- 7 Marksches, 'Apostolicum', 649; see the detailed discussion in J.N.D. Kelly, *Altchristliche Glaubensbekenntnisse: Geschichte und Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972) [= *Early Christian Creeds*, London: Longmans

- Green, 1972] and M. Vinzent, *Der Ursprung des Apostolikums im Urteil der kritischen Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).
- 8 See Vokes, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I', 552: 'Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Ketzertum hat in seinem Inhalt wenig Spuren hinterlassen. Symbole standen im Zusammenhang mit der *regula fidei* und bildeten den Maßstab, an dem die ungewisse Auslegung der Schrift überprüft wurde. Obwohl *Erzeugnisse der kirchlichen Tradition*, wurden sie schließlich als *Konzentrat des Schriftsinns behandelt*' (italics CS).
- 9 Already during the age of Reformation, there was discussion as to whether the *Apostles' Creed* contains the fundamental articles of the Christian faith; see Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 558: 'Nach Auffassung der orthodoxen Lutheraner war dies nicht der Fall: Es fehlte nicht nur die explizite Trinitäts- und Satisfaktionslehre, auch von Erbsünde und Rechtfertigung war nicht die Rede. Je nach Perspektive wurden Beanstandungen vorgebracht, die Lehre von der *communicatio idiomatum* oder auch Wiedergeburt, Buße und Heiligung konnten vermisst werden.' Barth further notes: 'Die aufkommende historische Kritik an der Bibel zog notwendig auch das stark an biblischen Aussagen orientierte *Apostolikum* in Mitleidenschaft' (562).
- 10 See the entries 'Bekenntnis I.-V.' in *RGG* 1, 1246-1264.
- 11 See the survey in H. Schwarz, 'Glaubensbekenntnisse VII. Reformationszeit bis 17. Jh.' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 416-429.
- 12 See C. Nicolaisen, 'Barmen II. Barmer Theologische Erklärung' in *RGG* 1, 1112-1115; W.D. Hauschild, 'Bekennende Kirche' in *RGG* 1, 1241-1246 and J.D. Douglas, 'Barmen Declaration' in S.B. Ferguson and D.F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988) 76: 'The declaration did not purport to be a comprehensive statement, but against contemporary deviations it stressed the headship and finality of Christ, and the pre-eminence of Scripture for belief and as the guide to practical action for Christians.' The same would apply to the *Belhar Confession*, issued by the *Dutch Reformed Mission Church* in 1986 and by the *Dutch Reformed Church in Africa* when they joined to constitute the *Uniting Reformed Church* in 1994.
- 13 See Marksches, 'Apostolicum', 648-649 and Kelly, *Glaubensbekenntnisse*, 103-165.
- 14 See on this the entries 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis' in *TRE* 3 (1978) 528-571.
- 15 See W. Pannenberg, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis – ausgelegt und verantwortet vor den Fragen der Gegenwart* (GTB Siebenstern; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1979); T. Schneider, *Was wir glauben – Eine Auslegung des Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1985); H. Küng, *Credo – Das*

- Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis Zeitgenossen erklärt* (München, Zürich: Piper, 1995); E. Busch, *Credo: Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); H.G. Pöhlmann, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis ausgelegt für Menschen unserer Zeit* (Frankfurt/M.: Lembeck, 2003) and T. Rusten, *Glauben macht einen Unterschied: Das Credo* (München: Kösel, 2010); in the English language e.g. C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Apostles' Creed: A Faith to Live by* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) and Alister E. McGrath, *'I Believe': Exploring the Apostles' Creed* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1997).
- 16 J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, 10th ed. (München: Kösel, 2011).
 - 17 The *Apostles' Creed* is present in the Church also because of its close relation with the liturgical year. H. Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III. Praktisch-theologisch' in *TRE* 3 (1978) 566-571 (569; italics CS) notes that 'Das Kirchenjahr ... ist aber eine sich übers Jahr hinüber erstreckende Begehung des Apostolikums.'
 - 18 A search for the expression *Sprachfähigkeit des Glaubens* in search engines like Google indicates how many recent ecclesial documents employ it (e.g. www.kirche-im-aufbruch.ekd.de/praxis/glauben.php).
 - 19 Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 558 comments on the relativisation of the *Apostles' Creed* in the era of the Reformation: 'Es hatte seinen Namen nicht auf Grund einer etwaigen apostolischen Verfasserschaft, sondern nur *materialiter ratione dogmatis*, aufgrund seines dogmatischen Gehalts. Damit war klargestellt, dass es theologischen Kriterien unterworfen bleiben musste und diese nicht seinerseits erbringen konnte.' In the age of the Enlightenment there were both high appreciation for the *Credo* and efforts 'es zu ergänzen oder überhaupt durch Neuformulierungen zu ersetzen' (559; italics CS).
 - 20 We do not argue for deletions or re-interpretations, but want to suggest additions in order to 'formulieren, was wir „wirklich“ glauben, d.h. so, dass wir mit unserem Leben daran hängen', Barth, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 563. See the presentation and discussion of recent formulations of the *Credo* in Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 566-567, who demands: 'Die faktische Monopolisierung des *Apostolikums* muss aufgehoben werden' (570). For the Protestant post 1945 re-assessment of Israel and Jesus the Jew see e.g. S. Hermle, *Evangelische Kirche und Judentum – Stationen nach 1945* (Arbeiten zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) and The Leuenberg Fellowship of Reformation Churches in Europe, *Church and Israel: A Contribution from the Reformation Churches in Europe to the Relationship between Christians and Jews*, 2. ed. (Leuenberg Documents 6; Frankfurt: Lembeck, 2001) 89-157; a survey of official statements is provided by R. Rendtorff and H.H. Henrix (eds.), *Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945 bis 1985: Veröffentlichung im Auftrag der Studienkommission Kirche und Judentum der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Arbeitsgruppe für Fragen des Judentums der Ökumene-Kommission der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz*, 3. ed. (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2001) and H.H. Henrix and W. Kraus (eds.), *Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1986-2000* (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2001), 429-942. For the Catholic Church see e.g. the *Decretum de Judaëis* of the Second Vatican Council constitution *Nostra aetate* (*Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions*, 1965) and the sources in Henrix and Kraus, *Die Kirchen und das Judentum*, 1-428.
 - 21 For an appreciation of the first article see the historical commentary in Vokes, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I', 545-546.
 - 22 I quote here from the version adopted by the Lutheran Church. The particular confessional version of the *Credo* is of little significance as my additions concern parts of the *Credo* that are not disputed among the various Christian denominations.
 - 23 W.H. Schmidt, 'Gott II. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 608-626 (614): 'Der Glaube an den Schöpfer ist vielleicht das Haupterbe des AT an die Christenheit', for God as creator see pp. 614-615.
 - 24 E.g. in Psalms 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 95:4-5; 102:6; 115:3; 136:4-9.
 - 25 See e.g. Isaiah 40:12-31; Jeremiah 32:17; 33:2; Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:5-6; Jonah 1:9; Zechariah 12:9; B. Janowski, 'Schöpfung II. Altes Testament' in Brigitte Schäfer et al. (eds), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart [RGG]* 7 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 970-972; R.G. Kratz and H. Spieckerman, 'Schöpfer/Schöpfung II. Altes Testament', *TRE* 30 (1999) 258-282. The New Testament also speaks of God with these traditional expressions (Acts 4:25); see. O. Wischmeyer, 'Schöpfung IV. Neues Testament' in *RGG* 7, 973-974.
 - 26 See the survey 'Christliche Glaubensbekenntnisse', http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christliche_Glaubensbekenntnisse, accessed on 16 August 2010 and the entries 'Glaubensbekenntnis(se) V.-X.' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 399-446.
 - 27 See e.g. Genesis 50:24; Exodus 3:6; 6:3; 32:13; 1 Kings 18:36; see R. Martin-Achard, 'Abraham I. Im Alten Testament' in *TRE* 1 (1977) 364-372.
 - 28 See S. Herrmann, 'Exodusmotiv I. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 10 (1982) 732-737.
 - 29 See Deuteronomy 26:5-9; Judges 11:16-22;

- Micah 4:1-5; Isaiah 12, Ps 2; 96-99; 148f; cf. E. Gerstenberger, 'Glaubensbekenntnis(se) II. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 386-388. For the election of Israel see K. Seybold, 'Erwählung I. Altes Testament' in Betz *et al.* (eds.), *RGG* 2 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999) 1478-1481; H. Seebaß, 'Erwählung I. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 10 (1982) 182-189 (186-187) and W.H. Schmidt, 'Gott II. Altes Testament' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 608-626 (611):
- Aber die Befreiung aus Ägypten gilt durch Israels Geschichte hindurch als die grundlegende Erwählungstat ..., und das Bekenntnis 'Jahweh, der Israel als Ägypten geführt hat' wird, gemessen an der Häufigkeit seines Vorkommens, die wichtigste theologische Aussage des AT, die weite Bereiche durchzieht und gleichsam zum Grund der Erwählung wird.
- 30 I gratefully acknowledge the guidance provided by my retired colleague in Old Testament studies, Dozent Bernd Brockhaus.
 - 31 See the survey by D.- A. Koch, 'Schriftauslegung II. Neues Testament' in *TRE* 30 (1999) 457-471 and G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007); see also M. Lüling, 'Geschrieben um unsertwillen' (Röm 4.24) – Die Verweise auf die Vergangenheit in der Argumentation des Römerbriefs, MTh Dissertation (Pretoria: UNISA, 2012; supervisor C. Stenschke).
 - 32 See G. Fischer, 'Bibel II. Altes Testament' in *RGG* 1, 1410-1412; I.Z. Dimitrov *et al.* (eds.), *Das Alte Testament als christliche Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Sicht* (WUNT 174; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
 - 33 On this issue see P. Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments I: Grundlegung, Von Jesus zu Paulus*, 3. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 178-195.
 - 34 See A. Lindemann, 'Judentum und Kirche IV. Alte Kirche' in Betz *et al.* (eds.), *RGG* 4 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 632-633; M.H. Jung, *Christen und Juden: Die Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008) 20-47 and the entries in E. Kessler and N. Wenborn (eds.), *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005). However, the Jewish influence on the Ancient Church should not be underestimated, see O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik (eds.), *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).
 - 35 See F. Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments II: Die Einheit des Neuen Testaments. Thematische Darstellung*, 2. ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 88-110.
 - 36 See D. Treier, 'Typology' in K.J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 823-827.
 - 37 See W.A. Bienert, 'Allegorie/Allegorese IV. Kirchengeschichtlich' in *RGG* 1, 306-307; H. Karpp, 'Bibel IV. Die Funktion der Bibel in der Kirche 1. Alte Kirche' in *TRE* 6 (1980) 48-59; E. Mühlenberg, 'Schriftauslegung III. Kirchengeschichtlich' in *TRE* 30 (1999) 472-488 (472-478) and J.K. Aitken, 'Old Testament' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 322.
 - 38 On this issue see Jung, *Christen und Juden*, J.T. Pawlikowski, 'Judentum und Christentum' in *TRE* 17 (1988) 386-403; K. Cracknell, 'Dialogue' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 124-126 and R.K. Soulen, 'Supersessionism' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 413-414.
 - 39 The recent NT Theologies of I.H. Marshall, F. Thielman, F.J. Matera and T.R. Schreiner offer similar summaries, though they focus more on the New Testament; see the presentation and evaluation of these volumes in C. Stenschke, 'Strong Cases for the Unity of New Testament Theology: A Survey of Four Recent English New Testament Theologies' in *Religion & Theology* 17 (2010) 133-161.
 - 40 'Der eine Gott, der die Welt geschaffen und Israel zu seinem Eigentumsvolk erwählt hat, in der Sendung, dem Werk, dem Sühnetod und der Auferweckung seines Sohnes für die endzeitliche Rettung von Juden und Heiden ein für allemal genug getan hat', *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments II: Von der Paulusschule bis zur Johannesoffenbarung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 320. It is interesting to note that the *Apostles' Creed* speaks after the introductory statement 'I believe in God' of God as the *almighty Father*. The attribute *father*, despite a few occurrences in the Old Testament, is essentially a New Testament designation for God, but see Svetlana Khobnya, 'God the Father in the Old Testament' in *European Journal of Theology* 20.2 (2011) 139-148. The combination 'almighty Father' does not appear in the Bible itself; see the entries 'Vatername Gottes II.-V.' in Schäfer *et al.*, *RGG* 8 (2005) 890-893 and C. Zimmermann, *Im Namen des Vaters: Studien zu ausgewählten neutestamentlichen Gottesbezeichnungen vor ihrem frühjüdischen und paganen Sprachhorizont* (AGJU 69; Leiden: Brill, 2007).
 - 41 See e.g. F. Crüsemann *et al.* (eds.), *Ich glaube an den Gott Israels: Fragen und Antworten zu einem Thema, das im christlichen Glaubensbekenntnis fehlt* (Kaiser Taschenbücher 168; Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1999). Despite the promising title, none of the essays in this collection directly addresses the issues with which we are concerned.
 - 42 Edited by the Kirchenleitung der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands und im Auftrag des Rates von der Kirchenkanzlei der

- Evangelischen Kirche der Union, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft, 2003) 541; by the source mentioned there is *Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck*, Agende I/2 (1996), 663 No. 8, 1049. The supplementary volume published in 2002 – *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch / Ergänzungsband: Für die Evangelische Kirche der Union und für die Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands* – contains further new creedal formulations that do not contain additions to the first article in the way we propose.
- 43 On this compare the still foundational reflections by G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments II: Die Theologie der prophetischen Überlieferungen Israels*, 3. ed. (Berlin: EVA, 1964) 329-424; more recent reflections in R. Rendtorff, *Theologie des Alten Testaments: Ein kanonischer Entwurf II: Thematische Entfaltung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001) 254-317.
- 44 See M. Beintker, 'Judentum und Christentum VI. Kirche und Judentum in der Gegenwart' in *RGG* 4 (2001) 635-637; C. Thoma, 'Juden, Judentum VII. Juden und Christen 3. Jüdisch-christlicher Dialog' in M. Buchberger, W. Kasper et al. (eds.), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 5 3rd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1996) 1046-1049 and Jung, *Christen und Juden*, 234-262. It is tragic that so many theologians and church officials appear, for example, in the new W. Benz (ed.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart Band 2: Personen A-Z* (München: Saur, 2009; see also the entries 'Antisemitismus/Antijudaismus', *RGG* 1, 556-574 and J.T. Pawlikowski, 'Anti-Judaism' in Kessler and Wenborn, *Dictionary*, 19-21) and that many of the other anti-Semites were at least socialised in Christian contexts.
- 45 The mere terms *Christianity*, *Christians* and the adjective *Christian* point to the *Christ*, the anointed one of God, the Messiah (cf. Acts 11:26). This concept cannot be understood apart from the Old Testament and early Judaism; see the surveys in Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie* I, 107-111 and in M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer, *Jesus und das Judentum* (Geschichte des frühen Christentums I; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). In this regard the introductory formula to the confession of faith 'Let us now confess our *Christian* faith', used in many Christian services, already serves as a reminder that this faith has its temporal roots long before the confessing church and God's saving action in Christ to which the New Testament testifies.
- 46 H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen*, 5. ed. (Serie Piper 4822; München, Zürich: Piper, 2010) 371. The German adjective *gottgläubig* was a welcome (self-) designation for people who – for a variety of reasons – had turned their back on established Christianity and wanted to demonstrate this, yet without breaking with some kind of faith in (a) god.
- 47 See E. Schweizer, 'Jesus Christus I. Neues Testament 9. Jesus: Leben' in *TRE* 16 (1987) 670-726 (710-712) and E.L. Ehrlich, 'Jesus Christus IX. Judentum' in *TRE* 17 (1988) 68-71.
- 48 This was also emphasised by the young Martin Luther in his treatise *Dass Jesus ein geborener Jude sei* from 1523. In contrast, there are massively anti-Jewish statements in the late Luther; for example in *Wider die Irrlehren der Juden* from 1543; see Junge, *Christen und Juden*, 130-136; H. Kremers (ed.), *Die Juden und Martin Luther, Martin Luther und die Juden: Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte, Herausforderung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985); T. Kaufmann, *Luthers 'Judenschriften': Ein Beitrag zu ihrer historischen Kontextualisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) and P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden neu untersucht anhand von Anton Margarithas 'Der gantz Jüdisch glaub' (1530/31)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002).
- 49 See T.R. Hatina, 'David' in C.A. Evans (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Historical Jesus* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008) 130-131; see my paper at the 2011 NTSSA conference in Potchefstroom.
- 50 This creed was drafted in collaboration with missionaries from the *Congregation of the Holy Ghost*. 'The creed attempts to express the essentials of the Christian faith within Maasai culture', see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masai_Creed (accessed 8 February 2012). It is astonishing that a confession drafted by Christians under Catholic influence would dismiss the *virgin Mary* so readily.
- 51 These words replace the traditional words 'born of the virgin Mary' for expressing the real humanity of Jesus.
- 52 This confession underlines Barth's estimate ('Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II', 560): '... der Rückgriff auf die altkirchlichen Bekenntnisse konnte auf die Dauer die theologische Bemühung nicht ersetzen; die Erarbeitung einer eigenen "Basis" erwies sich als notwendig'. Also the first half of the *Maasai Creed* (based on the first article) is worth noting:
- We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created Man and wanted Man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the Earth. We have known this High God in darkness, and now we know Him in the light. God promised in the book of His word, the Bible, that He would save the world and all the nations and tribes.
- The source reference in the Wikipedia article is J. Pelikan and V. Hotchkiss (eds.), *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (Yale: Yale UP, 2003). On confessions of the so-called 'young churches' see also H. Schwarz,

- 'Glaubensbekenntnis(se) VIII. 18. Jh. bis Neuzeit' in *TRE* 13 (1984) 430–437 (434): 'Die meisten [Bekenntnisse] blieben jedoch im westlichen Idiom und der westlichen Vorstellungswelt verhaftet'. Important exceptions are the confessions of *Huria Kristen Batak Protestan* – Church on Sumatra, Indonesia (1951) and the unification document of the *Church of South India* (1947).
- 53 See Jochen Eber, 'Das „Volkstestament der Deutschen“: „Die Botschaft Gottes“ – ein deutsch-christliches Neues Testament im Dritten Reich' in *European Journal of Theology* 18.1 (2009) 29–46.
- 54 See for example A.-J. Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006); R. Deines et al. (eds.), *Walter Grundmann: Ein Neutestamentler im Dritten Reich* (Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 21; Leipzig: EVA, 2007); A. Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20; Leiden: Brill, 2009) and O. Arnhold, *Entjudung – Kirche im Abgrund: Die Thüringer Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen 1928–1939 und Das Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben 1939–1945* (Studien zu Kirche und Israel 25; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum – Zentrum für Christlich-Jüdische Studien an der Humboldt – Universität zu Berlin, 2010).
- 55 See Jung, *Christen und Juden*, 37–41, 52–61.
- 56 The reference to Pontius Pilate serves to indicate the time of these events as between AD 26 and 36; see Vokes, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis I', 548. The birth of Jesus during the reign of Herod the Great (Mt 2) and the beginning of his public ministry mentioned in the synchronisms of Lk 2:1–2 and 3:1–2 have a similar function.
- 57 See W. Löhr, 'Doketismus', *RGK* 2, 925–927 and the survey of the developments and priorities in the formation of dogma in the Ancient Church, in particular in the various christological controversies, in A.M. Ritter, 'Dogma und Lehre in der Alten Kirche' in C. Andresen (ed.), *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte I: Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Katholizität* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982) 99–283.
- 58 For example by R. Bultmann; see K. Hammann, *Rudolf Bultmann: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 179–192. For an astute critique see I.H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977); see also the survey and methodological discussion in D.L. Bock and R.L. Webb (eds.), *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (WUNT 247; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
- 59 Through the many readings from the Gospels the life of Jesus is present in the liturgy and the proclamation of many churches.
- 60 Vokes, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis', 552, identifies as one of the few shortcomings of the *Apostles' Creed* that 'it contains no reference of any kind to the teaching of Jesus ...'.
- 61 Fortunately this is emphasised in many of the recent studies of the historical Jesus; see e.g. Hengel and Schwemer, *Jesus und das Judentum* and C.S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 33–46, 178–185, 214–222.
- 62 See the survey and evaluation by C. Stenschke, "... by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead ..." (Acts 4:10): Jesus in the Missionary Speeches of Acts', *Swedish Missiological Themes – Svensk Missions Tidskrift* 99 (2011) 267–294.
- 63 Here I follow the compilation in C. Stenschke, 'Sharing the Gospel: Jesus in the Speeches of Acts', *The South African Baptist Journal of Theology* 19 (2010) 24–34 (28–29).
- 64 This emphasis on Israel is probably behind Peter's surprised astonishment in Acts 10:43–44 which appears at the beginning of the only missionary speech in the narrow sense of the word that takes place before a Gentile audience. Although Peter proclaims Jesus as the Lord over *all* (10:36) and as the appointed judge of (all) the living and the dead and speaks of forgiveness of sins through his name for *everyone* who believes in him (10:42–43), the presentation of Jesus and his ministry has a distinctly Jewish note.
- 65 Quoted according to J.D.G. Dunn, 'The Book of Acts as Salvation History' in J. Frey et al. (eds.), *Heil und Geschichte: Die Geschichtsbezogenheit des Heils und das Problem der Heilsgeschichte in der biblischen Tradition und in der theologischen Deutung* (WUNT 248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 385–401 (401).
- 66 See S. Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) and de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institut_zur_Erforschung_und_Beseitigung_des_juedischen_Einflusses_auf_das_deutsche_kirchliche_Leben (accessed 28 April 2011). Cf. also note 53 above.
- 67 Slightly revised according to Stenschke, 'Sharing the Gospel', 32.
- 68 Graham Kendrick, *The Servant King* (1983).
- 69 See A.R. Bevere, 'Circumcision', in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2000) 256.
- 70 See C. Stenschke, 'Die Cantica der lukanischen Kindheitsgeschichte: Prolepse des lukanischen Doppelwerks und erste Leserlenkung', *Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie* 25 (2011) 7–32.

- 71 Examples in D.J. Goergen, 'The Quest for the Christ of Africa', *African Christian Studies: The Journal of the Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Eastern Africa* 17 (2001) 5-51; see also A. Neely, 'Incarnational Mission' in A.S. Moreau (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 474-475 and S. Mondithoka, 'Incarnation' in J. Corrie (ed.), *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (IVP Reference Collection; Nottingham, Downers Grove: IVP, 2007) 177-181.
- 72 Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 570.
- 73 Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 570.
- 74 Schröer, 'Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis III', 568 notes that 'Revisionen und Reduktionen des Apostolikums haben zu Recht kaum Anklang gefunden. ... Zugleich hat die Bemühung um Neuformulierung auch des Credo im Zusammenhang mit den Versuchen neuer Katechismen seit der Aufklärung eine beachtliche Geschichte'; compare also the discussion on p. 569.
- 75 See J. Reumann, 'Bekenntnis II. Bibel 2. Neues Testament', *RGG* 1, 1248-1249 and Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie* I, 178-195.

Wolfhart Pannenberg's Concept of Testimony as Natural Knowledge – Implications for the Doctrine of Scripture and the Church

Pui Shum Ip

RÉSUMÉ

Le témoignage constitue un aspect essentiel de la compréhension que le chrétien a de lui-même ainsi que de la perception de la nature de l'Écriture. Des conceptions philosophiques du témoignage, comme par exemple celle qui assimile le témoignage à un procédé rhétorique et littéraire, s'infiltrèrent souvent dans les études de la Bible et les écrits théologiques. Pour déterminer dans quelle mesure tels outils conceptuels sont adéquats pour rendre compte du sens et de la pratique du témoignage chrétien, il est nécessaire de se livrer à un examen très attentif. Il manque à ces approches philosophiques la prise

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Zeuge und Zeugnis machen einen wesentlichen Teil des christlichen Selbstverständnisses aus wie auch die Auffassung vom Wesen der Schrift. Philosophische Modelle von Zeugnis, wie Zeugnis als rhetorisches und literarisches Instrument, infiltrieren oft biblische Studien und theologische Schriften. Die Eignung dieser Mittel als gedankliche Werkzeuge, um die Bedeutung und Praxis christlichen Zeugnisses auszudrücken, erfordert sorgfältige Prüfung. Was diesen philosophischen Modellen abgeht ist die Analyse der göttlichen Autorenschaft bei der Abfassung und fortwährenden Weitergabe von

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SUMMARY

Witness and testimony constitute an essential part of Christian self-understanding, as does the perception of the nature of Scripture. Philosophical models of testimony, for instance testimony as rhetoric and literary device, often infiltrate biblical studies and theological writings. The aptness of these construals as conceptual tools to articulate the meaning and practice of Chris-

en compte de l'action divine dans la constitution et la transmission continue du témoignage. L'auteur étudie ici la position de Pannenberg qui considérait le témoignage chrétien comme une forme particulière de connaissance naturelle. Il vise à montrer que cette conception est très proche des conceptions naturalistes du témoignage proposées par les philosophes. Parce qu'il considère la constitution, la transmission et l'appropriation du témoignage comme un processus cognitif naturel humain, Pannenberg entretient une ambivalence à propos du rôle du Saint-Esprit dans sa doctrine de l'Écriture, ainsi qu'à propos de l'existence et de l'identité de l'Église comme témoin.

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Zeugnis. Dieser Aufsatz analysiert Wolfhart Pannenberg's Werk über das christliche Zeugnis als eine Art natürliches Wissen und vertritt dabei die Meinung, dass Pannenberg's Interpretation den naturalistischen Modellen nahekommt, wie sie von Vertretern der Richtung „Philosophie als Zeugnis“ vorgeschlagen werden. In Anbetracht der Abfassung, Weitergabe und Aneignung von Zeugnis als einem natürlichen Prozess menschlichen Wissens, schafft Pannenberg's Sicht von Zeugnis eine Ambivalenz hinsichtlich der Rolle des Heiligen Geistes in seiner Lehre über die Schrift und die Existenz und Identität der Kirche als Zeuge.

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tian testimony requires careful scrutiny. What is missing in these philosophical models is the analysis of divine agency in the constitution and continuous transmission of testimony. By analysing Wolfhart Pannenberg's construal of Christian testimony as a kind of natural knowledge, this essay argues that Pannenberg's construal comes close to the naturalistic models proposed by philosophers of witness. Considering the constitution, transmission and appropriation of witness as natural processes of human

knowing, Pannenberg's view of testimony engenders ambivalence regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in his

doctrine of Scripture, and the existence and identity of the Church as witness.

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1. Testimony and its philosophical construals

Different disciplines, for instance the legal profession and the study of social epistemology, have different working definitions of the category of testimony. Answers to the question of what constitutes testimony or how to evaluate an act of bearing witness, vary according to the needs of the diverse disciplines. Witness and testimony (μαρτύριον) also constitute an essential part of the Christian self-understanding, as does our perception of the nature of Scripture. While these are biblical concepts, they have also received considerable attention from philosophers; the works of Aristotle, C.A.J. Coady and P. Ricoeur are notable examples.¹ In fact, the influence of philosophers – Aristotle's writings on witness as a subsidiary practice of rhetoric; Coady's naturalistic and expansive model of testimony, and the hermeneutic philosophy of Ricoeur – can be found in biblical studies and theological writings. The appropriation of these philosophical resources in the works A.A. Trites, R. Bauckham, A.T. Lincoln and W. Bruggemann is noticeable.²

The Christian use of the term witness to a certain extent shares the semantic field of the secular use of the term. As is evident in A.A. Trites' *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, even an attempt to define the biblical notion of witness is not entirely independent of the influence of philosophical models.³ The category of witness or testimony often appears in biblical studies and theological writings, as well as in the self-descriptions of ecclesial communities. Contrary to our expectation, the uniqueness of the Christian understanding of testimony is often assumed in these theological writings and ecclesial self-descriptions, but in many cases without being clearly articulated. Different theologians have different insights into the category, and the present essay is an attempt to reconstruct and examine the concept according to Wolfhart Pannenberg (born 1928). Through this exploration I intend to draw attention to the relevance of a robust theological understanding of testimony that underscores the centrality of divine agency in the constitution and transmission of Christian witness.

Philosophical models have merits of their own,

grounded on an anthropology of the reflective self and relying on the use of imagination and memory; the conceptions of testimony which come from these models are useful in describing testimony as a social institution for the transfer of epistemological authority and knowledge. The usefulness of these understandings of testimony can be also extended to describe the basis of human solidarity. However, the aptness of these philosophical models for theology requires careful scrutiny. As a preliminary observation we can say that what is missing in these otherwise exemplary models is the analysis of divine agency in the constitution and continuous transmission of testimony. It therefore remains doubtful whether these philosophical models can provide an adequate account of Christian Scripture and witness. The consequence of these appropriations cannot be evaluated here; suffice it to say that there is evidence, for instance in Lincoln and Bauckham, that the use of philosophical understandings of testimony has significant bearing upon how they approach both the historicity and the theological meaning of Jesus' resurrection. Also noteworthy is that, in a comparison of the doctrine of the resurrection in K. Barth and R. Jenson, K. Sonderegger points out that their different views of witness probably have a decisive impact not only on how they speak of Jesus' resurrection, but also on the subsequent shape of their dogmatic systems.⁴

In what follows I will first outline Pannenberg's concept of testimony, highlighting aspects that it shares with naturalistic philosophical models of testimony; and second, I will explore some implications of Pannenberg's view of testimony for the nature of Scripture and the Church. The concept of witness in Pannenberg resembles the naturalistic models of testimony of philosophers. A salient similarity is that testimony is consistently pitched as a type of natural knowledge. For Pannenberg the question of our reception of testimony and bearing of witness is more or less an issue of epistemology. There is an intriguing reservation in Pannenberg against explicating the role of divine agency in the nature of Christian witness, as well as in its continuous operation. This absence of a robust understanding of divine agency in testimony has its repercussions. Pannenberg's view of

testimony engenders ambivalence regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in his doctrine of Scripture, and the existence and identity of the Church as witness. In contrast, it is worthwhile to note briefly that the way Karl Barth construes the category of testimony is probably the opposite of Pannenberg in a number of respects. Without discussing the details of Barth's concept, which would require a separate essay, it suffices to note that testimony is a recurring theme in Barth's theology. For Barth, active divine agency behind Christian witness is a non-negotiable presupposition, and from time to time he reiterates the ontology of Christian witness, which has its possibility, ground and condition in the archetypal self-witness of God.⁵

2. Pannenberg's concept of testimony as natural knowledge

Wolfhart Pannenberg is an original thinker who makes no deliberate use of philosophical models of testimony in his theology. Yet his understanding of witness as a species of natural knowledge actually comes close to the naturalistic model of Coady. As he has not dedicated any specific piece of work to an analysis of the concept of testimony, one must go to a number of places in his writings, including his anthropology, hermeneutics and his doctrinal reflections on revelation, Scripture, election and ecclesiology, in order to garner his ideas. Without giving detailed expositions of each of these areas and doctrines, we will attempt a rough sketch of Pannenberg's concept of testimony.⁶ In what follows I will outline his ideas in three points. In a later section, in which their implications will be addressed, these points will be expanded and substantiated. From time to time I will draw brief contrasts between Barth and Pannenberg, the main purpose of which is to highlight the uniqueness of latter. Given the limitation of space, I do not intend these contrasts to be in-depth comparisons of the two theologians.

2.1 Creator and creatures

In Pannenberg's early writing, Christian testimony like any other form of knowledge is essentially of a natural character.⁷ What underlies this view is Pannenberg's insight that all knowledge, including knowledge of revelation and testimony of God, is natural. What buttresses this argument is his doctrine of revelation, which is inseparable from his interpretation of Romans 1:19-20.⁸ He sees a basic continuity between the Creator and

his creatures, between the divine and the human spirit. This continuity is recognisable particularly in his anthropology, where he sees no necessity in differentiating the human spirit from the divine spirit. For Pannenberg,

[the] element of transcendence in spirit suggests that after all it might be neither necessary nor wise to admit a fundamental distinction between a human spirit and a divine spirit. The ecstatic, self-transcendent character of all spiritual experience brings sufficiently to bear the transcendence of God over all created beings. The spirit never belongs in a strict sense to the creature in his immanent nature, but the creature participates in the spirit – and I venture to say: in the divine spirit – by transcending itself, i.e., by being elevated beyond itself in the ecstatic experience that illustrates the working of the spirit. We remember: the spirit is not the mind, but the human comes to life only when he is touched by the spirit... Thus the idea of spirit allows us to do justice to the transcendence of God and at the same time to explain his immanence in his creation.⁹

In the ecstatic structure of human being and also in our capacity to exercise imaginative and anticipatory power, human participation in the divine spirit is seen as occurring naturally. The continuity that is grounded in the doctrine of creation is robust and strong. For Pannenberg, the problem of sin that encumbers humans and separates them from their Creator should not be granted so much importance as to overshadow this continuity.¹⁰ In brief, the capacity to appropriate meaning in revelation, and thus also testimony of God, is securely built upon the doctrine of creation, which stipulates the continuity between the Creator and his creatures.

2.2 Scripture

Testimony is constituted by the human experience of freedom,¹¹ and Scripture as testimony is the product of our imaginative inspiration.¹² Here, imagination as an innate faculty of the human creature plays an important role in generating meaning from historical experiences:

[the] power of imagination is thus the vital element at work in freedom as the latter takes concrete form ... it can manifest itself ... as a paradigm of the relation between grace and freedom.¹³

While inspirations of the imagination do not

automatically present God's word, Pannenberg believes that God speaks through the 'inspirations of the imagination' on condition that the human beings involved have pure hearts and an openness to the world. Having God as the origin and goal of their lives, their imagination can bear witness to God. Scripture testifies to human experiences of divine acts in history, and Scripture as an inspired text is a metaphorical way of saying that there is an intimate match between the texts and the original gospel of Jesus.¹⁴ Where divine acts in history are revelatory, revelation is about worldly affairs and events (contrary to common view of revelation as revelation of God's deity); as such it needs no inspired understanding.¹⁵ The content of human experience is where the authority of revelation resides and no external authorization is required.

While I acknowledge the development of Pannenberg's trinitarian theology in his later career, my research into his view of testimony has led me to think that his approach to the category as natural knowledge remains stable over time. His decision to place the issue of testimony within the realm of epistemology remains consistent. Two examples may help to illustrate this observation. First, samples of Pannenberg's argument regarding the naturalness of knowledge (including testimonial claims of divine reality) from both his early and mature writings tend to indicate the consistency of his stance.¹⁶ Second, in considering Scripture as witness, Pannenberg's analysis of the crisis of the Scripture principle does not significantly change over time.¹⁷ This evaluation of the crisis has been a crucial consideration that leads to suggestions on how to overcome the historical distance of testimony; these proposals include the interpreter's reaching back into religious traditions and the hermeneutical assumption of universal history.¹⁸

2.3 The Church

In Pannenberg's ecclesiology, the Christian call to witness is not the core of the Christian existence; that is rather the centrality of fellowship. Testimony is subsidiary to the Christian existence and it is a practice conducive to the goal of gathering believers into the fellowship that is grounded in Christ.¹⁹ The Church's mission is to be a sign of the Kingdom of God, and this is shown forth by the liturgical activities of the Church, which demonstrate its unity. In this context, witness in the manner of public confession is inwardly directed, for the purpose of the initiation of members, as

well as the reiteration of personal agreement with ecclesial teachings.²⁰ Where the Christian attestation of Christ is transmitted through evangelism, the process becomes a collective ecclesial act, with the aim that the message received will constitute an immediate relation between the recipient and Jesus Christ.²¹ It is intriguing that while Pannenberg attributes this to the work of the Spirit, the influence of the Spirit seems to recede rapidly to the background in his discussion of the personal appropriation of faith. (More on this later on.)

2.4 Interim verdict

The above has outlined Pannenberg's concept of testimony in broad brushstrokes. There are details that cannot be adequately unpacked here, for instance, his intricate solution to overcome the historical distance of testimony. Nonetheless, in this outline of Pannenberg's concept of testimony certain features are noticeable which resemble naturalistic models proposed by philosophers of witness. In such models, human testimony tends to require no additional (external or divine) agency in order to be constituted. Likewise, its transmission and appropriation are properly natural processes, based on the innate human faculties of imagination and memory.²² For Pannenberg, human testimony emerges through the encounter of the historical experience of freedom. Where the human subjectivity is bombarded by the divine reality in the power that comes to it as an experience of freedom, witness and the subsequent practice of witnessing naturally emerge.

