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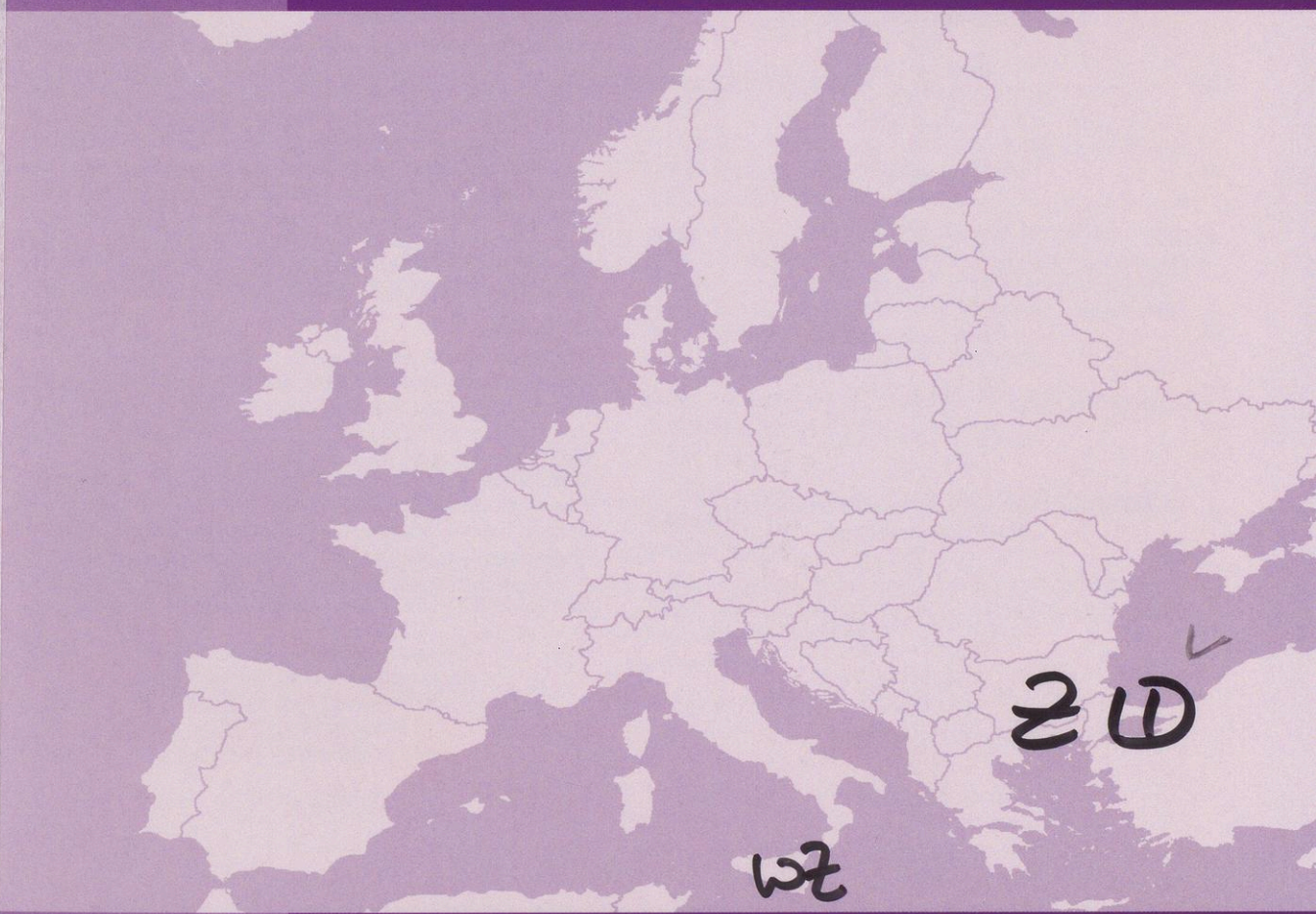

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Did Matthew Know He was Writing Scripture? Part 2

Roland Deines

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Beitrag versucht zu zeigen, dass Matthäus sein Evangelium von Anfang an als (Heilige) Schrift geschrieben hat. Der erste Teil diskutierte als Grundlegung ein Verständnis von Heiliger Schrift als Kondensat von widerfahrener Offenbarung. Der vorliegende Teil wendet dieses Verständnis exemplarisch auf zwei verschiedene Texttraditionen innerhalb der jüdischen Literatur der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit an Das erste Makkabäerbuch und das Matthäusevangelium werden als Beispiele dafür herangezogen, wie die Erfahrung von Gottes aktiver Teilhabe an gegenwärtigen Ereignissen dazu führte, dieses Geschehen in der Form einer neuen (Heiligen) Schrift zu vergegenwärtigen. Dadurch war es möglich, dieses neue Offenbarungshandeln sowohl mit der bisherigen Heilsgeschichte zu verknüpfen als auch für die zukünftige Beziehung zu Gott fruchtbar zu machen.

* * * *

SUMMARY

The article seeks to demonstrate the possibility that the Gospel of Matthew was from the outset written with the intention that it would function as (Holy) Scripture. Part 1 discussed the understanding of Scripture, within the Biblical texts themselves, as deposit of the revelatory acts of God. Part 2 applies this understanding to various strands of Jewish literature from the second century BC to the second century AD. First Maccabees and the Gospel of Matthew serve as case studies of how the experience of God's revelatory activity resulted in Scriptures which were intended to commemorate these acts in light of the history of salvation so far and to facilitate meaningful encounters with them for the time to come.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur veut ici démontrer que l'Évangile de Matthieu a pu être rédigé dès l'origine dans l'intention qu'il fonctionne comme Écriture (sainte). La première partie de l'article a soutenu la thèse selon laquelle, dans les textes bibliques eux-mêmes, l'Écriture était considérée comme le dépôt des actes par lesquels Dieu s'est révélé. Cette seconde partie applique cette conception à divers courants de la littérature juive dans la période allant du iie siècle avant au iie siècle après J.-C. Il effectue ensuite une étude de cas sur le premier livre des Maccabées et l'Évangile de Matthieu pour montrer comment l'expérience de l'activité divine de révélation a eu pour résultat la rédaction de textes scripturaires ayant pour but de commémorer ces actes à la lumière de l'histoire du salut et de permettre l'accès à ceux-ci pour les temps à venir.

* * * *

4. Scripture writing in the Hellenistic-Roman period

Whereas Josephus and Philo wanted to limit the number of authoritative Scriptures, there is plenty of evidence that during this period other Jews instead continued to compose Scripture-like texts. The Qumran library is full of examples of this activity, with many parabiblical psalms, biblically-styled narratives and law-codes as authorised by Moses, Enoch and other 'biblical' characters. The Enoch library is another prime example of a corpus of texts that clearly claims authoritative, 'scriptural' status on the basis of the fact that the content of the books is the result of various revelatory experiences.[1] For a historical understanding of what it means to write or to intend to write Scripture, the narrow idea of inspiration found in

Philo and Josephus does not suffice. If the Hebrew Scriptures themselves provide the model for what Scripture is, then their character as testimonies of experienced *revelation* seems to me to be a more helpful category than their inspired status, which focuses predominantly on the divine guidance in writing those texts. With such a concept it is possible to explain plausibly why authors during the Second Temple Period wanted to write Scripture and why some of these writings actually gained an authoritative, Scripture-like status at least within particular groups.

1) The most important reason why certain writers continued to produce 'Scripture' is simply that they lived in a religious environment in which Scripture was regarded as the appropriate means of witnessing and preserving God's revelation. This point is often overlooked: In a religious community within a cultural climate that has a tradition of venerating written documents as authoritative and as a (secondary) medium of God's communication with his people, every new 'author' who wanted to present a message as divinely authorised had to decide if he wanted to communicate his God-given insights as potential Scripture or not.[2] This does not infer, however, that the intended audience would immediately and automatically receive it as God's word. And even if they did, it does not follow that its status as a message from God would endure past its immediate context. Some messages are time-bound and pass away within their time; only a small proportion outlive their primary use to become part of a community's spiritual heritage and to be valued as enabling the recognition of God's will and other ways of communication with God beyond the actual 'Sitz im Leben'.

2) A second reason is that the already accepted Scriptures provide hope for a future intervention of God in the fate of his people and this world that would even surpass the experiences of the past. A new covenant, a new David, a new creation, a new song to sing, a new way to experience God's being with his people – all these eschatological promises are part of the already existing Scriptures and they teach the hearer to watch out for God's future actions.[3] And if Scripture is the deposit of God's revelations, we should expect that whenever somebody believes in the realisation or the fulfilment of these promises they will be compelled to testify to it. One way to do this is writing a new Scripture, as the case of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah has shown (see Part 1, pp. 104-5). As we will see, 1 Maccabees is a further good example of an author who saw the prophetic promises about Israel's restoration and a peaceful existence within secure borders as fulfilled in the time of the Hasmonean ruler Simon. As a result he wrote a book that is biblical in style and which received at least a kind of semi-canonical status through the Septuagint. The same can be said about the community in Qumran, which is based on the experience of living in the last days and being elected and guided by God through special revelations which were given for their own time.[4] There would be no New Testament if the followers of Jesus in the first century had subscribed to the opinion of Philo and Josephus, but we have evidence throughout that they were urged to write new books for the new message because God was experienced as having spoken to them anew in a previously unheard and unseen way. Yet the necessity of a new Scripture did not mean the end of the existing ones but their completion, because the revelation brought about by Jesus was – despite his disturbingly 'strange' fulfilment of the messianic expectations – seen as a legitimate and necessary continuation of God's acts in Israel.

3) It can be demonstrated, I think, that the writing of Scripture (or attempts to write Scripture) is connected to those periods in Israel's history when God was experienced as being more directly active than in others. The famous dictum of the nineteenth-century historian Leopold von Ranke, according to which all epochs are equally close to God, might need to be reconsidered in this light.[5] In Israel the time of the early monarchy, the last period of the Kingdom of Judah, the exile and the immediate post-exilic period were obviously considered as times when God was experienced more directly than in other periods. These had been the times when historical developments came to fruition and conclusions could be drawn with the benefit of hindsight based on the outcomes of God's activities. The way to commemorate these events and to make them spiritually profitable for the future was the production of new and/or redaction of already existing Scriptures. The Jewish writings after Ezra leave no doubt that this pattern continued into at least the beginning of the second century AD.