We are not suggesting that divine agency is missing from Pannenberg's doctrine of revelation or from his ecclesiology. The opposite is true: Pannenberg holds that revelation, when it comes to completion in the eschaton, is precisely God's self-revelation; while on the side of the eschaton, in our temporal order, revelation is God's divine acts in historical form. Also, for Pannenberg, the divine agency of the Spirit runs strong in the life of the Church.²³ It is beyond doubt that Pannenberg's pneumatology not only fills his thinking of the Church, but also permeates other major doctrines in his theological system such as creation and eschatology. But my point is that there is little in his pneumatology that is directly related to the theme of testimony and the act of witnessing.

3. Implications for the Christian understanding of Scripture and Church

Not all implications of Pannenberg's concept of testimony can adequately be addressed here; we will begin by looking at its impact on two areas – the nature of Scripture and the existence and identity of the Church. In what follows I seek to demonstrate that where the formation, transmission and appropriation of testimony are regarded as natural processes of human knowing, there is less urgency to articulate the role of divine agency in testimony. This state of affairs may have engendered the ambivalence regarding the role of the Spirit in Pannenberg's doctrine of Scripture, and in his view of the existence and identity of the Church.

3.1 Scripture and the agency of the Holy Spirit

Concerning the inspiration of Scripture, Pannenberg reasons that it is the content of the gospel which decisively determines the inspired character of Scripture. In his view, the original gospel that Jesus proclaimed is 'impregnated' ... 'by the divine Spirit, [and] has to be considered the criterion of scriptural authority and thus the basis of a doctrine affirming the inspiration of Scripture'.²⁴ The person and history of Jesus were saturated with the presence of the future of God, and thus emanated spiritual power. On the basis of this impregnation by the Spirit, it is justified to regard the apostolic writings as inspired by the same Spirit of God. Thus inspiration is to be understood with Jesus Christ as its centre and criterion. In terms of the 'literal concreteness' of the words in Scripture that bear witness to Jesus' gospel, Pannenberg has no reservation in calling them divinely inspired.²⁵ The inspired character of Scripture is the close connectedness and matching of content between its testimony and the gospel of Jesus.

Let us compare Pannenberg's view with that of Barth. Inspiration for Barth is an event that the Holy Spirit freely brings upon humans, and the whole process of inspiration is a trajectory in the form of a circle. The Spirit's movement leads from the divine revelation to the apostles, who were authorised to speak of it, and the circle of inspiration is eventually completed as the Holy Spirit moves the hearer, such that she is illuminated as the message is received in obedience. Here the self-disclosure of God happens; an additional step

has been taken so that the mystery of revelation is unveiled. Barth describes this self-disclosure in its totality as *theopneustia*.²⁶ In this miracle of knowing the revelation of Christ, Barth unpacks the idea of inspiration in three aspects; first, it is the benefit of revelation that sets the process in motion, meaning that in the first place the mystery of revelation is disclosed to elected humans, enabling them to become witnesses. Second, there is the coming forth of the spiritual man, that is, the apostle empowered by the Holy Spirit, who can speak of the revelation in the 'miracle of his existence as a witness'.²⁷ Finally, in the third movement, other humans at the receiving end of the apostolic message have to decide whether, as carnal persons, they will not receive or recognise it, or whether by the help of the Holy Spirit they will also be spiritual men and women who listen.

In Pannenberg's writings, inspiration is less described as an event and more as a completed state of affairs, a fixed property of Scripture: its content resembles, or speaks literally of, the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this literal connectedness, 'inspiration' has a static quality. Although the Spirit is still the source of inspiration, it is understood in terms of an idiom of field theory.²⁸ The emphasis is on the underlying continuity between the spirit of the human creature and that of the Creator God. As such, to speak of inspiration as an actual event (as Barth does) is not necessary. Hasel observes that for Pannenberg '[the] content of Scripture is neither divinely revealed, nor divinely inspired. Scripture does not originate directly from God as His Word because revelation is not to be understood in the same sense as direct communication'.²⁹ The consequence of this is to accept Scripture as merely a human document. For Pannenberg the origin of Scripture is from below: '... the Christian Bible originated, together with other religious texts, as an expression of religious experience. As such, Scripture is part of the history of the transmission of traditions'.³⁰ The biblical authors did not require special guidance or illumination to turn their experiences into text, because in them 'no content is communicated'.³¹

While Hasel's analysis of the origin of Scripture according to Pannenberg is accurate, it must be noted that in an article published a year after Hasel's book, Pannenberg does speak of the Scripture as inspired, albeit in a qualified way.³² In fact, Pannenberg critiques the doctrine of inspiration in the first volume of *Systematic Theology* and he offers a new foundation at the end of the second

volume.³³ In terms of the place of the doctrine – when and where one should tackle the concept of inspiration in a system of theology – his solution refuses to place it in the prolegomena, as a basis that would justify Christian doctrines. Rather, he suggests the transition between Christology and ecclesiology as the proper place where the inspiration of Scripture should be treated. He writes,

Christian theology is not entitled to use the idea of the divine inspiration of the biblical scriptures in a formal way in order to establish the authority of the Bible before dealing with the contents of Christian teachings.³⁴

As he sees it, concurring with Schleiermacher, the 'regard for holy scripture cannot be the basis of faith in Christ; rather, faith in Christ must be presupposed to allow for special regard for holy scripture'.³⁵ In this argument, talking of Scripture's inspired character must be built upon a solid Christology which provides the ground of trust in Christ. Again, in Pannenberg's system this trust is a rational assent to well articulated human historical experiences in which the man Jesus has been encountered, and once again this giving of assent to christological arguments requires no external and supernatural intervention.

Yet there is another side to the inspiration of Scripture as Pannenberg sees it, which is set out in the second volume of *Systematic Theology*. He briefly argues that Scripture has power because of the Spirit which imparts the eschatological presence of salvation through Scripture and apostolic proclamation.³⁶ Yet this viewpoint seems to be only a passing thought. An overall appreciation of Pannenberg's understanding of the inspired character of Scripture, however, convincingly shows his inclination to the concept of a concluded, static matching of content between the apostolic writings and Jesus' gospel. When we weigh the relative attention he gives to this literal connectedness of the contents, in comparison to the movement of the Holy Spirit in the testimonial process, we can plausibly conclude that Pannenberg sees the role of the Holy Spirit as a quiet presence in the background.

The way Pannenberg approaches John 15:26 and 16:13 in *Systematic Theology* partially reflects his understanding of the relation between witness and the Spirit's agency. The former verse mentions the Spirit whom the Father sends as the witness of Jesus; the latter verse speaks of the Spirit as the one who guides believers into the truth.

Pannenberg deals with these verses in a number of places,³⁷ in most of which the precedence of the Spirit's agency in the constitution, operation and reception of testimony is not at the forefront of his arguments. Reference to the plain meaning of these two verses does not necessarily mean making a purposeful and constructive move that brings the consideration of divine agency into the centre of the concept of testimony. Pannenberg's use of these verses can be summarized as follows: (a) On some occasions, they are mentioned only in passing without any significant discussion;³⁸ (b) sometimes John 15:26 is used with the aim to explicate the procession of the Spirit, and John 16:13 is also mentioned to help illustrate the self-distinction of the Spirit;³⁹ (c) in some cases, the verses are mentioned with the clear purpose to bring out the idea that the Spirit glorifies the Son.⁴⁰

Apart from the above pattern, the further use by Pannenberg of these two verses requires closer examination. In a passage in smaller font in *Systematic Theology* 2, pages 450-451, Pannenberg intends to show that the work of the exalted Christ and that of the Spirit is entirely interchangeable in content – a viewpoint that he considers evident in John and Paul. While recounting his understanding of Paul's thoughts in this regard, Pannenberg writes, 'the Spirit effects righteousness in us by creating faith in the message of Christ'. Yet the extent to which Pannenberg aligns his own view with this Pauline thought needs to be evaluated in the light of the paragraph that immediately follows, where he reiterates once again the naturalness of human ecstatic existence. Admittedly, 'the Spirit lifts us above our own finitude', yet Pannenberg is keen to point out that the believers are 'ecstatic' as they are in Christ, and there is 'nothing unnatural about this "ecstasy" for our spiritual life may well be inherently "ecstatic"', a condition of life which lies in the reality of creation. When calling the human consciousness ecstatic and arguing that it enables us to be outside ourselves, Pannenberg writes about both its negative and positive effects,

we may also be estranged from ourselves, not only in extreme states of self-forgetfulness or when fury and frenzy take us outside ourselves, but also in phenomena of bondage and addiction that lead structurally to the basic form of concupiscence. ... At the same time self-forgetfulness may also be the supreme form of self-fulfilment. ... This is how it is with faith in Jesus Christ.⁴¹

The Pauline idea of the Spirit's work in effecting righteousness and creating faith is intriguingly juxtaposed with Pannenberg's affirmation of the ecstatic nature of human life and the possibility of venturing beyond ourselves through self-forgetfulness. It is plausible that for Pannenberg, where the reception of testimony and the constitution of witness is concerned, the centrality of the Spirit's agency needs no emphasis. Though the human consciousness might be dull and forgetful, it could be enthused by the historical and spiritual reality of Jesus' gospel, and the knower could rise and grapple knowledge in faith, just like any other piece of historical knowledge.⁴²

A similar tendency to render the activity of the Holy Spirit as a quiet illumination in the background is noticeable in Pannenberg's discussion of whether external help is necessary if the contents of the Christian message are to be grappled with. In an essay entitled 'Insight and Faith' he admits that with respect to the psychological process of apprehension, 'an illumination is necessary in order for that which is true in itself to appear evident in this character to a man'.⁴³ He continues, 'the materially and logically impeccable grounding [of truth] is *one* thing, but the consent of man is very often quite another matter'.⁴⁴ This means that the removal of certain pre-judgments and enlightenment are sometimes necessary for insight into a truth. This is probably the one place in Pannenberg's early writings that speaks of the need of illumination by the Spirit. This statement is made in the context of replying to criticisms of his earlier theses in *Revelation as History*, which had invited the suspicion that 'there is no place for confession of the Holy Spirit'.⁴⁵ When we weigh this argument for the need of the Spirit's illumination against the many references to the naturalness of testimony in Pannenberg's other early writings, it seems plausible that he thinks of a naturalistic view of witness as sufficient. Direct intervention of the Spirit in the process of understanding the Christian message is not something he wants to emphasise. On the one hand, for him plain human reasoning is sufficient to understand the theological meaning of revelation in the event of Jesus Christ; on the other hand, where pre-judgments coming from other religious traditions may cloud human perception, the kind of illumination required is identical with the clarity of the very reports which convey the significance of the Christ event. Where the reports of the Christ event are accessible to plain human reason, Pannenberg does not deem it

necessary or beneficial to speak, as Barth would in his discussion of inspiration, of an actual and personal encounter with the Holy Spirit in the apprehension of truth.⁴⁶ The same reticence regarding the necessity of illumination by the Spirit is also there in his later writings; his consideration of personal faith in the last volume of *Systematic Theology* lends support to this observation.⁴⁷

3.2 Christian community and the agency of the Holy Spirit

If we consider the question of how witness is positioned in Pannenberg's ecclesiology, it is evident that witness as vocation is rarely mentioned in his *Systematic Theology*, and likewise that the Christian existence as witness receives less emphasis than the concept of fellowship.⁴⁸ For instance, in his analysis of the Pentecost event, the gift of the Spirit is directly related to fellowship, whereas he argues that the theme of witnessing and mission to the gentiles should be considered as a theological statement of Luke. Weighing these two themes, Pannenberg underscores the importance of the coming into existence of Christian fellowship through the event of Pentecost.⁴⁹ He suggests that

[the] story of Pentecost in Acts 2:1ff. gives expression to the fact that the Spirit does not simply assure each individual believer alone of fellowship with Jesus Christ ... but that thereby he founds at the same time the fellowship of believers.⁵⁰

As for Luke's theological reworking of the traditions about Pentecost, Pannenberg thinks that Luke 'says nothing about the fellowship of Christians with God. ... This dominant insight of Paul's ... does not occur in Luke's account'. While Pannenberg grants that Luke presupposed the existence of fellowship, he would prefer Luke to place more emphasis on this fellowship as the position from which the act of witnessing springs forth.⁵¹

This is again in sharp contrast to Barth, who underscores the Christian existence as essentially the discharging of the entrusted task of witness.⁵² Vocation and the sending of the Church are two areas on which Barth's thought concerning Christian witness concentrates. These two are essentially alternative ways of describing human existence as witness: both 'calling' and 'sending' are accomplished in one divine act of election and reconciliation; while vocation is focused on the individual context, the sending of the Church

hinges on the collective aspect of witness. When being called, individuals rise and come into a new existence as Christians and witnesses; similarly the Church when being sent does not exist apart from its bearing witness. Pannenberg understands Christian existence primarily as fellowship of believers, which is based on each individual's fellowship with Christ. It is not that he ignores the ecclesial task of witnessing – as Stanley Grenz points out, in Pannenberg the task of the Church is referred to as both a 'sign' and a 'reminder'⁵³ – but that the motif of fellowship is more prominent and central than witness. It is Pannenberg's belief that election when expressed as fellowship serves the greater goals of God's saving actions, and he understands 'the role of intrahuman fellowship as the direct object of the divine purpose of election that aims at the consummation of our creation.'⁵⁴ Human witness in this context is merely a function of fellowship. Witness is thus oriented to the goal of fellowship.

Where the Christian practice of witnessing or the act of bearing witness is discussed, Pannenberg refers to liturgies, sacraments and confession of faith during worship as modes of witnessing, and underscores its collective and inward aspects. The Church precedes any event of personal witnessing, and the latter 'finds its full form only in liturgical worship.'⁵⁵ In its collective and inward character, witness occurs in liturgies, sacraments and the communal confession of faith during Christian worship services, which are directed inward to strengthen the fellowship. It is through their common confession that Christians understand themselves as belonging to the fellowship of believers, which of course presupposes their individual allegiance and thus relation to Christ.⁵⁶ In this context, the act of testifying can be understood as a public confession of the identity and person of Jesus, where 'public' refers primarily to the community of believers, since the act is directed to this community and its function is to initiate, to declare or to reaffirm one's membership of the community. Pannenberg writes,

[the] basic significance of common confessing for the church's fellowship finds expression in the function of the confession in the church's liturgical life. In this regard common confession of faith stands closely related to baptism on the one side and to the Eucharist on the other.⁵⁷

In his discussion of liturgies, sacraments and confession of faith during worship as modes of witness-

ing, explicit reference to the Spirit's empowering of these acts of witnessing is sparse.

Prior to Jesus' death on the cross, no criterion was needed to determine whether a confession of Jesus was valid, because '[it] was enough that Jesus himself accepted confession of him'.⁵⁸ Yet after Easter period the apostles, disciples and subsequently the Church took over this function, so that now individual confession must align with 'the church's proclamation and its liturgical acclamation of Jesus as Messiah and Kyrios'.⁵⁹ Pannenberg examines the development of early confession formulas which have eventually consolidated as creeds.⁶⁰ Our interest is not in this genealogy, but rather in the idea of witness that emerges from it. Pannenberg's discussion indicates certain functional aspects of witness, that is first of all the initiation of individuals into the Church, and secondly the ongoing practice of public witness as a way to police the boundary of the community by reiterating the individual's agreement with the teachings of the Church. In short, witnessing is a deliberate act to build up the fellowship and to maintain its identity. In this testifying, to reiterate one's belonging to the community is the primary activity, while reference to the identity and person of Jesus Christ is less prominent, though this does not mean falsifying or relegating the original meaning of the Christian confession to secondary importance.⁶¹ These two aspects of witness – giving consent and reciting the agreed confession of the community – are conscious acts of believers, and in Pannenberg's thinking they require no discrete or separate event of supernatural inspiration or guidance, because he sees a basic continuity between the human spirit and the divine Spirit.

It is true that in relation to evangelism Pannenberg does speak of the work of the Spirit, which as a transcendent movement, liberates and endows new freedom to the recipients, bringing them into the filial relation of Jesus with the Father. Yet this emphasis on the independent work of the Spirit creates unease when read alongside earlier arguments of Pannenberg which deny the necessity to differentiate between the human and the divine spirit, and which argue that living human creatures always participate in the greater reality of the divine Spirit through their own self-transcendence.⁶² It is intriguing and noteworthy that in the third volume of *Systematic Theology*, after completing his discussion of the Spirit's work in bringing together individual and communal relation to Christ, Pannenberg moves on to address the 'basic

saving works of the Spirit' in individual Christian by faith, hope and love;⁶³ in the section on faith in particular, reference to the free and sovereign intervention of the Spirit rapidly recedes into the background.⁶⁴

In this particular section Pannenberg's exploration of the concept of faith begins by speaking of the ecstatic character of the work of the Spirit, which is not altogether distinct from the natural ecstatic openness of human life. From there onwards, he moves away from the pneumatological point of reference towards an exposition of the notion of truth in Hebrew and Greek traditions, and how their relation with faith is conceived. Here, the abiding theme of Pannenberg's writings emerges once more – that faith must first be connected to historical revelation and only later to God, and that since our assessment of historical events remains probabilistic, faith's knowledge is always provisional and open to testing. Throughout this epistemological reflection on faith, it appears that if there is any description of the work of the Holy Spirit, it depicts the natural acquisition of historical knowledge; the conscious act of giving assent based on rational choice; and the constant recognition that faith's knowledge is provisional in character. As Pannenberg moves on to the discussion of the assurance of faith,⁶⁵ he continues to counsel against any recourse to the witness of the Holy Spirit in the human conscience, as it would only mean lapsing back into theological subjectivism that is no longer allowed for the modern mind.⁶⁶ Consider for instance the statement,

A supreme feature of the integrity of faith is that it does not live of itself but by the given reality of God and his revelation in the history of Israel and ... in Jesus of Nazareth... The nature of faith is to rely on God as other than itself and thus to have the basis of its existence outside itself. ... In the subjective act of faith this precedence of God and his revelation as its basis finds expression in the distinction between believing trust and knowledge of God and his revelation in the public arena of human history.⁶⁷

Although this statement speaks of the divine reality and revelation as the precedence and basis of personal faith in God, it cannot be considered as a reference point that establishes the need of the Spirit's agency in a person's appropriation of witness through faith. Especially in the light of the extended discussion of the relationship of faith to

historical knowledge in the preceding pages,⁶⁸ the reference to divine agency here is not the leading theme. In these pages Pannenberg criticises blind submission to authority, the notion of inspired text, the general reliability of testimony, and religious experience as the basis of faith; after this he returns to the need to ground faith knowledge in historical knowledge. A pneumatological point of reference for the appropriation of historical knowledge is not readily recognizable. This section on faith in the final volume of *Systematic Theology* lends support to the observation that Pannenberg's idea of testimony as natural knowledge remains relatively stable in his mature works. The constitution, operation and appropriation of witness in faith requires minimal intervention of the Spirit. The limited references to the Spirit's active agency in Pannenberg's reflections on how individuals arrive at a state of faith probably signal an abiding idea of his, which appeared in his earlier writings⁶⁹ – that for him faith is equivalent to trust, and as such it is a natural capacity of human life.

4. Conclusion

Pannenberg has not dedicated a single piece of work to an explication of his concept of Christian testimony. What we attempted in the first half of this essay was a tentative sketch of his understanding of testimony, by piecing together his ideas from different places in his writings. This sketch is by no means comprehensive and includes only salient features with immediate relevance to our discussion, omitting for instance the eschatological and hermeneutical aspects in Pannenberg's conceptualisation of testimony. A possible way to make sense of this sketch is perhaps to see Pannenberg's concept of testimony as lodged in the doctrine of creation. Christian testimonial claims, as a species of knowledge, and more precisely, as knowledge of God, have their basis in the continuity of the relation which the Creator God decreed between himself and his creatures. Where this continuity between the human and the divine is also pneumatologically understood, it could be said that for Pannenberg the concept of witness has its basis in the first and third articles of the Creed.

The second half of this essay explored some implications of Pannenberg's views for his understanding of Scripture and the Church. I drew attention to the importance of a theological understanding of testimony, which ensures the place of divine agency in Christian witness.

Understandably, such theological understanding of testimony is not something on the agenda of philosophical reflection on witness. At certain points Pannenberg's ideas of testimony come close to the naturalistic model of philosophers, and alongside his understanding of testimony there is an intriguing ambivalence in speaking directly of the active agency of the Spirit in the constitution, transmission and appropriation of Christian witness.

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Endnotes

- 1 Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. J.H. Freese (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926); C.A.J. Coady, *Testimony: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); P. Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); P. Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004). See also E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969) and E. Lévinas *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998).
- 2 A.A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); A.T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000); R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) and W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997). See also M.D.J. Smith, 'Testimony to Revelation: Karl Barth's Strategy of Bible Interpretation in Die Kirchliche Dogmatik' (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 1997).
- 3 The structure Trites gives to the concept of witness in the New Testament is informed by his understanding of Aristotle's definition of the witness. See Trites, *New Testament Concept of Witness*, chapters 1-2.
- 4 K. Sonderegger, 'Et Resurrexit Tertia Die: Jenson and Barth on Christ's Resurrection' in J.C. McDowell and M. Higton (eds.), *Conversing with Barth* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2004) 191-213.
- 5 The theme of witness is identifiable in a number of places in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, for instance, in the doctrine of Holy Scripture, proclamation, human vocation and ecclesiology. The

root of this recurring theme can be traced back to his exegesis of John 1, in which he argues for John the Baptist as the prototype of human witness. See K. Barth, 'Erklärung des Johannes-Evangeliums (Kapitel 1-8): Vorlesung Münster Wintersemester 1925/1926, wiederholt in Bonn, Sommersemester 1933', ed. Walther Fürst, in *Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe II* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976) = K. Barth, *Witness to the Word – A Commentary on John 1*, ed. W. Fürst (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003). This prototype is the blueprint of Barth's consideration of testimony, which he developed and articulated in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. See K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics II.2* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1957) 482-502. Subsequent references to *Church Dogmatics* will be abbreviated as CD.

- 6 The outline of Pannenberg's ideas of testimony in this essay is not a complete picture. For instance, his analysis of historical and theological hermeneutic in relation to testimony is not covered because it has no immediate relevance to the main theme of this essay.
- 7 Pannenberg writes, 'I would not like to distinguish the knowledge logically presupposed by *fiducia*, or which in a broader sense of the term is included in faith, from natural knowledge... I cannot understand any knowledge as other than "natural."' See W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology* vol. 2 (London: SCM, 1971) 33 [= W. Pannenberg, *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze Band 1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967)]. Subsequent references to *Basic Questions in Theology* will be abbreviated as BQT.
- 8 W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 73-75, 80-81, 116-117 [= W. Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie 1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988)]. Subsequent references to *Systematic Theology* will be abbreviated as ST. For Pannenberg, the revelation of Christ presupposes the fact that the world and humanity both belong to, and 'know' God – the God proclaimed by the gospel. What Paul calls the knowledge of God from creation through divine works, according to Pannenberg, 'may be only a vague sense of infinitude' (117). This knowledge is not innate, but rather acquired through and related to experience of the world. Nonetheless, Pannenberg inclines to suggest that a certain innate intuition underlay such a sense of the infinite, that '[intuition] of an indefinite infinite, of a mystery of being which transcends and upholds human life, and gives us the courage to trust it, achieves a differentiation from finite things only in the course of experience'. See also W. Pannenberg, *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 97 [= W. Pannenberg, *Metaphysik und Gottesgedanke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

- Ruprecht, 1988)].
- 9 W. Pannenberg, 'The Working of the Spirit in the Creation and in the People of God' in W. Pannenberg, A. Dulles and C.E. Braaten (eds.), *Spirit, Faith and Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970) 21.
- 10 Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 82.
- 11 See Pannenberg, *BQT* 3, 110, for a discussion of God's reality as the origin of freedom. Divine reality is not being conceived of as an existent being, but rather as future. The notion of future is an 'alternative to an understanding of the real ... the future is real, although it does not yet exist'. For further clarification of Pannenberg's idea of God as the basis for the absolute future of freedom, see Pannenberg, *BQT* 3, 174; see also *BQT* 3, 131 and 133 for a discussion of the totality of reality as freedom ahead of us. Note that Pannenberg also speaks of freedom not only as a gift given to us during the course of our life, but as something hardwired into the human biological constitution. The lack of specialisation of the human organs and our extensive freedom from instinct predisposed humankind to diversity of action. W. Pannenberg, *What is Man? Contemporary Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970) 16 [= W. Pannenberg, *Was ist der Mensch?: Die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie* 3. Aufl. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968)]. See C.P. Venema, 'History, Human Freedom and the Idea of God in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg' in *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (1982) 53-77, for a critique of Pannenberg's concept of human freedom.
- 12 W. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985) 380-381. See also F. Hasel, *Scripture in the Theologies of W. Pannenberg and D.G. Bloesch. An Investigation and Assessment of its Origin, Nature and Use* (Berlin: Lang, 1996) 111, 150. Subsequent references to *Scripture in the Theologies of W. Pannenberg and D.G. Bloesch* will be abbreviated as *STPB*.
- 13 Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, 381.
- 14 Pannenberg, 'On the Inspiration of Scripture', *Theology Today* 54 (1997) 212-215.
- 15 Pannenberg, *BQT* 1, 19. Cf. C.E. Braaten, 'The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics', *The Journal of Religion* (1965) 225-237; Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 198-199, 238. See also W. Pannenberg (ed.), *Revelation as History* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) 125-131, 135-139 [= *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, in Verbindung mit R. Rendtorff, U. Wilckens, T. Rendtorff hrsg. von Wolfhart Pannenberg, 3. Aufl. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1965)].
- 16 Compare Pannenberg, *BQT* 2, 33 with *Metaphysics and the Idea of God*, 97 and *ST* 1, 157.
- 17 Compare Pannenberg, *BQT* 1, 6, 96-97, 188-191; vol. 2, 61-63 with 'On the Inspiration of Scripture', 212-213.
- 18 I. Taylor's analysis of Pannenberg's separation of ontology and epistemology tends to affirm the observation that in terms of his methodological orientation towards epistemology, Pannenberg's position remains stable over time. See I. Taylor, 'How to be a Trinitarian Theologian: A Critique of Wolfhart Pannenberg's Systematic Theology', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60 (2007) 180-195. See also I. Taylor, *Pannenberg on the Triune God* (London: T&T Clark, 2007). For critique of Taylor's analysis, see the reviews of his book by B. Trainor, J. Merrick, T. Whapham and K. Eilers, respectively in *The Heythrop Journal* 52 (2011) 833-834; *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10 (2008) 353-356; *Horizons* 36 (2009) 151-152; and *European Journal of Theology* 20 (2011) 184-186.
- 19 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 457.
- 20 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 111, 114-115.
- 21 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 122-129.
- 22 Using Coady's model as an illustration, testimony is being treated as a form of positive epistemology. Coady construes the receiving and responding to testimony as resembling the processes of direct knowledge formation through perception, as well as the direct access to knowledge through memory. As such, and concurring in a qualified way with T. Reid, Coady's model reckons our natural capacity and inclination to handle testimony as something resembling first principles of epistemology. As to our giving of testimony, Coady means firstly the general notion of 'certain sorts of telling', as traditionally philosophy has used the term. Second, the concept is tightened up as the performance of speech act, under certain social conventions of action and with intention. The bearing of witness is not limited to legal or quasi-legal contexts, but rather has an expansive scope covering the everyday needs of social life, the transfer of knowledge and epistemic authority. In brief, in both receiving and giving testimony, Coady's model sees human testimony originating and functioning within the innate capacity of the human mind, which he calls the 'social operation of mind'. See C.A.J. Coady, 'Testimony' in E. Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998); and *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*, 25-26, 55, 120-125. It is noteworthy that in Ricoeur's philosophical and hermeneutical model of testimony, there is also an emphasis on the natural human imagination playing a crucial role in the simultaneous processes of interpreting historical testimony and the exegesis of the self. As such, creative imagination can bring liberation from conceptual strictures that limit our

- reflection on testimonial claims. See Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, 116.
- 23 V. Kärkkäinen, 'The Working of the Spirit of God in Creation and in the People of God: The Pneumatology of Wolfhart Pannenberg', *PNEUMA* 26 (2004) 17-35. Kärkkäinen ably summarizes the pneumatological arguments in Pannenberg's ecclesiology into four areas: 1. The Spirit as gift is given not only for individual salvation but aims at the building up of the fellowship of believers. 2. There is an integral connection between Christology and pneumatology; the Church is the creation of both the Spirit and the Son. The Spirit makes it possible for individual believers to enter into the immediacy of Christ in the Church that is his body. 3. The Spirit releases and reconciles the tension between the fellowship and the individual in the concept of the Church, and hence, the underlying anthropological tension between society and individual freedom. 4. There is integral continuity between the work of the Spirit in creation, salvation, the Church and the eschatological consummation.
- 24 Pannenberg, 'On the Inspiration of Scripture', 213. This clearly spells out Pannenberg's idea of Scripture as inspired, as compared to a passage in his earlier writing, that, '[if] the relevant human word that rightly names the meaning of things and events, and thus brings out their truth, can be regarded as inspired, then a word of this kind is naming God as the origin of all reality. To the extent that the human word is apt and true, then, it no longer belongs to humanity alone, it is God's Word.' See Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 254.
- 25 Pannenberg, 'On the Inspiration of Scripture', 215.
- 26 Barth, *CD* I, 2, 517.
- 27 Barth, *CD* I, 2, 517.
- 28 See Hasel, *STPB*, 220 n. 1. Cf. Kärkkäinen, 'The Working of the Spirit of God', 21, 31-32; and T. Peters, 'Pannenberg on Theology and Natural Science' in T. Peters (ed.), *Toward a Theology of Nature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 114.
- 29 Hasel, *STPB*, 106.
- 30 Hasel, *STPB*, 218.
- 31 Hasel, *STPB*, 218.
- 32 Pannenberg, 'On the Inspiration of Scripture'.
- 33 Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 31-34, 222-225; vol. 2, 454-464.
- 34 Pannenberg, 'On the Inspiration of Scripture', 214.
- 35 Pannenberg, *ST* 2, 464 n. 170.
- 36 Pannenberg, *ST* 2, 459.
- 37 Including *ST* 1, 267, 270, 303, 305, 315, 317, 320; vol. 2, 394-395, 437, 450; and vol. 3, 4-8, 16.
- 38 Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 267, 270.
- 39 Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 303, 305, 315, 317, 320; *ST* 3, 7-8.
- 40 Pannenberg, *ST* 2, 394-395. Also consider a statement in *ST* 3, 16 where he writes, 'as the Spirit bears witness in believers to Jesus as the truth of God, they themselves are ecstatically raptured and are outside themselves in Jesus'. Yet again it needs to be pointed out that the main concern of the passage in which this statement is embedded is the Spirit's glorification of the Son, instead of an analytical statement that relates the Spirit's agency to testimony.
- 41 Pannenberg, *ST* 2, 452.
- 42 Concerning the teaching role of the Spirit, in *ST* 3, 5 we read that '[the] Spirit glorifies Jesus as the Father's Son by teaching us to recognize the revelation'. The purpose of this statement in its context is to refute Barth's view that the Spirit is the power in which Jesus Christ bears witness to himself. Pannenberg's purpose is only to accentuate a more exhaustive description of the Spirit which Barth failed to offer. Here Pannenberg's focus is the self-distinction of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, while the teaching role of the Spirit is just the plain meaning of Jn 16:13, of which Pannenberg gives no further exposition.
- 43 Pannenberg, *BQT* 2, 40.
- 44 Pannenberg, *BQT* 2, 40.
- 45 Pannenberg, *BQT* 2, 43.
- 46 Barth, *CD* I, 2, 532.
- 47 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 135-172. I will return to this aspect in the next section; see Taylor, 'How to be a Trinitarian Theologian', 182-183 for a similar observation.
- 48 Apart from *Systematic Theology* Pannenberg has written extensively on ecclesiology in relation to anthropology, history and the Creed. See W. Pannenberg, A. Dulles and C. E. Braaten, *Spirit, Faith, and Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970); W. Pannenberg, *The Apostles' Creed in the light of Today's Questions* (London: SCM, 1972) [= W. Pannenberg, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis: Ausgelegt und verantwortet vor den Fragen der Gegenwart*, 3. Aufl. (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1979)]; W. Pannenberg, *Human Nature, Election, and History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); W. Pannenberg, *The Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983) [= W. Pannenberg, *Thesen zur Theologie der Kirche*, 2. Aufl. (München: Claudius, 1974)]; and W. Pannenberg, *ST* 3, ch. 12-14. See also S.J. Grenz 'Sacramental Spirituality, Ecumenism, and Mission to the World: Foundational Motifs of Pannenberg's Ecclesiology', *Mid-Stream* 30 (1991) 20-34, for a concise overview of Pannenberg's ecclesiology. It is impossible to have here an adequate exposition of his thoughts in all these areas, but focusing on the concept of testimony embedded in his ecclesiology, it is evident that attention to Christian existence as witness receives less emphasis than the concept of fellowship. See Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 12-13.
- 49 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 15.
- 50 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 13.

- 51 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 15.
- 52 Barth, *CD* IV, 3, 573-574.
- 53 That the Church is a sign pointing to the future Kingdom of God and a reminder of 'the transience of all social orders in contrast to the finality of God's rule'. See Grenz, 'Sacramental Spirituality, Ecumenism, and Mission to the World', 22, 29.
- 54 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 461.
- 55 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 123.
- 56 There is also the aspect of saving efficacy in confession. Pannenberg does not render confession as purely a gesture to declare and maintain the boundaries of the Christian community. In fact, with Luke 12:8-9 and Matthew 10:32-33, it is clear that Jesus annexes promise to confessing him. See Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 114-115.
- 57 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 111.
- 58 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 115.
- 59 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 115.
- 60 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 116-122.
- 61 Pannenberg adds: so long as 'the normativeness of the church's faith for individual confession' remains strictly an expression and consequence of the priority of the person of Jesus and of the apostolic gospel, it is a valid criterion of authentic beliefs; but confessional formulas and creeds need constant testing and interpretation. See Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 117.
- 62 Pannenberg, 'The Working of the Spirit', 21. Pannenberg sees life as ecstatic, and he differentiates his position from that of P. Tillich: '[Tillich] uses the idea of ecstasy for his basic description of spiritual presence, i.e., of the *divine* spirit grasping the human person, but remaining distinct from the human spirit, from spirit as a dimension of life. I venture to disregard this careful distinction and dismiss it as an artificial one' (17).
- 63 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 135-210.
- 64 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 135-172.
- 65 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 162-172.
- 66 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 167.
- 67 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 153.
- 68 Pannenberg, *ST* 3, 144-152.
- 69 For Pannenberg, 'Faith as the fulfilment of life is really the same thing as trust. And trust is one of the fundamental aspects of life for every human existence.' See Pannenberg, *The Apostles' Creed in the light of Today's Questions*, 3-4.

Recovering the Missionary Memory: Russian Evangelicals in Search of an Appropriate Missiology

Johannes Reimer

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Evangelisation und Mission in den Ländern der ehemaligen Sowjet Union hat ihre Dynamik verloren. Liefen noch vor einer Dekade Massen von Menschen in die evangelistischen Veranstaltungen der Evangelikalen, so sind es heute nur vereinzelte Menschen, die man mühsam dafür gewinnt, in einen entsprechenden Gottesdienst mitzukommen. Kritisch denkende russischsprachige Evangelikale sind der Meinung, dass der Rückgang des Interesses der Bevölkerung am Evangelium vor allem auf das Fehlen einer adäquaten indigenen Missiologie zurückzuführen ist. Nahezu

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RÉSUMÉ

L'évangélisation et la mission dans les pays de l'ex-Union-Soviétique a perdu de sa dynamique. Il y a une dizaine d'années, les gens se pressaient en foules aux réunions d'évangélisation organisées par les évangéliques. Aujourd'hui, il est devenu difficile de persuader quelques individus à assister à de telles rencontres. Les évangéliques russophones qui analysent cette situation pensent que l'affaiblissement de l'intérêt des populations pour l'Évangile est dû principalement à l'absence d'une réflexion missionnaire adéquate. La plupart des efforts missionnaires se sont inspirés des idées et

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SUMMARY

Evangelism and mission in the countries of the former Soviet Union have lost their momentum. While about a decade ago masses of people flocked into evangelistic meetings organized by Evangelicals, nowadays only a few individuals can with difficulty be persuaded to join such a service. Critically minded, Russian speaking Evangelicals maintain that the decreased interest of the population in the Gospel is mainly due to the lack of an adequate indigenous missiology. Almost all missionary

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alle missionarischen Bemühungen orientieren sich an westlichen Vorstellungen und Methoden. Dabei weist die Geschichte des ostslavischen Protestantismus faszinierende eigene Entwicklungen auf, die angewandt auf die missionarische Praxis im postsovietischen Raum, durchaus Potenzial aufweisen, neues Leben in die erlahmende Missionsarbeit der Evangelikalen zu hauchen. Das missionarische Denken der Väter des ostslavischen Protestantismus Ivan S. Prokhanov und Ivan E. Voronaev wird an dieser Stelle als potenzielle Quelle und wichtigen Baustein einer einheimischen ostslavischen Missiologie bedacht.

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méthodes occidentales. En même temps, l'histoire du protestantisme slave oriental fait apparaître qu'il s'est grandement développé d'une manière qui lui est propre. L'application des mêmes principes à la pratique missionnaire dans les régions autrefois slaves est certainement susceptible d'insuffler un nouveau souffle à l'activité missionnaire locale des évangéliques. Les idées missionnaires des pères du protestantisme slave oriental, Ivan S. Prokhanov et Ivan E. Voronaev pourraient constituer, dans ce contexte, une source prometteuse et un fondement important pour élaborer une missiologie slave orientale adaptée à ces populations.

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efforts are based on Western ideas and methods. All the same, the history of Eastern Slavic Protestantism demonstrates its own fascinating development which, when applied to the missionary practice in the post-Slavic area, certainly has the potential to breathe new life into the waning missionary work of the Evangelicals. In this situation, the missionary philosophy of the fathers of Eastern Slavic Protestantism, Ivan S. Prokhanov and Ivan E. Voronaev, is considered a potential source and important foundation of an indigenous East Slavic missiology.

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1. The need for an appropriate missiology

Mission in post-Soviet countries is slowing down;¹ the growing excitement of the 1990s is gone. Some hundreds of thousands of Evangelicals have left the Commonwealth of Independent State (CIS) for the West. The Evangelical churches which they left behind have proved inadequate for the task of mission. Catherine Wanner, who studied the situation in Ukrainian Churches, emphasizes the disinterest and inability of these churches to bring their missionary activity into relationship with the socio-cultural situation of the people around them.² Ever more Evangelicals are becoming aware of the urgent need for change. The quest for what Charles Kraft called 'appropriate Christianity'³ has started, and with it comes a growing awareness of the need for an appropriate missiology. Michael Cherenkov, a Russian Baptist missiologist, states that the Slavic Evangelical churches have not yet formulated their own missiological paradigm.⁴ That does not mean that Russian Evangelicals have no access to missiological literature – the opposite is the case. During the past twenty years an impressive library of books and articles has been published in Russian. But almost all of these are translations of Western origins.⁵ A number of courses in missiology are offered in Bible schools and seminaries as well as online.⁶ Here too, however, the models and curricula are Western.⁷

This staggering development raises questions about the dominance of Western missiological theory. Russian mission leaders seem to be developing a clearer understanding of the mixed blessing of Western missionary assistance and the obvious dependency of Russian mission on Western support.⁸ As a result of this Western influence the Russian Evangelical Church is not in a fit state to do evangelism, the leader of the Russian Baptist Mission Agency, Ruvim Voloshin, claims.⁹ It is high time for them to develop their own Russian, or at least Slavic, missiology.

The proponents of an independent missionary theory point to recent developments in the Russian Orthodox Church. In contrast to the Evangelicals in the country, the Russian Orthodox Church has published only a few books on missiology which depend on Western models, among which Vladimir Fiodorov's book *Provoslavnaia Missia Segodnia* (*Orthodox Mission Today*)¹⁰ is the most adapted version, since most of it simply contains the translation of Jacob Stamulis's doctoral dissertation on the mission of the Orthodox Churches.¹¹

(Stamulis is an American Evangelical.) Most of the newer publications do not negate the creative dialogue with other missiological approaches, but seek a close relationship to their own tradition and theology. With *Missiologia*, edited by Alexandr Ginkel, the Russian Orthodox Church produced its very first textbook of missiology.¹² Its authors underline the fact that a genuinely Orthodox missiology will only be possible if the church recovers the best stories of its own missionary history. They write: 'What the Christians of our countries need is a healing of memory by collecting our own history from torn-apart pieces into one whole.'¹³ Sure enough, *Missiologia* and other publications of Orthodox authors have not yet reached this self-set goal.¹⁴ The crisis of Orthodox mission theory is not yet overcome, as Andrey Kuraev rightly underlines,¹⁵ but the direction seems properly chosen.

The Orthodox approach names the issues. An appropriate Evangelical missiology in Eastern Europe in general and Russia in particular will not only have to look back to the revelation in the Holy Scriptures to establish a proper biblical theology of mission, but also 'collect its own mission-historical memory' in order to define a missiological theory for today. Peter Penner is right when he states: 'In order to understand the present and prepare for the future, we need to look at the past history of mission in the FSU [Former Soviet Union]'.¹⁶ And this will have to include the whole of Christian mission, in all branches of the Christian Church – Evangelical as well as Orthodox and Roman Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed. An appropriate missiology is the product of a continuous conversation between Scripture, a discerning community of believers and the socio-political context in which mission is being done. This conversation is imbedded in history and its varied developments. Leaving out the historical background of a scriptural understanding, of community development and cultural change will lead to the adoption of foreign ideas which are in principle unable to touch the heart of a given people. An appropriate Evangelical missiology for the Slavic world must therefore recover its historic mission memory. This article will consider the potential.

2. Evangelical mission to the Slavs – an indigenous movement

Evangelical mission to the Slavs goes back to Western¹⁷ as well as Eastern sources.¹⁸ For centuries Russia has invited migrants to settle in the

country. Many of them were Protestants and some, the German Mennonites for instance, were Bible-believing Evangelicals. Their role in the establishment of a genuine Eastern European Evangelical movement has been well researched and established.¹⁹ But the unprecedented success of the Evangelicals in Russia is predominantly the result of developments within the context itself. Renewal movements inside the Russian Orthodox Church such as Clysty, Pryguny, Molokan, Tolstovcy and others entered into a missionary conversation with Western Evangelical migrants and became the main pool from which the young Evangelical movement drew its members.²⁰

Baptist, the periodical of the Russian Baptist Union, reported about Molokan groups in the Baku region who in 1908 practised believers' baptism similar to the Baptist praxis between 1840 and 1850 out of their own convictions which they had won by reading the Bible.²¹ A certain Wasilij Sotnikov brought this teaching to the Volga region where he baptised a number of Molokans in the Prišib. This Molokan group was known as 'wathering Molokan'. The baptism of the Molokan Nikita Ivanovi Voronin by the Baptist pastor Martin Kalweit on 20th August, 1867, in Tiflis (Tbilisi) is officially the birthday of the Baptist movement in Russia.²² Voronin, who later became the pastor of the Tiflis Baptist church, predominantly evangelised his own Molokan people.²³ The Molokan root of the Baptist movement in Russia is obvious. A similar development is reported about the work of the first Pentecostal missionaries of the Smorodin branch, the so-called 'Evangelical Christians in the apostolic spirit'.²⁴ Their mission was exceptionally successful wherever they approached members of the Orthodox renewal movements.²⁵

Mission and evangelism in Russia and the Ukraine is in the first place an indigenous story²⁶ and it is, as Kuznetsova justly says, a 'multifaceted movement'²⁷ with its own unprecedented originality, tracing its origins back to Eastern as well as Western sources.²⁸ And it is the Eastern source which provides the crucial conditions that allow the movement to flourish.²⁹ The majority of the Evangelical leadership in nineteenth-century Russia came from Molokan background, for instance; Ivan Prokhanov is only one example.³⁰ Prokhanov was, in all respects, the *spiritus rector* of the Evangelical revival in the Soviet Union in the first decades of the twentieth century.

If the way towards an appropriate missiology presumes the recovery of missionary memory,

then this memory will have to include a careful analysis of the Western as well as the Eastern sources of Evangelical mission history in Russia and the CIS. It is often frightening to see how little the contemporary Evangelical mission leadership is aware of the missionary theory and practice of their forefathers. Ruvim Voloshin, a Baptist mission leader, for instance, describes the faith of 'our forefathers' as 'bogoborcheski bolshevism', a militantly driven God-bolshevism.³¹ It would be hard to be more negative than that. History, however, proves Voloshin and like-minded people wrong. The Evangelical mission in Russia and in the early years of the Soviet Union was not a copy of Western protestant missiological models; the opposite seems to be the case. Any historian of mission will discover many elements of an indigenous movement with its own original settings and beliefs.

3. The great void – a church without missiology

The negative reception of their own missionary history by Russian-speaking Evangelical churches seems to derive its momentum from the immediate Soviet past. The church under state pressure, a continuously persecuted church, was unable to debate or develop its own missionary theology. Heinrich Klassen, who has carefully analysed most publications of the Evangelical Christian Baptists of the Soviet period,³² comes to the conclusion that little to nothing has been written on classical mission theology. The literature reveals a deep void regarding such issues in official publications like *Bratski Vestnik*³³ or in underground literature.³⁴ Klassen concludes: 'It appears that evangelical churches in the Soviet Union did not have time and energy for theological treatises on the subject of missions.'³⁵ Leonnard Frank, who analysed the literature of the Pentecostal churches over the same period, comes to a similar conclusion.³⁶

The absence of mission theology, however, does not mean that there has been no missionary praxis. Even at times of severe persecution the church was witnessing to its faith, but most cases through its alternative lifestyle rather than through strategic evangelism. This was repeatedly noticed by atheist authors. Klassen summarises his findings as follows:

The largest missionary power was perceived to lie in healthy Christian families. The family

had to be influenced, to be changed and to be retrained in order to stop the missionary message. The communist government certified that the Christians had an active missionary commitment. In the atheists' view, mission was not understood as proclamation *expressis verbis* in the first place, but as living a changed life.³⁷

This is generally true for all Evangelicals in the USSR including the Pentecostals. Their phenomenal growth is less due to mission and evangelism than to winning other people over, as Leonnard Frank proves.³⁸ Harsh persecution has not stopped the Evangelicals from being generally mission-minded. Nikol'skaia quotes atheist observers who complain that the 'persecuted, wherever they had been banned to, developed their missionary activity and managed to turn some of the citizens into adherents of their faith'.³⁹

With the change of religious policy during Gorbachev's perestroika and the growing missionary access of Western mission agencies, the absence of a written theology of mission was soon interpreted as missionary ignorance. The result was a rapid orientation towards Western concepts and a tendency to negate the missionary history of their own tradition. And Western missionary forces simply overran the Eastern church, offering help as far as the eye could see.⁴⁰

Overcoming the crisis of Evangelical missiology in the CIS by means of recovering the missionary memory of the Church will only be possible by going past the Soviet story. The Orthodox fore-runners look into the centuries of their history, and rightly so. Evangelicals working towards an appropriate missiology will have to examine the history of mission in their countries in general, but primarily the constitutive decades. For the Evangelicals we may consider the period between 1870 and 1930 as such a time. Walter W. Sawatsky has even suggested calling this period of sixty years the Golden Age for East Slavic Evangelicals.⁴¹

It is, of course, impossible to describe the totality of such a proposed research project in an article like this. It will take time to carefully examine our own history and we shall not accept shortcuts in research. Here I will only provide examples of the potential of such a venture by concentrating on two foundational leaders of the Evangelical movement and their theologies of mission: Ivan S. Prokhanov for the Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches and Ivan E. Voronaev for the Pentecostal Christians of Evangelical Faith.

4. Evangelical mission theory in the writings of the foundational fathers

The Evangelical story in Russia and the Soviet Union is, first and foremost, a story of mission, claims Walter Sawatsky.⁴² And this story is to a great extent the personal story of some extraordinary men and women whose lives are well documented. They are its foundational fathers.⁴³ Let us examine two of them, Ivan Prokhanov for the Baptist wing of the Soviet Evangelicals and Ivan Voronaev of the Pentecostal wing.

4.1. Ivan S. Prokhanov

The formation of the Evangelical mission movement in Russia and the Soviet Union is in every respect related to the work of Ivan Stepanovich Prokhanov (1869-1935). Prokhanov wrote extensively on different mission issues so that an analysis of his writings allows for a detailed reconstruction on his theology of mission. I presume that Ivan Prokhanov is the most important Evangelical name that an appropriate Evangelical missiology will have to recover; modern historians such as Bachinin urgently ask even the Russian church as a whole to study Prokhanov's insights, valuing them as crucial for Russia's search for a future.⁴⁴

Prokhanov's *vita* has been published in his own autobiography⁴⁵ as well as in a number of monographs,⁴⁶ the most extensive of which is the work of Wilhelm Kahle.⁴⁷ He was born into and socialised in a Molokan family, baptised in a Baptist church, educated in a leading Russian university, the Technological Institute of St. Petersburg, and a student of theology at the Baptist College in Bristol and the Congregational Hampstead New College, England, as well as at the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the University of Sorbonne in Paris and the famous Faculty of Theology at the Berlin Humboldt University. He took classes with the world famous historian of mission, Adolf Harnack, and was deeply interested in the reformation of the Russian Orthodox Church. Due to all this, Prokhanov ideally represents the type of east-west Evangelical who drew intensely from both sides of the theological divide. He calls Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon his spiritual and theological fathers, but even more so Jan Hus, the Czech reformer. He was so influenced by the Hussite movement that he asked for his ordination by the Hussite brethren in 1924 in order to establish a link between the Hussites and the 'Russian reformation'.

Prokhanov shared this excitement for Hus with many Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth century. In Hus they saw a Slavic reformation voice pleading not only for religious but also for a social and political reformation in his country.⁴⁸ Hus was an important figure of identification especially among the Slavophiles, even in Orthodox circles.⁴⁹ Prokhanov looked up to him from his youngest years on, as he wrote to his friend, Professor Marcinkovsky: 'The life of Jan Hus, this fighter for the Gospel, already fascinated me in my young years.'⁵⁰ And this excitement stayed with him throughout his life. Prokhanov's missiology certainly does not reside with Protestant models only; in his search for an appropriate missiology, he turns to the Czech renewal movement of the Hussites.⁵¹

Prokhanov's excitement for Hus contrasts to his experience with Western European Protestants. He studied theology under Harnack and Otto Pfleiderer in Berlin,⁵² read much Protestant theology and became very sceptical towards a theology which (in his view) 'generates unbeliefs' and a church which separates itself from its historical roots in Orthodoxy and Catholicism.⁵³ Prokhanov admits, however, that his theological knowledge is limited and uncompleted, due to the shortness of his studies and his insufficient knowledge of German and French.⁵⁴ His interest in closer relationships to the historical European Protestant churches grew, however, after he left the Baptist World Alliance, disillusioned by the American Baptist support for the Evangelical Christian movement in Russia. In 1931 Jakob Kroecker, the director of the mission union 'Light in the East', reported that Prokhanov had asked him to help establish formal relationships with the Churches of the Reformation.⁵⁵

An article does not offer enough space to examine Prokhanov's theology of mission in depth; some characteristic insights may encourage more elaborate studies in the future. How did Prokhanov view mission?

1. Mission is not simply a task of the Church, but rather a divine gift to the Church.⁵⁶ It is God, the triune God, who is deeply concerned with the state of his world. He is the creator of the Church; he is the prime agent of transformation and renewal of people and their cultures. It is his spirit who motivates for mission, his Son who lays the foundation for mission and his love which moves his strong hand towards the needy world.⁵⁷

2. Mission requires a deep understanding of

the centrality of love in Christ, which determines the foundation of true Christian spirituality and the missionary power of the Church. In a letter to V.A. Pashkov, Prokhanov reflects on his experience with the theological diversity of Western theologians and resumes that only the love of Christ can be the source of strength and life for the Church.⁵⁸ Prokhanov states that for him the teachings of Christ represent the only way to a complete renewal of the individual as well as the society and the whole of humanity.⁵⁹

3. The mission of God is clearly correlated to educating the people in God's word and will. When the Church does not preach the gospel and promote the reading of God's word, the nation, even a Christian nation, loses its moral and spiritual strength and cultural vitality.⁶⁰ The preaching of the gospel is central to the mission of the Church.⁶¹

4. Mission in an Orthodox country like Russia, according to Prokhanov's perspective, is first of all the reform and revival of the nation. This clearly includes all believers, all members of the body of Christ, men and women. A gender separation in the leadership of the Evangelical Christian Church is not acceptable. In 'The Evangelical Call' they ask the Orthodox Church for an inclusive policy on the role of women in the church and its mission.⁶²

5. Mission as reformation means moving towards the people, to those in need. In his autobiography, Prokhanov reports a personal dream which defined his theology to a great extent. In this dream he saw Jesus returning to the earth and throwing gold coins at the people. As he started to collect them, they immediately passed him and flew on to the poor and needy.⁶³ For Prokhanov this dream became a lesson for life – his life was now for ever devoted to the people in need.

6. Mission as reformation of a nation becoming a nationwide movement is what Prokhanov aims for.⁶⁴ It is a task for all believers in the country, including the members of the Orthodox State Church. And every Orthodox believer, especially clergy, who turns to the Lord, becomes a living testimony for the reformation-in-process.⁶⁵ Prokhanov repeatedly invited Orthodox fellow Christians to join forces in winning Russia back for Christ. In *Bratski Listok* he replies to his critic, the Orthodox missionary Bogolyubov: 'Christians should not quarrel with each other in front of unbelieving Russia. We should work hand in hand in the ministry of preaching living in Christ and

morally renewing our motherland. We invite you cordially to do so.⁶⁶ In 1922 Prokhanov and the leadership of the Union of the Evangelical Christians formulated the famous 'Evangelical Call',⁶⁷ inviting all orthodox believers to participate in a spiritual reformation of Russia. In 1928 another nationwide appeal was launched in what Prokhanov called 'Resurrection call', inviting all Christians to participate in a holistic renewal of faith and culture in Russia.⁶⁸ This document is also ecumenical in spirit, but, as Puzynin rightly comments, it less directly targets the Russian Orthodox Church.⁶⁹ Prokhanov seems to lose hope of seeing the Russian Orthodox Church reformed. Mission is an ecumenical venture of God. It is not done in a spirit of sectarianism. Prokhanov states:

The Free Evangelical Church in Russia has nothing to do with a sect. It exists in the spirit of ecumenicity. It is typical for a sect to claim salvation through belonging to the sect only. The Free Evangelical Church does not accept such a narrow view.⁷⁰

For Prokhanov salvation is offered even in those churches 'which may not be properly organised'.⁷¹ The Evangelical Christians will seek immediate cooperation with all bodies of Christian faith which are interested in the mission of transformation.⁷²

7. Mission presupposes unity among Christians. Prokhanov spent most of his energy trying to unite the different renewal movements in his country and he strongly believed in the transformative power of Christian unity. In an article written in *Bratski Listok*, he states:

The Evangelical movement aims towards renewal of all religious life of the Russian people. If the movement is to fulfil its task, all its branches will have to unite. If they do not unite, however, they will dry out and turn into separate sects and die spiritually. When they unite, they become strong and will effectively influence the reform of all religious life of the Russian people.⁷³

8. Mission as reformation, says Prokhanov, will never copy the church in other countries, but lead people in the nation to renewal and revival.⁷⁴ It presupposes contextualisation. Mission must be done in a way that is understandable in the people's language.⁷⁵ It will be carried out among the people by spiritually renewed individuals from the people itself. Mission as reformation of a nation does not come from importing Western theologi-

cal convictions and it is not an organised venture of the official state church, but rather a movement from below, a movement of people led by individual Christians.⁷⁶ Prokhanov compares his own Evangelical Christian movement to the time of the apostles. Here too, the movement of God started with the lower classes of society, reaching the whole of society through revival.⁷⁷

9. Mission is God's holistic venture. Prokhanov writes:

We steadily believe that Christianity is not just word, but also works, not just teaching, but also a transformed life. Therefore the Evangelical movement in Russia must express itself not only in preaching, but also in the creation of new forms of socio-economic life.⁷⁸

In his programmatic article on 'The New or Evangelical Life', published in *Christianin*, Prokhanov mentions a number of areas of individual and social, educational and economic life of a people which in his view will have to be transformed by the gospel.⁷⁹ He claims the transformation of people's lives, the cities and villages of Russia as the historic task for the mission of believers.⁸⁰ He wants to see at least half of all members of the Russian Academy of Science as coming from the Evangelical Christians.⁸¹ Christians will have to be the better citizens of Russia, who produce better economic results⁸² and organise their economic structures in a gospel manner, so that they become instruments of transformation. He even made plans for a new Gospel city, a project which never started due to the beginning Stalinist repressions.⁸³ But mission as an act of social transformation can never be a result of a social revolution, but rather of a 'spiritual revolution' carried out in a spirit of love and social care, motivated by God himself.⁸⁴ Mission introduces justice into all practical relationships between people⁸⁵ because Jesus has made justice possible.

10. The mission of the Russian Evangelical Church does not limit itself to its own country, but rather accepts the universal task to become an example and witness of renewal to the global church, especially the Protestant churches of the West, inviting them to return to the apostolic spirit of the original Christianity.⁸⁶ Soon after the revolution and the new freedom of speech and religious activity, Prokhanov and his Evangelical Christians sent missionaries not only to a number of non-Russian peoples inside of Russia, but also to India and China.⁸⁷

4.2. Ivan Efimovich Voronaev

The second founding father of the Eastern Slavic Evangelicals is the founder of the Slavic Pentecostal movement, Ivan Efimovich Voronaev (1885-1937). It was his work and writings which formed and defined the movement theologically. Voronaev was born in the Orenburg region on April 16, 1885. He converted to Christ in 1908 and almost immediately started to preach the gospel in the Baptist churches of Irkutsk und Krasnoyarsk. Persecution forced him to leave Russia in 1911; via China he moved to the USA where he served as pastor of a Russian speaking church in San Francisco.⁸⁸ Between 1912 and 1915, Voronaev studied theology at the Berkeley Theological Seminary while still serving his Baptist church as pastor and evangelist in Los Angeles (1913-1916) and then in Seattle (1916-1917), where he met Ernest Williams, one of the prominent leaders of the Assemblies of God. Williams introduced him to Pentecostal theology and praxis.⁸⁹ In 1917 Voronaev moved to New York where he pastored a Russian Baptist church until 1919, the year in which he and twenty other members of the Baptist church experienced the baptism with the Spirit and received the gift of speaking in tongues. On July 1, 1919, they founded the first Russian Pentecostal church in New York.⁹⁰ A number of other church plants in the USA followed. In the midst of this exciting mission, Voronaev received a call from God to return to Russia. A year after founding the Pentecostal church in New York, on July 15, 1920, Voronaev and two other families, the Saplyšnych and Koltovi, left for Constantinople in Turkey, heading for Odessa.⁹¹ On August 12, 1921, he returned to Soviet Russia as a missionary, after he personally sensed a clear prophetic call from the Lord.⁹² In less than ten years he organised and led a missionary movement, which reached 25,000 members in 400 churches by the year 1930, the year of his imprisonment.⁹³ Voronaev was killed by the Bolsheviks in 1937.

How did Voronaev view mission? He received his theological education in the USA and he followed the classic Pentecostal teachings of the American Pentecostals. How did this affect his theology of mission? Was he different to Prokhanov, the Westerniser among the Evangelical fathers? Voronaev left us no written missiology; he merely wrote some articles. Others reflected on his ministry and teaching – enough at least to propose a direction of thought. A number of crucial insights

shed light on his praxis and the theory beyond, and we will consider some.

1. Mission in Voronaev's conception is God's mission. The triune God is the initiator and main actor of mission; it is he who calls and sends people into mission.⁹⁴ He is the redeemer in Jesus, the Christ; the Spirit of God is the 'initiator, motivator and supervisor of world mission'.⁹⁵ Without a deeper theological discussion Voronaev lays a trinitarian foundation of mission, something that was unusual in Western Protestant thinking of his time.

2. Involvement in God's mission presupposes a personal call of God and a personal relationship. Voronaev himself returned to his home country in times of distress, leaving the safe haven of the USA. Prayer as an immediate conversation between God and his sent one is the most important ministry in effective mission. In one of his articles on prayer Voronaev writes:

Take time for prayer. I do not know of any other habit, which brings more blessing into the life of a Christian than the morning prayer. Am I ready to pay the price to develop such a habit, which is so closely connected with victory and a fruitful spiritual life?⁹⁶

For Voronaev mission and personal spirituality are interwoven; it is the changed life of a person which becomes an agent of change. It is the person personally touched by God who is able to touch the lives of others. Only Spirit-led mission is worthy to be called mission. And the Spirit leads his messengers to the people in the world.

3. The Church is God's prime missionary agent. It has no reason for existence except the mission of God. All members of the Church are called to mission; Voronaev states: 'You cannot be a Christian without being a missionary.'⁹⁷ The missionary Church follows the example of Christ⁹⁸ whose life was marked by mission, and consequently the Church of Christ has to be essentially mission-centred.

4. Mission in Voronaev's conception aims towards evangelism and conversion of people to God. The aim of all mission is conversion of sinners to God and as a result transformation of life in its totality.⁹⁹ Whatever the Church does, it has to lead people to Christ and to a fulfilled life in the Holy Spirit. The transformed individuals build the new people of God, the Church of the elect and redeemed. This leads to active church planting, which is seen as participation in God's divine

act.¹⁰⁰ The appointment of evangelists and church planters in the young movement clearly underlined this priority. At the first congress of the newly founded All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith, of which Voronaev became the first president, thirty male and five female union evangelists were commissioned to foster evangelism in all of the USSR.¹⁰¹ More were sent in the next years.¹⁰²

5. It is fascinating to see how Voronaev developed his mission work. While evangelism and church planting formed the heart of what he understood to be the mission of God, he consciously combined evangelism with social responsibility, ensuring a culture of a caring community. Typical for him are his sermons concerning the economic situation in the country, in which he directly calls Christians to invest their lives in serving the hungry and the needy.¹⁰³ Under his leadership the young Pentecostalism in the Soviet Lands served the spiritual as well as material and social needs of the people. Characteristic is the decision of the Pentecostal churches in Western Ukraine, Belarus and Poland, stating: 'Help needs to be given to poor people, who face famine, sickness, thievery and whose houses are burned down.' In such cases the churches were asked to assist immediately and without any delay.¹⁰⁴ The material and social ministry to the needy of Voronaev's newly established churches was, in the judgment of the Soviet historian Mel'nik, decisive for the growth of the Pentecostal churches.¹⁰⁵ Under Voronaev's leadership Pentecostal churches offered the people around them effective assistance by helping them to run their everyday lives in difficult economic and political situations, incorporating them in what the Soviet historian Klibanov calls their own well established social 'family net'.¹⁰⁶ It is this combination of social ministry and caring fellowship which determined their missionary success.¹⁰⁷ Mel'nik adds: 'Every family with material need can count on help from a Pentecostal church.'¹⁰⁸ Although the Soviet regulations strictly prohibited any humanitarian aid by the church, Mel'nik nonetheless summarises:

The humanitarian help of Pentecostals has never ended despite all state prohibition. The diaconal ministry is the most effective evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in a Pentecostal church.¹⁰⁹

6. In offering social help Voronaev and his followers directly combined human and divine inter-

vention. They counted on the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in healing, wonders and signs.¹¹⁰ In fact prayer for divine healing became an integral part of Pentecostal services and mission work.¹¹¹ 'The ministry of healing was considered as an empowerment of proclamation as well as non-verbal proclamation *par excellence*.'¹¹²

7. Voronaev strongly believed in mission as an organised and strategically executed venture. After summarising the missionary work of Voronaev, the Soviet historian Moskalenko states: 'Voronaev motivated through conferences and trained some of his followers for mission in a relatively short period of time.'¹¹³ For him mission was obviously the first priority and he organised the mission work of his young church with a sharp vision and strategic competence.¹¹⁴ In *Evangelist* he wrote:

It is the responsibility of every member of the church to preach the gospel. And this preaching must be done with courage and in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁵

It is amazing to see how strategically he started his work, moving first to the most responsive people among the Molokan and Dukhoborzy. Through his ministry many Molokan und Dukhobor Christians accepted Pentecostal beliefs.¹¹⁶ Soon his church grew in number and allowed him to enter other strata of society.

8. Mission and evangelism presuppose a church trained for its task. Voronaev, himself theologically trained, working hard to establish a missionary training school but his vision could not be realised due to the political circumstances.¹¹⁷ Frank points to other tools of missionary training such as publications and congresses which Voronaev used extensively to establish a missionary culture as well as a missionary understanding in his churches.¹¹⁸

4.3. Recovering the missionary memory – towards an appropriate missiology

The East Slavic Evangelicals have not developed an adequate system of theological training¹¹⁹ and as a consequence they have no written missiology. This does not, however, in my opinion, mean that there were no missiological foundations undergirding their missionary praxis. We have examined the voices of two of the forefathers of East Slavic Protestantism. Their Evangelical Protestant missiological roots are evident. In his inspiring study, Puzynin assumes that there was especially an Anglo-Saxon revivalist influence in their work¹²⁰ but the forefathers, especially Prokhanov, go far

beyond the Protestant models on the following points:

1. A clear trinitarian foundation of the Church and its mission,¹²¹ which was in no way typical for the Evangelical missiology in the Protestant West of the time.
2. A society-transforming framework of missionary thinking, which Prokhanov calls reformation, which was absent in Pietistic and Anglo-Saxon revivalist groups.
3. Church-centred mission, unlike most of the Western faith missions of the period.
4. A clear sense of contextualisation and independence from imported models and a search for an indigenous way.
5. A pneumatological dimension, especially in Voronaev's teaching, but also in Prokhanov's idea of a 'spiritual revolution', which goes beyond the classic Western concepts of mission at the time.

Those and similar convictions reveal Eastern roots, which may have added to the enormous success of the Evangelicals during the golden years of their mission between 1917 and 1929. Reading the Slavic Evangelical fathers, I was constantly reminded of David Bosch's 'emerging postmodern paradigm of mission'.¹²² All but two of Bosch's thirteen elements of an emerging ecumenical paradigm¹²³ are present in the writings of the fathers. They too speak of mission as God's mission, of a Church with others, of mediating salvation, of acts of justice, evangelism and contextualisation, liberation and inculturation, of witness acts of hope for a nation. For the fathers mission was evidently a ministry of the whole people of God. To be sure, there was less talk about theology and less inter-religious dialogue, but this was a direct result of their unique setting.

Slavic Evangelicals may and should look back to their heritage. Too much missiology has been lost along the Soviet path. After years of persecution the Church has become ingrown; it is pre-occupied with internal affairs and the cultivation of otherness, separating itself from the people around them. The vast majority of the Evangelical churches have almost completely lost the holistic understanding of mission which their forefathers had. Issues are still being raised, but they are now internally focused. The Evangelicals may still care for the needy, but first and foremost for they own members; they may still expect God's Spirit to heal the sick, but in the first place the members of

their own churches.¹²⁴ During the last decade the missionary excitement of many Slavic Evangelical Churches has lost its momentum.¹²⁵ At the same time the Islamic da'wa has developed an enormous missionary energy. In the city of Moscow, for example, the Muslim population has grown 250 times in the last ten years.¹²⁶ It is time to regain the lost missionary dynamic of our fathers. Maybe Orthodox missiologists will point the right way.

As to the Russian Orthodox Church, the development of its recent mission theory goes back to the decision of the Episcopalian Sobor of the Church in 1994 to establish criteria for a Russian Orthodox missiology; a working group presented its results in 1995. On this basis the current text of the 'Conception of missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church' was finalised and passed by the Holy Synod.¹²⁷ In 2009 the first textbook on missiology from a Russian Orthodox perspective was finalised by the Mission Office of the church and published.¹²⁸ There are many questions that can be asked about the book, both from a scholarly and from a missiological perspective, as Andrey Kuraev, one of the authors, rightly states.¹²⁹ In his estimation, the textbook is an 'expression of the missiological poverty' of the Church.¹³⁰ The missionary statement of the Russian Orthodox Church sees mission as a movement of the Church towards the world, with the declared aim to change and renew the world according to the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹³¹ Modern day Russian Orthodox missiology derives from the missionary praxis of the Church Fathers, but especially from their own missionary history in the nineteenth century, here especially from the Altai and Japan missions.¹³²

To be sure, the Orthodox are still far away from the set goal of formulating an appropriate missiology for their context. But they have started. Without a doubt, the Evangelicals should now follow and they may do so in conversation with the Orthodox. The first possible step will obviously be to recover the missionary legacy of our own tradition.