Three events were regarded (although in different ways by different groups, which consequently resulted in a split within Israel's scriptural legacy) as revelatory and therefore worthy to be remembered scripturally: First, the Hellenistic crisis and the fight of the Maccabees for the freedom of

Israel, which looked for a moment like the fulfilment of prophetic promises and the beginning of a new Davidic-like kingdom. In addition, the help of God in the fight against the much stronger Seleucid forces and the miraculous victories Israel achieved in their fight against them seem to have supported the idea that a biblical age had returned; parts of the Qumran library and the historical books dealing with the Hasmonean period can be seen as its scriptural 'deposits'. Secondly, the coming of Jesus was experienced by some of his contemporaries as a revelatory event that surpassed everything before it and which could be seen as the culmination of everything laid down in the Torah and the Prophets. Other Jews were not willing to see Jesus in such a light, not because they thought the time of the prophets or of God's revelatory actions had ceased, but because they were unable to see Jesus as the fulfilment of the promises contained in the Law and the Prophets. Only a few decades later, and this is the third example, some Jewish authors recognised instead the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem in the year 70 as an event that had to be dealt with on a biblical scale. This is evidenced by the Jewish pseudepigraphic writings in the name of Jeremiah, Baruch and Ezra, which were trying to cope with the events of the year 70 and to make them intelligible within God's history with his people.

To conclude this point: Writing Scripture is the result of the experience of an event in which God set or changed the direction of history for his people. Therefore, the decisive periods within salvation history are also the decisive periods for writing Scripture. The initial question of this essay, whether it is possible to assume that Matthew intended to write Scripture, can therefore be answered in the following way: First, he was living in a religious environment that was used to testifying to God's extraordinary revelatory deeds by means of writing Scripture. Secondly, he recognised Jesus as the fulfilment of Israel's hope as laid down in 'the prophets and the Law' (Matt 11:13; 5:17), and, finally, he experienced the revelation of Jesus (Matt 16:17) not only as the climax of past hopes but also as the beginning of a new era within salvation history which will last until 'the end' (τὸ τέλος, Matt 24:14). Accordingly, the only feasible way to witness to it was to communicate it as Scripture.

5. Two case studies

I want to demonstrate finally how authors could mark their writings as texts intended-to-become Scripture – as texts offered to their religious communities with the aim of them being received in the same way as those already considered to be biblical books.

5.1 First Maccabees as intended Scripture

In his *History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (1949), R. H. Pfeiffer (1892-1958) already observed that the author of 1 Maccabees planned his book as a sequel to the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah in order to complete the history of his people down to his own time.[6] The Book of Chronicles starts with the genealogy of the people of Israel and narrates the story up to the Cyrus edict which is a fitting end to a history of God's people starting with the sons of Jacob/Israel (1 Chr 1:34; 2:1).[7] It is the end of an epoch and the beginning of a new one. The focus according to the edict is the 'House of God' to be built in Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:22-23).

This focus on the Temple in Jerusalem might be one of the reasons why the author of 1 Maccabees took up the task of writing Scripture once more: The Temple had been plundered and desecrated again, but God's active intervention for his people and his election of a new leadership rescued the Temple and the people once more.[8] Yet in doing this the author of 1 Maccabees did not feel the need to treat the whole of the intervening period in the same way: The period from Alexander the Great and Darius III of Persia up to Antiochus IV Epiphanes is covered by the first nine verses only, after which the focus is on the circumstances that led to the rise of the Hasmonean dynasty. Alexander is described as coming 'from the land of Kittim', a biblical term for one of the descendants of Javan (Gen 10:4; 1 Chr 1:7) and used mainly to describe the Greek people in the West (Num 24:24; Isa 23:1, 12; Jer 2:10; Ez 27:6), whereas in Daniel 11:30 it is used for the Romans. Common to both, Greeks and Romans, is that they came on ships. Alexander is not mentioned by name in the Hebrew Bible but clearly alluded to in Daniel's vision of the goat coming from the west and destroying the ram from the east, which points to Darius III (Dan 8:3-7; 11:3). In the later books of the Hebrew Bible Darius is often used as the name for the Persian king, and the phrase 'King of the Persians and the Medes' is also a biblical label. It

can be demonstrated further that the characterisation of Alexander in 1 Maccabees 1:2-3 is based on Daniel 8:5-8.

This is just one example of the biblical style of 1 Maccabees; other elements are the inclusion of poetic, psalm-like texts and prayers; the quotation of official documents as in the book of Ezra; the anachronistic use of 'Israel' for the Judean people, etc. It is widely suggested that the original language of the book was Hebrew and it is to be assumed that the style was a kind of Biblical Hebrew; this is supported by the Greek translation, which is not in the style of the Greek Hellenistic world 'but in the style of the Greek scriptures, the Septuagint' as Bartlett points out. He suggests the possibility that this was done in an attempt 'to associate the book with other writings accepted by the Jewish community'.[9]

The other biblical book with a profound influence on 1 Maccabees is Judges: there the sins of the tribes of Israel allowed foreign nations to plunder them. In the time of the biblical judges the Israelites had to hide their harvest before the foreigners, while in 1 Maccabees the Israelites need to hide the scrolls of the Law which the enemy seeks to destroy so that they might annihilate Israel as a nation. The situation in the time of Gideon is especially telling, with Israel hiding in caves before the Midianites like the faithful in the time of Antiochus IV (Judg 6:2, cf. 1 Macc 2:28-30). Then God chose Gideon to rescue his people; although he belonged to an unimportant clan within the tribe of Manasseh (Judg 6:15) he received the promise that God would be with him (6:16). In the same way the Hasmoneans were members of an unimportant priestly clan (1 Macc 2:1) but they were chosen to rescue Israel as God had once chosen Gideon. They were those 'through whom deliverance was given to Israel' (1 Macc 5:62). As Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal and the image of Asherah in his father's house (Judg 6:25-28) and instead built an altar for YHWH, so did the Hasmonean brothers: they destroyed the foreign altar which was erected in their hometown Modein (1 Macc 2:24-25) and cleansed Jerusalem from idol worship and the 'desolating sacrilege on the altar' in the Temple (4:45, cf. 1:54; 6:7) before erecting a new altar according to the Law of God (4:47-54). As in Judges, the end of the story is not a happy one: Gideon returned to a form of idolatry and his son Abimelech, who usurped his position of leadership, was driven by worldly ambitions and no longer by the spirit of God. Judges 9 reports internal slaughter and rivalry and the ending of 1 Maccabees is equally gloomy: the Hasmonean Simon and two of his sons were killed by Simon's son-in-law and another son only just escaped (1 Macc 16:11-22). The storyline ends with a short comment on John Hyrcanus, the only surviving son of Simon, but without revealing anything about his long career as high priest (135–104 BC) apart from the short summary:

> The rest of the acts of John and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and the building of the walls that he completed, and his achievements, are written in the annals of his high priesthood, from the time that he became high priest after his father (16:23-24).

This summary is clearly reminiscent of the concluding remarks in the Book of Kings (1 Kings 11:41; 22:39; 2 Kings 8:23; 10:34; 12:19; 20:20 etc.).

It is obvious, and the points mentioned above could easily be multiplied, that the author of 1 Maccabees is adopting a biblical *style*. According to my proposal he does this because he experienced events in the relationship between Israel and her God which he considered as being of a biblical *scale*. It is the scale that requires the style and the style follows the scale. This thesis is supported by the following further observations:

- 1 Maccabees 2:24-26: When Mattathias, the father of the Hasmonean brothers, was asked to sacrifice according to the foreign king's order he confessed his loyalty to the 'covenant of our ancestors' (2:20-21) and refused to do so. When instead another man from his town stepped forward and made the sacrifice, 'Mattathias became zealous and his kidneys were stirred. He built up passion for judgement, and running he killed him on the altar' (2:24). The author of 1 Maccabees comments on this outburst of anger with the help of a biblical analogy: 'He became zealous for the law, just as Phineas did against Zambri son of Salom', placing Mattathias alongside the biblical hero Phinehas, who received an eternal covenant as a reward for his loyalty towards Israel's God.
- 1 Maccabees 2:51-64: The last words of Mattathias addressed to his sons are a summary of Israel's trials throughout her history from Abraham down to Daniel. All these men remained faithful to God and received their heavenly reward in return. The *distichoi* are carefully crafted to illustrate the obedience-

reward structure: The first *stichos* tells about the actions of the men in the active voice; the second *stichoi* are all formulated as divine passives. The author's intention is obvious: Now it is up to the sons of Mattathias to be tested and if they persist, they will be rewarded like their predecessors. Just as Jacob blessed his sons and Moses the tribes at the end of their lives (Gen 49:1-28; Deut 33), so did Mattathias before 'he was gathered to his ancestors', which is another biblical phrase (Judg 2:10).

- 1 Maccabees 3:16-22: Before the first battle between Judas and the Seleucids, Judas' men are afraid, being vastly outnumbered and wondering how they might attack a superior force. Judas reminds them that 'before Heaven there is no difference to save by many or by few', a line that is reminiscent of the 300 who fought with Gideon.[10] Judas ends his short speech with the conviction: 'He himself will crush them before us' (3:22); that is to say, God's active involvement in the battle for the sake of his people is taken for granted, even if it is described only cautiously.[11]
- 1 Maccabees 4:30-33: Judas Maccabeus and 10,000 Israelites face Lysias with 65,000 Seleucid troops. When Judas prays before the battle he compares his situation with that of David and Jonathan against the Philistines. In those times the 'Saviour of Israel' (ὁ σωτὴρ Ἰσραὴλ) smashed the enemy forces by the hand of David and Jonathan, and Judas prays the same for his army: That God might do something against the enemy by the hand of the few around Judas (4:31-33; in verse 32 three imperatives are addressed directly towards God requesting his action during the battle).
- 1 Maccabees 5:62: A divine passive – a veiled reference to the revelatory action of God – is used to describe the election of Judas and his brothers as the 'one family through whom deliverance was given to Israel'.
- 1 Maccabees 7:41-42 is another prayer offered by Judas before battle. He recalls how the angel of the Lord killed the 185,000 Assyrians before the walls of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:32-35) and asks God to do the same here. God is urged into action with the imperative active σύντριψιον 'smash!' (verse 42) and the following verse 43 reads 'and the army of Nicanor got smashed' (σύνετρίβη), taking up the same verb but this time in the passive voice. It was not Judas and his men who defeated the enemy's army but God, as in the days of Isaiah and Hezekiah.

1 Maccabees admittedly is rather minimalistic in its description of God's revelatory activities – especially in comparison with 2 Maccabees[12] – and they disappear altogether in the later parts of the book. Instead, the worldly ambitions of the Hasmoneans become more visible and the last event properly reported is the killing of Simon and his sons. But such a distanced perspective which even admits to failed hopes is not inconceivable for 'biblical' historiographical writing because it is in line with the Books of Kings or Nehemiah, or Psalm 89 as another example, all of which finish without a clear perspective for the time to come.