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Endnotes

- 1 The available statistics show a clear tendency, which may have started at the end of the 1990s and continues until today. See Walter Sawatsky, 'Return of Mission and Evangelism in the CIS (1980s – Present). An Assessment' in Walter Sawatsky and Peter F. Penner (eds.), *Mission in the Former Soviet Union* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2005) 110-111.
- 2 Catherine Wanner, 'Missionaries of Faith and Culture: Evangelical Encounters in Ukraine' in *Slavic Review* 63.4 (2004) 732-755; Catherine Wanner, 'Missionaries and Pluralism: How the Law Changed the Religious Landscape in Ukraine' in Larissa M.L. Zaleska Onyshkevych and Maria G. Rewakowicz (eds.), *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2009).
- 3 Charles H. Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2005) 4-5. See for concern Michail Cherenkov, 'Postsovetskie evangelskie cerkvi v posikach podchodiaschei missiologii: globalnye tendencii i mestnye realii' in <http://baptist.org.ru/articles/missions/382> [accessed 01.02.2013]; English translation: **Michael Cherenkov**, 'Global Missiological Trends and Local Realities Toward Appropriate Missiology for Post-Soviet Evangelicals: Global Missiological Trends and Local Realities' in March 1, 2012; Denis Shumilin, *Missiologia* (Donezk: Donetsk Christianski Universitāt) at www.shumilinalia.org/missiolog.pdf [accessed 20.01.2013].
- 4 Cherenkov, 'Postsovietskie'.
- 5 John York, *Missiologia v vek Ducha*. Springfield: Life Publishers International, 2002; Harold Kurz, *Ocerki po missiologii* (Moskva: Narnia, 2002); A. Chacki and Jim Overton, *Missiologia: bibleiskiy, istoricheskiy, kulturny, strategicheskiy aspekty, Uchebnoe posobie* (Moskva: Duchovnoe vospozrozhdenie, 2001); David J. Bosch, *Probrazovanie missii* (Moskva: Bibleiskaia kafedra, 2002).
- 6 See for instance Wes Bredenhof. 'Reformatskie veroispovedania I missia cerkvi' at www.reformed.org.ua/2/613/Bredenhof [accessed 25.01.2013].
- 7 The strong dependence on Western models is also caused by the strong presence of Western missionary forces in the CIS. It has been estimated that in 1996, 5,600 Western missionaries operated in the CIS: Peter F. Penner, 'Critical evaluation of recent development in the CIS' in Sawatsky and Penner, *Mission*, 127).
- 8 See for instance Ruvim Voloshin, 'Vozvedite ochi vashi i posmotrite na nivy kak oni pobeledi i pospeliki Zhatve' 3.12.2008 in <http://baptist.org.ru/articles/missions/> [accessed 01.02.2013].
- 9 Voloshin, 'Vozvedite ochi'.
- 10 Vladimir Fiodorov (ed.), *Pravoslavnaia missia segodnia* (St Petersburg: Apostolski Gorod, 1999).
- 11 Fiodorov (ed.), *Pravoslavnaia missia*, 91-291.
- 12 Alexandr Ginkel (ed.), *Missiologia*. 2-e isprav. Izdanie (Belgorod: Belgorodskaja Duchvnaia Pravoslavnaia Seminaria, 2010) 8.
- 13 Ginkel (ed.), *Missiologia*. All translations from Russian and German in this essay are mine.
- 14 See for instance the textbook on missiology by V.M. Chernyshev, *Missiologia* (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo L'va Papy Rimskogo, 2010).
- 15 Andrey Kuraev, *Missionerski krizis pravoslavia* (Moskva: Nikea, 2010).
- 16 Peter F. Penner, 'Scripture, community and context in God's mission in the FSU' in Sawatsky and Penner, *Mission*, 23.
- 17 See for instance Waldemar Gutsche, *Westliche Quellen des Russischen Stundismus* (Kassel: Oncken, 1955) 10-68; Wilhelm Kahle, *Evangelische Christen in Rußland und der Sowjetunion. Ivan Stepanovic Prochanov (1869-1935) und der Weg der Evangeliums Christen und Baptisten* (Kassel: Oncken, 1978) 38-79; Hans-Christian Dietrich, *Ursprünge und Anfänge des russischen Freikirchentums* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1985) 215-216; Hans-Christian Dietrich, *Siedler, Sektierer und Stundisten. Die Entstehung des russischen Freikirchentums* (Holzgerlingen: Hänssler, 1997).
- 18 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 90-104; Dietrich, *Ursprünge*, 155-156; Hans-Christian Dietrich, 'Russische Sekten' in H.D. Betz u.a. (Hrsg.) *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 4. Auflage, Band 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 686.
- 19 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 38-89; Hans Kasdorf, *Flammen unauslöschlich* (Lage: Logos Verlag, 1991) 71-173.
- 20 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 90-92. See also the article of Marina Sergeevna Karetnikova, an outstanding Russian historian in this regard: Marina S. Karetnikova, 'The missionary movement in Russia: The 19th and 20th centuries' in Sawatsky and Penner, *Mission*, 64-73.
- 21 In Vladimir Franchuk, *Probuždenie: ot centra Odessy do okrain Rossii* (Odessa: Simäks-print, 2011) 225.
- 22 See for example Dietrich, *Siedler*, 162.
- 23 Heinrich Löwen, *Russische Freikirchen. Die Geschichte der Evangeliums-Christen und Baptisten bis 1944* (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1995) 94-95; Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 180.
- 24 More about the different branches of Pentecostal churches in Tat'iana Nikol'skaja, *Russkij protestantizm i gosudarstvennaja vlast' v 1905-1991 gg.* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo evropejskogo universiteta, 2009) 77. Nikolaj Petrovich Smorodin (1875-1953), a former officer of the Russian army, founded the first Pentecostal church in Wyborg, close to St. Petersburg, in 1915 (Nikol'skaja,

- Russkij Protestantizm, 77).
- 25 Vladimir Franchuk, *Prosla Rossija dozhdia u Gospoda* Tom 1 (Kiev: Svitankova Zorja, 2001) 326-329; Leonard Frank, *Gemeindegewachstum der Pfingstgemeinden in der UdSSR im 20. Jahrhundert* (Unpublished MTh dissertation; Pretoria: UNISA, 2013) 51.
- 26 See for instance Walter Sawatsky, 'The centrality of mission and evangelism in the Slavic Evangelical story' in Sawatsky and Penner, *Mission*, 41.
- 27 Miriam R. Kuznetsova, *Early Russian Evangelicals (1874-1929). Historical background and hermeneutical tendencies based on I.V. Kargel's written heritage* (Unpublished PhD dissertation; Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2009) 16.
- 28 Kuznetsova, *Early Russian evangelicals*, 62.
- 29 Steve Durasoff, *The Russian Protestants: Evangelicals in the Soviet Union, 1944-1964* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1969) 25, points to the Orthodox renewal movements as the actual precondition of Protestantism in Russia.
- 30 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 18-19.
- 31 Voloshin, 'Vozvedite otchi'.
- 32 See his doctoral dissertation: Heinrich Klassen, *Mission als Zeugnis – Zur missionarischen Existenz in der Sowjetunion nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Lage: Logos, 2001).
- 33 *Bratski Vestnik* is a publication of the All-Union of Evangelical-Christian Baptists.
- 34 Klassen, *Mission als Zeugnis*.
- 35 Heinrich Klassen, 'Mission as bearing witness – Immigrant witness in Germany' in *Mission Focus* 14 (2006) 167.
- 36 Frank, *Gemeindegewachstum*, 95.
- 37 Klassen, 'Mission as bearing', 170.
- 38 Frank, *Gemeindegewachstum*, 116.
- 39 Nikol'skaia, *Russkij Protestantizm*, 188.
- 40 See Michael Bourdeaux, *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Euroasia* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995) 117-118; Johannes Reimer, 'Mission in post-perestroika Russia' in *Missionalia* 24.Frank, *Gemeindegewachstum* 18-39.
- 41 Sawatsky, 'Centrality of mission', 48.
- 42 Sawatsky, 'Centrality of mission', 40.
- 43 Johannes Reimer, 'Mission der Aussiedlergemeinden in Deutschland – was bremst den Aufbruch?' in *Evangelikale Missiologie* 25 (2009) 159; Frank, *Gemeindegewachstum*, 151.
- 44 Vladislav Arkadieievich Bachinin, 'Proekt russkoi reformacii', in <http://kolokol.net/content/64-credo-/385-ivan-prohanov>.
- 45 Ivan S. Prokhanov, *In the Cauldron of Russia* (New York: John Felsberg, 1933).
- 46 Leonid Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie christiane. Vozrozhdenie evangel'skogo dvizhenija v istoricheskoi christianskoi cerkvi. Istoricheskii ocherk (XIX-XX vv.)* (Togoshio: Print, 1986); V.A. Popov, I.S. Prokhanov. *Stranicy zhizni* (St. Petersburg: Biblia dlja vsekh, 1996).
- 47 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 430-431.
- 48 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 430.
- 49 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 431.
- 50 Ivan S. Prokhanov in Vladimir Marcinkovski, *Zipiski veruyushchego. Iz istorii evangel'skogo dvizhenia v sovetskoi Rossii (1917-1923)* (St. Petersburg: Biblia dlja vsekh, 1994) 296.
- 51 Sawatsky, 'Centrality of mission', 41.
- 52 Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 437.
- 53 See the ecumenical orientation of Prokhanov in Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 439-440.
- 54 Ivan S. Prokhanov, *Cauldron*, 97, 102; see also Andrey P. Puzynin, *The Tradition of the Gospel Christians* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2011) 128-130.
- 55 Jakob Kroecker, 'Nachrichten' in *Dein Reich komme* 7 (1931) 204-205; Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 444.
- 56 Prokhanov, *Cauldron*, 131.
- 57 Ivan S. Prokhanov, *V kotle Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Biblia dlja vsekh, 1992) 40-41.
- 58 Letter of I.S. Prokhanov to V.A. Pashkov dated 17th May, 1998, VSEChB Archives, Moskva, quoted in Bachinin, 'Proekt russkoi reformacii'.
- 59 Prokhanov, *V kotle*, 76.
- 60 See the sharp analysis of the state of the Russian Orthodox Church in Prokhanov's autobiography: Prokhanov, *V kotle*, 20-21.
- 61 Prokhanov, *V kotle*, 83.
- 62 See *Evangel'ski klich*, 20 in <http://charismaticoc.narod.ru/business7.html> [accessed 01.02.2013].
- 63 Prokhanov, *V kotle*, 43-44.
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- 65 Ivan S. Prokhanov, *Erfolge des Evangeliums in Rußland* (Wernigerode: LiO, 1929) 29-30.
- 66 *Bratski Listok* 12 (1908) 17-18, quoted in the translation of Puzynin, *Tradition*, 139.
- 67 See the full text in <http://charismaticoc.narod.ru/business7.html> [accessed 10.02.2013].
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- 79 Prokhanov, *Religious Reformation*, 26.]
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- 83 See the detailed discussion of the socio-economic views of Prokhanov in Kahle, *Evangelische Christen*, 450-455; Popov, *Prokhanov*, 97-98, 133-148.
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- 85 *Evangel'ski klich*, 26.
- 86 *Evangel'ski klich*, 131.
- 87 Bachinin.
- 88 Vladimir Franchuk, *Prosila Rossija doždja u Gospoda*. Tom 2 (Kiev: Svitankova, 2002) 8-10; Durasoff, *Russian Protestants*, 68.
- 89 Nikolai Usach and Vladimir Tkachenko, *Poslannik piatidesiatnicy. K istorii piatidesiatnicheskogo dvizhenija, Kniga 1* (Vinnica: Slovo Christianina, 2006) 91.
- 90 Durasoff, *Russian Protestants*, 52.
- 91 Usach and Tkachenko, *Poslannik*, 97-103; Franchuk, *Prosila Rossija 2*, 22.
- 92 Franchuk, *Prosila Russija 2*, 21; Usach and Tkachenko, *Poslannik*, 98.
- 93 Vladimir Franchuk, *Prosila Rossija doždja u Gospoda*. Tom 1 (Kiev: Svitankova, 2001) 154.
- 94 Ivan Voronaev, 'O Boge' in *Evangelist 1* (1928) 15-16.
- 95 Ivan Voronaev, 'Kakuju silu imeet Duch Svjatoj' in *Evangelist 2* (1928) 7.
- 96 Ivan Voronaev, 'O Bozh'em uteshenii' in *Evangelist 2* (1928) 11.
- 97 Ivan Voronaev in *Evangelist 8* (1928) 22.
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- 101 Franchuk, *Prosila Rossija 2*, 67-69; Usach and Tkachenko, *Poslannik*, 184-187.
- 102 In 1927 25 more Union evangelists began their ministry, see Franchuk, *Prosila Rossija 1*, 337-338.
- 103 Some of the sermons have been published in *Evangelist*, for instance Voronaev's sermon on the hunger in Odessa in *Evangelist 2* (1928) 15-17.
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- 107 See in this regard Klibanov, *Religioznoe sektantstvo*, 96.
- 108 Viktoria Mel'nik, *Molodiozh' v piatidesjatnichestve: poiski ideala* (L'vov: Svit, 1992) 102.
- 109 Mel'nik, *Molodiozh*, 143.
- 110 See for instance Voronaev on healing as part of the missionary calling of the church in *Evangelist 3-4* (1928) 1; 5 (1928) 20. Frank, *Gemeindewachstum*, 137-139 lists numerous articles in Pentecostal publications of the time, such as *Primiritel* and *Evangelist*, strongly supporting this observation.
- 111 Nikol'skaja, *Russkij protestantizm*, 68.
- 112 Frank, *Gemeindewachstum*, 139.
- 113 Aleksei Moskalenko, *Pjatidesjatniki* (Moskva: Politi eskaja literatura, 1973) 127.
- 114 See for instance Franchuk, *Prosila Rossija 2*, 67-69; Usach and Tkachenko, *Poslannik*, 184-187.
- 115 Voronaev, 'O cerkvi', 7.
- 116 Frank, *Gemeindewachstum*, 55.
- 117 Franchuk, *Probuzhdenie*, 382.
- 118 Voronaev, 'O Bozh'em uteshenii', 15; Frank, *Gemeindewachstum*, 94-95.
- 119 See the argument in Sawatsky, 'Centrality of mission', 52.
- 120 Puzynin, *Tradition*, 147.
- 121 Puzynin, *Tradition*, 147.
- 122 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991) 349-350.
- 123 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 368-510.
- 124 Frank, *Gemeindewachstum*, 140-142, points to the fact that, despite the clear orientation of the Pentecostal churches in the USSR on healing, only very few reports on healing can be collected from the time after 1945.
- 125 Voloshin, 'Vozvedite ochi vashi'.
- 126 Voloshin, 'Vozvedite ochi vashi'.
- 127 Ginkel, *Missiologia*, 12-13. See the text *Koncepcia missionerskoi deiatelnosti Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Cerkvi* (Moskva: Missionerski otdel Rossiskoi Pravoslavnoi cerkvi, 2009).
- 128 Ginkel, *Missiologia*, 14.
- 129 Andrey Kuraev, *Миссиология. Учебное пособие. Издание Белгородской семинарии, 2009*, in <http://diak-kuraev.livejournal.com/41380.html> [accessed 2.02.2013].
- 130 Kuraev, *Миссиология*.
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Belgian Protestantism from the Reformation to the Present

A Concise History of its Mission and Unity

Colin Godwin

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Obwohl ein großer Teil der belgischen Bevölkerung sich der Verkündigung verschiedener Reformer geöffnet hat, so haben doch schwere Verfolgung und eine Reihe von Kriegen den belgischen Protestantismus nach dem 16. Jahrhundert nahezu ausgelöscht. Im Jahr 1831 hatten

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SUMMARY

Although a large part of the Belgian population was receptive to the preaching of the various Reformers, heavy persecution and a series of wars almost annihilated Belgian Protestantism after the sixteenth century. By

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RÉSUMÉ

Une grande partie de la population belge s'est montrée réceptive à la prédication de divers réformateurs. Toutefois, de dures persécutions et une série de guerres ont presque anéanti le protestantisme belge après le xvi^e siècle. En 1831, il ne restait plus que vingt et une Églises

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Belgium has recently been described by a prominent evangelical publication as 'one of the most needy countries in Europe, with great spiritual apathy and faith largely banished from the public sphere'.¹ This may be a bleak assessment of Christianity in contemporary Belgium, but few Protestants in Belgium yearn to return to days gone by. Fuelled by foreign missionary activity, the arrival of immigrant churches and recognition by the Belgian government, Belgian Protestantism has never been stronger than it is today. Since much of the history of Belgian Protestantism has been written in French, this essay seeks to make

nur 21 protestantische Gemeinden in Belgien überlebt. Heute gibt es nach mehreren Wellen missionarischer Tätigkeit von jenseits des großen Teiches im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert mehr als 700 protestantische Gemeinden in allen Teilen des Landes. Der vorliegende Artikel bietet einen geschichtlichen Überblick über das Wachstum und die Herausforderungen des belgischen Protestantismus.

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1831, there were only 21 surviving Protestant churches in Belgium. Today, after several waves of missionary activity from overseas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there are more than 700 Protestant churches in all parts of the country. This article provides a history of the growth and challenges of Belgian Protestantism.

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protestantes en Belgique. Aujourd'hui, suite à plusieurs vagues d'activité missionnaire étrangère aux xix^e et xx^e siècles, on compte plus de sept cents Églises protestantes réparties dans tout le pays. Cet article retrace l'histoire de la croissance du protestantisme belge et des difficultés rencontrées en chemin.

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that research available to English speakers. It also includes a treatment of the important efforts at Protestant unity that have taken place in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

The Reformation in Belgium

By 1566, approximately 300000 Belgians, roughly 20% of the total population, had affiliated themselves with the ideas of the various Reformers: Martin Luther from Wittenberg, Martin Bucer from Strasbourg, Ulrich Zwingli from Zurich, John Calvin of Geneva, and the Anabaptists

Conrad Grebel and Melchior Hofmann.² A large number of nobles embraced the new faith, sometimes organising themselves to take control of the local government. But these Protestant advances were not met with ambivalence by the Catholic authorities. Belgium had the unfortunate privilege of giving to the Reformation its first martyrs on July 1, 1523, when two monks who had converted to Lutheranism were burnt alive at the stake in the Grande Place in Brussels for their Reformed ideals. In 1536, the Englishman William Tyndale, who had made it his life's work to see the Bible translated into English, was executed at Vilvoorde, near Brussels. The interest in Protestant ideas was so strong, however, that the Catholic authorities were limited in their ability to implement repressive actions. Between 1577 and 1585, the city of Brussels was a Calvinist Republic, and a significant number of other Belgian cities and towns followed, including Ghent, Antwerp, Brugge, Courtrai, Tournai and Dendermonde.³

It was not until the Spanish King, Philip II, sent the Duke of Alba with Spanish troops to put down the heretics, that the threat of Protestantism was eliminated. In 1585, the Spanish conquered Antwerp and by 1604 the last Protestant rebellion was eradicated.⁴

Persecution and emigration

This persecution was so intense that it almost completely annihilated Belgian Protestantism.⁵ Belgian Protestants had to choose between persecution and exile. The vast majority chose exile, with between 200000 and 225000 leaving Belgium between 1522 and 1630. Their destinations were England, Holland, Denmark, Germany and Sweden. By the end of the sixteenth century, 15 Walloon churches had been started in Holland.⁶ Their Reformed confession of faith, the *Belgic Confession*, was originally written in French by Guy de Brès (1522-1567), who was born in Mons in what would later become the Belgian territory.⁷

Anabaptists were persecuted more severely since they lacked the protection of a civil power. In Tournai, Michel Delehaye was decapitated with five of his companions, despite the repudiation of his Anabaptist faith. Marie Boisière, a young widow and mother of two children, would not reveal the identity of her brethren to Pierre Titelmas, the inquisitor, who had shown great interest in the community despite its small size of only a few dozen members. She was strangled in

the town square in July 1564, then her body was burned and the ashes thrown into the river.⁸

Sailing under a Dutch flag, a group of French-speaking Belgian Protestants emigrated to the New World with the Dutch West India Company in 1624 and founded the city of New Amsterdam on the island of Manhattan in the mouth of the Hudson River. The surrounding territory between the Delaware River and Lake Champlain was named New Belgium by the government of the Dutch United Provinces. In 1628, a Protestant pastor in Manhattan wrote, 'We hold all our church services in French because the majority of the inhabitants are Belgian Walloons.'⁹ In 1664 the name of the city was changed to New York when King Charles II of England incorporated the territory into his North American possessions.¹⁰

Belgium was a European battleground in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the presence of foreign armies on its soil sometimes allowed for greater religious liberty, at least for a time. The wars against King Louis XIV of France at the turn of the eighteenth century for the Spanish succession brought English troops to Belgium, and under General John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, reforms were instituted in favour of Protestants and churches were built. This period ended in 1715 when Belgium passed under the control of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs. Nevertheless, freedom of worship was granted to the soldiers in the various Dutch garrisons scattered in towns and cities around the country, and Belgian Protestants benefited from the presence of military chaplains and the worship services they led. In the countryside, however, Protestants still suffered persecution. The last Belgian martyr, Gilles Laurent, was killed at Dour in 1750, dragged behind a horse until his death.¹¹

Napoleon and limited freedom (1789-1830)

Between 1789 and 1830, the Belgian territories changed hands several times: the United States of Belgium, the Austrian Restoration, French invasion, annexation by France. Religious freedom mirrored the political changes: a return to intolerance, freedom of religion, and the outright banning of Protestantism. It was not until Napoleon that Belgian Protestantism would officially become a legitimate religion. Under the law governing Protestant worship (18 Germinal An 10 / April 8, 1802), Napoleon granted Lutheran and Reformed

Protestants, including those in the Belgian departments, freedom of worship. Nevertheless, the conditions for the exercise of Protestant religion were strict. A Consistorial Church required 6000 members, a number impossible to obtain in almost every region. In Brussels, permission was granted to establish a smaller 'oratory' because of the influence of the church members in the textile trade.¹²

The Congress of Vienna in 1814 reunited the Belgian territories with Holland under King William I, and under the Dutch king, Protestant churches were established in Liège, Huy, Tournai and Ostend, with military chaplains assigned to Bruges, Namur, Mons, Bouillon and Arlon. But the Catholic French-speaking upper class (Walloon and Fleming) objected to the economic practices of their Dutch Protestant king, and, inspired by the July 1830 revolution in France, Belgian nationalists rioted in Brussels the following month.¹³ The Dutch army invaded a year later but, after some initial successes, it was halted by the French army under Marshall Gérard. Despite fears that France would annex Belgium, the other European powers were unwilling to send troops to Belgium, and Belgian independence was won. The European powers officially recognised the independence of Belgium in the Treaty of London in 1839.¹⁴

The impact of the persecution, war and the exodus on the Protestant population was so great that by 1830, there were only 21 Protestant groups in the whole country, five of which were expatriate communities.¹⁵

Belgian independence and the end of religious conflict

Sixteen churches which had survived the Belgian Revolution organised themselves as the Union of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Belgium on April 22, 1839. Although the synod established by this meeting did not include all the Belgian Protestant churches, and it had simply sought to establish a legal identity to represent its members, it was recognised by King Leopold as the sole legal representative for all Protestants in Belgium.¹⁶ Some Protestant churches received state financing and some did not; nevertheless, the new Belgian constitution guaranteed freedom of religion and opened the way for the slow growth and expansion of Protestantism in Belgium. Some of the original churches were closed, missionary efforts were undertaken and evangelists worked to begin Protestant churches in areas of the country where

no such church existed.¹⁷ By the death of Leopold I in 1865, there were 43 Protestant churches in the country.¹⁸

Help from Europe

New growth also came from outside the country, in two phases. The first phase was the establishment of Protestant works in Belgium from neighbouring European countries. After the defeat of Napoleon, British Protestants sought to evangelise the continent through various missionary societies, such as the *London Missionary Society* (1875), the *British and Foreign Bible Society* (1803) and the *Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (1813). In France, the *Société Évangélique de France* was founded in 1833, and in Belgium, under the leadership of William Pascoe Tiddy, the *Société Évangélique Belge* began in 1837 with financial support and personnel from overseas. The churches founded by the Society, for the most part in Wallonia, became the Belgian Christian Missionary Church, which numbered nineteen communities by 1865.¹⁹

Anglican

Anglican churches were established in Belgium in the sixteenth century to service the spiritual needs of English-speaking Protestant merchants, who, because of their economic interests in the country, were excluded from the persecutions suffered by other Belgian Protestants. The 'Merchant Adventurers' of Antwerp were authorised to conduct Anglican worship services in their chapel during the wave of general persecution under the reign of Charles V.²⁰ Even under the relentless persecution by the Duke of Alba, Anglicans were tolerated, and it was only when Belgium fell under Spanish rule in 1585 that the churches were scattered.²¹ But English economic interests persisted and favours were granted to those of the Anglican faith. In 1783 the Anglican church of Ostend was established, followed by the Anglican church of Brussels in 1786. These churches were emptied when Napoleon annexed the Low Countries, but after his defeat in 1815, the large number of British soldiers ensured the prosperity of the churches, and churches were founded in Antwerp, Bruges, Spa and Ostend. By 1829 there were three Anglican churches in Brussels.²²

After the Belgian independence, the economic and social status of these communities in Belgium allowed the Anglican Church to be officially recognised as a state religion independently alongside

the (United) Protestants, Catholics and Jews.²³ Anglican churches, after the initial request from the pastor of Ostend in 1832, even benefitted from state subsidies for the exercise of worship and for the salary of Anglican pastors. This subsidy, voted by the Belgian government in 1835, was granted on the grounds that the Belgian Constitution respected the equality of all faiths, and permitted subsidies for ministers of religion. Until this time, the costs of Anglican worship had been borne by each local church, or through subsidies from England. By 1865, Anglicanism in Belgium was represented by ten pastors or chaplains.²⁴

Brethren

The French evangelist Casimir Gaudibert began his ministry for the *Société Évangélique Belge* in February 1854 in the work which had been established in Fontaine l'Évêque. Six months later, however, the Society questioned Gaudibert because a fellow missionary accused him of teachings drawn from John Nelson Darby.²⁵ Gaudibert refused two summonses to Brussels to be questioned, and was excluded as a missionary of the Society.²⁶ He remained at the church, which gained its independence from the Society, and Gaudibert got the support of the Open Brethren assembly of George Müller in Bristol.²⁷ Despite the polemics between Gaudibert and the Society which continued until 1867, his work prospered and his printing press became the centre of Brethren work in the region. In addition to the French work in Fontaine l'Évêque, two more Open Brethren assemblies, this time German-speaking, were established in Liège and Verviers in 1865 and 1866.²⁸

The Salvation Army

In 1889, the Salvation Army sent a Scottish officer to begin to work in Belgium, opening works in Malines, Ghent and Antwerp. The following year, a post was established in Brussels by General William Booth's eldest daughter, Catherine. In 1891, the first Belgian officers began their training. In the ensuing years, with an increase in personnel, the number of posts multiplied. By 1902, there were thirty officers serving in eleven posts and two social works across the country.²⁹

Baptists

The first Baptist church in Belgium was planted in Ougrée, near Liège, in 1893 by two steel workers who had joined the Baptist church in Denain, France, while they had worked there.³⁰ In 1903,

a second church was planted in Péruwelz, near the French border, by two French evangelists, François Vincent and Samuel Farelly, and another in Mont-sur-Marchienne, near Charleroi, in 1904. These churches, along with six more in northern France, were planted as part of an outreach to the textile workers, coal miners and steel workers active in a geographical region that spanned across northern France, southern Belgium and the German Rhineland. In these regions, the workers were subject to hard working conditions and alcoholism became not only a major social problem, but also a hindrance to industrial and commercial development, so much so that the religious message and lifestyle preached by the Baptist evangelists was perceived positively, and even sometimes encouraged, by the authorities.³¹ In 1922, these three churches led the founding of the Union of Evangelical Baptists in Belgium.³²

Seventh-Day Adventists

Adventism arrived in Germany in 1875, in France in 1877 and in Holland in 1887, but these immediate neighbours were not the source of the Belgian mission, for it was the work in Switzerland which was the best organised. In 1880, the Swiss editor of *Signs of the Times* noted that copies of the Adventist magazine were sent to Belgium and Luxembourg³³ and in 1896 Charles Roth travelled to Belgium to assess the possibilities of starting a work. By 1899 the first church was established in Jemappe (Liège). The church had 18 baptised members by November 1906. A second church was started in Verviers in 1900 and a work began in Charleroi in 1901. The Adventist missionaries, all of them from Switzerland, spread their message through door-to-door work, evangelistic meetings in tents when the weather permitted, and meetings in rented halls when the church could afford it. Catholic opposition in some towns was strong, with one missionary complaining that with all the different kinds of Jesuits, Capuchins and other monks, 'the city of Namur is more clerical than the pope'.³⁴

In Flanders, an American Adventist of German descent, Reinhold Klingbell, began the work in Antwerp in 1903 with a convert that came from the Salvation Army. A work in Brussels was opened in 1907 with ten baptisms. In 1909, there were four Adventist churches in Belgium, with the Brussels church offering bilingual services in French and Dutch.³⁵

Mennonites

In 1550, Mennonites were among the largest non-Catholic Christian groupings in the Low Countries. John Calvin's wife, Idelette de Bure (1505-1549), was an Anabaptist from Liège who, with her first husband, John Stordeur, converted to Calvin's faith during their stay in Strasbourg. But the persecutions that followed in Belgium against Anabaptists were so intense that Anabaptism in Belgium completely died out by the seventeenth century. Many fled north to East Friesland, especially to Emden. In Flanders, Mennonites were given between one and six weeks to recant; in the south, they were executed within one week of capture. The number of Belgian Mennonite martyrs is estimated at 800.³⁶

In 1945, the Mennonite Relief Committee (MRC) of Elkhart, Indiana, began post-war relief work. Between 1947 and 1948, the MRC rebuilt houses in the badly damaged village of Büllingen, near the German border. In 1950, missionaries David and Wilma Shank were sent to Belgium by the MRC, more with the aim of helping other Christian groups in the country, both Protestant and Catholic, than to re-establish a Mennonite movement.³⁷ Social work, mediation and educational work took place at the Protestant Social Centre in Brussels from the early 1960s and were continued by the Brussels Mennonite Centre after 1982.³⁸

The Missions Interests Committee of the Beachy Amish Mennonites began work in Poperinge in 1986 and made three unsuccessful attempts to begin an assembly, with the last missionaries leaving in early 2007. At the time of writing, there were two Mennonite churches in Belgium, one in Brussels and the other in Flavion.³⁹

Work in Flanders

The Flemish branch of the Dutch Reformed Church (beginning in 1894) and the Silo mission, under the leadership of Nicolas de Jonge (beginning in 1875), concentrated their missionary effort in Flanders. But the Protestant churches in French-speaking Belgium grew more quickly than those in the Flemish region. The Dutch Reformed Church was composed principally of Christians from Holland. The Silo movement was distinctively Flemish, while the work of the Salvation Army, the Baptists, the *Société Évangélique Belge* and the Brethren was almost exclusively in Wallonia. Only the historic *Union*

of *Evangelical Protestant Churches of Belgium* was present proportionately across the whole country. Even in Wallonia, Protestant work grew faster in some regions than others. This difference was in part due to the receptivity of local government officials. In industrial Wallonia, socialist administrations accepted Protestantism more favourably than in the more Catholic-dominated Flanders.⁴⁰

By 1909, there were a total of 115 Protestant churches in the country, operating in French, Dutch and German, and including nine foreign churches.⁴¹

Help from America (1918-)

The second phase of missionary activity begins with American activity in Belgium after 1918.

Methodism

Wesleyan Methodists from Britain had shown an interest in Belgium in the nineteenth century, starting a church in Brussels in 1816. But this mission post never grew into a larger work and did not continue into the twentieth century. A second beginning for Belgian Methodism came with American help after the close of the First World War. From 1917, Bishop J. Cannon of the (American) Methodist Episcopal Church South made frequent visits to Europe, and a Centenary Fund was established to encourage donations to the European Missionary work. In addition to war relief after the devastation of the First World War, Methodist evangelistic efforts were motivated by the breaking away of many Belgians from the Roman Catholic Church. American Methodists chose Belgium, alongside Poland and Czechoslovakia, as countries for a new missionary outreach.⁴²

Aside from an immediate focus on war relief, Methodist ministry began two educational institutions, an orphanage and a boarding school for girls, both in Uccle, a suburb of Brussels. In 1919, a clinic was opened in Ypres and preaching posts were begun in areas where no Protestant witness was yet present. By 1925, fifteen new churches had been planted and membership statistics showed nearly 300 adult members. In 1926 or 1928, Methodists were the first to begin Protestant radio broadcasts in Belgium.⁴³

With a substantial financial investment and the sending of personnel, the missionary effort brought considerable growth. Methodists were active in open-air evangelistic meetings and door-

to-door visitation and Bible distribution, organising an evangelistic campaign in Brussels in 1930 in which other Protestant churches took part. Bibles were sometimes distributed in newspaper format, because the Belgian working class would not easily accept the traditional New Testament format which too closely resembled the 'mass books' used by priests in Catholic churches.⁴⁴

Despite considerable growth, the American depression severely affected the mission work and all American missionaries were withdrawn in 1932. Belgian Methodists had to sell properties and stop some ministries. By 1939, there were twenty Methodist churches in Belgium, with approximately one thousand members.⁴⁵

After the Second World War, American and British chaplains preached in Methodist chapels and help to rebuild the congregations. Four churches had their buildings completely destroyed and twenty other Methodist church buildings or institutions required major repairs.⁴⁶ Funds from America helped to reconstruct church buildings and pay salaries. Twenty-two congregations, twelve French-speaking and ten Flemish, saw strong growth in their membership, which grew to about 5000 members and adherents. Existing churches were strengthened, but besides a new work in Hasselt in the early 1950s, no new churches were started.⁴⁷

Methodists worked cooperatively with some historic Protestant groupings in Belgium, eventually leading to a union with the Evangelical Protestant Church in 1969, which was itself the 1959 merger of the historic United Protestant Churches and the (Flemish) Silo mission. In 1979, the Belgian Christian Missionary Church and the Reformed Church joined the other groups to form the United Protestant Church of Belgium. In 1980, there were 104 churches comprising the denomination.⁴⁸

The Belgian Gospel Mission

At the close of the First World War, the American couple of Ralph and Edith Norton founded the Belgian Gospel Mission, originally an extension of their ministry to Belgian troops stationed in London, England.⁴⁹ Through intense evangelistic activity, despite his difficulties speaking both French and Dutch,⁵⁰ and with funds and workers coming from the USA and the UK, Norton and his colleagues began 33 churches in less than 20 years. The young churches later became the Belgian Evangelical Free Churches.⁵¹

After cooperative work with the existing Belgian Protestant denominations directly after the First World War, mainly in relief work,⁵² the work of the Belgian Gospel Mission was carried out independently and sometimes in opposition to the existing churches. Ralph Norton was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and considered the existing Belgian Protestant churches liberal. They were affected by the higher criticism of the Bible and so cooperation was out of the question.⁵³ If Norton and his colleagues were going to carry out a massive distribution of Bibles, 'they would have to do it alone'.⁵⁴ This separation was despite the fact that Ralph owed his own conversion to the work of Quaker and Methodist preachers.⁵⁵ By the death of Ralph Norton in 1934, more than 100 missionaries with the Belgian Gospel Mission were spread out in 66 cities and towns in the country.⁵⁶

Pentecostalism

Mrs. Ada Esselbach, in charge of the Sailor's Rest mission post of the Dutch Reformed Church in Antwerp, was probably the first witness of the Pentecostal movement in Belgium. Cornelis Potman, after spending years in the United States, returned to spread Pentecostal teachings in Belgium soon after the end of the First World War.⁵⁷ By 1923, the first Pentecostal missionaries began holding meetings in Brussels. In 1928, the first (Flemish) church was founded, and towards the end of 1930 Theodore Lopresties, who had attempted at first to work with the Belgian Evangelical Mission, registered the first independent Francophone Pentecostal Church in Belgium.⁵⁸

Douglas Scott crossed the Channel in the 1930s and held a series of revival meetings in France and, despite his poor knowledge of French, discovered a great receptivity to the Pentecostal message. By 1932, invitations were issued to hold campaigns in Belgium, with meetings following in Brussels, Liège, Charleroi and the region around Mons. The Baptist church in Ougrée, near Liège, invited Scott to preach at the church, and the church grew from 60 to 150 members in a few months. But tensions within the church, and with two neighbouring Methodist churches, lead the Pentecostals to leave the church and found an independent Pentecostal church in Liège.⁵⁹ After the campaigns, Scott organised enthusiastic converts into churches and appointed evangelists and pastors for the congregations.⁶⁰

In the latter part of the twentieth century, Belgian Pentecostalism grew to become very

diverse, with eight different Pentecostal denominations in Wallonia and seven in Flanders, along with a considerable number of ethnic churches.⁶¹ Two of these deserve particular mention. The Antioch church movement began with one church in Brussels in 1987 and has grown to include 81 congregations by 2012. Most of these congregations are composed primarily of non-Belgians (Brazilian, Hispanic, Congolese and Rwandan), even if the language in the church services is French or Dutch.⁶²

The Church of God, led by Bishop Martin Mutyebele, has also seen remarkable growth. The denomination is almost exclusively African, although sermons are preached primarily in French. The Brussels congregation, started in 1986, is now the largest Protestant church in the country, with a membership of over two thousand. The Church of God numbered 37 congregations in 2012, including one Polish-speaking church.⁶³

Movements toward unity

In the closing decades of the twentieth century, the United Protestant Church of Belgium remained the only Protestant denomination that was officially recognised by the Belgian government, despite the significant number of Protestant churches that existed outside the movement.⁶⁴ In the 1990s, this privilege was increasingly contested by the evangelical churches not represented by the United Protestant Church,⁶⁵ which for that reason had no voice in any dealings with the government or access to government subsidy for those churches that would wish it.⁶⁶ Significantly, there was also no possibility of representation in the administration of Protestant education in schools, Protestant social work, Protestant television and radio programmes, or Protestant chaplaincy in prisons, hospitals and the armed forces. Rather than joining the United Protestant Church, the evangelical churches organised their own association and asked the United Protestant Church to join *their* association, the Federal Synod of Protestant and Evangelical Churches in Belgium.⁶⁷

Are evangelical churches dangerous cults?

At the same time, the Belgian government became increasingly concerned about the activity of cults in the country, and established a commission to study the phenomenon. In April 1997, the commission published a report, including the names of groups that it considered to be cults. The list

was made public and published on the front page of major newspapers, and live debates were held on television. Twenty-one evangelical denominations were on the list, representing more than 200 congregations, including the Evangelical Free Church, the Assemblies of God, the Amish and the Brethren. Charismatic Catholic organisations, the Catholic lay organisation Opus Dei, as well as Buddhist movements were also on the list.⁶⁸

The 'cult list' had been drawn up on the basis of testimonies and complaints compiled by Belgian police and intelligence services. There was no recourse possible, and evangelicals mobilised to clarify their identity as Protestants in the eyes of the government and of the population as a whole. On May 7, 1997, the Belgian parliament voted to accept the report, but dissociated the 'cult list' from the report in order to sidestep a political crisis.⁶⁹

The evangelicals would not merge into the United Protestant Church as the Methodists and Reformed Churches had done. They claimed that since they actually represented more Belgian Protestants than the United Protestant Church, they should be recognised by the Belgian government apart from the United Protestant Church. But the Belgian government insisted on only one organisation to represent Protestants.⁷⁰

Evangelical disunity and unity

What unity existed among evangelicals suffered when a number of the older evangelical denominations which had started work in Belgium before the First World War entered into separate partnership agreements with the United Protestant Church. The Belgian Baptist Union (1997),⁷¹ the Salvation Army (1999) and the Seventh-Day Adventists (2003) were among those who were prepared to negotiate directly with the historic United Protestant Church.

After four years of negotiations between the Federal Synod and the United Protestant Church, a solution was found: the two groups would be equal partners in a new organisation, the Administrative Council of Protestant and Evangelical Religion in Belgium, which became the official and unique intermediary between all Protestant Churches and the Belgian government in January 2003.⁷²

Religion and the state

The initiative of the Belgian state to include newer Protestant and evangelical movements might seem somewhat surprising in the context of advancing

secularism in Western Europe, but it is part of an historic agenda to recognise the role of religion in Belgian society. In Belgium, religion is recognised as a positive influence on morality and on society as a whole. 'When the churches are full, the prisons are empty', explains one Protestant author. A separate reason applies to the Roman Catholic Church: government subsidy is compensation for the buildings and other assets confiscated from the church by the state under Napoleon.⁷³

In practical terms, a recognised religious group having an established geographical area (a parish) can apply for a pastoral salary, which may be granted by the federal Minister of Justice. In addition, the church can apply to local authorities for financial help related to the maintenance of the church building. The principle of the mutual independence of religion is maintained, however, and the state is denied by the Constitution any authority in the *spiritual* affairs of the church: the choice of its ministers, its statement of faith and its organisation. There has been no known incident of the state overstepping its boundaries in any of the 'recognised' religious groups since Belgian independence. In addition, local churches can refuse subsidy even within a religious movement or denomination that is recognised by the government.⁷⁴

The implications of Protestant unity

The unity of Protestants, even if it remains on an administrative level, has had and will continue to have profound consequences for Belgian Protestantism. First of all, the effort has been made by all major representatives of Belgian Protestantism and evangelicalism to be as inclusive as possible in the new Administrative Council. After 2003, any group that chooses not to be part of this body runs the risk of being considered a cult.⁷⁵

The United Protestant Church has had to grieve the loss of its status as sole intermediary with the government, a role it held for 164 years. Evangelical churches, which had historically classed themselves as evangelicals first and Protestant second (or not at all), went to great efforts to re-identify themselves with Belgian Protestantism. Many denominations and local churches have changed their names to include the word 'Protestant' on signs and in official documents. For example, the Open Brethren changed their denominational name to the Assemblies of Evangelical Protestants. Another striking example of this is the name change of

the Evangelical Free Churches (the denomination begun by the Belgian Gospel Mission) to the Evangelical Protestant Churches, a name almost identical to what the United Protestant Church called itself before 1969 (Evangelical Protestant Church), during decades of considerable tension with the Belgian Gospel Mission.⁷⁶

The benefits of state recognition, both to achieve legitimacy and potential financing, were ultimately more important than the historical tensions that had existed between the different language groups; they were also more important than the theological differences between liberals, moderates, fundamentalists and Pentecostals. As this unity promotes and strengthens the witness of Belgian Protestants, it will be celebrated. By 2012, there were more than seven hundred churches registered with the Administrative Council of Protestant and Evangelical Religion in Belgium.⁷⁷

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Endnotes

- 1 'Kingdom of Belgium' in Jason Mandryk (ed.), *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation* (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010).
- 2 Michel Dandoy (ed.), *A la découverte du monde protestante en Belgique* (Brussels: Eglise Protestante Unie de Belgique, 1994) 5-6.
- 3 Guido Marnef, 'Chapter Twenty: the Netherlands' in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *The Reformation World* (Routledge Reference Resources Online, 2000) 344-364; Jacques Bosquillon, 'Les gueux et les Républiques Calvinistes (1566-1585)', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 42-46. For the story of the persecution of dissenters and the establishment of the Calvinist church in Tournai, see Gérard Moreau, *Histoire du Protestantisme à Tournai jusqu'à la veille de la révolution des Pays-Bas* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1962); Charlie Steen, *A Chronicle of Conflict: Tournai 1580-1567* (Utrecht: HES, 1985).
- 4 Emile Braekman, 'L'église sous la croix (1604-1781)', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 47.
- 5 Jean Meyhoffer, 'Les origines du Protestantisme Belge', *Le Messager Evangélique* 328 (1992) 181-198.
- 6 Michel Tilleur, 'Les débuts de la Réforme', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 22-27;

- Frank Le Cornu, *Origine des églises Reformées wallonnes* (Utrecht: van Boekhoven, 1932) 45; E. M. Braekman, *Le Protestantisme belge au 16^e siècle: Belgique, nord de la France, refuge* (Carrières-sous-Poissy, France: La Cause, 1999) 207-218. A French-speaking Protestant congregation still meets in the crypt of the Canterbury Cathedral and is officially affiliated with the United Protestant Church of Belgium.
- 7 The purpose of the Confession (1561) was to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were not rebels. Emile Braekman, 'L'extraordinaire destin de Guy de Brès (1522-1567)', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 28-33.
- 8 Moreau, *Histoire du Protestantisme à Tournai*, 200-205.
- 9 Cited in Tanguy de Gravelles, 'Un curé belge chez l'Oncle Sam', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 110.
- 10 Tilleur, 'Débuts de la Réforme', 27; E. M. Braekman, *Le Protestantisme belge au 17^e siècle: Belgique, nord de la France, refuge* (Carrières-sous-Poissy, France: La Cause, 2001) 48-49.
- 11 Braekman, 'L'église sous la Croix', 59.
- 12 Michel Dandoy, *Le Protestantisme: mémoires et perspectives* (Bruxelles: Éditions Racine, 2005) 22-23; Michel Tilleur, 'Le regroupement des Protestants (1781-1830)', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 70-72.
- 13 In an interesting reversal for Dutch Protestantism, the Belgian revolution witnessed Catholic political and economic liberalism confronting Calvinist conservatism. John Molony, 'Christian Social Thought' in Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (eds.), *World Christianities, c.1815 – c.1914* (The Cambridge History of Christianity; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 155.
- 14 Gordon Craig, 'The System of Alliances and the Balance of Power' in J.P.T. Bury (ed.), *The Zenith of European Power 1830-70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) 247-250.
- 15 Emile Braekman, 'Le réveil du Protestantisme dans le royaume de Belgique (1830-1980)', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 87; Dandoy, *Découverte*, 8-9; Meyhoffer, 'Origines du Protestantisme Belge', 197.
- 16 Braekman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 76; Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme en Belgique au XIX^e siècle* (Flavion-Florennes: Le Phare, 1988) 103-132.
- 17 One of these evangelists was Vincent van Gogh, who worked for the *Union des Églises Protestantes Évangéliques* among the coal miners in Mons from 1878 to 1879. Braekman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 77.
- 18 Braekman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 87.
- 19 Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 138, 163-166; Braekman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 77-78.
- 20 The 'Merchant Adventurers' left Antwerp in 1563 but the cause was economic, not religious. The sale of English textile was forbidden and the English merchants returned in 1564 when the trade was renewed. Christine Lannoy-Payson, 'L'Anglicanisme en Belgique', *Belgia 2000: Toute l'histoire de Belgique* 5 (1984) 98.
- 21 Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 185-186.
- 22 Lannoy-Payson, 'L'Anglicanisme en Belgique', 99; Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 196-198.
- 23 Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 203-205; Lannoy-Payson, 'L'Anglicanisme en Belgique', 103.
- 24 There were disparities between the different Anglican parishes regarding the subsidies received from the Belgian government. The church of Spa only received partial subsidy. The churches of Malines and Liège were sponsored by the Colonial and Continental Mission Society. Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 210-212. The Belgian Anglican churches also asked for help from the British Foreign Office and the pastors of Antwerp and Ostend were granted subsidies in 1835 by Act of Parliament. In 1870, Belgian legislation confirmed subsidies for all Anglican congregations in Belgium, giving Anglicanism the same status as Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism. Lannoy-Payson, 'L'Anglicanisme en Belgique', 100-103.
- 25 Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name: The Story of the Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006) 67-68.
- 26 Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name*, 95-96; Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 168-175.
- 27 Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 180-183; Grass, *Gathering to His Name*, 107-108.
- 28 G.W. Lorein and J.-L. Simonet, 'Le Protestantisme évangélique non-E.P.U.B. en Belgique', *Le Messager Évangélique* 344 (1994) 351; Braekman, *Histoire du Protestantisme*, 167-184.
- 29 Dandoy, *Protestantisme*, 89-92; Braekman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 80; Lorein and Simonet, 'Le Protestantisme', 350.
- 30 No authoritative history of Baptists in Belgium has been written and there is even a difference in the date given for the founding of the Ougrée church: either 1890, 1892 or 1893. Dandoy, *Protestantisme*, 35; Braekman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 80-81; Sébastien Fath, *Une autre manière d'être Chrétien en France: Socio-histoire de l'implantation Baptiste (1810-1950)* (Histoire et Société; Genève: Labor et fides, 2001) 243; Jean Desy, 'Small Minority in a Catholic Land' in *Baptist Witness in Catholic Europe* (Rome: Baptist Publishing House, 1973) 52-53.
- 31 For example, in Bruay (region of Calais) the president of the mining society made a personal gift to François Vincent to enable him to buy land for a

- building for the growing Baptist congregation; Fath, *Une autre manière*, 194-195, 243-245.
- 32 Brackman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 87.
- 33 Door-to-door work was forbidden in Catholic Luxembourg, so the sending of the magazine was the only means of witness available to the Adventists. Georges Vandenvelde, *100 Ans d'Adventisme en Belgique et au Grand-Duché du Luxembourg*, Spécial Centenaire (Brussels: Fédération Belgo-Luxembourgeoise des Eglises Adventistes du Septième Jour, 1996) 3.
- 34 Vandenvelde, *100 Ans*, 6.
- 35 Vandenvelde, *100 Ans*, 6-7.
- 36 Dandoy, *Protestantisme*, 93; Tilleur, 'Débuts de la Réforme', 13-16, 19-20; Cornelius J. Dyck and Dennis D. Martin, *The Mennonite Encyclopedia. A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement* (Hillsboro, Kansas: Mennonite Brethren Pub. House, 1955) 270-272.
- 37 David Shank writes about the difficulties of re-establishing a Mennonite presence in Brussels in the 1950s in 'A Missionary Approach to a Dechristianized Society', *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 24 (1954) 38-55.
- 38 Personal interview with Robert & Wilda Otto and Peter Crossman, Director of the Brussels Mennonite Centre (Brussels, January 15, 2007).
- 39 Personal interview Otto/Crossman 2007; Nanne van der Zijpp and Robert Charles, 'Belgium' in *Global Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* (1987), <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/B4447.html>. The 2010 update shows the closing of the Beachy Amish work.
- 40 Dale, 'Aperçu sur l'évangélisation en Belgique pendant l'entre-deux-guerres' (Master's thesis, Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique, 1976) 2-3.
- 41 Brackman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 87.
- 42 A Central Conference structure was established with the three countries, with the first held in Prague in 1927 and the second in Brussels in 1929. Two other American Methodist groups were active in Europe in the twentieth century. The Evangelical Association, with its German roots, focussed its work in Germany and Switzerland, while the Methodist Episcopal Church was active in Scandinavia, France, Italy and Eastern Europe. In addition, British Wesleyan Methodism had been active in several Western European countries (but not Belgium) since the end of the eighteenth century. Patrick Ph. Streiff, *Methodism in Europe: 19th and 20th Century* (Tallinn, Estonia: Impressum, 2003) 152-157; Paul Neff Garber, *The Methodists of Continental Europe* (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949) 27.
- 43 Streiff, *Methodism in Europe*, 198-199; Neff Garber, *Methodists of Continental Europe*, 27-28.
- 44 Dale, 'Aperçu sur l'évangélisation en Belgique', 18.
- 45 Egbert A. Bos, 'Church Planting in Flanders' (Master's thesis, Evangelische Theologische Faculteit te Leuven, 1988) 11; Streiff, *Methodism in Europe*, 199; Neff Garber, *Methodists of Continental Europe*, 85.
- 46 Neff Garber, *Methodists of Continental Europe*, 96.
- 47 Streiff, *Methodism in Europe*, 275-277.
- 48 Streiff, *Methodism in Europe*, 3; 'New Church in Belgium', *Christian Century* 86.30 (1969) 970-971; Brackman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 85-87.
- 49 The Salvation Army and the *Société Évangélique Belge* (Bible Society) were also active in offering practical help and service during the war, but were hindered by limited financial and human resources. Dale, 'Aperçu sur l'évangélisation en Belgique', 4.
- 50 Norton was forced to use translators, which slowed the progress of the mission. Phyllis Thompson, *Tison ardent des Flandres: triomphes de l'évangile en Belgique* (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1973) 55.
- 51 Brackman, 'Réveil du Protestantisme', 82.
- 52 Dale, 'Aperçu sur l'évangélisation en Belgique', 10-15.
- 53 Philip E. Howard, *A New Invasion of Belgium* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Company, 1924) 88-89, 97; Dandoy, *Protestantisme*, 39-40. Ralph completed a two year course at Moody Bible Institute. Mrs. Ralph C. (Edith) Norton, *Opened Windows of Heaven* (Toronto: Evangelical Publishers, 1927) 11.
- 54 Thompson, *Tison ardent des Flandres*, 54.
- 55 Ralph Norton 'came under conviction of sin through the preaching of a Quaker evangelist ... later, when the Methodists began a series of meetings, Ralph and a friend visited from house to house, praying with those they interviewed'. Edith's grandparents were Methodists as well. Howard, *New Invasion of Belgium*, vii, viii.
- 56 Thompson, *Tison Ardent des Flandres*, 65.
- 57 Cornelis van der Laan, 'The Pentecostal Movement in Holland: Its Origin and Its International Position' in *Pneuma. The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 5.2 (1983) 34.
- 58 From the outset, considerable tensions existed between the Belgian Gospel Mission and the nascent Pentecostal churches. David Bundy, 'Pentecostalism in Belgium', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 8.1 (1986) 44, 48.
- 59 Dale, 'Aperçu sur l'évangélisation en Belgique', 56. The Baptist church in Ougrée (Liège) was not only the first Baptist church in Belgium and the origin of one of the first Pentecostal churches in Belgium, it may also have been the source of Adventism in Belgium. In July 1897, the first Adventist missionaries were sent to Liège from Switzerland after a 'Macedonian cry' was received from what was probably a group of Baptists in Liège. In 1897,

- the only Baptist church in Liège was the Ougrée church. Vandenvelde, *100 Ans*, 3.
- 60 Bundy, 'Pentecostalism in Belgium', 43-47.
 - 61 Bundy, 'Pentecostalism in Belgium', 41.
 - 62 John Doherty, 'L'implantation d'églises en Belgique' (Unpublished paper: Brussels, 2001)
 10. John Doherty, 'Church Planting in Belgium: A Study of the Structures and Support for New Church Plants' (Unpublished paper, University of Wales, 2002) 17-18.
 - 63 See www.cacpe.be/index.php?page=annuaire_f [accessed October 31, 2012].
 - 64 Lorein and Simonet, 'Le protestantisme évangélique', 335-343.
 - 65 There are also a large number of evangelicals within the United Protestant Church, which covers the entire spectrum of Protestant theology from liberal to conservative evangelical. Infant baptism is generally practised, although some congregations practise believer's baptism exclusively.
 - 66 Whether or not evangelical churches should accept subsidies was a matter of debate. George Winston, 'L'église peut-elle accepter des subsides de l'état?', *Le Messager Évangélique* 360 (1997) 67-78; Jean-Louis Simonet, 'Des subsides de l'état? ... oui, mais', *Le Messager Évangélique* 361 (1997) 91-105.
 - 67 Jean-Louis Simonet, 'La Fédération Évangélique Francophone de Belgique', *Le Messager Évangélique* 359 (1997) 51-53; 'Fondation du Synode Fédéral des Églises Protestantes et Évangéliques de Belgique', *Le Messager Évangélique* 363 (1997) 166.
 - 68 Willy Fautré, '21 Evangelical Denominations Labeled as Cults in Belgium', *Compass Direct*, June 23, 1997; Jean Valentin, 'Le Protestantisme évangélique belge à la croisée des chemins', *Le Messager Évangélique* 360 (1997) 59.
 - 69 Dandoy, *Protestantisme*, 50-51; Paul Vandebroek, 'La chasse aux sorcières', *Le Messager Évangélique* 360 (1997) 61-66. In France, a similar debate among Protestants and evangelicals took place after the government commissioned a parliamentary report on the subject. Louis Schweitzer, 'Les sectes'. l'Etat de la question dans la société', *Les Cahiers de l'Ecole Pastorale* 28 (1997) 5-10.
 - 70 Jules Lambotte, 'L'Assemblée Générale de la Fédération Évangélique Francophone de Belgique', *Le Messager Évangélique* 370 (1999) 15-16. One of the points of divergence between the two groups was the level of relations that the United Protestant Church maintained with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1971 the United Protestant and Catholic churches agreed to a mutual recognition of baptism. Hugh Robert Boudin, 'Churches in the European Community: 2. The Churches in Belgium', *Expository Times* 104.5 (1993) 134-135.
 - 71 For Baptists, this was a change of position from the strict separation of church and state espoused in the 1970s. Rudolph M. Wood, 'Environment for Minority Mission', in *Baptist Witness in Catholic Europe* (Rome: Baptist Publishing House, 1973) 62.
 - 72 Dandoy, *Protestantisme*, 99-103. For the case of the Baptists 'changing sides', see Samuel Verhaeghe, 'Report du Président, 1997' (Ostend: Belgian Baptist Union, January 16, 1998). In 1998, the year following the signing of the partnership agreement between the Baptist Union and the United Protestant Church, the Baptists saw two of their churches receive state subsidy for the salary of their pastors. Samuel Verhaeghe, 'Report du Président, 1998' (Ostend: Belgian Baptist Union, December 31, 1998).
 - 73 Simonet, 'Des subsides de l'état?', 91.
 - 74 Simonet, 'Des subsides de l'état?', 91-92. The recognition of Islam by the Belgian government in 1974 and the attendant growth of Islam in the latter part of the century also meant that increasing numbers of Muslim clerics were funded by the Belgian government. Ultimately, it was unpalatable for evangelicals to consider that Muslims would benefit from state recognition with all its attendant advantages while they would not. Meryem Kanmaz, 'The Recognition and Institutionalization of Islam in Belgium', *Muslim World* 92 (2002) 99-113.
 - 75 Simonet, 'Fédération Évangélique Francophone De Belgique', 51.
 - 76 In all fairness, however, the choices of a new name for the denomination which would include both 'evangelical' and 'protestant' were limited. What is significant is that 'Protestant' was formally added to the nomenclature of many denominations and local churches.
 - 77 For information on the total number of Protestant churches in Belgium as well as individual churches in the different denominational groupings, see the website of the Administrative Council www.cacpe.be. [Editor: The Dutch name of the Council is Administratieve Raad van de Protestants-Evangelische Eredienst (ARPEE). In French it is Conseil Administratif du Culte Protestante et Évangélique (CACPE).]

Review Article: Ablution, Initiation and Baptism in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism and Early Christianity

Christoph Stenschke

David Hellholm, Tor Vegge, Oyvind Norderval, Christer Hellholm (eds.), *Ablution, Initiation and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (BZNW 176.1–3; Berlin, Boston: W. de Gruyter, 2011); three volumes, hb., xlvii + 763, xxviii + 767–1782, xiv + 1786–2024; €279; ISBN 978-3-11-024751-0

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage de 1800 pages rassemble des contributions traitant des ablutions, des rites d'initiation et du baptême, ainsi que des liens étroits entre ces pratiques, dans le monde ancien. À partir d'un projet de recherche scandinave, ces études rédigées en allemand et en anglais abordent des questions méthodologiques et traitent des sujets ci-dessus en considérant les religions de la fin de l'antiquité autres que le judaïsme et le christianisme, puis le judaïsme ancien, le christianisme primitif et la période patristique. L'ensemble s'achève avec cinq études thé-

matiques et des contributions sur l'archéologie et l'histoire de l'art. Cette combinaison d'approches diverses, ainsi que de contributions à partir de différentes disciplines, fait ressortir la diversité des conceptions qui prévalait dans le monde ancien. Cette diversité n'a pas été pleinement explorée par la théologie systématique, ni prise en compte dans la liturgie et la pratique ecclésiales. L'approche générale de l'ouvrage est descriptive : on n'y trouve pas d'essai d'analyse, ni d'indication concernant des lignes directrices ou des thèmes communs aux différentes parties.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese umfangreiche Sammlung von Aufsätzen über nahezu 1800 Seiten ist folgenden Themen gewidmet: rituelle Waschung, Initiation und Taufe in der Welt der Antike und ihre komplexen Zusammenhänge. Auf der Grundlage eines skandinavischen Forschungsprojekts befassen sich die Aufsätze in deutscher und englischer Sprache mit methodologischen Betrachtungen, ritueller Waschung, Einführungsriten und Taufe in den Religionen der Spätantike außerhalb von Judentum und Christentum so wie im Frühjudentum, in der Urchristenheit und in

der patristischen bzw. spätantiken Epoche. Der Band schließt mit fünf thematischen Aufsätzen und weiteren Aufsätzen, die der Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte gewidmet sind. Diese Verknüpfung von verschiedenen neuen Aspekten und Disziplinen zeigt die Vielfalt von Konzepten, die in der Welt der Antike vorherrschten. Diese Vielfalt wurde noch nicht voll erforscht durch die systematische Theologie und auch noch nicht voll ausgeschöpft durch Liturgie oder Gemeindepraxis. Der Ansatz ist im Großen und Ganzen beschreibend; es lässt sich kein Versuch erkennen, das Material zu analysieren und Hauptgedanken oder allgemeine Themen aufzuzeigen.

* * * *

SUMMARY

This substantial collection of essays of almost 1800 pages is devoted to ablution, initiation and baptism in the ancient world and their intricate interrelationship. Based on a Scandinavian research project, the essays in

German and English address the methodological considerations, ablution, initiation and baptism in the religions of late antiquity outside of Judaism and Christianity as well as in early Judaism, in earliest Christianity and in the patristic/late ancient period. The volumes close with five thematic essays and essays devoted to archaeology and

art history. This combination of different, fresh perspectives and disciplines indicates the variety of concepts that were prevalent in the ancient world. This variety has not yet been fully explored by systematic theology or in the

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The present set of three volumes contains the results of a major research project entitled *Ablution, Initiation and Baptism in Antiquity*, organised by Scandinavian scholars. The participants in the project met in 2008 and 2009; the papers read and discussed on those occasions were later supplemented by other papers. The project involved 58 scholars; it was international,

interdisciplinary, with Historians of Religion, Classicists, Egyptologists, Biblical and Patristic scholars as well as Art Historians and Archaeologists; it should further be interdenominational with among others, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant scholars (from the preface in vol. 1, xlv–xlvi).

The essays are written in English and German. All essays, in particular the German ones, would have benefited from English abstracts.

Volume 1 opens with an introductory essay by the patristic scholar C. Marksches who aptly summarises the contribution that the essays of both volumes make towards understanding the history of Christian baptism, its pre-history and its immediate reception history. He also lists the questions and issues that are still open for further discussion despite this major research project, and sketches areas which need attention in future research. Marksches suggests that further inquiries into the subject should use the methodology of ‘dense description’, which means in this case

paying attention to the more quiet signals in the texts, for example, the secondary ending of Mark’s Gospel and the question whether such texts, which are often neglected in this context, contain important information regarding the role of baptism in early Christian mission and propaganda. (lx)

He further argues that further research needs to be done

in the field of ecclesial law and the history of liturgy which were often neglected, in particular in Protestant research of ancient Christianity. The important issues of ecclesial law have not been discussed sufficiently and studied particularly for the later era of the ancient church, for exam-

plurgy and practice of the Church. The overall approach is descriptive; no attempt is made to analyse the material and to indicate major trajectories or common themes.

* * * *

ple the notorious question of the recognition of baptism conducted by heretics or schismatics in the Western and Eastern churches which has not been addressed sufficiently for the third and fourth centuries. (ix)

Marksches also notes the large variations in liturgical practices and the extent to which the norms (in church orders and liturgical books) and the actual practice of the rite differed in individual churches and congregations. In addition, the contributions to the project indicated

that the application of ritual theory and other quests from the various cultural sciences by scholars of liturgy to the procedure of baptismal preparation, the actual act of baptism and post-baptismal rites as it can be reconstructed from the pertinent sources is still in its beginnings, but promises rich rewards. (lxi)

Furthermore, scholars have hardly addressed the nature of the relationship between baptism and church membership on the way to the Constantinian or Theodosian Church of the empire and its further developments after the fourth century. Marksches also suggests that there is a need to examine the late ancient era in its entirety up to the eighth century (e.g. John of Damascus) based on the present essays and the methodology developed here.

Antiquity

In *Part one*, ‘Methodological Considerations’, A. Klostergaard Petersen offers a survey of ‘Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation: Phenomenological, Taxonomical and Culturally Evolutionary Reflections’. His discussion includes the intricate relationship between rituals of purification and initiation and the prevalence of water as a ritual means in the ancient Mediterranean world. The essay also addresses terminology, rites of passage, individual phases of the ritual, rituals of initiation and other rituals, rituals of purification and different types of ritual in the ancient world. The author argues that while rituals of purification and initiation are found across many cultures, the ritual

of baptism is closely related to the emergence of the utopian type of religion (one that has experienced the transition from a locative form of religion, so in the categories of Jonathan Z. Smith).

Part two surveys ablution, initiation and baptism in religions of Late Antiquity outside Judaism and Christianity. J. Assmann and A. Kucharek discuss water in the cultural perspective of ancient Egypt, the Egyptian theory of the flooding of the Nile, water and purification in the cult of the dead and of Osiris, the Theban festival of the decades and the cult of the dead in late-Egypt and the notion of the 'baptism' of Pharaoh. A. Hultgard writes on 'The Mandaean Water Ritual in Late Antiquity' (the *masbuta* as a late Antiquity ritual, its Iranian elements and its significance in understanding Mandaean origins). In 'Baptism and Greco-Roman Mystery Cults', F. Graf analyses Justin Martyr's references to pagan baptismal rituals, Tertullian's testimonies and the relationship between baptismal cleansing and various pagan purification rituals. B.A. Pearson addresses baptism in Sethian Gnostic texts, offering a definition and describing essential features of Sethian Gnosticism. He further examines references to baptism in various Gnostic writings, including the Gospel of Judas. G. Wurst covers Mani's rejection of baptism in the controversy with the Elchesaites, the rejection and spiritualisation of baptism in various (anti)Manichaean sources and rites of initiation in Manichaeism. The essays indicate that various forms of ablution, initiation and baptism were common in the religions of late antiquity. Occurrences in early Judaism and Christianity need to be seen against this background; in this context they made sense and had to make sense in continuity and in contrast.

Judaism

Four essays in *Part three* are devoted to ablution, initiation and baptism in early Judaism. A. Labahn surveys ablution and ritual purification in early Judaism: the occurrences in the *Testamentum Levi*, in *Jubilees*, in the *Letter of Aristeas* and the various Dead Sea Scroll references. In this context, ablution is understood as the restoration of quality of life. S. Freyne compares Jewish immersion and Christian baptism; he describes the theory and practice of Jewish ritual washing, the literary evidence and the many Jewish *miqva'ot*, the 'borderline' existence of Jewish-Christian baptism and the origin and function of immersion in relation to the two developing orthodoxies of Rabbinic Judaism

and Catholic Christianity. C.K. Rothschild writes on the uncertain authenticity of Josephus' witness to John the Baptist; she offers a detailed analysis of the text and context of *AntJud* 18.116–119 and of its reception history in the manuscript evidence, in Origen and in Eusebius, who can be understood as witnesses to Josephus.

In "Ist er heraufgestiegen, gilt er in jeder Hinsicht als ein Israelit" (bYev 47b): Das Proselytentauchbad im frühen Judentum', D. Sänger first examines the nature of early Judaism and its relationship to the wider Graeco-Roman world. He sketches the far-reaching consequences which conversion to Judaism had for gentiles. Against this background it would be plausible to assume that from the middle of the first century BC onwards gentiles willing to convert, in particular women who would not be circumcised, had to undergo some kind of ablution for cultic cleansing and in order to establish them as members of the Jewish community (294). Sänger then surveys the current state of research regarding the baptism of proselytes to Judaism (294–298), covering its origin, age, nature, function and significance, all of which are disputed. He next re-examines the most important texts regarding their age and the function ascribed to the rite, in order to find out whether the baptism of John the Baptist and Christian baptism have their roots in Jewish proselyte baptism, as is usually assumed. He further examines the terminology employed for the *baptism* of proselytes and notes that the designation in itself is not helpful as it is a case of *interpretatio Christiana*. He then discusses the relationship between the immersion/baptism of proselytes, the baptism of John and Christian baptism in the available sources (TestLev 14:6; Sib 4:162–169; Epictetus, *Diss* II.9:19–21 and several rabbinic sources). In these sources, proselyte baptism can be understood as a ritual act of initiation into Israel (324). Like others before him, Sänger argues that proselyte baptism was *not* the model for John's baptism (325; see e.g. D.S. Dockery, 'Baptism' in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 55–58). In fact he suggests that the Christian baptismal practice may have influenced developments in late Second Temple Judaism and early Rabbinic Judaism rather than vice versa, as is commonly assumed. Sänger inquires '... to what extent the Christian practice of baptism impacted on the formation of proselyte baptism and promoted its dissemination and eventual acceptance' (326) and concludes:

In view of the fact that there is no dependable evidence for an early dating of the immersion of proselytes and that there are no literary references to instruction / catechesis in combination with these immersions before the middle of the second century, this alternative consideration of influence becomes rather plausible (327; detailed bibliography on 327-334).

If correct, this reconstruction of the direction of influence throws an interesting light on the early interaction between Jews and Christians and indicates that the 'parting of the ways' may have been less radical and later than has often been assumed. In that case early Rabbinic Judaism was inspired by the way in which Jewish Christianity included gentile converts in its ranks.

New Testament and Early Church

Part four includes studies on ablution, initiation and baptism in earliest Christianity and the New Testament. It opens with an essay by M. Labahn on the origin of Christian baptism according to early Christian sources, which surveys the baptism of Jesus, baptism in the early Jerusalem community, Jesus as baptiser and John the Baptist as points of departure. According to Labahn, baptism appears as a post-Easter creation and as an initiation ritual into the new community in continuity with the baptism of John. H.D. Betz writes on Jesus' baptism and the origins of the Christian ritual of baptism, addressing issues of historiography and of comparative religion. He sees Mark 1:9-11 as the earliest baptismal account and studies its interpretation in the other Gospels. According to Mark, 'the scandal of the cross unfolded in Jesus' life on earth, beginning with his baptism by John the Baptist' (393). L. Hartman, author of the entry on 'Baptism' in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, offers notes on the baptismal formulas. He surveys the different formulas 'into the name of the Lord Jesus', 'in the name of Jesus Christ', 'because of the name of Jesus Christ', 'into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' and their occurrence in different communication situations from the 'enigmatic beginning' onward, including some references outside the New Testament to some Greek texts after the New Testament.

D. Hellholm describes 'Vorgeformte Tauftraditionen und deren Benutzung in den Paulusbriefen', a survey of pre-formed baptismal traditions in Paul and their rhetorical function in

his argumentation in 1 Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. Hellholm identifies formulas of naming, of incorporating, of justifying, of being clothed over and of identifying; 1 Corinthians 12:13 might have been treated in more detail. T. Vegge addresses baptismal phrases in the 'Deuteropauline Epistles' (Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Timothy and Titus) and their function in the argument of these letters. Both essays on Pauline literature have a specific focus; one misses a survey article on the theology of baptism in the *Corpus Paulinum*.

J. Schröter studies baptism in the Acts of the Apostles, including the place of baptism in Luke's theology of history, baptism as enablement for witness and as entry into the community of believers, baptism in the name of Jesus, the baptism of John and the reception of the Spirit, baptism as the opening of the people of God for gentiles, the baptisms of the Ethiopian in Acts 8 and the baptism of Paul as exceptional cases, and the use of traditional material in the Lukan baptism narratives. On this subject see also the detailed study of the late F. Avemarie, *Die Taufferzählungen der Apostelgeschichte: Theologie und Geschichte* (WUNT 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002). More attention should have been given to the baptism of household leaders who were baptised together with their houses (Acts 16:15, 31-33; see also 11:14 and 18:8). Some scholars have argued that such 'household baptisms' obviously included not only most or all adult or adolescent members of the household but also children and infants. They see in these household baptisms the biblical warrant for infant baptism. Other scholars emphasise that the contexts of these events mention proclamation of the gospel and conversion; therefore, obviously, only people who had come to faith were baptised. In my opinion, both cases are *argumenta ex silentio* and cannot be verified. The social, religious, political and economical significance of houses/households and the interaction between various members of the core family and extended members have recently been studied in more detail by classical scholars (e.g. solidarity within the family and house, the role of the *pater familias* in the household). It now needs to be seen what fresh light such studies can shed on these cases of household baptism, the people involved and their respective ages.

S. Byrskog, writing on baptism in the Letter to the Hebrews, argues that in Hebrews 6:1-6, 9:9-10 and 10:21-23 baptism is understood as initiation, i.e. as a christological, eschatological and

non-repeatable event:

The baptism of the believers was in distinction to other baptisms of such great importance for the new life of the believer that its rejection would mean nothing but final destruction (602).

H. Moxnes contributes 'Because of "the Name of Christ": Baptism and the Location of Identity in 1 Peter', arguing for the centrality of 1 Peter 3:18-22 and relating baptism to the structure and composition of 1 Peter. To be placed 'in Christ' functions as a spatial metaphor in this letter. Moxnes suggests that the conflict with the world described in the letter should be understood as dislocation of identity and displacement as stigmatisation and shame. The readers experience displacement and have received a new place 'in Christ': the baptismal metaphor of being 'in Christ' in the argument of 1 Peter derives from the presupposition that ethnic identity is fluid and can be changed; at the same time it presupposes that through baptism one is placed in an identity that is stable and stronger than any previous ethnic identity (624; see also K.-H. Ostmeier, *Taufe und Typus: Elemente und Theologie der Tauftypologie in 1. Korinther 10 und 1. Petrus 3* [WUNT II.119; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000]).

U. Schnelle examines anointing, Spirit and baptism in 1 John; he addresses the historical situation of the letter and its confrontation with heretics. Schnelle further describes charisma in the cultural environment of the letter and its use in 1 John, and the relationship between charisma and Spirit in 1 John. In his essay 'Matthew 28:9-20 and Mark 16:9-20: Different Ways of Relating Baptism to the Joint Mission of God, John the Baptist, Jesus, and their Adherents', K.M. Hartvigsen examines the authenticity and genre of both passages and offers a detailed comparison. Baptism is discussed in relation to Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology. Hartvigsen reflects on the oral performance of the Gospels, on baptism in all of Matthew and Mark and suggests in closing that baptism serves as a link between the gospel world and the real world of members of the audience. T. Karlsen Seim scrutinises the baptismal reflections in the Fourth Gospel, discussing the baptismal practices of John and Jesus, the expression 'generation from above' in John 3 and the significance of the life-giving Spirit. Finally, O. Wischmeyer discusses the hermeneutical aspects of baptism in the New Testament. She analyses the commonali-

ties and differences between Paul, Mark, Matthew, Acts, John and late New Testament texts. A similar summary and analysis of the *theological* and *sociological* aspects of baptism in the New Testament would have been welcome.

In this part on the New Testament, Romans 6:1-11 would have deserved an essay of its own. (It is treated in some detail by Hellholm, 442-452, 459-462, 468-470.) The same applies perhaps also to Ephesians 4:5 (some treatment by Vegge, 517-536). In addition, an article might also have addressed the question of infant baptism and the New Testament. On relatively few occasions children are in view in the narratives and letters of the New Testament. While children in antiquity in general have received more attention in recent research, the question of infant baptism in the New Testament seems to have been settled or considered inconclusive by and large since the fierce and detailed controversies between by K. Aland, K. Barth, J. Jeremias and others between the 1950s and the 1970s. In current scholarship there is consensus that infant baptism does not appear in the New Testament. In view of the debate over infant baptism since the Reformation, of this controversy and of the continued significance of baptism in the ecumenical discourse, it is noteworthy that the present project does not include an article on infant baptism *in the New Testament*. (For infant baptism in the Christian apocrypha, see below.) This observation is telling in a number of ways. The New Testament does not indicate whether and how the children of believers should be initiated into the community of faith prior to their own personal repentance and faith (Acts 2:38). With few exceptions the addressees of the New Testament were first generation converts; the integration of their offspring into the community is not in view. Therefore, not on the basis of any New Testament evidence but led by dogmatic and ecclesial interests, several cases have been argued for a 'biblical' foundation of the practice of infant baptism as a valid sacrament and initiation rite for infants.

Early Church

Volume 2 starts in *Part five* with a detailed coverage of ablution, initiation and baptism in the patristic period. A. Lindemann writes on 'Zur frühchristlichen Taufpraxis: Die Taufe in der *Didache*, bei Justin und in der *Didaskalia*'. He concludes

The texts hardly reflect the understanding of baptism or even an explicit “theology of baptism”; rather they reflect the baptismal practices in early Christian communities, probably in Syria and Rome (767).

D.-A. Koch describes the interpretation of baptism in Ignatius and the Epistle of Barnabas; his discussion includes what Ignatius says about the baptism of Jesus and of Christians, Barnabas 6:8-18, baptism as the gift of the water of life in Barnabas 11 and baptism in relation to cult metaphors in Barnabas. V. Blomkvist studies the teaching on baptism in the Shepherd of Hermas, including the themes of baptism and *metanoia*, baptism in the allegory of the tower and references in *Visio* III and *Similitudo* IX.