One argument against the proposal that the author of 1 Maccabees saw his writing as a potential biblical book needs to be addressed, namely what he wrote in 9:27: 'So there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.'[13] This verse is central to the assumption of the 'cessation of prophecy' and it is widely used as the most important early proof-text for it (see Part 1, pp. 105-6). Can the author of 1 Maccabees claim 'biblical' authority without assuming a prophetical self-understanding? As we have seen, the connection between inspiration, prophecy and canonical status is first made by Josephus. It should not be presupposed for the time of 1 Maccabees and, as a matter of fact, not all biblical texts are actually prophetical writings or supposed to be so. Without such an understanding, based on later texts, the comment can even mean the exact opposite: Because the distress was so extraordinary in scope, a new Scripture was necessary since this was one of the established ways for Israel to cope with disaster.[14] The scale of the oppression was such that Israel could not sufficiently deal with it on the basis of the Scriptures that were already available. And it is not just the threat that was extraordinary but also the blessings which mark the peak of the book and of Simon's high-priesthood, which is painted with the colours of eschatological fulfilment (1 Macc 14:8-15). It is as if the unknown author wants to describe how God rewarded the zeal of the Maccabean brothers and how through them God brought a time of blessing that already had the taste of the eschatological kingdom of God. However, as in the times of the judges and the kings of Judah, the blessing did not last because of the sins of the next generation. The

book serves therefore as a powerful reminder of how God acted on behalf of his people, and this commemoration provides the foundation for and expectations of further actions by the same God for his people in the future, on condition that they would show the same commitment to his will as did Mattathias and his sons. This seems to be the main role of Scripture: To enable looking ahead on the basis of past experiences of God's active role in the course of the history of his people.

In sum, what was experienced as extraordinary or exceptional (as could be seen from 1 Macc 9:27) and different from the everyday experience of God is what caused someone to capture those events as Scripture. This result can be used as a bridge to the Gospels, which are in a similar way historical narratives inspired by the fact that they relate something never seen before. In Mark's Gospel this is clearly expressed by the crowd after Jesus forgave and healed the paralytic in Capernaum (2:12: 'We have never seen anything like this …' οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἴδομεν; par. Luke 5:26: 'We have seen unexpected things today …' εἴδομεν παράδοξα σήμερον). Matthew places this comment at the end of the miracle chapters 8-9 and gives it an even greater weight: what Jesus has taught (note the astonishment of the crowds in Matt 7:28-29) and the miracles he did went beyond anything seen in Israel so far (9:33): 'And the crowds were astonished and said: Never before has something like this appeared in Israel' (καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες· οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ). The passive voice of the main verb 'to appear' (φαίνω) can be taken as an allusion to a revelatory event caused by God.[15] This brings us back to the initial question: Is it reasonable to assume that Matthew, when he started to compose his Gospel, had a clear vision of writing a text which could, even should, be treated as Scripture in the long run?

5.2 The Gospel of Matthew as intended Scripture

There are indeed good reasons to assume that Matthew was motivated (inspired) to write with the purpose of writing Scripture. Such an assumption goes against the focus of current Matthean scholarship which is dominated by the (rather secondary) question of what the Gospel reveals about the conflict between the Jewish Christian community Matthew belongs to and their surrounding majority Jewish culture. Matthew is here predominantly a document of the 'parting of the ways' but no longer a book for 'all Christians', and subordinated to an alleged partisan dispute between two rival Jewish groups in the last third of the first century.[16] What the Gospel relates about Jesus is shaped according to the needs of this conflict without any intention to be true for all time and at all places for those who want to follow Jesus.

Against this prevailing view I would like to give more weight to the thought that Matthew has indeed written a *Gospel for all Christians* and that to do this he wrote it as Scripture because he wanted to testify to not just *a* but *the* fulfilling revelatory event in God's history with and for his people. This 'biblical' intention can clearly be seen at the beginning (linking back to the already existing history of God's people in the style of 1 Chronicles and 1 Maccabees) and the end (looking forward and making commands for the future of God's people) of this Gospel. This intention is further supported by the 'biblical style' and the careful attempts to intersect and contextualise the new Scripture with the already established Scriptures, but also by the impressive and amazing efforts *not* to allow contemporary (and therefore passing and marginal) events to surface strongly.[17] This conclusion, based on compositional observations, is strengthened by the historical argument developed above that at the time of Matthew there was no 'dogma' that Scripture-writing had come to an end; quite the opposite, the relative openness of the Hebrew canon makes it rather plausible that Matthew and the other authors of the Gospels saw themselves – as other Jews did – as successors of the previous 'biblical' authors.

The greatest weight, however, goes to the argument that the impact of Jesus' life, death and resurrection (which was undoubtedly taken as a historical event by Matthew) on his followers was experienced as a revelatory act of God that could only be dealt with in the form of writing Scripture.[18] The experience of and reflection on this new revelation of God within the history of his people called for a new Scripture-like preservation, memorisation and application by means of preaching and spreading the word. What can be learned from Jewish literature of the time is that contemporary events could be seen and understood in the light of Scripture in different ways: either Scripture was applied to enlighten the present in the form of commentaries (the *pesharim* from Qumran); or Scripture was rewritten to make it more applicable to a present situation which was considered to be in need of incorporation into the salvation history between God and his people (e.g. Josephus'

Antiquities); or contemporary events were commented on (or 'sanctified') by writing new books in the style of the established Holy Scriptures (e.g. 1 Maccabees, 1QHodayot). With regard to the 'good news' the Gospels wanted to communicate, it seems that the scale of the event was regarded as so different from what had happened before that it was not enough to adapt the story to an existing biblical style. Rather, this overwhelmingly new experience of God's intervention called for a new genre, namely what we now have in the Gospels. There are no Gospels before Jesus and none after him. Some attempted to write further Gospels but failed to convince a large enough readership of their worth for them to become Scripture, which alone is an astonishing thing from a historical point of view.

Matthew in particular, but the other New Testament authors to some extent as well, present themselves in their writings as being imbued with the habit of looking upon reality through the lenses of Scripture. This means that these authors were accustomed to seek understanding of extraordinary events in relation to Scriptures, and naturally this was even more so with respect to their experiences with Jesus and – through Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection – with God himself. Nevertheless, the Gospels are written anonymously; this means the authors step back completely behind their work – again following the biblical example, where almost no book can be properly labelled as author-literature. Should this not be understood as to infer – in light of the possibility that the New Testament authors used the existing Scriptures as a model for their own writing – that their work aimed to transcend the limits of the authors so that it could be seen as a testimony to the revelatory work of God?

We have seen that the later Old Testament writings refer back to earlier Scripture as authoritative. Not-yet-Scripture quoting Scripture is an established form of making a connection to the already sanctified tradition. This means that if an author quotes Scripture in a text that is not yet Scripture but is composed in a Scripture-like format and comprising a Scripture-like content (namely a revelatory experience), he is borrowing authority from what is already authoritative and places his own scripture alongside the existing one. By doing this, the author is able to influence the reception of his writing; he might also be able to steer the way his writing is performed in public. Although we do not know when exactly regular readings from Scripture started in the gatherings of Jesus' followers after the first Easter, it is most likely that these regular meetings were not just social coming-togethers but included acts of worship similar to those in a synagogue where the reading of Scripture plays a prominent part.[19] It is therefore a legitimate question whether the early Christian writings were composed with the intention/hope to be read *alongside* established Scriptures, which also explains the many allusions and references to them within the New Testament writings. I assume that the Gospels (or any other writing within the New Testament) were never meant to be read in isolation but always as part of a literary web with other Scriptures (and perhaps within a setting of standardised liturgical elements). Therefore, scriptural or canonical embeddedness already needs to be taken into account as part of the production process: The Gospel of Matthew is intended to be read and understood with the help of Isaiah and the other prophets, and with the books of Moses and the Psalms. This 'canonical' embeddedness not only justifies but indeed requires a reading in 'context' with those books.

But if the Gospel is read, heard and preached alongside and as 'co-text' to existing Scriptures, does this not also affect the way in which it is perceived? In other words, a process was set in motion that finally turned a not-yet-but-intended-to-be-scripture into proper Scripture through the commitment of a believing audience to these 'new' texts about the new revelation of God. There is no reason to assume that the evangelist was completely unaware of this dynamic, even if it might go too far to assume that from the beginning Matthew was written to fulfil the need for a Christian lectionary, as G. D. Kilpatrick and Michael Goulder assumed.[20] But an author like Matthew knew what happened with Scriptures. He knew that Scriptures are expounded, preached and connected with other Scriptures. And consequently, for an author like Matthew, the idea of a textual understanding that goes beyond the capacity of its originator is not impossible but instead even likely. Scriptural intertextuality is an inherent quality of all New Testament writings.

Does this then open the possibility that the evangelists' *word* about God's revelatory actions was intended as the revelatory *word of God* as well? This is where the topic of inspiration comes in again but I heed to the wise counsel of Howard Marshall: 'The doctrine of inspiration is a declaration that the Scriptures have their origin in God;

it is not and cannot be an explanation of how God brought them into being.'[21] Nevertheless I can at least offer two observations on the idea of inspiration which are worthy to be studied in more detail at another time:

1) Matthew has in his repertoire the idea of words given to believers by God's spirit which are not their own, as can be seen from Matthew 10:19-20. Clearly, the context is standing trial and not writing Scripture so one should not press this argument too far. Additional support, however, is provided by Matthew 16:17 where Peter's confession of Jesus as Son of the living God was qualified by Jesus as a divine revelation.

2) It is interesting that the description of the purpose of inspired writing according to 2 Timothy 3:16 fits the Gospel of Matthew extremely well; it is indeed a book full of teaching (διδασκαλία), reproach/correction (ἐλεγμός) and setting things straight (ἀπανορθωσις) for the sake of an education in righteousness (πρὸς παιδείαν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ), so that the man of God may be competent for every good deed (πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον αγαθόν).

6. Conclusion

To draw a conclusion: I am quite convinced that it would be possible to demonstrate for nearly all writings in the New Testament that they were intended to be Scripture-like – that they were written to witness to what the authors have experienced as God's revelation in their own time but clearly not only for that time. The New Testament writers took this revelation as a continuation of what had happened in earlier times and this is why they used scriptural quotations so frequently to demonstrate the fundamental rooting of the new 'word' of God in that which already existed. To support this connection even further they adopted – albeit quite freely – a biblical or scriptural style for their own writings. It seems to me inconceivable that in doing so they would have been unaware of the implications this would have for their own writings if they were placed alongside existing Scriptures. The notion and awareness of Jesus being the ultimate revelation of God for the last times can be taken as the default setting of the New Testament authors even if not all of them express it as clearly as the unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 1:1-2). It is, after all, the cultural context of first-century Judaism that urged the followers of Jesus to present their experience with him as a revelatory event of God in the form of new Scriptures. In turn these became, in a process similar to Jewish Scriptures (though in a much shorter period of time), a new entity which could be referred to as the New Testament, but not in the sense of replacing what thus became the Old Testament, but forming together with it (Holy) Scripture in the singular.[22] Together they form the testimony to God's revelatory acts from creation to the incarnation of God's mediator of creation. The redemption he brought about opened the way to the ultimate ends of God's history with his creation. And because this ultimate revelation of God in Jesus took place in the last days in an unsurpassable way, it subsequently made sense to discontinue the writing of new Scriptures, and to be content for the present time and the time to come with applying existing Scripture to the life of God's people.