E.-M. Becker contributes a study of baptism in Marcion, including baptism according to *Adversus Marcionem*, baptism according to Tertullian’s *De baptismo* and Marcion’s understanding of the meaning of the *Apostolikon* and of the Gospel. In ‘Baptism among the Valentinians’, E. Thomassen surveys the practice of baptism, the value of baptism and its components – the value of the ritual in general, the relative value of water baptism and anointing, the meaning of baptism –, redemption, Jesus’ baptism as a model, the bridal chamber and the union with angels and other ideas associated with baptism in this group. W. Tabbernee addresses baptism and initiation in the Montanist movement, paying attention to the baptismal formula of the Montanists, to the synod of Iconium, to Cyprian and his interaction with Montanism in North Africa, to related North African inscriptions, to the cult of the martyr Montanus, to Montanist baptism in Phrygia, to rebaptism and to baptism of or on behalf of the dead.

Under the title ‘Simplicity and Power’, O. Norderval reads Tertullian’s *De Baptismo* and examines the historical context of the treatise, Tertullian’s theology of baptism, the actual baptismal rite and baptismal regulations. H.F. Hägg covers baptism in Clement of Alexandria: the baptismal season and the catechumenate, Jesus’ own baptism as a paradigm as understood by Clement, baptism as purification of sins and the question of hereditary guilt, baptism as restoration and new birth and as instrumental in perfection and enlightenment. G.A. Hällström asks ‘More Than Initiation? Baptism According to Origen of Alexandria’. He discusses Origen’s terminology and background and his statements regarding the

baptism of Jesus, the purpose of baptism, infant baptism, the post-baptismal life and baptism and Platonism.

In ‘Initiation in the *Apostolic Tradition*’, A. Ekenberg examines textual problems, the understanding of the initiation process, the meaning attributed to baptism (baptism and conversion, escaping evil forces, initiation and community, forgiveness of sins and new birth). The essay closes with an English translation of the *Apostolic Tradition* 15–21. Ekenberg notes that

Considerable stress is laid in it on initiation as a process of sincere break with the initiate’s former life, and with the demonic forces thought to dominate non-believing human existence, as well as on his or her incorporation into the Christian community. Baptism itself is conceived of both as an act of confession of faith and as an experience of the saving grace of God, forgiving sins and bestowing new life. (1034)

E.E. Popkes comments on ‘Die Tauftheologie Cyprians’, covering the range of baptismal theology in Cyprian’s writings, the relationship between water baptism and ‘blood’ baptism in persecution and martyrdom, Cyprian’s position in the controversy about baptism administered by heretics and Cyprian’s Letter 73 as the most important source for his baptismal theology. E. Wehnert sketches ‘Taufvorstellungen in den Pseudoklementinen’, describing the novel and its origin, the picture and understanding of baptism in its various literary layers and its portrayal of John the Baptist. M. Lattke first briefly surveys Syriac Christianity until Chalcedon and then studies Aphrahat’s writings and sources, the allusions and quotations from the New Testament, terminology, definitions of circumcision and baptism, the baptism of Jesus, belief in baptism, baptism and belief, baptism understood as second circumcision, second birth, washing and remission of sins, baptism and marriage/celibacy and finally baptism and the Holy Spirit.

S. Seppälä addresses ‘Baptismal Mystery in St. Ephrem the Syrian and *Hymnen de Epiphania*’. Discussion includes Ephrem’s *Hymns* and the baptismal event, the baptism of Christ as cosmic mystery, mysticism of immersion and oil, the pneumatic, the Trinitarian, paschal and personal dimensions of baptism, baptism as a call to struggle and the use of biblical imagery of paradise and other Old Testament imagery for baptism. In his essay on Cyril of Jerusalem, J. Day introduces the

Catechetical Lectures and the *Letter of Macarius*, analyses the Jordan event as theological framework and describes the liturgy of baptism in the *Catechetical Lectures* including ritual sequence, ministers, pre-immersion rituals, the seal, the actual immersion, anointing, imposition of hands and transitorial rituals; he also addresses the baptismal liturgy of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*. I.L.E. Ramelli describes the significance of baptism in Gregory of Nyssa's theology and its orientation to eschatology.

In 'Iohannes Chrysostomus: Die zehn Gaben ... der Taufe', R. Brändle comments on particular elements of the Antiochene theology of baptism, on aspects of John Chrysostom's understanding of baptism, on his *Sermo ad neophytes* and on the relationship between baptism and original sin. R. Aasgaard examines the views of Ambrose and Augustine on baptism and the construction of Christian identity; he analyses Ambrose's treatises *The Sacraments* and *The Mysteries* and Augustine's Easter *Sermones*. Baptism is employed as a boundary marker for the neophytes regarding their past or relating to outsiders in the present. Aasgaard concludes that

for both Ambrose and Augustine, baptism plays a crucial part in their understanding of Christian identity and in their strategies for shaping and strengthening such an identity. (1277)

In 'The Efficacy of Baptism in Augustine's Theology', J. Patout Burns outlines the African conflicts over baptism (Tertullian, Cyprian, the *Treatise on Rebaptism*, the Donatist conflict, Optatus of Melvis) and describes Augustine's theology of baptism, including baptism in unity and schism, baptismal consecration and sanctification, the minister of baptism, baptism in special circumstances and baptism in the Pelagian controversy.

O. Hesse traces 'Der Streit über die Wirkung der Taufe im frühen Mönchtum: Die Taufe bei Makarios/Symeon, Markos Eremites und den Messalianern', offering a sketch of the various early monastic baptismal theologies. Following this, H. Lundhaugh addresses baptism in the monasteries of Upper Egypt. He surveys baptism in the *Pachomian Corpus* and the *Writings of Shenoute*, and compares both positions.

These studies of individual fathers and wider movements in the ancient church are followed in *Part six* by thematic surveys. C. Strecker writes on 'Taufrituale im frühen Christentum und in der Alten Kirche: Historische und ritualwissenschaftli-

che Perspektiven'. He covers baptismal rituals in the first four centuries and shows the usefulness of approaches based on ritual theory under the headlines 'transformation – liminality', 'embodiment – habitus' and 'cultural performance'. In 'Seal and Baptism in Early Christianity', K.O. Sandnes examines the seal as a non-religious idea and as a mark of branding expressing belonging, authority, protection and obligation. He also discusses 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Shepherd of Hermas (*Visio* 3, *Similitudo* 8-9), the seal and Exodus 12 in Melito of Sardis' *On Pascha* 14-17, the seal in 2 Clement, in Thecla and in the Acts of Thomas. H.-U. Weidemann analyses the close link between 'Taufe und Taufeucharistie: Die postbaptismale Mahlgemeinschaft in Quellen des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts'. He describes baptismal Eucharist in Justin Martyr, the process of the initiation of pagans to the Eucharist in the *Didache*, baptism as the initiation to ascetic table fellowship in various apocryphal acts, in the Pseudo-Clementine writings and the references to milk and honey in the *Traditio Apostolica*.

H. Löhr comments on 'Kindertaufe im frühen Christentum: Beobachtungen an den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen'. He summarises the possible references to infant baptism in the New Testament Apocrypha, the direct references, the *oikos* formula, mass baptisms, the understanding of baptism and infant baptism in *Pseudo-Clement*, to conclude that

the motifs and concepts of baptism which appear in the source do not necessarily require the baptism of young children and infants. ... One cannot say that the baptism of children or infants does not appear in early Christianity. But in remembering the beginnings, as it is reflected in various sources, this practice does not play a significant role. Perhaps even more telling is the fact that this practice is not reflected theologically (1547-1548).

In 'Das Taufbekenntnis in der frühen Kirche', R. Staats addresses confession, faith and symbol as key notions, the relationship between public confession and confession in baptismal liturgy, the Credo as confession of the church, the baptism of individuals, the renouncing of evil and pledging loyalty to Christ. He further discusses 'one baptism' in the Apostolic Creed, offers comparison of ancient church apologetic and confession, describes particular forms in the Christian Orient and analyses the *Nicaenum* as ecumenical text.

The final *Part seven* contains contributions on archaeology and art history: O. Brandt, 'Understanding the Structures of Early Christian Baptisteries'; D. Korol and J. Rieckesmann, 'Neues zu den alt- und neutestamentlichen Darstellungen im Baptisterium von Dura-Europos'; R.M. Jensen, 'Baptismal Practices at North African Martyrs' Shrines'; H. Schneider, 'Die Entwicklung der Taufbecken in der Spätantike'; D. Apostolos-Cappadona, "I understand the mystery, and I recognize the sacrament": On the Iconology of Ablution, Baptism, and Initiation' and M.M. Mitchell, 'The Poetics and Politics of Christian Baptism in the Abercius Monument'.

Volume 3 contains 104 colour images and illustrations related to the articles in volumes one and two, lists of technical terms in Greek, Latin and other ancient languages, an index of modern authors, subjects and passages, and a list of the editors and contributors to this substantial enterprise.

Evaluation

These three volumes are a milestone in the scholarly study of the occurrences, the interrelationship and the significance of ablution, initiation and baptism in the period under discussion; any further discussion cannot but take note of them. The essays testify in great detail to the richness and vitality of the New Testament and patristic reflection on baptism and baptismal practices. A wealth of information and theological reflection on the ancient sources is gathered in these volumes which can help us to understand the theology and practice of the ancient church.

As these volumes focus on antiquity, they should be supplemented by further studies on the subject in the sixth and seventh century up to the period of John of Damascus, according to Marksches in his introductory essay. This would be in line with recent attempts to stretch the period under discussion from more narrowly understood 'patristic' studies to late ancient studies. Such a supplementary quest should include an essay on the early Islamic responses to ablution, initiation and baptism. It would also be interesting to take the discussion further in time and area in order to understand how the heritage regarding these topics was developed in the Middle Ages, the Reformation era and so on. Furthermore, one should examine how the ancient heritage changed and was adapted when Christianity ventured further beyond the boundaries of the Hellenistic-

Roman world, into Asia and, later, Northern Europe. Obviously, the search broadens even further with the spread of Christianity to new shores from the fifteenth century onwards.

The essays indicate that understanding ablution, initiation and baptism is no longer a particularly *theological* quest but a field wide open for interdisciplinary research. A distinct historical interest (history and phenomenology of religion) and several minor quests are evident. Some essays are heavily indebted to the questions and methods of cultural studies and sociology and as such offer welcome and fresh perspectives. The project is strong on detailed descriptions and analyses of the ancient evidence but apart from the introductory essay by Marksches (and perhaps Wischmeyer's hermeneutical reflections), there are no summary articles or attempts at a synthesis. It is left to the readers to draw out the theological implications; for example, what is unique about Christian baptism in view of the wide spread of ablutions and initiation practices in the ancient world. An attempt to do so does not seem to be the interest of the scholars involved. These volumes thus testify to the postmodern shift in the humanities in general and in biblical studies in specific, in theological faculties and indirectly also in the church.

Other books

In the recent third volume of the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2011), baptism is discussed in six sections: L. Hartmann writes about baptism in the New Testament (Greek terminology, John's baptism, Jesus' baptism by John, baptism in early Christian communities, Paul, the so-called Deuteropauline letters, the Acts of the Apostles, 1 Peter, Hebrews, Matthew 28:16-20, John, Mark 16:9-20). The entry on baptism in Christianity by B. D. Spinks covers baptism as seen by the Greek and Latin Fathers, Orthodox Churches and early medieval times, medieval times and the Reformation era, modern Europe and America. In closing Spinks briefly refers to developments in the non-Western world:

Newer churches in Asia and Africa have questioned whether they should simply accept adaptations of products of European culture, whether from the older age of imperialism or more recent times. Some have sought riches in their own cultural rites of initiation that could

be incorporated in rites of Christian baptism. F. Kabasele Lumbala, for example, describes a rite of adult baptism in Zaire, where the renunciation entails the baptizand lying down on a mat and being covered with banana leaves while a song of penitence or mourning is struck up. During the baptism incense is wafted around and an elaborate conferring of a new name takes place (463).

Two further examples are briefly described, one from Sri Lanka (a contextualised baptismal rite from the Christian Workers' Fellowship) and one from African-American congregations (463-464).

The third entry, on baptism in Judaism by R. Chazan, merely deals with medieval Jewish (polemical) responses to Christian baptism; neither here nor in the section on baptism in the New Testament is there any reference to proselyte bap-

tism or to the relationship of John's or Christian baptism to rites of ablution (cf. the entries 'Ablutions I-III' in volume I, columns 108-120; here one looks in vain for Islamic reactions to Christian baptism). The remaining sections are on baptism in literature (J. F. Keuss), in the visual arts (M. O'Kane) and in film (J. DeCou). Cross reference is made to the entries 'Baptism of Jesus', 'Baptisteries', 'Baptists', 'Confirmation', 'Infant Baptism' and 'John the Baptist'.

Also of interest are the substantial monograph by E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) with over 900 pages and the short survey by C.L. Christian and R. Olbrich (eds.), *Die Taufe: Einführung in Geschichte und Praxis* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008).

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L'Évangile selon Saint Luc (19,28-24,53), François Bovon (CNT IIIId; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2009); pb, 555 pp., ISBN 978-2-8309-1261-6

Luc le théologien, François Bovon (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2006); pb, 631 pp., ISBN 978-2-8309-1200-5

L'Évangile selon Saint Luc, François Bovon (CNT IIIA; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007 [1991]); pb, 514 pp., ISBN 978-2-8309-1235-7

RÉSUMÉ

Le dernier tome du commentaire de François Bovon sur l'Évangile de Luc vient achever un travail remarquable de haute teneur académique. Avec les trois tomes précédents du commentaire ainsi que la présentation des études sur la théologie de Luc, ce dernier volume constitue une étude spécialisée de grande valeur sur Luc. Les spécialistes, étudiants et prédicateurs consulteront ces ouvrages avec profit, même si les positions de l'auteur sur les questions ayant trait à l'historicité ne sont pas pleinement satisfaisantes.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der abschließende Band von François Bovons Kommentar zum Lukasevangelium bringt ein beachtliches Werk der Forschung zu einem Abschluss. Zusammen mit den vorangehenden drei Bänden des Kommentars und Bovons wissenschaftlicher Studie zu Lukas als Theologen stellt dieser Band einen Höhepunkt der Lukasforschung dar. Forscher, Studenten und Prediger werden ihn gleichermaßen zu Rate ziehen, selbst wenn er in historischen Fragen nicht zur vollen Zufriedenheit ausfällt. Dank der Fähigkeiten und Bemühungen von Bovon steht den Lesern der vollständige Kommentar bereits auf Französisch (CNT) und auf Deutsch (EKK) zur Verfügung und wird auch bald auf Englisch erscheinen (Hermeneia).

SUMMARY

The final volume of François Bovon's commentary on the Gospel of Luke brings a remarkable labour of scholarship to a conclusion. When taken together with the preceding three volumes of the commentary and Bovon's survey of scholarship on Luke as theologian, this volume marks a high point in scholarship on Luke which should be consulted by scholars, students and preachers alike, even if it is not fully satisfying on matters of historicity. Thanks to Bovon's skills and labours, readers can already access the complete commentary in French (CNT) and German (EKK) and will soon be able to read it in English (Hermeneia).

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The final volume of François Bovon's four-volume commentary on Luke's Gospel in the *Commentaire du Nouveau Testament* series provides a fitting conclusion to an exceptional piece of scholarship. Bovon was Professor

of New Testament in Geneva for more than 25 years before moving to Harvard Divinity School, and he is now emeritus. His work on this commentary began in the 1970s and in the preface he gives thanks to God for having permitted him to bring the task to completion. This review focuses on the final volume of the commentary, but I will also make reference to two related volumes.

Labor et Fides graciously provided a review copy of the 'second edition' of the first volume of Bovon's commentary (*L'Évangile IIIA*). In fact, this appears to be a republication of the volume which was published in 1991. The dust jacket has been updated but I looked in vain for any sign of updating of bibliographies or any additional notes. Thus those who possess this volume in its original form have no need of buying this edition.

The third edition of Bovon's *Luc le théologien* was published both in French (by Labor et Fides) and in English (by Baylor University Press) in 2006. This volume might make us regard Bovon's work on Luke as a 'five-volume' commentary because it functions as the introduction to the commentary proper – and the formal introduction to the first volume of the commentary is very short. *Luc le théologien* is a superb feat of scholarship. It is primarily a review of scholarship on (as the title makes explicit) Luke as a theologian, but it not only surveys an extensive field of secondary literature (published between 1950 and 2005) but also engages with the literature in a creative manner, drawing out Luke's theological emphases such as 'the plan of God, history of salvation and eschatology', 'the interpretation of the Old Testament', 'the Holy Spirit' and 'the Church'.

The exegesis in the final volume of the commentary (*L'Évangile IIIId*) follows the standard format of this series. First, there is a French translation of the Greek text which includes footnotes with information on textual variants or a more literal rendering of the Greek where necessary. This is followed by a bibliography for the specific passage which generally includes works in French, English, German and Italian. It is pleasing that Bovon acknowledges evangelical scholarship both in his bibliographies and in his comments. In fact, he appears to have a very respectful attitude towards evangelical scholarship which, sadly, is not always found among continental European commentators and theologians. In the essay which surveys literature published between 1980 and 2005 for the third revised edition of *Luc le théologien* (461-517), evangelical contributions noted include works by Howard Marshall, Joel Green, Douglas McComiskey, Darrell Bock, Craig Evans, David Pao (whose Harvard doctoral thesis was supervised by Bovon, as he indicates with enthusiasm), David Crump, Mark Strauss, Max Turner and others. Having said this,

the reader should not assume that Bovon shares all standard evangelical convictions; for example, he comments on Darrell Bock's published thesis that an aspect which weakens Bock's thesis is his presupposition that the accounts and arguments reported by Luke are faithful to history (*Luc le théologien*, 482).

Following the bibliography, Bovon sets the pericope in its context in the narrative. The next main section is the analysis, which examines fundamental literary and historical matters relating to the passage such as structure and rhetorical strategy. For example, in the discussion of the denarius and the domain of Caesar (Lk 20:20-26), Bovon first discusses in detail the way Luke preserves (in his view) the structure of the material he has drawn from Mark's Gospel; then he considers relevant material from various non-canonical sources, including *Papyrus Egerton 2* and *the Gospel of Thomas* (the engagement with such non-canonical sources is Bovon's specialty) and the possibility of their dependence on oral traditions (77-81).

The analysis is followed by a verse-by-verse explanation. These sections are typically rich in literary sensitivity, socio-historical detail and reflection on the wider biblical context. Bovon writes well and there is a sense of literary quality in his comments rather than simply a collection of pieces of information.

The next section on history of reception is a distinctive of Bovon's commentary, similar to how Ulrich Luz's emphasis on *Wirkungsgeschichte* became characteristic of his EKK commentary on Matthew's Gospel. In fact, comparison with Bovon's first volume shows that this element was relatively understated at first (a point Bovon concedes in the preface to that volume, IIIa, 5). In most cases there is no section on history of reception and where there is such a section, a footnote indicates that it was prepared by a colleague rather than by Bovon himself. In the final volume (IIIId), by contrast, a history of interpretation is standard for every pericope and, while some of these sections are fairly short (1 or 2 pages), some are quite significant discussions. For example, Bovon devotes almost 8 pages to the history of reception of the ascension narrative (490-498). In my mind, there is still some lack of clarity regarding the significance of the history of reception sections. As they come last in the various sections, it seems that most exegetical decisions have already been made by the time we survey the historical material. Yet Bovon's willingness to hear voices from the past, combined with the fact that he has clearly devoted a great deal of time to considering them, is surely encouraging for those who desire that biblical interpretation should avoid the arrogance which values only interpretations from our own time.

Finally, a short conclusion highlights important theological issues and possible contemporary application. While this is generally very brief (just a few lines), it is often expressed effectively and memorably. For example, in his final 'conclusion' of the commentary on the ascension narrative, Bovon makes some typically thoughtful

theological comments: 'He who had suffered as servant of God was now rehabilitated [perhaps, 'reinstated to his former position', AIW] and glorified. He was from now on going to remain with the Father, not in order to be uninterested in the fate of human beings, of his Church in particular, but in order to give responsibility to each one and to await the missionary engagement of the witnesses' (498). However, he also says that he regards this account as 'the literary fixing of a tradition, of a legend in the etymological sense of the term'.

The final volume of the commentary concludes with indices covering all four volumes. When the volumes of the commentary are taken together, along with the engagement with scholarship found in *Luc le théologien*, the sum total is a quite exceptional volume of technical scholarship which is nonetheless carried out with a fairly light touch (although these volumes are certainly not 'light reading') and a sense of the importance of the task for the good of the Church. I warmly commend these books as valuable tools, even if I might have wished for a different judgement here and there, particularly on issues of historicity. The full commentary is scheduled for publication in the Hermeneia series by the early part of 2013 so then the benefit of Bovon's excellent scholarship will reach an even wider readership.

Alistair I. Wilson
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The Gospel of John

New International Commentary on the NT

J. Ramsey Michaels

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010; xxvii + 1094 pp;

€48,99; ISBN 9780802823021

SUMMARY

The commentary on the Gospel of John by J. Ramsey Michaels is the replacement for Leon Morris' volume in the same series and is the fruit of several decades of intensive study of the Fourth Gospel. While Michaels' treatment of introductory matters is comparatively brief, his synchronic approach is most helpful as it consistently focuses on the biblical text as it stands. The interpretation distinguishes itself by a fresh and careful exegesis, especially by the skilful inclusion of other Johannine passages in dealing with the Gospel's message. Michaels' work will take its place among the best commentaries on the Fourth Gospel and will be a much appreciated resource for both pastor and scholar for years to come.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Beim vorliegenden Kommentar zum Johannesevangelium in der NICNT-Reihe handelt es sich um die Ablösung des Bandes von Leon Morris. Das Werk von J. Ramsey Michaels ist die Frucht mehrerer Jahrzehnte intensiver Forschung am vierten Evangelium. Nach einer recht knappen Behandlung der Einleitungsfragen entfaltet

Michaels seinen synchronen Auslegungsansatz, der konsequent auf den vorliegenden Evangelientext fokussiert ist. Dabei werden vor allem andere Passagen aus dem Johannesevangelium in hilfreicher Weise zur Erhellung konkreter Textstellen miteinbezogen. Dieser Kommentar wird in Zukunft seinen Platz in der Riege ausgezeichneten Auslegungen des vierten Evangeliums einnehmen.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire sur l'Évangile de Jean vient remplacer le volume rédigé pour la même série par Leon Morris. Il est le fruit de plusieurs décennies d'étude intensive du quatrième évangile. Les questions d'introduction reçoivent un traitement relativement rapide, mais l'approche synchronique est particulièrement utile dans la mesure où elle s'attache systématiquement au texte biblique tel qu'il se présente. L'interprétation se distingue par une exégèse soignée, qui met habilement à profit d'autres textes johanniques pour faire apparaître le message de l'Évangile. Cet ouvrage trouvera sa place parmi les meilleurs commentaires de l'Évangile de Jean et constituera un outil fort appréciable pour les pasteurs et les spécialistes dans les années à venir.

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Fast vier Jahrzehnte nach Erscheinen von Leon Morris' Kommentar zum Johannesevangelium (1971, leicht überarbeitete Aufl. 1995) ist nun in der Reihe *New International Commentary on the New Testament* dessen Ablösung erschienen. J. Ramsey Michaels, emeritierter Professor des Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary und der Southwestern Missouri State University, ergänzt die lange Liste an beachtenswerten Johanneskommentaren mit seinem – im Vergleich zu seinem Vorgänger – noch umfangreicheren Werk (Morris: 824 Seiten; Michaels: 1094). Wie im Vorwort deutlich wird, ist der Verfasser als echter Johannesexperte einzustufen, hält man doch das Ergebnis von mehreren Jahrzehnten intensiver Forschungsarbeit am vierten Evangelium in den Händen.

Die Einleitung zum eigentlichen Kommentar nimmt bei Michaels verhältnismäßig wenig Platz ein (42 Seiten). Während sich der Autor in der Frage nach der Verfasserschaft entschieden gegen einen scheinbar von Papias ins Spiel gebrachten „zweiten Johannes“ wendet, überzeugen ihn die vorgetragenen Argumente für eine apostolische Verfasserschaft ebenfalls nicht. Er schließt sich daher einer agnostischen Position an, die Anonymität des Autors sei „both conspicuous and deliberate“ (24). Was die literarische Beziehung des vierten Evangeliums zu den Synoptikern betrifft, geht Michaels von der Unabhängigkeit der johanneischen Tradition aus, das vierte Evangelium sei allerdings „familiar with many of the unwritten traditions“ (29), die hinter den synoptischen Evangelien stehen. Den Unterschied zwischen beiden Strängen der Evangelienüberlieferung fasst Michaels wie folgt zusammen: „much of what is implicit in the other three Gospels becomes explicit in John“ (30).

Im Blick auf den Wahrheitsanspruch des Evangelisten insistiert Michaels, dass innerhalb des Johannesevangeliums keine Unterscheidung zwischen theologischer Wahrheit und historischer Wahrheit vorgenommen wäre. Beides sei vielmehr durch den Geist-Parakleten und das Zeugnis vorhandener Augenzeugen garantiert. Weniger optimistisch äußert sich der Autor allerdings in seiner Antwort auf die Frage, ob das vierte Evangelium Jesus Worte in den Mund lege: „Perhaps so, but not as often as some think, and when I conclude that it does, my job as a commentator is to leave them there.“ (xii) Ein derartiger Ansatz erlaubt es dem Exegeten zwar sein Augenmerk auf den vorliegenden Text zu richten. Doch es bleibt zu konstatieren, dass sich selbst für eine solch moderat-skeptische Sicht auf die Historizität der Johannesreden weit weniger schlagkräftige Argumente finden als gemeinhin angenommen wird.

Damit ist bereits angedeutet, dass Michaels im Umgang mit dem Text einen strikt synchronen Ansatz verfolgt. Damit unterscheidet er sich von dem kürzlich im selben Verlag erschienenen Kommentarwerk von Urban C. von Wahlde und dessen ausgeklügeltem, diachronen drei-Stufen-Modell (vgl. *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 Bde., Eerdmans Critical Commentary, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). Interessanterweise hat Michaels laut eigener Aussage unter allen Auslegern am meisten von Rudolf Bultmann profitiert, allerdings keinesfalls von dessen quellen- und redaktionskritischen Theorien. Vielmehr stellt er fest, dass Bultmanns „eye for detail is unsurpassed, and his close reading of the text as it stands – even when he discards it – perceptive and illuminating“ (xi).

Gleiches gilt für Michaels' eigene Interpretation des Johannesevangeliums. Diese zeichnet sich weniger durch den Rückgriff auf und die Interaktion mit anderen Kommentatoren bzw. redaktionskritischen Ansätzen aus (beides kommt allerdings dennoch nicht zu kurz), als vielmehr durch eine erfrischend eigenständige Auslegung des überlieferten Textes, die immer wieder bedenkenswerte Perspektiven zu Tage fördert. Dabei bezieht der Autor insbesondere den unmittelbaren Kontext des Johannesevangeliums derart gekonnt als Interpretationshilfe heran, wie es nur ein erfahrener Kenner des Buches zu tun vermag.

Drei kurze Beispiele mögen genügen: In Joh 3:13 findet sich das notorisch schwierig zu interpretierende Menschensohn-Wort „Und niemand ist gen Himmel aufgefahren außer dem, der vom Himmel herabgekommen ist, nämlich der Menschensohn.“ Hier hält sich Michaels nicht lange mit der in seinen Augen wenig zielführenden Frage nach dem gemeinten Zeitpunkt dieser „Himmelfahrt“ auf. Stattdessen verbindet er das vorliegende Menschensohn-Wort sowohl mit dem Jesus-Wort in 10:30 („Ich und der Vater sind eins.“) als mit der Aussage Johannes des Täufers in 3:31 („Der vom Himmel kommt, ist über allen.“) und kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die „Himmelfahrt Jesu“ hier nicht temporal zu bestimmen sei. Vielmehr verbirgt sich

dahinter „a way of describing who Jesus is“. Dieser ist (unter Verweis auf Joh 6:33,38,42,51,58,62) „both an ‘ascending’ and a ‘descending’ Son of man (...), for he knows ‘heavenly things,’ and makes them known on earth“ (196-197).

Im Hinblick auf 6:52-59 bemerkt Michaels gegen eine Vielzahl von Exegeten, dass der unmittelbare literarische Kontext keine eucharistische Interpretation dieser Verse erlaube. Die Ausdrücke „Fleisch essen“ und „Blut trinken“ bezieht er in der Folge zwar zu Recht in erster Linie auf den Tod Jesu, fügt dann aber unter Bezugnahme auf das Wort vom Weizenkorn in 12:24-25 hinzu, „that it may be that to eat Jesus’ flesh and to drink his blood implies not only benefiting from his death but to some degree sharing or participating in that death“ (396-397). Damit würde dieser Teil der Johannesreden auch inhaltlich näher an die synoptische Lehre Jesu heranrücken, wie die von Michaels genannten Parallelen in Mt 10:38-39; 16:24-25; Mk 8:34-35; Lk 9:23-24; 14:27; 17:33 zeigen.

Schließlich bleibt Michaels auch im Blick auf die christologisch weitreichende Aussage in Joh 14:28, wonach der Vater „größer“ sei als Jesus, bei seinem konsequenten Interpretationsansatz, der konkrete Stellen primär im Licht anderer Passagen des Johannesevangeliums interpretiert. In dieser Hinsicht hält er Jesu Erklärung der eigenen (sicher nicht ontologisch zu fassenden) Nachrangigkeit für wenig überraschend, da der johanneische Kontext wiederum deutlich mache, dass die „Priorität des Vaters“ unbestreitbar sei.

Der Kommentar von Michaels wird in Zukunft seinen Platz in der Riege ausgezeichneter Auslegungen des vierten Evangeliums einnehmen. Wer eine umfassende Bibliografie sowie eine ausführliche Behandlung der historischen Fragen zum Johannesevangelium sucht, wird bei Keener eher fündig (*The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 Bde., Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005). Dagegen bietet Michaels eine sorgfältige und detaillierte Exegese, die den vorliegenden Text in seiner Gesamtheit ernst nimmt und in vorbildlicher Weise zur Erhellung der Textaussage beiträgt. Ob zu Predigt- oder Forschungszwecken – alle am Inhalt des Johannesevangeliums Interessierte werden mit Gewinn zu diesem gut lesbaren Werk greifen.

Philipp Bartholomä
Giessen

*A Jelenések könyvének magyarázata, 2 vols.
(A major commentary on Revelation in
Hungarian)*

Klára Lenkeyné Semsey

Debrecen: Magyarországi Református Egyház Doktorok Kollégiuma, 2011; 660 pp, pb.;

ISBN 978-963-08-1936-7, €6 (sponsored price)

SUMMARY

The Revelation commentary of Klára Lenkeyné Semsey is the most profound Hungarian work on Revelation published so far. The author reads the last book of the New Testament through the lens of Christ’s conquest and sets the conflict motif at the heart of its argument. While this idea is not new, the author develops it in a creative way that merits our attention. Readers who share the author’s perspective of faith will find this resource not only a useful source of text critical and exegetical insights, but also a significant tool of spiritual formation and an aid for preaching. The short ‘meditations’ following each major section are a valuable contribution not characteristic of Revelation commentaries.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Kommentar zur Offenbarung von Klára Lenkeyné Semsey ist das umfassendste ungarische Werk zur Offenbarung, das bisher publiziert wurde. Die Autorin liest das letzte Buch des Neuen Testaments aus der Sicht des Sieges Christi und stellt das Konflikt-Motiv ins Zentrum ihrer Argumentation. Wenn diese Idee auch nicht neu ist, so verdient die kreative Herangehensweise der Autorin dennoch unsere Aufmerksamkeit. Die Leser, die ihre Glaubensvorstellung teilen, werden in diesem Kommentar nicht nur eine nützliche Quelle an textkritischen und exegetischen Erkenntnissen finden, sondern auch ein bedeutendes Werkzeug zur geistlichen Bildung und eine Hilfe zur Predigtvorbereitung. Die kurzen „Meditationen“ am Ende eines jeden größeren Abschnittes sind ein für Kommentare zur Offenbarung unüblicher, aber wertvoller Beitrag.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire sur l’Apocalypse est l’ouvrage le plus élaboré qui ait été publié à ce jour en hongrois sur l’Apocalypse. L’auteur considère que le dernier livre du Nouveau Testament a pour but de proclamer la victoire de Christ et elle voit dans le thème du conflit le cœur de sa problématique. Cette ligne d’interprétation n’est pas nouvelle, mais l’auteur la présente d’une manière créative qui mérite de retenir l’attention. Les lecteurs qui partagent la foi de l’auteur trouveront en cet ouvrage bien des remarques utiles et perspicaces de critique textuelle et d’exégèse, ainsi qu’un apport pour la vie spirituelle, et une aide pour la prédication. Les courtes méditations qui suivent l’étude de chaque section principale du livre sont bienvenues, d’autant plus qu’il n’est pas habituel d’en trouver dans les commentaires sur l’Apocalypse.

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The last decades have seen an explosion of knowledge in Revelation studies. This period was marked by raising new questions, the use of new approaches and the emergence of a consensus on different critical issues. Never were more commentaries written on the last book of the New Testament than in this period. Whereas the extensive commentaries of Aune (1997–98), Beale (1999), Osborne (2002), Prigent (2001), Maier (2009–11) and some others became standard works in the field, the wider scholarly community is often unaware of major works written in minority languages. Such is the case with the Hungarian scholarly literature on Revelation, among which the recent two-volume commentary of Lenkeyné Semsey Klára, the distinguished New Testament professor emerita of Debrecen Reformed Theological University, stands out as the most extensive and most thorough Hungarian work on Revelation written so far.

The conviction of Lenkeyné Semsey (II, 290–291) is that Revelation is the detailed exposition of Jesus' logion in the farewell discourse: 'I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!' (Jn 16:33). She argues that the last book of the New Testament is focused on the proclamation of Christ's conquest to the church militant with the purpose of stirring perseverance and faithfulness until death. This viewpoint sets the conflict motif at the heart of the book's argument. The significance of this motif for the theology of Revelation has previously been argued, though rarely, in the scholarly literature; for a recent example, see S.K. Tonstad, *Saving God's reputation: the theological function of Pistis Iesou in the cosmic narratives of Revelation* (LNTS 337; London: T & T Clark, 2006). But Lenkeyné Semsey develops it in an unexpected way through her commentary. While the conflict motif is generally viewed as focused on the cosmic struggle between the divine and the demonic powers with a particular reference to the people of God, she shifts the emphasis. She argues that for the conflict motif, the struggle of the divine powers for the nations is more essential than the cosmic combat of the supernatural powers for sovereignty over the universe. Though she acknowledges the basic apocalyptic outlook according to which God's conquering programme includes 'dethroning the enemy' (I, 11), she puts the emphasis rather on God's initiative for the salvation of humankind. As reflected in the subtitle of the commentary, this divine initiative includes awakening, warning and struggle. This theological emphasis is in agreement with the pastoral agenda of Lenkeyné Semsey, who writes from the perspective of faith, but at the same time sacrifices no scholarly rigour on the altar of pastoral concern.

The second most important motif in Revelation for Lenkeyné Semsey is worship. In the introductory section of the commentary she launches the idea that the universal call to worship in 14:7 is the thematic centre of Revelation (I, 12). This idea has been recently argued

independently by Jon Paulien, *Seven keys: unlocking the secrets of Revelation* (Nampa, Id.: Pacific Press, 2009), 39–43, who claims to follow the lead of Schüssler Fiorenza on the centrality of chapter 14 in the book. Whereas Lenkeyné Semsey arrives independently at the same conclusion, she nowhere provides a substantial argument for it – only a brief reference to the research of Lohmeyer (II, 71 n. 87). Even in the detailed exegetical discussion of chapter 14 (II, 71–102) no argument is set out in favour of this crucial thesis, neither does she discuss its significance for the theology of the work as a whole. The agreement with Paulien is even more surprising in light of the fundamental difference between the views of these two scholars on the structure of Revelation: whereas Paulien is a proponent of a chiasmic structure with 11:19 – 15:4 at the centre, Lenkeyné Semsey argues for a linear structure comprising eight basic sections in which chapter 14 is viewed as part of the fifth major section (12:1 – 14:20).

One of the greatest strengths of this commentary is the profound textual critical discussion (often marginalized in the commentaries) after the author's own translation, but preceding the exegetical analysis of the individual sections. Also worthy of attention is the author's interest in the christological aspects of the book and its trinitarian theology. Whereas other commentaries often limit their christological discussion to the exegesis of chapter 5, Lenkeyné Semsey tries to develop the topic as much as she can in the discussion of other texts.