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Endnotes

1 See Michael A. Knibb, 'Reflections on the Status of the Early Enoch Writings', in *Authoritative Scriptures*, 143-154; George W. Nickelsburg, 'Scripture in 1 Enoch and 1 Enoch as Scripture', in Tord Fornberg and David Hellholm (eds), *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts* (FS L. Hartmann; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) 333–354; *idem*, 'The Books of Enoch at Qumran: What We Know and What We Need to Think about', in B. Kollmann, W. Reinbold and A. Steudel (eds), *Antikes Judentum und Frühes Christentum* (FS H. Stegemann; BZNW 97; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) 99-113; *idem*, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 57: '... the corpus claims to be authoritative Scripture that is based not on other inspired texts but on direct revelations received by its primordial author'. For the discussion of Enoch in early Christianity see Deines, 'The Term and Concept of Scripture', 262-263.

2 Deines, 'The Term and Concept of Scripture', 276; see also Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 124-125.

3 For Gerhard von Rad the not-yet-fulfilled nature of the Hebrew Scriptures, in his own words 'a book of ever increasing anticipation', warrants a biblical theology, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. II: *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965) 319; see also Gese, 'The Biblical View of Scripture', on the unity of both testaments as witness to one unbroken

'Revelation History' (25ff.).

4 1QS I 9; V 9; IX 13, 19; the chapter on the two spirits (1QS III 13-IV 26) is one document of the new revelation for the eschatological community; the prologue of the Damascus Scroll (I 1-II 1) is another Scripture-like document that introduces a new epoch in salvation history which is marked by the Teacher of Righteousness who was raised up by God for this task (I 11). For a fuller treatment see Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture* and Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 42-56. Still helpful is also Otto Betz, *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte* (WUNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1960).

5 'Jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott, und ihr Wert beruht gar nicht auf dem, was aus ihr hervorgeht, sondern in ihrer Existenz selbst, in ihrem Eigenen selbst.' Leopold von Ranke, *Über die Epochen der neueren Geschichte* (Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, hg. v. Theodor Schieder und Helmut Berding; Aus Werk und Nachlaß 2; München: Oldenbourg 1971, 60); see also von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2.319-320.

6 Mentioned in John R. Bartlett, *1 Maccabees* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 16-19. The same point is made by Moody Smith, 'When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?', 8.

7 1 Chronicles 1, from Adam to the descendants of Esau, is a prelude to the genealogy proper. The compiler of the genealogy works in a reversed order in the first part: the less important figures are mentioned first, so the sequence is not Shem, Ham, Japhet but Japhet, Ham, Shem, and in the case of Abraham Ishmael's descendants come first, followed by the ones born by his concubine Keturah, and only then Isaac's, where Esau's descendants are listed before Jacob's. With chapter 2 the pattern changes: after giving the list of the twelve sons of Jacob in 2:1-2 in their traditional, age-based order, verse 3 starts with the sons of Judah, who is only the fourth-born but nevertheless the bearer of the kingly promise and line.

8 2 Chronicles 34-35 is dedicated to the rediscovery of the book written by Moses and the celebration of the Passover festival according to what was found written in this book. In a similar way 1 Maccabees (and even more 2 Maccabees) is promoting the feast of Chanukkah as a remembrance day of a new intervention of God for the sake of the Temple (1 Macc 4:52-59, cf. 2 Macc 1:18; 10:1-8). Note that the decision to celebrate the dedication of the altar annually was made by Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel. It is not God's commandment as are the feasts in the Pentateuch. There is also no miraculous event connected to the rededication as it is in 2 Maccabees.

9 Bartlett, *1 Maccabees*, 19.

10 Judges 7:1-7, see also 1 Samuel 14:6.

11 In 1 Maccabees 3:25 it is said that 'fear' has fallen upon the nations so that Judas and his brothers were feared. This is another biblical phrase which points to God as the one who puts fear on the nations, see Josh 2:9; Ps 105 (LXX 104):38; the idiom is also used in Jdt 2:28 for Holofernes and his army who made the nations tremble.

12 2 Maccabees, written in a literary *koine* Greek and not in the 'biblical' style of the Septuagint, is an example of a book that was not intended by its author to be Scripture but rather edifying and entertaining reading based on the detailed historical account made by Jason of Cyrene (2 Macc 2:23-31, see also the epilogue of the epitomator 15:37-39). Despite the authorial intent it received semi-canonical status, and the reason for this is that the book – much more than 1 Maccabees – describes God's active involvement in the course of events and highlights religious elements very strongly.

13 See also 1 Macc 4:45b-46; 14:41. For a similar scaling of distress see Mark 13:19.

14 Cf. R. Deines, 'How Long? God's Revealed Schedule for Salvation and the Outbreak of the Bar Kokhba Revolt', in A. Lange, K. F. D. Römheld and M. Weigold (eds), *Judaism and Crisis: Crisis as a Catalyst in Jewish Cultural History* (Schriften des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2011) 201-234 (212-213, 233-234; see also the 'Introduction' to this volume, 7-22: 8-18); David C. Sim and Pauline Allen (eds), *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature: Thematic Studies From the Centre for Early Christian Studies* (LNTS 445; London: T&T Clark International, 2012).

15 The same verb is used in Matt 1:20; 2:13, 19 for the appearance of the 'angel of the Lord' in Joseph's dreams which guided him (ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ = Joseph; 2:13 ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσὴφ; 2:19 ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσὴφ); the verb is further used in 2:7 with regard to the star that appeared in the east and for the last time in 24:30 for the future revelation of the Son of Man from heaven (τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ).

16 See R. Bauckham, 'To Whom Were Gospels Written?', in *idem* (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 9-48; in the same collection the chapter by Richard A. Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences', *ibid.* 113-145, is pertinent to the question at hand; see also my paper 'From the Centre to the Margins: German-speaking Scholarship on Matthew's Gospel as a Case Study for Matthean Scholarship as a Whole' (SBL-Matthew paper 2009), available from http://eprints.nottingham.

ac.uk/1697/.

17 For the first argument see the vast literature on the use of the Old Testament in Matthew's Gospel, for the second see R. Deines, 'Jesus and the Jewish Traditions of His Time', *Early Christianity* 1 (2010) 344-371 (358-359, 368-370), where I discussed the meaning of the Gospels' reductionism with regard to the historical contingencies of the life of Jesus as essential for their presentation of him as Lord. This article (and also the one quoted in n. 14) is now available in Roland Deines, *Acts of God in History: Studies Towards Recovering a Theological Historiography* (ed. Christoph Ochs and Peter Watts; WUNT 317; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

18 Crucial in Matthew's account are the confirmation of Jesus' mission by God in the voice from heaven in the baptism scene (3:17) and during the transfiguration (17:5), which are mirrored by Jesus' acknowledgement of his sonship (11:25-27), and his obedience to the Father (26:39) to fulfil the Scriptures (26:54, 56).

19 Smith, 'When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?', 19.

20 For references see Smith, 'When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?', 5-6.

21 I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982) 44.

22 For this development see Ulrike Mittmann and Rouven Genz, 'The Term and Concept of New Testament' in *What is the Bible?*, 305-337; Tobias Nicklas, 'The Development of the Christian Bible', *ibid.*, 393-426. Two important books appeared after completion of this paper which are pertinent to the questions addressed: Michael J. Kruger, *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate* (Nottingham: Apollos/Inter-Varsity Press, 2013); Tomas Bokedal, *The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon: A Study in Text, Ritual and Interpretation* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014).

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I Kneel Before the Father and Pray for You (Ephesians 3:14): Date and Significance of Ephesians, Part 1

Rüdiger Fuchs

SUMMARY

This three-part article argues that Paul's thinking shows much development throughout his ministry and that Ephesians can be seen as a representative example of his mature theology. The first part discusses the dates of writing of the letters of Paul, especially of Ephesians. The letters are divided over an early, middle and late period, the latter crowned by Ephesians. Part 2 will ground the dating proposal for Ephesians more fully upon the Pauline chronology and the letter's character as a legacy; the third and final part will discuss some arguments against the authenticity of Ephesians.

* * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser dreiteilige Artikel vertritt die Auffassung, dass sich die Ansichten von Paulus während seines Dienstes beträchtlich weiterentwickelt haben und dass der Epheserbrief als ein repräsentatives Beispiel für seine gereifte Theologie angesehen werden kann. Der erste Teil behandelt die Abfassungsdaten der paulinischen Briefe, insbesondere des Epheserbriefes. Die Briefe gehen von einer frühen Abfassungszeit über eine mittlere bis hin zu einer späten Periode, die durch den Epheserbrief ihre Krönung erfährt. Der zweite Teil wird sich mit seinem Datierungsvorschlag für den Epheserbrief noch umfassender auf die paulinische Chronologie und das Charakteristikum des Briefes als ein Vermächtnis gründen. Der dritte und letzte Teil wird sich mit Argumenten gegen die Authentizität des Epheserbriefes befassen.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article qui comportera trois parties, l'auteur soutient que la pensée de l'apôtre Paul a connu un développement important au cours de son ministère et que l'épître aux Éphésiens peut être considérée comme un exemple représentatif de sa maturité théologique. La première partie traite des dates de rédaction des épîtres pauliniennes et en particulier de la date d'Éphésiens. Les lettres sont réparties en trois groupes : celles de la première période, de la période médiane, puis de la dernière période, la lettre aux Éphésiens venant couronner la troisième. La deuxième partie apportera des éléments supplémentaires pour étayer plus pleinement la date proposée pour Éphésiens ainsi que son caractère de testament de l'apôtre. La troisième partie considérera certains des arguments avancés contre l'authenticité de cette lettre.

* * * *

Repeated attempts have been made to date all thirteen letters of the *corpus Paulinum* to within the lifetime of Paul.[1] The following article[2] seeks to develop a proposal by Peter Stuhlmacher concerning the letter to the Ephesians. He writes that the

> letter … assumes that the apostle is imprisoned (see Eph 4:1; 6:20). In my opinion, this can be traced back to a Pauline circular, which was given to co-workers of Paul, like Tychicus (see Eph 6:21), and which was supposed to be read in the congregational gatherings throughout the entire area of Asia Minor. The copy is preserved for us from the congregational archive of Ephesus… After the apostle's death the circular was fundamentally revised (see Eph 2:20; 3:5) and reconfigured as a kind of 'theological legacy of the school of Paul'.[3]

Klaus Berger argues that Ephesians was written

before AD 63-64 and considers it not unlikely that Tychicus (Eph 6:21) could have written the letter on behalf of the apostle.[4] We can also think of the theological teacher Epaphras as Paul's 'ghost-writer'. As one familiar with the Lycos Valley he would have had significant influence on Colossians (Col 1:7; 4:12). In that letter Paul could work best through the teacher of the Colossians, Epaphras, while holding to his principle: 'To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law … so that I might win those outside the law' (1 Cor 9:21). Colossians and Ephesians are closely related stylistically and it is possible that their style is in fact the style of Epaphras.

What we learn about Epaphras in the New Testament can be read like a summary of Ephesians. Can we perhaps gain a sense of how much this theologian and teacher might have influenced Paul in the writing of Ephesians? We read in Colossians 1:6-8 that the gospel

> … has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit [cf. Eph 5:9] and growing in the whole world,[5] so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves [Eph 5:9] from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.[6] This you learned from Epaphras, our *beloved* fellow-servant. He is a faithful minister of *the* Christ (the article is present in the Greek and is used often in Col and Eph!) on our behalf, and he has made known to us your *love* in the Spirit.[7]

Then in Colossians 4:12-13: 'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of *Christ* Jesus, greets you. He is *always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf* …' (Of all Pauline letters, Ephesians starts with the longest prayers on behalf of the addressees, in chapter 1, 3:14-21 and 6:18-20.) The apostle continues,

> … so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.[8]

And Philemon 23 reads: 'Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you.'

Epaphras was a Jewish-Christian teacher (see below) to whom Paul ascribes nearly equal rank, calling him a 'servant of Christ Jesus' (cf. Col 4:12 with Rom 1:1 and Phil 1:1). Paul would surely have been pleased to have received information and advice from such a teacher, in order to write 'as a non-Jew to non-Jews' (see 1 Cor 9:20-22). An old, chained and very ill Paul would in fact have had every reason to choose precisely this teacher of the Christians in Asia Minor as his 'ghost-writer' for Colossians and Ephesians.

Perhaps Ephesians was a letter intended for circulation beyond Asia Minor, even though at first it may have been intended particularly for that region.[9] It contains further developments of thoughts from other letters of Paul. Compare for example 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 with Ephesians 5-6; Ephesians 2:20 with Galatians 6:9; regarding circumcision and the teaching on grace Ephesians 2 with Galatians and Romans; or the 'body of Christ' metaphor in Ephesians with 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. Was the congregation of Ephesus also supposed to bring copies of the letter to Macedonia, Achaia and the Galatian region in the vicinity of Colossae?

Whatever the case, in this examination I will first outline the chronology of the letters of Paul, including Ephesians, which I consider the most likely.[10] Thereafter I will base my dating proposal for Ephesians more fully on the Pauline chronology and its character as a legacy. In the third and last part I will discuss the arguments that for many speak against the authenticity of Ephesians.

1. Ephesians in the Pauline Chronology

1.1 Was Paul silent after Romans?

Through Christ, Paul was a 'transformed zealot' for the love of God. Involved with his whole heart and ready to accept nearly every risk in missionary (2 Cor 11; Rom 15:19-29), catechetical (1 Cor 4:17) and literary work, he was a very active apostle. It is unthinkable that Paul, so eagerly engaged for God and congregation in the years prior to his imprisonments in Caesarea and Rome, would have become silent after his imprisonment. He had a strong sense of responsibility for all his congregations (1 Thess 1-3; 2 Cor 11:28) and indeed for all gentile Christians (Rom 1, 15-16). He therefore wanted especially to have his letters (1-2 Thessalonians; 1-2 Corinthians; Philippians, Philemon, 1-2 Timothy) and circulars (Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Titus) read by all congregations (1 Thess 5:27; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Col 4:16). This Paul would never have given up his congregations, or himself, to the opponents he had fought so hard (Gal, Rom 16:17-20, Phil 1:15-18, 3:2-19). Would the Paul we experience in 1 Corinthians 4:1-21, 2 Corinthians 11-12 and elsewhere have failed to use the two years of relatively mild custody in Caesarea (Acts 24:23) and

then again the two years' custody in Rome (Acts 28:30-31)? A silent Paul, after Romans, would be more of a 'puzzle', as Gert Theissen argues.[11] For Paul, silence would have meant being unfaithful to God (Gal 1:1, 11-16; 1 Cor 4:1; 9:16-17). After Romans (ca. AD 56-57), Paul probably lived another six years. Dating Philippians and Philemon late would obviate this problem of a silent Paul, as Theissen thinks. But to write only two letters in six years from Caesarea or Rome to two specific congregations would really have been few for a man like Paul.

Theissen further asks:

> Or, during these final years when his imprisonment separated him from his congregations, was his ministry amplified by others in the congregations? For example, did during that time one of his pupils write Colossians and did he add his own signature at the end as authorization (Col 4:18)?[12] Or was he working on an edition of his letters with the help of his co-workers?[13] Or ... was he acting ... amplified again through envoys? It is most difficult to imagine an inactive Paul.[14]

I conclude that after writing Romans, even a Paul forced to the inactivity of 'house arrest' would not have been 'silenced'. He would have used all possibilities mentioned by Theissen in order to continue to care as 'father' and 'mother' for his 'children' (1 Thess 1-2; 1 Cor 4:14-17; 2 Cor 11:28-29).

It is probable that we can know when Paul at least assumed that he would be able to care for his congregations one last time by means of a circular letter. To me, Ephesians is the testament of the 'Apostle to the Gentiles' for his communities. He begins with praise from the perspective of the 'we' group of Jewish Christians. Probably this 'we' group contains mainly the Jewish apostles who are the most important group in this letter (Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). And Epaphras perhaps speaks also through the 'we'. He was probably a Jewish-Christian because Paul calls him in an Old Testament and Jewish manner a 'servant' and minister of 'the Christ (Messiah)' and a 'fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus' (Col 1:7; 4:12; Phlm 23). In Ephesians 1:3-13 Paul uses more Jewish-Christian language ('he chose us', 'he predestined us', 'we have redemption through his blood') but subsequently Paul changes the perspective to that of the 'you' group of the addressees (1:14) and adds a prayer of thanks and intercession. This is a prayer specifically from the Jewish Christian Paul, who writes as a member of the group of Jewish Christians who all prayed together in Ephesians 1:3-13. (Note the shift from Paul writing as part of the anonymous 'we' group in 1:3-13 to the personal comment in 1:15, 'I have heard'.) Here he writes on behalf of the Gentile Christians (and Christians in general) who have come later to be the new people of faith: baptised Jews and non-Jews in the one Church under Christ or as the body of Christ.

From Ephesians 1:14-15 on, the Gentile Christians are the primary addressees in the letter. Ephesians was probably written shortly before Paul's departure as prisoner from Caesarea to Rome, following his appeal to the emperor (Acts 25:9-12). He writes or dictates the letter in case he does not survive the journey or dies after arrival in Rome. Ephesians is his bequest. He writes knowing that many or most of the apostles have died, from the perspective of one of the last apostles, one who will never again minister personally in the congregations that he founded. He writes looking at the Church of Christ at the end of the apostolic period, 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone' (Eph 2:20). In other words, Paul writes as a typical writer of antiquity. He does not write from his own perspective, but rather from the perspective of his current and future readers, who, following him and the apostolic era, will live as Christians regardless of which rulers and powers they are living under (Eph 1:21). In a way, he is already writing in the name of the entire collegium of apostles, those already dead as well as those who will soon die. He writes for the preservation of the unity of the Church under Christ (Eph 2:20; 3:5, 14; 4:11; cf. an early form in 1 Cor 15:1-11, 28).

Already in Paul's time the Church had become a majority gentile movement (see the disappointed-sounding words of Rom 9-11; 16:21b; Col 4:11b). Luke reports this as well from Acts 13 on. Moreover, according to Luke, in Caesarea a number of intensive conversations with educated, high-ranking Romans (and Jewish) authorities took place which likely influenced the thinking and language of Paul (Acts 22-26), much as the despair felt by him and Timothy following the afflictions they had suffered in Asia had changed his perspective (2 Cor 1:8-11). Certainly the theology and ethic of the earlier letters is more thoughtfully developed in Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians (cf. Phil 2:5-18; 3:20-21 with Col 1:15-29; Eph 1-3) and even in Philemon (cf. this

letter with earlier statements in Gal 3:26-28 and 1 Cor 7:21-24 and with Col 3:22 - 4:1 and Eph 6:5-9 in the time of Philemon). I presume that the origins of Colossians and Ephesians were in Caesarea (see below). It is possible that these last letters to communities were written more in the style of the secretaries and 'ghost-writers' Paul chose,[15] and beyond that, were re-worked by pupils posthumously and published again.[16]

There is at least one further indication that Paul's thinking continued to develop during the long, enforced pause in Caesarea and Rome: all five of the prison letters clearly demonstrate an increase of Christology along with a simultaneous decrease of theology. For Paul, God is the head of Christ, as for example in 1 Corinthians 11:3b, and God the Father remains prior vis à vis Christ. But, among other things, we can recognise an increase in the use of the 'in Christ' formula in the prison letters. The formula appears in the letters of Paul in the following levels of frequency (I count each appearance of the formula as one word):

Frequency of 'in Christ' in letters to congregations

	'In Christ'	Percentage
Romans	21	0.3
1 Corinthians	23	0.3
2 Corinthians	13	0.3
Galatians	8	0.4
1 Thessalonians	6	0.4
2 Thessalonians	2	0.2
Philippians	21	1.3
Philemon	5	1.5
Colossians	18	1.1
Ephesians	34	1.4

Frequency of 'in Christ' in letters to co-workers

	'In Christ'	Percentage
1 Timothy	2	0.1
Titus	0	0
2 Timothy	7	0.6

Note that 2 Timothy was written from a prison.[17]

The way Paul's letters were written is that he determined the contents and then dictated them, perhaps in consultation with his secretaries. They could obviously introduce a better, more hymnic (e.g. Eph 1-3) or simply different writing style. Compare Romans, written by Tertius (16:22), which in style is far removed from 1 Corinthians, written by Paul and Sosthenes (1:1).[18] It is also likely that Paul's secretaries – like Epaphras, see above – advanced and inspired Paul's thinking through their own theology and teaching experience. The expectation of the imminent return of Christ could have turned more and more into anticipatory joy over the almost-present Christ. Following the death of many companions on the journey, a more present-time eschatology may increasingly have replaced the apocalyptic thinking of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians (cf. already Rom 13:11 and 6:1-11).[19] In Colossians and Ephesians, a thesis of opponents (that Christians were already resurrected in baptism) almost becomes Pauline opinion – but not quite (e.g. Eph 1:21; Col 3:1-4; cf. also 'hope' in Eph 1:18, 2:12, 4:4; Col 1:5, 23, 27).

Colossians, Ephesians and even Philippians presumably adopted (and continued to develop) a more *spatial* expectation of the future from Galatians, a formulation more understandable for Hellenist readers; see 'the *present* Jerusalem ... the Jerusalem *above*' (Gal 4:25-26) and also 'to *set us free* from the *present* evil age' (Gal 1:4). Galatians knows nothing of imminent apocalyptic expectation. Hence, Colossians and Ephesians preserved a more 'Galatian' futurist eschatology. Ephesians is more concerned with the earthly battle with heretics generally, at present and in the future, which explains the absence of eschatology in this letter, as in Galatians, in which Paul is presently engaged in battle with opponents. On the other hand, Colossians wants to win back a local readership influenced by a specific and enthusiastic heresy to look toward God's future. Note how Colossians, for the sake of its readers, progresses from the standpoint of the opponents in Colossians 2:12 to that of Paul in Colossians 3:1-4. The eschatology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians 4 and 15 is not abandoned but rather rewritten and updated. Paul realised, at the latest after 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, that he could die before Christ's *parousia* and that the Church would be there after him.