A valuable part of the work is the detailed discussion of Revelation's thorny history of canonisation (17–18). Unique to the commentary is that all exegetical discussions are followed by short 'meditations', reflections on the text with the aim of spiritual formation. These sections are of particular value for readers who are interested in preaching from Revelation, since they resemble homiletical notes. The beautifully rich, clear and sometimes even poetic Hungarian language of the author also merits commendation, although it is unfortunate that some sections of this commentary lack final proofreading.

Although this is the most profound Hungarian commentary on Revelation, Lenkeyné Semsey should pay more attention to recent scholarly literature. Authors quoted or referred to regularly include mostly scholars of previous generations writing in German such as Zahn, Lohmeyer, Kraft, Brütsch and Rissi. The commentary does not use the insights of recent major works such as those of Aune, Bauckham and Beale. If this work will see a new edition, more careful attention to the use of the Old Testament and Graeco-Roman sources in Revelation and the analysis of the historical-religious context of first-century Asia Minor are also desirable. Nevertheless, the commentary of Lenkeyné Semsey is a capital resource for the Hungarian scholarly community – a major work that needs to be found on the shelf of any Revelation scholar who reads Hungarian.

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Reading Revelation. A Thematic Approach

W. Gordon Campbell

Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2012; 430 pp,
£30.00; pb; ISBN 978-0-2271-7383-1; also available
as PDF or EPUB

RÉSUMÉ

Voici la version anglaise d'un ouvrage d'abord publié en français. L'auteur a une approche thématique de l'Apocalypse et montre comment les divers éléments de ce livre s'harmonisent en un ensemble qui fait sens. Il avertit le lecteur de l'Apocalypse contre des identifications historiques trop rapides. Tous ne seront pas convaincus sur tous les points, en particulier par la mise en doute de la pertinence des données historiques pour l'exégèse des chapitres 2 et 3, ou par l'identification proposée pour Babylone et Jérusalem. Cette étude apporte néanmoins bien des suggestions nouvelles intéressantes. Et Campbell nous offre ici une théologie biblique de l'Apocalypse complète et cohérente.

SUMMARY

This is the English version of a study that was originally published in French. Gordon Campbell's thematic approach to Revelation shows how the different elements of the book fit together into a meaningful whole. Campbell warns the interpreter of Revelation not to make historical identifications too hastily. Even if not everyone will be convinced in all respects, particularly concerning his questioning of the relevance of historical information for the exegesis of chapters 2-3 or the proposed identification of Babylon and Jerusalem, this study provides many fresh insights. What Campbell offers is a complete and coherent biblical theology of Revelation.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dies ist die englische Ausgabe einer Studie, die ursprünglich auf Französisch veröffentlicht wurde. Gordon Campbells thematischer Ansatz zur Offenbarung zeigt, wie sich die unterschiedlichen Elemente des Buches zu einem sinnvollen Ganzen zusammenfügen. Campbell warnt die Ausleger der Offenbarung davor, nicht zu eilig historische Identifikationen vorzunehmen. Nicht jeder mag von allen Aspekten überzeugt sein: Dies gilt insbesondere, wenn Campbell die Relevanz von historischen Informationen für die Exegese der Kapitel 2-3 infrage stellt, oder was die vorgeschlagene Identifikation von Babylon und Jerusalem angeht. Dennoch bietet diese Arbeit viele neue Einblicke. Was Campbell hier vorlegt, ist eine vollständige und stimmige biblische Theologie der Offenbarung.

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There exist several works providing useful theological approaches to Revelation. What could a 'thematic approach' add to such books? Gordon Campbell has spent more than fifteen years conducting research on the book of Revelation, resulting in a doctoral thesis and several articles written in French. In this present

work, he presents his approach in English to a broader public. Campbell is professor of New Testament Studies at Union Theological College, Belfast. The French original of this book appeared in 2007, at the time when the author was teaching New Testament at the Faculté Jean Calvin in Aix-en-Provence. He decided to translate his book into English, being both translator and author, and feeling free to improve the clarity or the force of the argument wherever this seemed appropriate. As a result, the present book now starts with four introductions: foreword and preface to the English edition, and foreword and preface to the French edition.

Campbell proposes to read the book of Revelation as though it were a symphony in three movements: God, Humanity and Covenant. 'Human beings may enjoy a free and true relation to God who is wholly other, and to the Lamb on condition that, in the various choices and commitments of their lives, they refuse idolatry with all it entails... God offers to humankind a way of living together with him, which is structured by a covenant.' (344) In seven chapters, Campbell explores interlaced thematic trajectories: divinity and pseudo-divinity, true sovereignty and usurped claims, legitimate adoration and bogus worship (part 1: God reveals himself); genuine testimony and counter-proclamation, faithful belonging and counter-allegiance, bride-city and whore-city (part 2: Humanity finds itself); broken covenant and new covenant (part 3: When God and humanity meet).

Again and again, Campbell warns the interpreter of Revelation not to make historical identifications too hastily, particularly in identifying Babylon and Rome. The most important issue concerning the name Babylon is its feminine-urban imagery, rooted in the Jewish Scriptures. This is a complex theme, the unfolding of which in Revelation is linked not to one city in particular: it is linked to the seven church-cities of Asia, to the great city introduced in 11:8 and to the controlling concept of the woman city in the rest of the book. The heavenly city is, according to Campbell, nothing short of a *Babylon rediviva* as she both neutralises the city on the Euphrates and becomes the more glorious with splendour of her own. By replacing Babylon, this Jerusalem-from-above puts an end to the revolt, tyranny and oppression of Babel or Sodom or Tyre. Campbell, then, defends the minority position that reads the cargoes for merchants and associates of Babylon in reference to biblical Jerusalem (Rev 18:12-13 referring to the trade of the Temple and bazaars of Jerusalem).

For Campbell, the Bible is not to be used for satisfying whatever curiosity we may have. Even in the case of the seven Asian cities in chapters 2-3, he is reluctant to use historical data for the exegesis. He states that it is not certain that the historical import of the cities is anything more than circumstantial, incidental or secondary; their worth is not simply to calculate in historical terms, it is also representative and symbolic. Revelation, as an apocalyptic book, creates its own symbolic universe, including the oracles of chapters 2-3.

This thorough reading of Revelation led Campbell ultimately to break with the current interpretative consensus. As he himself puts it, Revelation's narrative is not, as is usually assumed, 'a rhetorical position fundamentally at loggerheads, politically or religiously, with the ancient Roman status quo, but instead manifestations of a distinctly inner-Jewish debate, conducted on the basis of rival readings of the Old Testament current at the time. Consequently, a provisional reconstruction of the cognitive and rhetorical situation that gave rise to Revelation would suggest a context linked to the synagogues of the Jewish Diaspora'. (25)

Hermeneutically significant is Revelation's ever present use of antithesis, because 1. we are dealing, here, with a skilfully woven part of the compositional web; 2. the numerous antithetical phrases, figures and images are carefully interlinked within the narrative; 3. these very motifs, with their positive and negative poles, both regulate and punctuate the developing narrative.

To give one example of careful thematic reading: Revelation uses the variable but always fourfold formula 'peoples, multitudes, nations and languages' (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15) to denote humanity as a whole, so it is almost synonymous with universality. However, the formula never recurs in identical fashion twice and this is more than simply matter of form. Allowing for two shifts in meaning, it has three distinct nuances in all. The first is positive, the second is neutral, the third and final nuance is negative. By highlighting these nuances, Campbell shows that the formula in question undergoes a very subtle evolution as Revelation's plot moves forward.

In conclusion, Campbell's 'thematic approach' proves to be an account of how the different elements of the book of Revelation fit together into a meaningful whole. Even if not everyone will be convinced in all respects, particularly concerning the questioning of the relevance of historical information for the exegesis of chapters 2-3 or the proposed identification of Babylon and Jerusalem, this book provides many fresh insights. What Campbell offers is a complete and coherent biblical theology of Revelation, undoubtedly useful to theological students, teachers and researchers, so that contemporary readers become competent readers.

Rob van Houwelingen
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Ancient Christian Interpretations of "Violent Texts" in the Apocalypse

Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus / Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 92

Joseph Verheyden, Andreas Merkt, Tobias Nicklas (eds)

Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011; 313 pp, hb, € 69,95, ISBN 978-3-647-53976-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Werk für Spezialisten enthält sehr unterschiedliche Beiträge. Einige der dreizehn Aufsätze (auf Deutsch und Englisch) konzentrieren sich auf die Schriften von Kirchenvätern wie Origenes, Victorinus, Lactantius und Tyconius zum Thema Gewalt im Buch der Offenbarung, andere wiederum nicht. Es ist zu begrüßen, dass Wissenschaftler aus ganz Europa an diesem Werk beteiligt sind.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage qui rassemble des contributions très diverses s'adresse aux spécialistes. Une partie des treize contributions, en allemand et en anglais, traitent de ce que les pères de l'Église comme Origène, Victorin, Lactance et Tyconius ont écrit concernant la violence dans l'Apocalypse. Il est appréciable qu'on ait fait ici appel à des auteurs de toute l'Europe.

SUMMARY

This is a book for the specialists which contains very diverse contributions. Some of the thirteen essays (in German and English) do focus on what church fathers such as Origen, Victorinus, Lactantius and Tyconius wrote about the violence in Revelation, others do not. It is good that scholars from all over Europe are involved.

* * * *

This book presents itself as a collection of studies written in preparation for a commentary on the Book of Revelation based on the Fathers of the Church, the *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* project. We already have the series Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (IVP) and the Blackwell Bible Commentaries which focus on the reception history of the Bible, but it seems that NTP will provide more complete overviews of what the Fathers wrote.

Anyway, the essays in the present book, written by scholars from many countries, are a rather mixed collection and not many deal with the three elements Revelation, Fathers and violence. There are thirteen essays, seven in English and six in German. Luca Arcari (Italy) opens with an essay on the Jewish background of the war scenes in Revelation. He introduces the Book of Enoch, the War Scroll (1QM) and 2 Baruch, thus sketching the general milieu in which Revelation may have originated, but fails to establish any direct links between these texts and Revelation. Tobias Nicklas (Germany) dialogues with Charles E. Hill on the reception of Revelation

in the second century. He shows great appreciation of Hill's *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* – an appreciation shared by this reviewer – but disagrees with some of Hill's specific conclusions regarding the knowledge of Revelation in the second century.

Ilaria Ramelli (Italy) is the first author to stay close to the volume's theme as she analyses Origen's handling of the violence in Revelation. She shows how his allegorisation enables Origen to see the violence as positive, viz. as the purification of humanity. Andreas Merkt (Germany) analyses the different ways in which the constituent parts of the *Passio Perpetuae* receive Revelation. He introduces the *Passio* well and shows how it claims an authority for itself equal to that of the writings of the emerging New Testament. Konrad Huber (Austria) introduces Victorinus of Pettau, the famous first commentator on Revelation, and his work, with special attention to Rev 1:9-20 – not a violent text! Martin Hasitschka (Austria) follows on with Victorinus' interpretation of Rev 19-21 – another passage without much violence – and Jerome's reception of it. Jan Dochhorn (Denmark) studies Lactantius' eschatology, a fascinating construct which only vaguely builds on Revelation – amazing for such an early author who died in AD 325.

Then follow three essays in which violence is actually a topic: (1) Christopher Rowland and Ian Boxall (UK) tell us what Tyconius and the English theologian Bede made of Rev 4:1 and 8:2 – 11:18; both linked Revelation directly to their own situations. (2) Pieter de Villiers (South Africa) introduces the enigmatic author Oecumenius and his commentary on Revelation, which has the violent Roman Empire as its main character and God as merely responding to its violence. (3) Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou (USA) discusses the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea; her introduction and presentation are good.

Yet in the last three essays the theme of violence is lost from view once again. (1) Harald Buchinger (Austria) contributes the longest essay (51 pages), describing the use of Revelation in the liturgy and iconography of the Church. Going far beyond the patristic era, he finds that the violent texts were largely ignored. (2) Julia Eva Wannenmacher (Germany) describes Joachim of Fiore, hardly a church father. She assumes rather much, such as a distinction between the real Joachim and Pseudo-Joachim, and the essay's English is so poor that it is at times hard to understand. (3) Stefan Alkier (Germany) presents his own, all too brief exegesis of Revelation in intertextual perspective. Turning to violence he argues that 'The violence of the Book of Revelation is not an invention of this book, but a real experience of all mankind; the power of God is the foundation of the hope that violence will come to an end. There is no passage in the Book of Revelation that instructs the human witnesses of Jesus and God to kill anybody or to fight against people who do not believe...' (293)

This is a highly specialised collection; although the present reviewer teaches on Revelation he lacks the

expertise in patristics to evaluate some of the contributions. Regrettably the volume lacks an index of biblical texts, which will limit its usefulness.

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The Holy Trinity. Understanding God's Life

Stephen R. Holmes

Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012, xv + 231 pp,
£19.99, pb; ISBN 978-1-842-27741-6

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Holmes argumentiert auf rein historischer Basis, dass momentane Ansprüche auf eine trinitarische Renaissance fehlgeleitet und falsch sind. Stattdessen würden gegenwärtige Lehren zur Dreieinigkeit in Wirklichkeit von traditionellen Überlieferungen abweichen, indem sie die Schrift in ihrer Gesamtheit außer acht lassen, die Dreieinigkeit im Netz der Geschichte einfangen, eine volle Persönlichkeit jeder der drei göttlichen Personen zuschreiben und eine eindeutige Sprache verwenden. Die klassische Lehre der Dreieinigkeit entwickelte sich aus exegetischen Anliegen heraus und im Zusammenhang mit einem göttlichen Minimalismus, einer Doktrin, die nun in der Theologie der Gegenwart fehlt. Abgesehen vom filioque sprachen Ost und West unisono bis zum 19. Jahrhundert, als Änderungen der Lehre eintraten.

SUMMARY

Holmes argues on purely historical grounds that recent claims to trinitarian revival are misguided and mistaken. Instead, contemporary doctrines of the Trinity actually deviate from traditional accounts by failing to account for all of Scripture, entangling the Trinity in history, ascribing a full personality to each divine person, and the use of univocal language. The classical doctrine of the Trinity developed out of exegetical concerns and within the context of divine simplicity, a doctrine now missing in contemporary theology. Besides the filioque, East and West spoke with one voice up until the nineteenth century when changes to the doctrine began.

RÉSUMÉ

En se fondant simplement sur l'histoire de la théologie, Holmes soutient que les tendances récentes que l'on présente comme participant à un renouveau trinitaire sont en fait mal orientées et erronées. Au contraire, les approches nouvelles de la doctrine de la Trinité s'écartent en fait de la tradition en ce qu'elles ne prennent pas en compte l'ensemble des Écritures. Elles errent par un accent indu sur une conception plus « personnaliste » de Dieu en opposition avec la tradition métaphysique, par la manière dont elles lient la Trinité à son engagement dans l'histoire, ou par une confiance trop optimiste dans la capacité du langage humain à se référer à Dieu, parfois de manière univoque. La doctrine classique de la Trinité a été élaborée sur

la base de l'exégèse et en tenant compte de la simplicité de l'être de Dieu, doctrine désormais laissée de côté par la théologie contemporaine. En dépit des divergences quant au filioque, les théologiens orientaux et occidentaux ont parlé d'une seule voix jusqu'au xix^e siècle, au cours duquel de nouvelles approches de la doctrine ont commencé à apparaître.

* * * *

Many books have been written in the last fifty years that have charted and lauded the retrieval and resurgence of the doctrine of the Trinity in contemporary theology. However, Stephen Holmes' new book argues that most modern expositions of the Trinity do not constitute a retrieval of the traditional doctrine, but a completely new development. He states that 'the explosion of theological work claiming to recapture the doctrine of the Trinity that we have witnessed in recent decades in fact misunderstands and distorts the traditional doctrine so badly that it is unrecognizable' (xv). Despite recent claims, modern trinitarian theology does not actually depend on patristic, medieval or Reformation accounts. This does not, however, mean that the modern developments are wrong. They may be correct, but this would imply that the majority of the Christian tradition was wrong. Holmes finds this conclusion dissatisfying and therefore aims to survey Scripture and the tradition in order to see what has been left behind in modern accounts of the Trinity.

Holmes begins by surveying views of the Trinity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. While Barth and Rahner form the origins of modern trinitarian theology, Holmes locates new developments such as a focus on a more 'personal' view of God in contrast to the metaphysical tradition, the entanglement of the Trinity and history, the relation of the Trinity and the Church, and an increased confidence in the ability of human language to refer to God (sometimes univocally). Holmes sees the developments in modern trinitarianism as 'absent from, or even formally condemned by, all earlier accounts of the Trinity' (32). This first chapter forms a significant beginning, setting the stage and placing the modern period against the backdrop of Scripture (chapter two) and the theological tradition (chapters three to nine).

The development of the doctrine of the Trinity was not, as is sometimes claimed, a speculative exercise in Christian logic as a result of cultural pressures of Greek philosophy. Rather, it was chiefly a result of biblical exegesis. Patristic interpreters read scripture christologically and Holmes gives examples by surveying Proverbs 8, Wisdom 7, Isaiah 53 and the Psalms. Chapters three to nine survey the theological tradition (both East and West), providing excellent summaries of primary texts. Holmes finds continuity amidst the diversity of contexts and time. Contrary to much recent scholarship and the 'de Rénnon thesis', East and West 'spoke with one voice' (144) except on the issue of the *filioque*; they commonly emphasized divine simplicity, unity, ineffa-

bility and the unity of divine operations. Holmes also argues that 'Augustine is the most capable interpreter of Cappadocian Trinitarianism' (146) and sees Aquinas as a fully biblical and Trinitarian theologian rather than one who subordinates the Trinity to a philosophical and general view of the one God.

One theme in this volume stands out among the others: divine simplicity. Aside from analytic philosophy, recent scholarship either ignores or denounces simplicity as a distortion of a biblical view of God. Holmes argues, however, that the doctrine can be found in early Patristic thought and is not merely the product of Augustinian thought finding its culmination in Aquinas. It was essential to trinitarian theology in the East and the West. Contemporary scholars who claim that it has obvious problems must assume that the tradition either ignored such problems or was blind to them. Therefore, more significant arguments against divine simplicity must be developed before it can be denied as a crucial doctrine for trinitarian theology.

For as much historical ground as Holmes covers, it is surprising that Colin Gunton and Jonathan Edwards are both largely absent from this work. Gunton, Holmes' *doktorvater*, was an important figure in the rise of contemporary trinitarian theology and a critic of Augustine and much Western trinitarianism. Edwards' theology, the focus of Holmes' doctoral study, seems to have offered new developments on the doctrine of the Trinity. Does Edwards stand in continuity with the tradition? Or would he be relegated to more modern theologians who have deviated onto a new theological pathway? The reader cannot be sure. Lastly, Holmes might have made his critique of social trinitarianism more explicit from the beginning; readers must wait until the end (195) to read that it is a departure from 'the unified witness of the entire theological tradition'.

Because the series within which this book is found is primarily aimed at upper-level undergraduates, some readers may disagree with Holmes' starting-point in recent theology. Can students understand the complexity and diversity of trinitarian theology from the beginning? Although I was hesitant about this approach at first, I came to agree with Holmes' decision as it allows to students to learn about the so-called 'trinitarian retrieval' first, and then to move on to hear the tradition and to assess if recovery is truly taking place. I found Holmes' historical argument convincing, and this text will serve students well and spark debate among scholars on some of Holmes' more controversial stances. This book should be taken seriously and I hope it changes the direction of conversation in trinitarian studies.

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Forsaken. The Trinity and the Cross, and Why It Matters

Thomas H. McCall

Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2102, 11 + 171 pp.,
\$20.00; ISBN 978-0-830-83-958-2

SUMMARY

McCall's book aims at a strong view of indivisibility in the doctrine of the Trinity, the divine attributes, the nature of the atonement, and justification and sanctification. The Father and Son are not ruptured because of the cross, nor does the cross remove a supposed tension between God's love and wrath. The nature of the atonement is rich like a complex network rather than a set of individual models, and justification and sanctification, while distinct, cannot be separated from each other or the work of the triune God.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce livre, l'auteur affirme avec force le caractère indivisible de la Trinité, des attributs divins, de la nature de l'expiation, et le caractère inséparable de la justification et la sanctification. La croix n'entraîne pas de rupture entre le Père et le Fils. Elle n'a pas non plus pour but de résoudre une supposée tension entre l'amour et la colère de Dieu. Plutôt que de concevoir la nature de l'expiation selon un ensemble de modèles distincts, il faut apprécier sa richesse comme celle d'un réseau complexe. La justification et la sanctification, bien que distinctes, ne peuvent pas être séparées l'une de l'autre, mais constituent l'œuvre rédemptrice du Dieu trinitaire.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

McCalls Buch vertritt einen starken Standpunkt der Unteilbarkeit im Hinblick auf die Lehre der Dreieinigkeit, die göttlichen Attribute, die Natur der Erlösung, Rechtfertigung und Heiligung. Vater und Sohn werden durch das Kreuz nicht auseinandergerissen, auch hebt das Kreuz nicht die angenommene Spannung zwischen Gottes Liebe und Gottes Zorn auf. Das Wesen der Erlösung gleicht eher einem reichlich komplexen Netzwerk als einem Bausatz mit einzelnen Modellen. Darüberhinaus können Rechtfertigung und Heiligung, während sie unterschiedlich sind, doch nicht voneinander oder vom sonstigen Werk des dreieinigen Gottes geschieden werden.

* * * *

Was the Trinity broken at the cross? Did the death of Jesus make it possible for God to love people? Was the death of Jesus a meaningless tragedy? Does it even make a difference? These four questions form the structure of the present book. McCall, associate professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, argues for a strong view of indivisibility: of Father and Son, divine attributes, the nature of the atonement, and justification and sanctification. This indivisibility is not one that avoids or negates distinctions, but it does deny separation, confusion and

division. Each of the four chapters asks a key question, attends to it and concludes with some views to avoid, affirm and then explain why it matters.

McCall is critical of the 'broken-Trinity' view and the stance that Jesus' cry of dereliction does not refer to Psalm 22 or only refers to Psalm 22:1 and not to the entire passage. 'Saying "the Trinity was broken" amounts to saying "God does not exist"', he argues (44). Although the Father and Son relation was not ruptured, Scripture and tradition help us see that we must affirm that the Father did indeed abandon his Son, but only to death. McCall also argues that Jesus' union with humanity and the Son's relationship with the Father must be seen as unbroken.

Did the cross make it possible for God to love us? This question assumes that God's love might not have existed (or was different) prior to the cross. Contrary to some scholarly and popular trends, Scripture demonstrates that God's love is holy and wrathful and that his wrath is also loving. But, wrath is a *contingent* attribute stemming from the holy love of the Trinity. At this point, both divine impassibility (meaning the appropriateness of divine emotion, not the lack of emotion) and divine simplicity play important roles. God's love is the holy *impassible* love of the Trinity that never oscillates in relation to sin. Divine simplicity reminds us that wrath and love do not oppose or compete with one another. Neither is it merely the Father alone who is wrathful and the Son who loves, as though they could be divided. The simple nature of the triune God means that all three persons are equally loving and wrathful, undivided in their works, and trustworthy in their love and wrath. In sum, 'God is for us. It is not *part* of God that is for us – as if some divine persons or some divine attributes were opposed to me while others are for me – it is just *God* who is, in the impassible simplicity of the trinitarian life, radically *for us*' (91).

The third chapter asks whether God's divine foreknowledge means that God killed Jesus, since he knew the crucifixion was going to happen. McCall navigates between what he sees as two extremes: a senseless tragedy view and a soft (compatibilism) or hard view of determinism. Furthermore, McCall outlines the nature of the atonement as including a wealth of views, unable to be divided or emphasized against one or the other. The final chapter outlines the distinct but undivided nature of justification and sanctification as understood in a trinitarian context. The work of the triune God results in our immediate justification as well as our ongoing sanctification. The book concludes on a personal note in which McCall powerfully testifies to the significance of the trinitarian gospel in the face of his father's death in 2009. Whether the reader agrees or disagrees with his arguments, this is a great witness to one of the main truths that McCall has been after: the Trinity really does make a difference in our lives.

Reformed readers are likely to disagree with chapter three in particular and may have problems with the

presentation of determinism. The author's critique is too brief and at times dismissive, speaking of those who want to protect divine sovereignty 'as if it *needs* protection' (99-100). My hope is that this chapter will not distract from McCall's main contribution, even though the arguments against determinism seem to wander from the book's central aim.

It is difficult to know the level of education necessary to benefit from this work. It is deeply pastoral and filled with wisdom and insight in a mere 170 pages. However, it assumes a good working knowledge of historical theology, doctrine, some philosophy, and at times technical distinctions. Some of these are fit for students and pastors, while in other places McCall engages academic scholarship that the intended audience is not likely to know well or at all. Even so, he should be commended for the book's many strengths. In this very readable volume; McCall brings the skills and tools of analytic theology to bear on some very difficult teachings. He brings clarity, precision and insight along with a pastoral tone that shows great care not only for the truth but also for the mind and character of the readers. Other scholars would do well to imitate McCall's work for the sake of students and the Church.

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***God is a Communicative Being: Divine
Communicativeness and Harmony in the
Theology of Jonathan Edwards***

T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology

William M. Schweitzer

London: T&T Clark International, 2012, 198 pp.,
\$110.00, hb; ISBN 978-0-5671-9522-7

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette monographie, William Schweitzer étudie l'élément central de la doctrine de Dieu chez Jonathan Edwards. Selon lui, Jonathan Edwards voyait la propension divine à communiquer comme la clé pour comprendre la création. La communication intra-trinitaire, communication de connaissance, d'amour et de joie, se reflète dans la communication *ad extra* qui s'effectue de manière harmonieuse par la médiation de la nature, de l'Écriture et de l'histoire. Écrit avec intelligence, cet ouvrage remarquable constitue une ressource excellente, non seulement pour les spécialistes qui s'intéressent à Jonathan Edwards, mais aussi pour tous ceux qui se penchent sur les grandes questions théologiques suivantes : Qui est Dieu ? Pourquoi a-t-il créé le monde ? Comment puis-je le connaître ?

SUMMARY

In this monograph William Schweitzer examines the core of Jonathan Edwards' doctrine of God. Edwards, as Schweitzer explains, sees divine communicativeness as the key

to our understanding of the Trinity *ad intra* as well as *ad extra*. God essentially communicates his knowledge, love and joy through the media of nature, Scripture and history, and he does so in a harmonious way. Lucidly written, this outstanding work is an excellent resource not only for Edwards scholars but also for everyone who is interested in the big theological questions: Who is God? Why did he create the world? How can I know God?

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In dieser Monographie untersucht William Schweitzer das Herzstück von Jonathan Edwards' Lehre von Gott. Wie Schweitzer erläutert, versteht Edwards die Kommunikationsfähigkeit Gottes als Schlüssel zu unserem Verständnis von der Trinität sowohl *ad intra* als auch *ad extra*, also nach innen wie nach außen hin. Gott teilt im Wesentlichen sein Wissen, seine Liebe und Freude durch die Medien von Natur, seinem Wort und der Geschichte mit, und dies auf eine harmonische Weise. Dieses hervorragende Werk ist verständlich geschrieben und ein ausgezeichnetes Hilfsmittel nicht nur für Wissenschaftler, die sich mit Edwards befassen, sondern auch für jeden, der an den großen theologischen Fragen interessiert ist: Wer ist Gott? Weshalb hat er die Welt geschaffen? Wie kann ich Gott kennenlernen?

* * * *

Scholarly interest in the North American pastor, theologian and philosopher Jonathan Edwards remains high. Today, the virtually unlimited availability of Edwards resources, both physically (printed Yale University Press editions, 1957-2008) and digitally (Jonathan Edwards Center, <http://edwards.yale.edu/>), facilitates research and leads to an ever-increasing number of publications. This is surely a desirable development as Edwards' voice deserves to be heard today if we want to make real progress in our theological discussions. However, faced with the immense proliferation of Edwards studies, one is in danger of losing sight of the core of Edwards' theology and hopes for a presentation of the big picture. To speak with authority, such a scholar would not only have to exhibit a profound insight into the Edwards corpus but would also need to be familiar with the secondary material, which is, as already mentioned, enormous. William M. Schweitzer is such a scholar and he handles the daunting challenge exceptionally well.

Jonathan Edwards' *Leitmotif*, Schweitzer argues, was to find an answer to the fascinating question of why a self-sufficient God would create. This is the answer Edwards offers: God 'created the world to communicate himself to intelligent beings' (12-13). As suggested by the title of Schweitzer's volume, God is an inherently communicative being; it is his very intention to communicate himself to creation in a harmonious way. In Edwards' view, Schweitzer explains, God's communicativeness *ad intra*, the intra-Trinitarian sharing of knowledge, love and joy is mirrored by his communication *ad extra*, whereby all of reality is infused with his beauty, harmony and excellence. As self-communication can be

regarded as synonymous with revelation, Schweitzer sees fit to guide the reader predominantly through Edwards' notion of revelation. Sandwiched between an introductory account of Edwards' core theology (chapter one) and his overall project (chapter six), one thus finds in-depth treatments of Edwards' views of nature, special revelation (where Schweitzer carefully traces Edwards' openness for general revelation that does not succumb to a full-blown natural theology), Scripture and history (chapters two to five) as the media of God's revelation, which are ultimately the modes of 'Christ's own revelation in space and time' (30).

Throughout his lucidly written work, Schweitzer not only exhibits a magisterial mastery of the extensive Edwards material *per se*, but also demonstrates a significant sensibility for Edwards' biographical-historical context in that he helps us to read Edwards against the backdrop of his *Zeitgeist*. Schweitzer thus critically discusses Edwards' own interaction with Enlightenment thinkers, in particular British Deism, and he carefully traces important characteristics and shifts in Edwards' thinking (from the *Rational Account* to the *History of the Work of Redemption*, for example). In addition, Schweitzer guides the reader through the jungle of relevant secondary sources, offering his informed critique of scholarly misinterpretations of some of Edwards' views, such as his view on salvation history.

There are, however, at least two areas where this work could have benefitted from a more detailed exposition. First, as Schweitzer's focus is clearly on divine communicativeness and as communication necessarily involves reciprocity, one wonders if Schweitzer could have said more about the recipient of the divine communication. Whilst he provides a brief account of this aspect of 'two-sided conversation' (70-71), one would have wished for a more in-depth treatment of this issue. It would have been interesting to hear more about Edwards' view on how humans take part in the communicative process of love, knowledge and joy, through prayer and worship, and particularly in the Eucharist. Secondly, it appears that one particularly peculiar Edwardsian idea is his high view of the ministry, which also contributes, as it were, to God's communicative activity (148-154). 'Edwards even likens', writes Schweitzer, 'the work of ministers to the prophetic aspects of Christ's salvific work' (149). Edwards even goes so far to say that ministers were in some respect 'subordinate saviours' (149). These remarks perhaps require some qualification and one wonders whether the absence of a more substantial critique should be interpreted as Schweitzer's tacit approval of Edwards' view.

Overall, then, Schweitzer reminds us of Edwards' key insight that God is not the disinterested and fragmented God of the Deists but the active and harmonious Trinitarian God of Scripture who communicates himself to us in harmony through the media of nature, Scripture and history. In times where the aspect of 'cognition' dominates the theological debate, one does well to rediscover

Edwards' focus on the emotive impact of God's divine communication with us; God communicates himself not only in knowledge and love, but also in joy, which calls forth in us a 'joyous affectional response' (156), as Schweitzer puts it.

This is Schweitzer's first major academic publication and given its outstanding quality, one cannot but hope that he, like Edwards a pastor-theologian (in that order), will continue to follow Edwards' example by finding time and energy to contribute to the academy whilst also serving as a minister in the future.

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Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif

T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology

James Eglinton

London and New York: T&T Clark International,
2012; x + 224 pp., £65, hb; ISBN 978-0-5671-2478-4

RÉSUMÉ

En proposant une nouvelle lecture du « motif organique » chez Herman Bavinck, Eglinton trouve la clé d'une compréhension unifiée de la pensée du théologien néo-calviniste néerlandais. Au sein de cette théologie centrée sur le Dieu un-et-pluriel, le « motif organique » cher à Bavinck permet de décrire la correspondance entre l'unité-dans-la-diversité ectypale du monde créé triniforme et le Dieu archétypal à la gloire duquel il existe.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Eglinton stellt eine neue Lesart des „organischen Motivs“ bei Herman Bavinck vor und hat damit den Schlüssel gefunden für ein einheitliches Verständnis des Denkens des neo-calvinistischen Theologen aus den Niederlanden. Im Herzen dieser Theologie, die sich auf den einen-und-pluriformen Gott konzentriert, liegt das von Bavinck so wertgeschätzte „organische Motiv“. Es erlaubt, die Beziehung zwischen der ectypischen Einheit-in-der-Vielfalt der Welt, die in einer Dreiheit geschaffen wurde, und dem archetypischen Gott zu beschreiben, zu dessen Verherrlichung sie existiert.

SUMMARY

Proposing a new lecture of the 'organic motive' in the work of Herman Bavinck, Eglinton has discovered the key to a coherent understanding of the ideas of the Dutch neo-Calvinist theologian. Embedded in this theology which concentrates on the one-and-pluriform God, lies the 'organic motive' which is so dear to Bavinck. This motive allows describing the relation between the ectypal unity-in-diversity of the world which was created in a triniform way, and the archetypal God for whose glory it exists.

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« Il ne suffit pas de connaître les œuvres d'un artiste. Il faut aussi savoir quand il les faisait, pourquoi, comment, dans quelles circonstances. » (Picasso) L'« artiste » auquel s'intéresse James Eglinton dans *Trinity and Organism* est le théologien néerlandais Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) qui a fait paraître sa *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Dogmatique réformée) à la fin d'un siècle traversé par les interprétations contradictoires des conservateurs et des modernistes sur ce que signifiait être réformé.

L'hypothèse « des deux Bavinck » qui, jusqu'à présent, a dominé les études sur le théologien batave tient compte, à sa manière, de ce contexte. Un « Bavinck conservateur » héritier du calvinisme piétiste et rural de son enfance, du Réveil élitiste et urbain des cercles qu'il a fréquentés par la suite s'opposerait au « Bavinck moderniste » marqué par ses études de théologie à la Faculté de Leyde. Il en résulterait une théologie en tension traversée par des motifs antithétiques irréconciliables. Eglinton montre la fragilité de cette thèse et propose une interprétation plus convaincante : celle d'un Bavinck unifié, orthodoxe et moderne qui répond aux questions de son époque à partir d'un solide ancrage dans la tradition réformée.

Cette nouvelle perspective permet à Eglinton de faire une lecture bien plus probante de l'emploi récurrent chez Bavinck du « motif organique » par quoi il faut entendre l'utilisation de la métaphore de l'organisme, par opposition à celle du mécanisme, pour parler du monde, de la révélation divine et de l'Église. Les promoteurs de la « théorie des deux Bavinck » y voyaient un motif exclusivement propre au « Bavinck moderniste » influencé par le romantisme et l'idéalisme allemand de son siècle. Eglinton discrédite efficacement cette thèse, d'une part, en faisant remarquer que la similitude de langage n'implique pas la similitude conceptuelle et, d'autre part, en montrant qu'une perspective spécifiquement néo-calviniste rend bien mieux compte de l'emploi chez Bavinck de ce thème qu'une prétendue perspective néo-hégélienne. D'ailleurs, dans son *Johannes Calvin*, Bavinck établit en fait un lien explicite entre le motif organique et la pensée du Réformateur qu'il résume ainsi : « le monde entier ... doit être considéré ... comme un tout organique et harmonieux » à la gloire de Dieu de sorte que « dans leur diversité, [les cieux et la terre, les plantes et les animaux, les humains et les anges, la famille, l'état et la société, la vocation religieuse, la science et l'art] demeurent un, parce qu'ils ont tous leur origine dans la même volonté divine » (77-78).

De là, Eglinton établit que, dans la théologie de Bavinck, le motif organique est employé pour expliquer dans quel sens « l'unité archétypique (trinitaire) de la divinité sert de fondement à toute unité ectypale (triniforme) ... au sein de la création. » (79) La Trinité divine ad intra est ainsi pour Bavinck l'archétype de l'unité-dans-la-diversité créationnel ad extra. Autrement dit, le caractère organique du monde, de la révélation divine (générale et scripturaire) et de l'Église visible est la transposition dans la réalité créée de l'unité-dans-la-

diversité divine. Toute la seconde partie de l'ouvrage démontre le caractère foncièrement théocentrique et trinitaire de la pensée de Bavinck et la correspondance du motif organique avec ce théocentrisme trinitaire au sein de la dogmatique du théologien néerlandais.