The development of thought in the letters to the co-workers is similar: 2 Timothy is the only letter in the *corpus Paulinum* that never mentions 'hope', even though the author sees death before his eyes. He does, however, in 4:6-8 and elsewhere, express the expectation that Christ, as he always has, will now, finally, in the next months or one or two years, 'save me for his heavenly kingdom' (4:18). (Is this meant spatially?) We can compare 2 Timothy 4:16-18 with earlier, similar thinking in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11. In 1 Timothy and Titus, on the other hand, 'hope' of God's eschatological

future and eternal life is very much a central theme already years earlier (1 Tim 1:1; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17; Tit 1:2; 2:13; 3:7).

Following this sketch of a probable development of Pauline thinking from ca AD 48 until the early 60s, I will now attempt to date Paul's letters.

1.2 Dating the letters of Paul

Generally, I have for a long time pursued[20] the following dates of Paul's letters, especially after reading some works of Peter Walker.[21]

Galatians was written after the second visit by the apostles Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 14:4, 14; note that Luke sees both men as apostles), following a prophetic revelation they received (Acts 11:27-30, 12:25, parallel to Gal 2:1-10), but, according to Galatians 1-2, before Paul's third visit to Jerusalem (Acts 15). We can date this circular letter (Gal 1:1-2) to the south Galatian communities (Acts 13-14) quite precisely to the period before the apostolic council of AD 48-49 (Acts 15:1-2). At this time Paul does not yet know Timothy and Silas; besides, he cannot yet report a matter of relevance to the Galatians that he certainly would not have kept quiet: that he and Barnabas had reconciled, following the argument described in Galatians 2:11-14. In Galatians 3-6 he argues like a Spirit enthusiast, hence the controversy with the enthusiasts of Corinth must still lie before him. That the behaviour of Christians must show consideration for outsiders is a main theme in Pauline letters from first problems with misconduct by Christians (1 Thess 3:12 - 4:12; 5:11-15; 1 Cor 10:31 - 14:14; also the continuation of 1 Cor 5-6; 9:20-22 in 2 Cor 6:3, where Paul speaks as a model for the Corinthians; also Rom 12:14 - 14:18; Phil 2:16; 4:1-9). But in Galatians 5-6 this issue is almost entirely missing (only 6:9-10). Dispute among Christians is not discussed as having a negative effect on the public.

Thus, Galatians was written before 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians in the time of the very first troubles in Pauline communities. Passages like 1 Thessalonians 3:12 - 4:12 are probably Paul's later reactions to problems he had not realised and did not have to solve before. Besides, according to Galatians 2:11, Paul still believes that his opponents who preach circumcision and who provoked the first disputes in Pauline communities (Acts 15:1-3) are authorised by James. After the clarification by James described in Acts 15:24, he can no longer maintain this (cf. Rom and Phil 3).

Luke does not report 'that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy' (Gal 2:13). But he reports from a considerable distance in time and probably with the knowledge of a later reconciliation between Paul, Barnabas and Mark (1 Cor 9:6; Phlm 24; Col 4:10 no longer with negative undertones); the harmonising result is a solid front of all the apostles. According to Luke in Acts 15, all apostles had historically, once and for always, stood together against the preachers of circumcision. In Galatians 1 and after Galatians 3, Barnabas is not mentioned at all as a congregation founder. The last we read about him actually sounds very negative (Gal 2:11-18). It is likely that Barnabas and Paul, according to Acts 15:2, were actually forced by the congregation in Antioch to travel to Jerusalem. Maybe that journey was a very quiet one as they walked along together.

1-2 Thessalonians were written ca. AD 50-51. Second Thessalonians, however, assumes (in contrast to 1 Thess 3:10), the transfer of a complete early Christian-Pauline paradosis, as in 1 Corinthians 11:1-2. Second Thessalonians was composed, according to 2:15 and 3:6, after 1 Thessalonians in time and intended for better instructions. It was probably especially but not exclusively meant for future teachers of the congregation. Therefore the subject of the brief passage in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15 becomes a primary theme in 2 Thessalonians 3. The surprising twist at the end (2 Thess 3:15) seems to fit in time with 1 Corinthians 5:9-11.

1 Corinthians and **1 Timothy** were, in my opinion, written in AD 53-54; later in the same year, **Titus** followed.[22] **2 Corinthians** came into being 55-56, Romans 56-57. In **Romans** Paul summarised his theology and ethics for the first time for people he had never visited. To some extent, they knew his gospel only through negative rumours (Rom 3:8; 6:1-3; 16:17-20).

In Romans, while Paul reflects on his mission activities in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, more than anything else Paul wants to prepare his planned visit to Rome, which will include teaching there (15:14-33; 16:23). That involves disproving (in this letter) the negative rumours about him and his gospel spread by his opponents (2:17-24; 3:8; 6:1-3 and beyond). Paul is in agreement with the Roman Christians in doctrine (6:17; 16:17) and on this common basis he sharply attacks his opponents again at the end of the letter (16:17-20). Some disputes and conflicts, well known from previous

letters, emerge again in Romans in a way which suggests that Paul would attempt to rectify them.

Parts of Romans 12-14 can be read as an 'improved edition' of 1 Corinthians 8-14. Paul's harsh polemic against 'the Jews' in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, which his opponents might have quoted against him, can be corrected in Romans 9-11 as easily misunderstood. In Romans 2-11, 13:8-10 and 15:4 (esp. in chapter 7) he also 'corrects' unfavourable comments about the Law of Moses in Galatians 3-4. Soteriology is missing in Galatians but heavily present in Romans; likewise the expectation of the *parousia* of Christ and the final judgment now appear in Romans 1:18-32; 13:11-14; 14:7-23; 16:17-19, and the gospel is encompassed within it.[23]

According to Acts 19, opponents of the Christian community at Ephesus reproached the Christians, claiming that, because of them, 'the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be scorned, and she will be deprived of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship (σέβεται / *sebetai*) her' (Acts 19:27). So the Christians were accused of 'godlessness' (*asebeia*). It seems to me that a further feature of Romans fits into the context of the taking up of past conflicts. With the exception of 2 Thessalonians (2:4 only) and Romans, only three letters utilise words from the *seb-* group; they are the letters to Timothy and Titus which were most likely written under the influence of ongoing conflicts around Artemis of Ephesus.[24] The repeatedly 'un-Pauline' use of such words in the theological part of Romans (c. 1-11) with a polemical stab at the people who want to live *asebes* (Rom 1:18) instead of 'worshiping' God (cf. σεβάζομαι in 1:25) could also be a corrected restaging (Rom 1:18, 25; 4:5; 5:6; 11:26) of the accusations of opponents from Ephesus, Asia Minor (and Crete).

According to Luke, Jewish opponents of Paul, from Ephesus in particular, wanted to harm him by disseminating rumours that he was a sinner and a blasphemer. They were ultimately successful because it was most likely opponents from Ephesus in Asia Minor who saw to it that Paul wound up in a Roman prison, which likely led to his death (Acts 19:9-10, 33-34; 21:27-29). Following the life-threatening clashes in the province of Asia (Acts 19:23-40; 2 Cor 1:8-11), Paul may already have suspected that rumours would reach Rome from there. Thus in Romans he shows himself as a loyal citizen of the Roman state, in a manner similar to 1 Timothy 2:1-8 and especially Titus 3:1-8: standing clearly for peace (Rom 13:1-7; cf. the frequency of the word 'peace' in Rom 1:7; 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 14:17, 19; 15:13, 33; 16:20 and esp. 12:18). Romans 13:1-7 sounds like a reflection of past struggles in and around Ephesus. Paul here assures that he is not a destroyer of peace – which could be the impression that reaches Rome through rumours from Ephesus – but a promoter of the *pax romana*.[25]

I date **Philippians** ca. AD 57, following the arrest described in Acts 21:27-36 and at the beginning of a quiet phase in Caesarea (Acts 24:23). Paul wrote the letter when a youthful Christianity had barely got over its first scare: Paul had been arrested by the emperor Nero's tribune and was in prison, and not just for a few days. Before this, there had never been such a serious imprisonment! But now, finally, after a long time of uncertainty (Acts 19:23-40 through 24:28), the Philippians had revived their concern for Paul (Phil 4:10-13). Imprisonment develops quickly into a mission opportunity. It is not, as all feared, the beginning of the end of the Pauline mission (Phil 1:15-18). As the situation is becoming manageable, Paul now even reckons with an early release and further ministry in the east (Phlm 22; Phil 1:12-29). He does not abandon the travel plans he shared in Romans 15. His view ranges from Caesarea towards the west. He wants to travel by way of Colossae and Philippi, among other places. It is only after the appeal to the emperor (Acts 25:9-12) and later after reaching Rome that the plans are undone. Paul was able to reach Rome all right, but as a prisoner and unable to make any visits on the way.

Even the language of Philippians could speak for my dating proposal. This letter is on the one hand linguistically close to the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, but on the other hand it is similar to earlier Pauline letters in many respects.[26]

Philemon is written ca. AD 57-58, during the period of calm in Caesarea but before the appeal to the emperor. Paul is hoping for his release and a visit in Colossae (Phlm 22). Right after the appeal to the emperor, Paul might well have sent Timothy and Mark, Tychicus and Titus, among others, as envoys with letters to and assignments for the eastern areas. He knew now that he himself would no longer visit the congregations in the east. His 'team', named in Acts 20:4, Philemon 23-25, 2 Timothy 4:9-22, Colossians 4:7-17 and Ephesians 6:21, now becomes an apostolic delegation, sent by Paul to the congregations to be dispersed among them.

1.3 The later letters

Following his arrival in Rome, Paul first writes **2 Timothy**, ca. AD 60. I have elsewhere argued for this date in almost the same way as Walker,[27] who however presents further, good arguments for it.[28] According to Walker, **Colossians** and **Ephesians** were perhaps written after 2 Timothy.[29] These two letters were deliberately to complement each other wherever possible. For example, Ephesians – written not for the Lycos valley but rather generally for the non-Jewish believers (2:11-13 etc.) – emphasizes soteriology much more than does Colossians. Paul takes into his teaching on *grace* the σωζω κτλ-language (originally of opponents, see Acts 15:1!), which is missing in Colossians but important for Paul after Galatians. It is important for him, also in his directives regarding conduct when under demonic and satanic attack. This happens more specifically in Ephesians 2:5, 8 within the context of 2:1-9, as well as in Ephesians 5:23 and 6:17 within the context of 5:21 - 6:20. There is nothing about grace in the final segment of Ephesians but shortly thereafter comes the all-concluding blessing of grace (6:24). In the directives of Ephesians 6:1-20 earlier thoughts from Galatians (1:6-9; 6:14-18) and 1 Corinthians (16:22-24) are taken up, which include an excommunication of (satanically inspired?) heretics.