La mise à mal de l'hypothèse des « deux Bavinck » n'est pas la seule vertu du *Trinity and Organism* de James Eglinton. En ce début de XXI^e siècle où la pensée d'Herman Bavinck devient accessible aux non-néerlandophones depuis la traduction en anglais de sa *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* sous le titre *Reformed Dogmatics* [Baker, 2003-2008], *Trinity and Organism* servira certainement d'introduction et de guide très utile à qui souhaite s'initier à la pensée du théologien de Kampen et d'Amsterdam. En publiant cette version actualisée de sa thèse de doctorat, Eglinton ouvre la voie à de nouvelles recherches concernant l'une des lignes de force les plus nettes du mouvement néo-calviniste : le fondement trinitaire de l'articulation de l'un et du multiple. Les études sur Bavinck en seront très certainement stimulées et toute pensée qui se veut trinitaire sera conduite à interagir avec Bavinck. Qu'il en soit ainsi !

Pierre-Sovann Chauny
Paris

Abraham Kuyper: An Annotated Bibliography 1857-2010

Tjitze Kuipers

Leiden: Brill, 2011, 756 pp, hb, €224.00 / \$290.00;
ISBN 978-90-04-21139-1

SUMMARY

This book, an annotated bibliography of all writings by Abraham Kuyper published between 1857 and 2010, is remarkable and of outstanding worth to the Reformed theological tradition. Tjitze Kuipers deserves much credit for this gargantuan effort. The bibliography is invaluable in gathering (and providing short introductions to) the complete works of Kuyper, a theologian who wrote incessantly throughout his working life. Thanks to Kuipers, scholars are now better placed to read Kuyper's individual writings contextually which will, one hopes, lead to a more nuanced and responsible interpretation of his thought.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese kommentierte Bibliographie aller zwischen 1857 und 2010 veröffentlichten Schriften von Abraham Kuyper ist ein bemerkenswertes Werk von außergewöhnlichem Wert für die Theologie der reformierten Tradition. Tjitze Kuipers verdient hohe Anerkennung für dieses gigantische Unterfangen. Die Bibliographie ist besonders hilfreich, weil sie die vollständigen Werke Kuypers zusammengefasst und mit kurzen Einführungen präsentiert. Kuyper ist ein Theologe, der während seines gesamten Arbeitslebens unablässig geschrieben hat. Dank Kuipers sind Wissenschaftler heute viel besser in der Lage, Kuypers einzelne Werke im

Zusammenhang zu lesen, was – wie man hoffen darf – zu einer differenzierteren und verlässlicheren Interpretation seines Gedankengutes führen wird.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici une bibliographie annotée de tous les écrits d'Abraham Kuyper publiés entre 1857 et 2010 qui constitue un tribut remarquable et de grande valeur à la tradition théologique réformée. C'est le fruit d'un travail gigantesque. Elle rassemble l'ensemble des écrits de Kuyper, un théologien qui n'a cessé d'écrire tout au long de sa carrière, et livre une courte introduction à chacun d'eux. Elle permettra aux spécialistes de lire chaque écrit de Kuyper dans son contexte, en vue d'une interprétation mieux informée et plus nuancée de sa pensée.

* * * *

Abraham Kuyper's thought is notoriously difficult to interpret well. He wrote constantly, his thoughts were always in development and were inextricably linked to the rapidly changing social, political and ecclesiastical contexts in which he lived. The sheer volume of his publications makes anything like concrete statements on 'Kuyper believed that...' rather difficult: bearing his incessant stream of publications in mind, it is challenging to be sure that one has read everything that Kuyper wrote on a given topic.

The nature of this challenge, however, has changed (for the better) thanks to Tjitze Kuiper's remarkable efforts. Over many years, he has carefully compiled an annotated bibliography of Kuyper's works from 1857 onwards. This bibliography also covers re-editions and translations of Kuyper's works until 2010. And these bibliographic entries are annotated – often with particularly helpful explanations of the development of Kuyper's thought in the works in question (see, for example, page 331 on *Drie kleine vossen*) and with useful notes on the historical context of the relevant publications. In that sense this book is simply necessary for those attempting to write accurately on Kuyper's life and works.

Indeed, the fact that the bibliographic entries are so exhaustive and chronologically ordered is of considerable value to the development of Kuyper scholarship. Those wishing to write on a particular Kuyper publication can now easily explore what else he wrote at the time in question, where the publication stands in relation to the development of his key ideas, and so forth.

The bibliography covers essays, books, articles (with the exception of Kuyper's articles in *De Heraut* and *De Standaard*), printed telegrams, pamphlets, multi-volume works, first and later editions, and later translations. The bibliography does not, however, cover Kuyper's works available via print-on-demand technology. Despite this, it nonetheless covers some 756 pages.

George Harinck's introductory essay, 'Being Public: On Abraham Kuyper and His Publications,' is well written and typically nuanced. Harinck skilfully captures the sense in which Kuyper, from a note dealing with

his desire to give himself over to God written at the age of 10, to his deathbed statements, saw his life as inherently public. (Harinck draws an interesting comparison to Kuyper's colleague Herman Bavinck, who wished to maintain a firm distinction between his public and private lives.) This essay explores the sense in which Kuyper mastered material culture in order to publicise his life and thought, but notes, appropriately within the context of a 756 page bibliography, that writing was Kuyper's means *par excellence* of maintaining a public profile, concluding that, '[F]or upwards of seventy years and in an unprecedented way, Kuyper gave himself away in books and papers, where what was personal to Kuyper became public and where the public word was as utterly personal as it has been for any figure since.' (xxi)

The obvious critique of this bibliography concerns its price, rather than its content. At €224.00 or \$290.00, its price is extremely restrictive to individual buyers. (That said, a recent Oxford University Press publication on Augustine, at \$895, makes this work cheap in comparison.) However, it should be noted that the publisher has announced the intention to make an electronic version available online, free of charge. As such, the realm of Kuyper studies stands to benefit considerably from Kuyper's dedication and thoroughness.

James Eglinton,
Kampen, NL

The Mighty and the Almighty: An Essay in Political Theology

Nicholas Wolterstorff

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, vii + 181 pp., £55 / \$90, hb, ISBN 978-1-107-02731-2

SUMMARY

In this book Nicholas Wolterstorff presents his view of a Christian understanding of the state in a discussion with two opposing positions: The understanding of the state as representing a foreign power (Yoder and Hauerwas) and the understanding of the state as a representative of God in the ordering of social life (Calvin's 'two rules' doctrine). Through an exegesis of Romans 13, combined with philosophical-political reflections, Wolterstorff argues that the state has a God-given authority but with a more restricted aim than in the two-rules doctrine, and that the Western rights-limited democracies are good expressions of this.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, Nicholas Wolterstorff traite de la conception chrétienne de l'État. Il expose son propre point de vue, après avoir considéré deux positions opposées : celle qui voit l'État comme un pouvoir étranger (John Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas) et celle qui le considère comme un représentant de Dieu chargé d'assurer l'ordre dans la vie sociale (la doctrine calviniste des deux règnes). Sur la base d'une étude exégétique du texte de Romains 13 et

de réflexions philosophiques et politiques, Wolterstorff considère que l'État détient une autorité que Dieu lui a confiée, mais que son rôle est plus restreint que le veut la théorie des deux règnes. Il conclut que les démocraties occidentales aux droits limités constituent de bonnes expressions de ce que l'État doit être.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch stellt Nicholas Wolterstorff seine Sicht eines christlichen Verständnisses vom Staat im Rahmen einer Diskussion mit zwei entgegengesetzten Positionen vor: Das Verständnis vom Staat als Repräsentant einer auswärtigen Macht (Yoder und Hauerwas) und das Verständnis vom Staat als Repräsentant Gottes in der Gesellschaft und ihrer Ordnung (Die Lehre Calvins von den 'zwei Königreichen'). Auf eine Exegese von Römer 13 und philosophisch-politische Betrachtungen gestützt, vertritt Wolterstorff folgendes Argument: Der Staat hat eine gottgegebene Autorität inne, doch mit einer enger gefassten Zielsetzung als in der Zwei-Reiche-Lehre, und die westlichen Demokratien mit eingeschränkter Staatsmacht sind ein guter Ausdruck davon.

* * * *

The aim of this book, which originated in the author's Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1998, is to reflect on how we are to look at the state and its authority from a Christian standpoint – i.e. in relation to the belief in God's supreme authority. An important reason for taking this up is the radical criticism that theologians like John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas have levelled against the classical Christian understanding of worldly authority as servants of God (18-46). According to Yoder, worldly authorities belong to the powers that have rebelled against God. Even if God uses these powers in his providential work, Christians cannot support them, only (if necessary) freely subordinate themselves to them. Hauerwas follows a slightly different line of thought, which Wolterstorff surprisingly links with Augustine's 'two cities': he sees Church and state as representing two different nations, with different citizens. Even if they intermingle in daily life you can only be a citizen of one of them. Christians are thus 'resident aliens' in the state, living in it without identifying with it.

The reason for Wolterstorff's reaction against this is not only that it runs counter to his own exegesis of Romans 13. It also renders Christians strangers in the world, so that they exclude themselves from taking part in the improvement of government. But to his own surprise Wolterstorff cannot identify with the opposite, classic view – the so called 'two rules' doctrine – either. In this book it is represented by Calvin, for whom Wolterstorff clearly has great sympathy (67-82). According to this view, civil government, far from being part of the rebelling powers, is to be regarded as 'deputy of God', holding a 'holy ministry'. Even if persons in government may be morally depraved, their office is to be honoured

and Christians are encouraged to take part in it for the sake of peace and stability in society. But that is also the limit of its aim and authority. When it comes to salvation and eternal life God does not rule through civil government but through his Church and the means that he has entrusted to it, Word and sacrament.

As is evident from Wolterstorff's subsequent exegesis of Romans 13 (83-104), and the 'fleshing out' of this exegesis in relation to our modern society (the rest of the book), his main objections to this understanding are as follows:

(1) It is a misunderstanding to ascribe to the state the 'positional authority' that Calvin does with reference to Romans 13:1. Key to understanding what Paul says about the state is his description in verses 4 and 5 of the aim of the state, namely 'curbing injustice' and protecting the rights of its citizens (90). If the state does not live up to that, it is to be criticised and opposed.

(2) This being the God-given task of the state, it is also a misunderstanding of its role to ascribe to it the task 'to ... protect the outward worship of God' and 'to defend sound doctrine of piety' (so Calvin, 71). Calvin's understanding is here more in line with Aristotle's all-encompassing understanding of the state as fulfilling the goal of human life than with Paul's more restricted understanding of it as 'curbing the wrongdoing and encouraging the good-doing' (101).

(3) It is also a misunderstanding when Church and state in the 'two rules' doctrine are understood as two governance structures in relation to a common body of persons, taking care of the people's outward behaviour and their inner life respectively. It has not much to do with the churches of the New Testament as institutional bodies alongside other institutional bodies in a multi-religious society. And this view inevitably gives the state a much more prominent role in defining human life than the NT allows.

Wolterstorff's own view is developed through philosophical analyses of the nature of the authority of governments and through a presentation of the Dutch reformed theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper (who happened to deliver the Stone Lectures a hundred years before Wolterstorff). Authority in society is not as simple as we tend to think. Society is a many-faceted network of institutions and units such as companies, schools, churches and families, each with their own authority-structure. The state is but one of these, albeit an important one. The diversity of society is an expression of God's creation work, and is therefore to be secured, not only on an individual but also on an institutional level. And exactly this is the God-given task of the state. The state that the Bible points at is, in other words, the 'rights-limited state' of Western democracies. In relation to this, Christians are not to regard themselves as 'resident aliens'.

There is much to learn from Wolterstorff's understanding of society, even if it is a little too American to my taste. And he is to be lauded for his wish to combine

theological-philosophical thinking and exegesis. But I cannot say that I was convinced by his exegesis. Maybe it is not that easy to draw the line from Scripture to Western democracy.

*Asger Chr. Højlund
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***The Four Gospels on Sunday: The New Testament
and the Reform of Christian Worship***

Gordon W. Lathrop

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012, vii + 219 pp,
\$38.18, hb; ISBN 9780800698522

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch „Die Vier Evangelien am Sonntag“ umfasst acht Kapitel in zwei Teilen. Es erforscht die Rolle, welche die urchristlichen Gemeinden bei der Bildung der Evangelien gespielt haben und welche Auswirkungen dieser Bezug für die christlichen Gottesdienste heute hat. Gordon Lathrop vertritt die Auffassung, dass, weil die Evangelien im ‚Einklang‘ mit den urchristlichen Versammlungen geschrieben wurden, liturgische Theologen den fortwährenden Einfluss ernst nehmen müssen, den die Evangelien auf Versammlungsrituale und –praktiken ausüben. Lathrop behauptet, dass die Evangelien mehr als eine geschichtliche Rolle spielen, sondern auch als ein stets reformierender Katalysator dienen, der die Gemeinde in die Geheimnisse der lebendigen Gegenwart Christi hinein führt durch Symbole, Metaphern und verbale Bezüge.

SUMMARY

Comprised of eight chapters divided into two parts, *The Four Gospels on Sunday* explores the role ancient Christian assemblies played in the formation of the Gospels and the implications of this relationship for today's Christian assemblies. Gordon Lathrop contends that because the Gospels were written to 'cohere' with Christian assemblies, liturgical theologians must take seriously the Gospels' ongoing role in the gathering's rituals and practices. More than mere history, Lathrop claims the Gospels serve as an ever-reforming catalyst leading the community into the mystery of Christ's living presence through symbol, metaphor and verbal juxtapositions.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage se divise en deux parties et comporte en tout huit chapitres. Il cherche à déterminer quel rôle ont joué les communautés chrétiennes primitives dans l'élaboration des Évangiles et quelles implications on peut en tirer pour les communautés chrétiennes d'aujourd'hui. L'auteur soutient que, puisque les Évangiles ont été rédigés en fonction des communautés chrétiennes, les théologiens de la liturgie doivent considérer avec attention quel rôle les Évangiles continuent à jouer dans le rituel et les pratiques des réunions chrétiennes. L'auteur considère que les Évangiles, plus qu'une simple présentation de l'histoire,

ont pour but de servir de catalyseur d'une réforme permanente des communautés, en conduisant celles-ci dans le mystère de la présence vivante de Christ à l'aide de symboles, de métaphores et de juxtapositions verbales.

* * * *

Veteran liturgical theologian Gordon Lathrop's *The Four Gospels on Sunday* takes up the relationship of the Gospels to their ancient Christian assemblies in order to address the place of worship in today's Christian gatherings. Lathrop contends that the Gospels were written specifically for the ancient communities in which they were originally read. Thus, he contends that today's Christian worship must take seriously the Gospels' ongoing roles in shaping rituals and practices. Even more, Lathrop argues the Gospels provide an irreplaceable bridge to worshipping the risen Christ.

The first chapter, 'Beginnings', frames the discussion by exploring the origin of the Gospels in light of the assemblies in which they were read. Drawing on John Dominic Crossan's claim that the Gospels demonstrate a dialectic between the 'Jesus-then' and 'Jesus-now', Lathrop argues that the assembly is the context for both: 'Jesus-then is indeed Jesus-now, in the assembly' (27). Similarly, he draws from F.W. Danker and G.H.R. Horsley's work on the origins of the word 'gospel' to argue that Paul adopted imperial good-news announcements that included both invitations to festivals and the festival sacrifices themselves. Lathrop proposes that Mark took up Paul's (i.e. Danker and Horsley's) understanding of the Gospel and, therefore, also wrote with fledgling Christian communities in mind. Specifically, Lathrop claims that Mark's 'house' motif carried special associations for the house-church assemblies of the first century. In turn, Mark's example inspired the other three Gospel writers; Matthew, Luke, and John all concluded their Gospels with the risen Lord appearing to a gathering.

The second chapter focuses on the relationship between the Gospels and the 'meal meetings' of the early Christian movement. Following the work of Paul Bradshaw, Lathrop posits an irreducible diversity of patterns present in meal practices of ancient Christian assemblies. At the same time, this diversity and unfolding development of practice was carried out alongside the implications for meal-keeping found in the Gospels: Luke's Emmaus story (Lk 24:13-35), Mark's Passover meal (Mk 14:12-20) and (more covertly) Matthew's Wedding Banquet parable (Mt 22:1-14). As Lathrop summarizes, 'The growing similarities in Eucharistic practice, then, would be due not only to the fourth-century imperial interest in a unified church but also and more profoundly to the common orthodox Christian heritage of the reforming word of the apostle and Gospels' (57).

Chapters three, four and five examine the four gospels in detail (Mark and John get their own chapter while Matthew and Luke share a chapter). This section is the

exegetical heart of Lathrop's volume, relating the focus and structure of each Gospel to the Christian assemblies to which they were addressed. The fruit of this research is summarized succinctly at the end of the volume:

Mark wants the communities of Christians to be ready for persecution, (...) Matthew wishes them to have their lamps ready for the return of the Lord. Luke argues for the constant repetition of the meal at Emmaus. And John gives the assemblies resources to resist incipient Gnosticism. (199)

Whereas the previous chapters discussed the roles of the Gospels in ancient Christian assemblies, chapters six, seven and eight transition into a discussion of the Gospels' roles in assemblies today. Lathrop urges that his readers need not unearth 'original' practices; instead, they should assess whether their current practices 'join the witness' of the Gospels (157). This is supported by examples of what such 'Gospel reform' of worship entails for preaching, Eucharist, baptism and (in chapter seven) leadership. Lathrop concludes his book (chapter eight) with a call to a new kind of biblical-theology movement. Rather than romanticism regarding early church practices or a modernist dogmatism regarding the biblical text, the Gospels call assemblies to make the presence of the crucified Christ their 'central mystery' (199).

There is much to appreciate in Lathrop's call for a renewal of liturgical theology via biblical theology. As he acknowledges, liturgical theology can no longer operate under the romantic notion of clearly delineated rituals and practices handed down from the apostles. In light of this, his impulse to appeal to Scripture is welcome. However, Lathrop's structuralist hermeneutic (the word 'juxtapositions' occurring some eighteen times in the volume) raises semantic issues of its own. Additionally, his volume fails to clearly state where the Gospel begins and the assembly ends. Do both find their nexus in an archetypal 'juxtaposition' in the presence of the risen Christ? To the degree the Gospel gives birth to the Church (and not visa versa), a mutual 'coherence' appears to be undermined. These questions notwithstanding, Lathrop's delightfully worded volume has placed the Bible and liturgy in fresh conversation. As such, *The Four Gospels on Sunday* evinces emerging vistas sure to fund future work with in both biblical and liturgical theology.

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Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity

Mark S. Kinzer

Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011; xxvii + 221 pp.;
\$22.40; ISBN 978-1-60608-883-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Sammlung von Aufsätzen des messianisch-jüdischen Autors Kinzer bringt die zentrale These zum Ausdruck, dass messianische Juden sich nicht 'entjudaisieren' sollen. Sie sollen vielmehr als Juden angesehen werden, die im Licht von Jesus, dem Messias, leben. Kinzer vertritt das Argument, das die Loyalität der Kirche als ganze ebenso der jüdischen wie auch der heidnischen Welt gilt. Jesus muss als Jude gesehen werden, anstatt dass er von seinen Wurzeln abgeschnitten wird.

SUMMARY

This collection of essays by the Messianic Jew Kinzer has as its central thesis that Messianic Jews should not un-Jew themselves. They are rather to be defined as Jews who live in the light of Jesus the Messiah. Kinzer argues that the loyalty of the Church as a whole is as much towards the Jews as it is towards the gentile world. Jesus has to be seen as a Jew rather than separated from his roots.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage rassemble une série de textes du Juif messianique Mark Kinzer dont la thèse centrale est que les Juifs messianiques ne devraient pas abandonner leur judaïcité. Ils devraient plutôt se considérer comme des Juifs vivant à la lumière de Jésus le Messie. Kinzer soutient que l'Église dans son ensemble a un devoir de loyauté autant envers les Juifs qu'envers le monde non juif. Jésus doit être vu comme un Juif et non pas être coupé de ses racines.

* * * *

Mark S. Kinzer, President emeritus of the Messianic Jewish Theological Institute in Los Angeles (CFA), is one of the leading voices in the post liberal dialogue between Christianity and Judaism in the last decades. This book offers a broad introduction to Kinzer's thinking and presents a compilation of articles and lectures previously stated.

The book needs a short introduction into the issues that are at stake here. Much of western theological reflection is still hampered by implicit (or even explicit) supersessionist perspectives. Accordingly, the proverbial 'parting of the ways' of Jews, Messianic Jews and non-Jewish Christians is easily maintained and fuelled. Only recently the tide has started to turn. Over the past few decades, there has been a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish-Christian relations, including signs of a new, improved Christian attitude towards Jews. Some of the distinguished names involved in the new conversations are Michael Wyschogrod (e.g. *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations* [Grand Rapids, 2004]), Peter Ochs (e.g. *Another Reformation: Postlib-*

eral Christianity and the Jews [Grand Rapids, 2011]), R. Kendall Soulen (e.g. *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* [Minneapolis, 1996]), David Novak, David Fox Sandmel (e.g. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, David Fox Sandmel, Michael A. Signer [eds.], *Christianity in Jewish Terms* [Boulder, 2000]), and Mark S. Kinzer.

Symbolic of these fresh negotiations is the Jewish Statement *Dabruemet*, issued by the National Jewish Scholars Project on the 10th of September 2000 and signed by over 220 rabbis and intellectuals from all branches of Judaism. While affirming important theological differences between Christianity and Judaism, the purpose of *Dabruemet* is to point out common ground, and even the very legitimacy of Christianity for non-Jews.

Very perceptive in this field of Jewish-Christian relations are the pioneering books of the Messianic Jew Mark S. Kinzer. In his renowned book *Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (2005), Kinzer reflects on the role of Jews, Israel, Jesus and Christians in biblical texts. Most of the exegesis and interpretation here is to be highly recommended. For example, Kinzer discusses the possibility of the apostle Paul understanding Israel's temporary unbelief in Jesus itself as a paradox (according to Romans 9-11), that is: as participation in Jesus' vicarious suffering. Kinzer also contends that according to the New Testament the Church did not replace Israel but contains at its core a portion of Israel (a remnant), which must truly live as Israel, pure in its observation of traditional Jewish practices, and as such sanctifying Israel as a whole. For this reason Kinzer thinks that Jesus is still present among the Jewish people, albeit 'in a hidden and obscure fashion', because the church is called to live as a bilateral body in close solidarity with Israel (one *ekklesia* consisting of two corporate sub-communities).

Therefore, Messianic Jews should not un-Jew themselves. On the contrary, Messianic Judaism should be defined throughout as Judaism, practised in the light of Jesus the Messiah. This is the main line of thought in Kinzer's present book, which was edited by Jennifer Rosner: *Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity*. It is all about covenant fidelity of Jews and Messianic Jews together, which makes the Church of Jews and gentiles into a body with two orientations. One is its affinity with and loyalty to the Jewish people and their covenant with God; the other is its connection with the gentile world. Messianic Jews have the obligation to emphasize the first orientation, Kinzer asserts, whereas gentile Christians do not have to. Hence, Jesus is for Kinzer the essential link between Judaism and Christianity rather than the distinguishing factor that separates them. The church becomes an extension of Israel, rather than a replacement.

For Kinzer this is true catholicity, if the Church rediscovered its connection with Israel through Jesus, because

the Messiah is Israel's corporate personality, the one-man Israel, the Jew 'par excellence', who reconciles and unites. The cross, too, shows Jesus' fidelity to the covenant of Israel and God, by which the body of Israel was re-opened to Israel, and for the first time really opened to all of the nations.

Kinzer's book is divided into three parts: (I) Vision for Messianic Judaism, (II) Judaism from a Messianic Perspective and (III) Yeshua-Faith from a Jewish Perspective, with altogether seven chapters. In the first chapter Kinzer tells the story of his conversion to Jesus Christ, and his search for bringing this faith and the faith of Israel together. His major discovery was that Jewish people never had to lose their Jewish identity in order to become part of the fellowship of the redeemed. After centuries of mutual suspicion and hostility, Christianity should be described in a new way from a Jewish perspective, resulting into a Jewish theology of Christianity as well as into a Christian theology of Judaism. Exactly this turned out to become the agenda of Kinzer himself.

I warmly recommend *Israel's Messiah and the People of God* and hope that it will critically stimulate discussion and dialogue between the many fractions of the people of God.

Henk Bakker
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Dementia. Living in the Memories of God

John Swinton

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012; vii + 298pp, £23.75, pb, ISBN 978-0-8028-6716-2

RÉSUMÉ

Que serais-je si j'oubliais totalement qui je suis, en quel Dieu je crois et à qui je rends un culte ? L'auteur affirme que rien ne peut annuler le fait que Dieu nous reconnaît comme des personnes. Il nous invite à une réflexion théologique sur la démence et considère les problèmes complexes que suscite l'expérience de la démence pour la théologie. Sans jamais perdre de vue la foi chrétienne, l'auteur élabore une perspective théologique spécifique en prenant en compte les travaux effectués au sein de disciplines diverses comme la philosophie, la psychiatrie, la neurologie et la psychologie.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Welch ein Mensch wäre ich, wenn ich überhaupt nicht mehr wüsste, wer ich bin und an welchen Gott ich glaube und wen ich anbe? Der Autor ist der Ansicht, dass nichts das Erkennen und Anerkennen, das von Gott herkommt, zerstören kann. Dieses Buch ermutigt uns, theologisch über die Erfahrung der Demenz zu reflektieren, und ringt mit komplizierten Sachverhalten, die auftauchen, wenn wir die theologische Dynamik der Erfahrung von Demenz ins Auge fassen. Während dieses Buch nicht den christlichen Glauben aus dem Blick verliert, entwickelt es eine

ausgesprochen theologische Perspektive, die sich mit einer breitgefächerten Vielfalt von Disziplinen in den Bereichen von Philosophie, Psychiatrie, Neurologie und Psychologie befasst.

SUMMARY

What would I be like if I became completely forgetful about who I am and which God I believe and worship? The author suggests that nothing can destroy divine recognition. This book encourages us to reflect theologically on the experience of dementia and wrestles with the complicated issues that emerge as we consider the theological dynamics of the experience of dementia. While this book is not losing sight of Christian faith, it develops a specifically theological perspective engaging with a wide range of disciplines in the fields of philosophy, psychiatry, neurology and psychology.

* * * *

In *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*, John Swinton, a professor in Aberdeen, gives an insightful practical theological perspective and challenges our view of dementia. He addresses the deeply seated assumption that dementia is a neurobiological disease that determines forms of care. If we look at the experiences of people with dementia and their families, there are important dimensions that are different from the standard medical description of dementia which so far have been overlooked: the relational and social dimensions. The author refuses to accept that dementia is defined only in the medical paradigm and argues that dementia is as much relational and social as it is neurobiological. Furthermore, he particularly challenges pastoral and practical theologians to rethink dementia and urges us to go beyond what we see of dementia from the perspective of a Christian counter-story that recognises the contingent nature of being a human and God's providence.

Although Swinton is not entirely against psychiatry and neurobiology per se as he attempts to re-describe what dementia is, he is critical of pastoral theologians and ministers who 'naturally' adopt the neurobiological explanation of dementia as the starting point for their theological reflection. Rather, the experience of severe forgetfulness might be told from a radically different counter-story emerging from the big story of God and the living experience of dementia. This would be like entering into a strange and new world of the Bible for those living with deep forgetfulness. This understanding of people with dementia and their families can be held within both the medical and theological descriptions of dementia, and it offers hope for those who suffer from it.

The author's argument is centred on the concept of personhood that is assumed in the current person-centred approaches, which make people with dementia non-persons. He argues that this concept actually shapes the way in which we respond to offer care. While he acknowledges the significance of person-centred models

like Tom Kitwood's relational model of care and Steven Shabbat's recognition of the self in understanding dementia, according to Swinton, they omit the transcendent dimension from their approaches. Precisely at this point, he is convinced that re-considering dementia from a theological context (using the doctrines of creation and the Trinity) could make a difference. A new understanding of personhood might overcome the shortcomings in the cognitive-functional and the horizontal-relational understandings of persons. People with dementia should be understood in the context of their humanness; his thesis is that God's memory ensures divine action which holds our creaturely identity within his memory. We are dependent, contingent, embodied, deeply lost, yet profoundly loved and purposeful human beings held in the memory of God. Even if we forget whom we think we are and if others merely remember our past, it is God's memory that holds our true identity. Nothing will be forgotten by God unless he chooses to forget.

Regarding the implications for Christian practice, the author reminds us that the church is called to become a community of the memory of God and to remain faithful to the memory of those who have forgotten whose they are. Even if people with dementia do not remember their past, the communal and faithful action of the church holds them and remembers them by valuing their dignity in the present, for God is in the present moment. The church is also called to create a hospitable place of belonging where people with dementia and their families can find support and express their affliction and lament as well as their joys and possibilities.

The theological framework laid out in this book makes the attempt to re-describe dementia compelling. At the same time it explores a unique way of offering care for dementia sufferers in the Christian practice. The book challenges the discipline of practical theology in terms of its unique methodological position. It is very useful for pastoral workers, health professionals and family carers who are involved with people with dementia. It may help us all to re-consider how we make a difference in offering hospitable care to people with dementia and their families in an alternative way.

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Looking for Mary Magdalene: Alternative Pilgrimage and Ritual Creativity at Catholic Shrines in France

Oxford Ritual Studies 8

Anna Fedele

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; xii + 320 pp., £22.50, pb (also available as hb), ISBN 978-0-19-989842-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Anna Fedele ist eine italienische Ethnografin, die unter ‚neuheidnischen‘ Menschen arbeitet, welche sich zur Person der Maria Magdalena hingezogen fühlen. In dieser umfassenden Studie erforscht sie die Glaubensüberzeugungen, Gefühle und Erfahrungen von Pilgern, welche die Stätten mit Altären von Maria Magdalena besuchen. Alle Interviewteilnehmer hatten sich ablehnend zum christlichen Glauben geäußert, entweder weil sie persönliche Ablehnung erlebt oder Schwierigkeiten mit einem patriarchalischen Glauben hatten, der ihrer Ansicht nach Frauen und/oder ‚das Feminine‘ zurückwies. Das Buch befasst sich mit Anliegen, die interessant sein dürften für Missionswissenschaftler und Verfasser von Kirchenliturgie oder von neuen Anbetungsritualen.

SUMMARY

Anna Fedele is an Italian ethnographer working amongst ‘Neo-pagan’ people drawn to the figure of Mary Magdalene. In this comprehensive study, she explores the beliefs, feelings and experiences of pilgrims visiting Marian shrines. All of those interviewed had rejected Christianity, either because of perceived personal rejection, or difficulties in the patriarchal expression of faith, which they saw as rejecting women and/or ‘the feminine’. The book raises interesting issues for missiologists and those within the Church writing liturgy or devising new rituals for worship.

RÉSUMÉ

Anna Fedele est une ethnologue italienne qui s'intéresse aux « néo-païens » attirés par la figure de Marie de Magdala. Dans cette étude fournie, elle examine les croyances, les sentiments et les expériences des pèlerins qui visitent les sanctuaires dédiés à Marie de Magdala. Toutes les personnes qu'elle a interrogées ont rejeté le christianisme, soit parce qu'elles se sont senties personnellement rejetées, soit parce qu'elles ne pouvaient pas accepter les expressions patriarcales de la foi et voyaient celle-ci comme rejetant les femmes ou « le féminin ». Ce livre soulève des questions intéressantes pour les missiologues ou pour ceux qui, au sein de l'Église, rédigent des liturgies ou élaborent de nouveaux rituels pour le culte.

* * * *

Anna Fedele is an Italian ethnographer who has spent much of the last decade examining the spiritual practices of a group far outside orthodox Christianity. In this book she describes the motivation, rituals and expe-

riences of three separate groups of pilgrims who are interested in the figure of Mary Magdalene. For native English speakers, her phraseology sometimes seems a little odd, and occasionally incorrect, but this does not detract from the quality of her study.

Whilst declining the term ‘New Age’ as defining their groups, each offered syncretistic beliefs drawn from anthropological, psychological, religious and esoteric sources, which she refers to as ‘Neo-Pagan’. This included influence by sources ranging from ‘*The Da Vinci Code*’ and its fore-runners, through to purported indigenous Latin or Central American religious practices. The majority of pilgrims interviewed or observed were Southern European women, predominantly from Catholic backgrounds, although there were men involved in two of the groups and one group consisted of American and British pilgrims.

Although their Christian heritage shaped the way the groups designed their new rituals (marking menarche or menopause, making offerings to goddesses or Mother Earth), many or all of the pilgrims had rejected Christianity, primarily because of their personal experiences of its patriarchal expression in their own cultures. As a Northern European Baptist, I found it hard to reconcile some of the descriptions of Southern European Catholic Christianity with my own understanding and experience of the Gospel and organised Church.

As an observer, Fedele is very good at maintaining her academic, neutral status, even when involved in a ritual or rite. She gives clear descriptions of the rituals themselves and through reported interviews draws out similarities and differences in the feelings and experiences of the pilgrims, even sometimes, within the same event. Several times, she reiterates that for the participants the exact nature of a ritual was not important, nor the purported historical roots of the ritual; what was valued most highly was the *effectiveness* of the ritual. Indeed, in her follow-up interviews, the report Fedele makes of the changes wrought internally and externally amongst the pilgrims is very dramatic. Many of the pilgrims went home and relatively quickly introduced major changes to their lifestyle, including moving home, changing jobs and ending relationships. One might indeed say that the pilgrimages were effective in motivating change.

This may be challenging to more orthodox Christians; whilst recognising that every person is made in the image of God and therefore has a spiritual life, how are we to explain spiritual experiences that make real differences to lives amongst those actively rejecting the Judaeo-Christian theology of God and pro-actively seeking to embrace the Feminine/Goddess/Mother Earth/Light Energy? One missiological method used by Christians historically has been to invite people from another faith to ‘try’ Christian prayer and practices, suggesting that the Truth behind them is revealed by their effectiveness. Fedele’s report would appear to fatally undermine that approach.

Another challenge to the Church would be how

the gospel is presented and lived out. If these pilgrims (particularly, but not inclusively, the women) reject Christianity because they perceive it as patriarchal and rejecting or actively covering up the Feminine, despite our Holy Book clearly telling us that in Christ 'there is no male and female', how are we to change? Many of the pilgrims had experienced personal rejection by the church, or vicariously through family members. Some had been abused by active church members, others felt condemned because of their sexual practices.

All felt drawn to the figure of Mary Magdalene – who they perceived as sexually liberated, a female equivalent of Christ or as an embodiment of the goddess/Feminine – especially as her role within the Catholic Church has been difficult. At an early stage, the Church conflated most of the Gospel 'Marys' into one figure, which they labelled as Mary Magdalene. Thus she was seen as a demon-possessed prostitute liberated by Jesus from both her possession and prostitution after coming to him in repentance. She was also accepted as the first wit-

ness to the resurrection, but not accepted as an apostle to the apostles. In the twentieth century, the 'Marys' were disentangled and the Catholic Church admitted its mistake. Whilst some theologians, like David Brown, explore positively the theological development made possible by this imagined conflation, the pilgrims Fedele observed saw it as a devaluing and abuse of each individual 'Mary', reflecting a wider rejection of women by the Church. In light of recent decisions by the Anglican Communion in England and Wales, and the ongoing rejection of women in priesthood by both Catholic and Orthodox churches, the perception of misogyny within the church may be hard to counter, but must be.

This book is aimed more at anthropologists and ethnographers than theologians. However, for mis-
siologists and those involved in writing new liturgy or devising new rituals, there is much food for thought and reflection.

Sarah Bingham
Worthing, England

STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY AND THOUGHT

Did the Reformers Misread Paul?

A Historical-Theological Critique of the New Perspective

Aaron O'Kelley

This book argues that a faulty hermeneutical presupposition underlies the new perspective on Paul because of its failure to grasp the precise shape of the doctrine of justification that emerged from the Reformation.

'Carefully researched and argued, Aaron O'Kelley's monograph offers a refreshing engagement of New Testament scholarship from the perspective of historical and systematic theology.'

Kevin W. McFadden, Cairn University

'Several urgent questions confront the Christian church today, but few are more urgent than the question Aaron O'Kelley addresses in this book.'

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

'Part of the polemic surrounding the New Perspective on Paul has focused on the historical context of debates about justification. O'Kelley has made a significant contribution to clarifying this vital but hotly contested point.'

Carl R. Trueman, Westminster Theological Seminary

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