Rescue language (σωζω κτλ) is probably missing in Colossians because Paul assumes that the Colossians will also be reading a copy of Ephesians (Col 4:18 – typical of Paul: 1 Thess 5:27). The themes of Ephesians (rescue, peace and others) hardly need to be treated in Colossians. Colossians, on the other hand, augments Ephesians,[30] and also generalises several things from Philemon; see for example 'erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, *nailing it to the cross*' (2:14). This alludes metaphorically to the letter to Philemon as a promissory note (Phlm 19). As Paul, similar to Christ, asks Philemon to 'nail' to him, the representative of Christ, the promissory note of Onesimus, so Christ assumes the promissory note of all debtors and pays it.

The title *Kurios*, which is rare in Colossians (as in Galatians), shows up exactly, and *only*, in Colossians 3:13 - 4:1. The concentration of the term 'Lord' in this one segment of Colossians establishes a direct link with Philemon, in which it is a primary theme that a slave and his owner, his 'lord', are both Christians under the same heavenly Lord, just as in Colossians all slaves and all their 'lords' are under the Lord. Thus, Christ as Lord (*Kurios*) over slaves and their owners is a primary theme in both letters, which points to a similar date and address. That is to say, as the two letters are read to all Christians in the congregational assembly, it is not only the host of the Colossians, Philemon (Phlm 1-2), who is put under the one 'Lord'; rather, both letters put him and all other 'lords' (slave owners) and all slaves in the Lycos valley in subordination to Jesus and within a 'brotherhood'. Finally, the thanksgivings of Philemon 5, Ephesians 1:15 and Colossians 1:4 are almost similar in wording, which indicates that the three letters were written close to each other in time; moreover, Colossians 4:18 fits well with Philemon 19: both letters are expressly signed and attested by the apostle.

In Ephesians, *agape* is more important than in Colossians and any other letter of Paul;[31] it is a primary concern of the letter.[32] In order to strengthen and protect the congregations in Asia Minor (Col 2:6-15, Eph 2:2-6, 20), Colossians and Ephesians probably want to introduce Pauline theology and ethic, better informed about actual heresies, into the intense disputes in that area (see 1 Tim, 2 Tim 1:15, 4:14-15, Rev 2-3). Paul had actually developed his theology further on the basis of information, especially from Epaphras and, of course, also from other 'reporters' (Col 4:7-15; cf. Onesiphorus in 2 Tim 1:15-18).

According to Walker, in Colossians, Mark and Timothy are not being summoned to join Luke (as in 2 Tim 4:9-11) because they are already present with Paul (Col 4:10-11).[33] Neither of the letters calls for further missionary work, but they do seek to strengthen the already baptised Christians in the mature communities. They present a mature Pauline theology and ecclesiology, a considerable time after the writing of Romans. Colossians, then, would mirror the situation that in the meantime Onesimus had been sent again from Philemon to Rome, as was at first only diplomatically hinted at by Paul in Philemon.

However, in my view these events can also have happened earlier in Caesarea, if Philemon was already written and sent in the first year in Caesarea, but Colossians only toward the end of the second year. In any case, H. Binder shows that Colossians could reflect a time later than Philemon. Mark, Timothy and others are soon underway in the east again, wherever possible.[34] (Timothy is missing yet again in Eph 1:1.)

But if we use Walker's dating of Colossians

and Ephesians after 2 Timothy, there is a serious problem: in Colossians, Demas would be reunited with Paul instead of, as 2 Timothy 4:10 clearly witnesses, an apostate. Therefore I think that at least Colossians, if not also Ephesians, was more likely written before 2 Timothy, at the end of the detention in Caesarea. The advantage of this dating is that the turning away of (almost) 'all' in Asia, announced in 2 Timothy 1:15, would not yet have happened at the time of Colossians and Ephesians. The turning away would then likely have been triggered by the fact that, in the eyes of his congregations, Paul would once and for all have been 'abducted' from the eastern regions. Paul's concerned premonition that his communities could despair was not unjustified (see Eph 3:1-13: 'This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles ... I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you ...'). Certainly Paul's 'abduction' gave his opponents the opportunity triumphantly to spread the news of the collapse of a failed Pauline mission and of unanswered prayers of Paul and his communities (cf. Phlm 22, Phil 1:19-26). In addition, it was certainly known in Asia Minor that Paul was destined for death. Nero's first good years of rule after AD 54-55 were past and sometime after AD 60 he mutated into a crazed hater of Christians. He did not become that overnight but rather some time before the burning of Rome in AD 64 and his subsequent persecution of the Christians. According to Walker, Nero's shift in thinking happened primarily and especially through the interrogations of the *leaders* of the Christians, Peter and Paul; their proclamation before him or his representatives clarified for him what Christians are. After AD 60-61 no Christian could expect a fair trial from Nero. Under the heading 'peace and order', it became ever easier to distinguish between Christians and Jews in Rome. And following the Jewish revolt, the Jews were hated even more in Rome. A release of the Jewish Christian Paul during the years of Nero's animosity toward Christians and Jews would have been improbable.

For these reasons, I date the prison letters somewhat differently than Peter Walker: **Philippians** and **Philemon** originated at the time of Acts 24:23. Around that time Timothy could have departed to Philippi (Phil 2:19-23). Then follows the appeal of Paul to Nero, which makes an end to any hope of visits to the congregations in the east. While still in Caesarea, shortly before the departure to Rome, Paul writes **Colossians** and **Ephesians**. It is also possible that at this time Romans was expanded with a new ending (Rom 16:25-27) which takes up the theme of Romans 1:1-16, using the language of Hellenistic non-Jews; Romans was then newly released especially for gentile Christians. Timothy, back from Philippi, is sent to Asia, where he is to organise a young community, among other things (compare the directive 2 Timothy 2:2 with Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5). Paul's journey to Rome follows and in Rome the first preliminary hearing takes place. Or was it still in Caesarea, as reported in Acts 26? In that case 2 Timothy 4:16 reflects the previous hearing before Agrippa and Festus.[35]

After this Paul sees more clearly and he immediately writes **2 Timothy** at the start of the two-year time period (Acts 28:30-31), still prior to the first winter, for which he needs his cloak (2 Tim 4:13a). He writes yet before the second hearing, so decisive for his appeal, for which he needs the books and parchments 'that I left with Carpus at Troas' (2 Tim 4:13b). Written years after the march from Troas to Assos without Timothy (Acts 20:13), before which Paul no doubt left his belongings for safekeeping with Carpus, this verse is a note of identification for the not-informed Timothy. It does not provide information about any travels recently completed before his arrival in Rome. Timothy is reminded of the time described in Acts 20:1-13, for he had to leave Paul already in Caesarea in order to travel to Philippi and later into Asia. All the information relayed to Timothy by Tychicus and other team members shows us that Timothy had departed ahead of these co-workers. Paul has to explain to Timothy why he is in Rome with only Luke (2 Tim 4:9-12). During the anxious time after his arrest, Paul could not risk fetching his cloak and books so he preferred leaving them in Troas (Acts 20:6). Only after the situation is calmer does he, via Timothy, bring them to Rome.

In any case, Timothy knows nothing about what happened following his tearful departure in Caesarea (2 Tim 1:4). Timothy, as co-author of Philemon and Colossians, could not yet know of Demas' desertion (see Phlm 24; Col 4:14, but then 2 Tim 4:10). This happened quite possibly because, from Demas' perspective, the situation of the appeal to the emperor worsened frighteningly at the first hearing in Rome. The bad news brought from Asia by Onesiphorus may have disheartened him as well (2 Tim 1:15-17). In any case, Demas' desertion put Paul in an extremely difficult

theological predicament. To Jews and Christians of that time, according to Deuteronomy 19:15, every matter must be confirmed 'by two or three witnesses' (2 Cor 13:1-2, 1 Tim 5:19). But now only Luke was with Paul. The desertion of Demas is clearly the primary reason (note the *gar* in 2 Tim 4:10!) for Paul to summon Timothy and Mark to Rome: as the second and third witnesses. He has sent off all other potential witnesses on important assignments or lost them through illness (2 Tim 4:9-12).

1.4 Concluding remarks

The journey of **Tychicus** to Ephesus, mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:12, can be the one mentioned in Colossians 4:7 and Ephesians 6:21, which therefore took place before 2 Timothy. This agrees with dating Colossians and Ephesians before 2 Timothy. It must have followed the sending of Tychicus after Timothy's departure from Caesarea and shortly after Colossians 1:1 and 4:12, so that Timothy has to be informed about it (2 Tim 4:12). Perhaps the letter to the Colossians, written in consultation with Epaphras (Col 1:7, 4:14) and together with Timothy (Col 1:1), remained with Paul for a short time yet. Tychicus may previously have been underway somewhere else (see e.g. Tit 3:12) and was available only belatedly, for whatever reason, as a messenger after Timothy's departure.

Timothy's journey, which Paul announces in Philippians 2:19-23, would then have been delayed considerably; alternatively, Timothy made two or more journeys during the entire time span of Acts 21:27 - 28:10: either he travelled early on from Caesarea to Philippi, then later again to Asia Minor (2 Tim 2:2) or the hoped-for journey of Timothy mentioned in Philippians 2:19-23 did not happen at all, or they were later combined. Timothy then travelled to Asia Minor as well as to Philippi, but then again to Rome (2 Tim 4:9-13). We do not know.

Mark may also have undertaken several journeys in that period of up to six years from Philemon 24 to Colossians 4:10 and 2 Timothy 4:9-11. **Luke** remained as physician and secretary with an unwell Paul (cf. 2 Cor 12:7-10; Phlm 9). Besides 2 Timothy,[36] he composed – in conversation with Mark – his Gospel and Acts (as an apology for the case?).

In the next issue of *EJT* I will base my dating proposal for the letter to the Ephesians more fully upon the Pauline chronology and the letter's character as a legacy.

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Endnotes

1 With regard to the letters of Paul and Luke-Acts, see e.g. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976); D.A. Carson, D.J. Moo and L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Tesament* (Leicester: Apollos and IVP, 1992) 215-390; Thomas Weißenborn, *Apostel, Lehrer und Propheten: Eine Einführung in das Neue Testament* (Marburg: Francke Verlag, 2012) 59-143, 167-196 and 208-390; Peter Walker, *Unterwegs auf den Spuren des Paulus: das illustrierte Sachbuch zu seinen Reisen* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2008); the same, specifically regarding the Pastoral Epistles: 'Revisiting the Pastoral Epistles, Part I' in *European Journal of Theology* 21.1 (2012) 4-16; and the same, 'Revisiting the Pastoral Epistles, Part II' in *European Journal of Theology* 21.2 (2012) 120-132. See also Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Band 2: von der Paulusschule bis zur Johannesoffenbarung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2012²) 2-3; regarding Paul and Luke, see Klaus Berger, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2011) 210-211, 415-416 and 495-830. Regarding Luke-Acts, see A. Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker: zur Datierung des lukanischen Doppelwerkes* (TANZ 43; Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2006).

2 My thanks to Merlin Schlichting, who translated my German text and gave some helpful advice, to David L. Mealand (University of Edinburgh) who allowed me to use an unpublished study, and to the editor for his redactional work. Most Scripture quotations are from the NRSV. Quotations from German authors are translated. Around the time this study was being written our grandchildren *Abigail* and *Hazel Elizabeth* were born. We dedicate this essay to them and all the children and grandchildren of both of our families whose names are mentioned in the present and the future, with the blessing of Christ (Eph. 1:21-22; 3:14-21).

3 Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie*, 2-3.

4 Berger, *Commentary*, 688-698, 717.

5 Note this worldwide perspective from the lack of an address in Eph 1:1 and from Eph 1:21 forward.

6 See *grace* as a main theme of Ephesians in 1:2, 6-7, 2:5, 7-8, 3:2, 7-8, 4:7, 29, 6:24.

7 See *love* as *the* main theme of Ephesians in 1:4, 15, 2:4, 3:17, 19, 6:23-24 and other places; cf. Part 3 of this study (forthcoming).

8 A key theme in Ephesians.

9 Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*,

revised ed. (Leicester and Downers Grove: Apollos and IVP, 1990) 528-535 and following Guthrie (and J.N. Sanders), G. Hörster, *Einleitung und Bibelkunde zum Neuen Testament* (Handbibliothek zur Wuppertaler Studienbibel; Wuppertal und Zürich: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1993) 124-126; cf. the discussion in Carson, Moo and Morris, *Introduction*, 309-312.

10 In a future publication I hope to give more detailed reasons for my dating of the letters of Paul.

11 Gert Theissen, *Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments als literaturgeschichtliches Problem* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007) 124.

12 K.-W. Niebuhr (ed.), *Grundinformationen Neues Testament: eine bibelkundlich-theologische Einführung* (UTB 2108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; 4. rev. ed. 2011) 265-266; Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie*, 2; E. Schweizer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser* second edition (EKK XII; Düsseldorf, Zürich, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980); U. Wilckens, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Teilband 3* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2005) 254-266; Berger, *Commentary*, 736.

13 2 Tim 4:13b could also mean that Paul had, among other things, a collection of his letters in his possession. In that case he could have proceeded well against the forgeries and forged letters his opponents were using in his name (see 2 Thess 2:1-3; 3:17).

14 Theissen, *Entstehung*, 124.

15 The best work on that theme I know is E.R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT II/42; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991).

16 We probably see Paul's own style or influence most clearly in Ephesians in ch. 4-6. On the other hand, Eph 1-3 are quite unlike Paul's undisputed letters (D.L. Mealand, unpublished results, personal email 3 April 2003). In ancient times, one and the same author could deliberately 'operate in the same text with multiple styles', see F. Jung, *Soter: Studien zur Rezeption eines hellenistischen Ehrentitels im Neuen Testament* (NTA neue Folge 39; Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 2002) 310-311, with reference to R. Brucker, *Christushymnen oder epideiktische Passagen?* (FRLANT 176; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 174ff.

17 R. Fuchs, *Unerwartete Unterschiede: müssen wir unsere Ansichten über 'die' Pastoralbriefe revidieren?* (BWM 12; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2003) 117-125; for word numbers see A. Kenny, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) 15.

18 Kenny, *Stylometric Study*, 99-100; K. Jaros, *Das Neue Testament und seine Autoren: eine Einführung* (UTB 3087; Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2008) e.g. 263.

19 H.-J. Eckstein, 'Auferstehung und gegenwärtiges Leben nach Röm 6,1-11: präsentische Eschatologie bei Paulus' in *Theologische Beiträge* 1 (1997) 8-33.

20 Fuchs, *Unterschiede*.

21 Walker, *Unterwegs* and *Revisiting* Parts I and II.

22 On the dating of 1 Timothy und Titus see R. Fuchs, 'Eine vierte Missionsreise des Paulus im Osten? zur Datierung des ersten Timotheusbriefs und des Titusbriefs' in *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 25 (2011) 33-58.

23 For further examples see K. Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (ThHK 6; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999) 78.

24 See Fuchs, 'Vierte Missionsreise' and also 'Ein Gott, der Vater, ein Herr, Jesus Christus: Verwendung und Vermeidung der Gottesbezeichnung „Vater" in den Gemeinde- und Pastoralbriefen des Paulus' in *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 26 (2012) 63-91.

25 K. Haacker, 'Der Römerbrief als Friedensmemorandum' in *Novum Testamentum* 36 (1990) 25-41.

26 Results from an unpublished study by D. L. Mealand, personal email 3 April 2003.

27 Fuchs, *Unterschiede*, 18-30.

28 Walker, 'Revisiting', Part 2.

29 Walker, *Unterwegs* and 'Revisiting' Part 2.

30 I believe that the letter to Laodicea mentioned in Col 4:16 was a copy of Ephesians.

31 It is only in Philemon that the agap- word group is relatively more frequent.

32 Heinz-Werner Neudorfer, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an Timotheus* (HTA; Gießen and Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2004) 23-24; Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) 104-106.

33 Walker, 'Revisting' Part 2, 123-124.

34 Hermann Binder, *Der Brief des Paulus an Philemon* (THK XI/2; Berlin: Evangelisches Verlagshaus, 1990) 25.

35 In favour of the official *prima actio* are e.g. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles: I & II Timothy, Titus* (Black's New Testament Commentaries; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1963) 217-218 and Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 635ff. In favour of record keeping only, not as part of the process: Walker, 'Revisiting' Part 2, 124.

36 On Luke as author of 2 Timothy and also of 1 Timothy and Titus, see e.g. Rainer Riesner, 'Once more: Luke-Acts and the Pastoral Epistles' in Sang-Won Son (ed.), *History and Exegesis*, Festschrift for E. Earle Ellis (New York, London: T & T Clark, 2006).

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Das Gebet zu Jesus in den kanonischen und in den apokryphen Acta[1]

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SUMMARY

This article studies the parallels between Stephen's prayer to Jesus in the canonical Acts (7:59–60) and the prayers to Jesus found in the five major Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles from the second and third centuries AD, i.e., the Acts of Andrew, John, Paul, Peter and Thomas. On the basis of these parallels and in comparison with prayers to Jesus found in the rest of the New Testament, in the four other Apocryphal Acts and in the Acts of the Christian Martyrs, it is argued that Acts 7:59–60 is the most probable literary background for the prayers to Jesus in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht die zwischen dem Christusgebet des Stephanus in den kanonischen Acta (Apg 7,59–60) und den Christusgebeten der fünf großen apokryphen Acta aus dem zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert, das heisst den Andreas-, Johannes-, Paulus-, Petrus- und Thomasakten, bestehenden Parallelen. Auf der Grundlage dieser Parallelen sowie aufgrund eines Vergleichs mit alternativen literarischen Hintergründen im übrigen Neuen Testament, in den vier jeweils übrigen apokryphen Apostelakten sowie in den frühchristlichen Märtyrerakten wird dafür plädiert, in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 den naheliegendsten literarischen Hintergrund für die Christusgebete der apokryphen Apostelgeschichten zu sehen.

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RÉSUMÉ

Voici une étude des parallèles que l'on peut noter entre la prière qu'Étienne a adressée à Jésus selon le livre canonique des Actes (7.59-60) et les prières adressées à Jésus dans les Actes d'apôtres apocryphes datant des ii^e^ et iii^e^ siècles, comme les Actes d'André, de Jean, de Paul, de Pierre et de Thomas. En se fondant sur ces parallèles ainsi que sur la comparaison avec les prières de Jésus rapportées dans le Nouveau Testament, et les prières qui lui sont attribuées dans les quatre autres *Actes* apocryphes et dans les *Actes des martyrs chrétiens*, l'auteur soutient que le texte d'Actes 7.59-60 est l'arrière-plan littéraire le plus probable pour les prières adressées à Jésus dans les *Actes* d'apôtres apocryphes.

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Einleitung

Die kanonischen und die apokryphen Acta sind bereits mehrfach gemeinsam untersucht worden. Das läßt sich gut anhand des Aufsatzes illustrieren, den Wilhelm Schneemelcher, der international angesehene Spezialist für die neutestamentlichen Apokryphen, im Jahr 1964 zur Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen, dem Fachmann für die kanonische Apostelgeschichte, beigesteuert hat. Der Beitrag trägt den Titel "Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas und die Acta Pauli" und Schneemelcher stellt darin im Hinblick auf die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten fest: "[Ü]ber deren Verhältnis zur lukanischen Apostelgeschichte [hat] man sich schon oft Gedanken gemacht."[2] Der vorliegende Aufsatz kann unter andere als Weiterführung der Erforschung der zwischen den kanonischen und den apokryphen Acta bestehenden Beziehungen und Parallelen angesehen werden. François Bovon schreibt zu solch einem Vergleich: "The spontaneous wish to compare the canonical with the apocryphal acts of the apostles … is legitimate."[3]

Die kanonische Apostelgeschichte enthält ein Gebet zu Jesus. Es handelt sich dabei um das Gebet des Märtyrers Stephanus, welches sich in 7,59–60 findet. Während seiner Steinigung richtet Stephanus hier die folgenden zwei Bitten an den erhöhten Herrn Jesus: "Herr Jesus, nimm meinen Geist auf!" und "Herr, rechne ihnen diese Sünde nicht an!"[4] Dieses Gebet des Stephanus stellt eines der ganz wenigen neutestamentlichen Gebete zu Jesus dar. Ein weiteres Gebet zu Jesus findet sich in Offenbarung 22,20, wo es heißt: "Amen. Komm, Herr Jesus!" Dieses Gebet wiederrum geht eventuell auf die aramäische Formel "Maranatha" in 1 Korinther 16,22 zurück, wobei von der Grammatik her nicht klar ist, ob es sich hierbei tatsächlich um einen Imperativ ("Unser Herr, komm!"), das heisst um ein Gebet, handelt.[5] Gebete zu Jesus werden dann vielleicht noch an zwei weiteren Stellen im Neuen Testament erwähnt. In Johannes 14,14 sagt Jesus zu seinen Jüngern: "Wenn ihr *mich* um etwas in meinem Namen bittet, werde ich es tun." Jedoch ist "mich" (με) textkritisch unsicher. In 2 Korinther 12,8 schließlich berichtet Paulus, dass er wegen des Pfahles im Fleisch dreimal den Herrn angefleht hat. Jedoch ist hier nicht sicher, ob er mit dem "Herrn" (κύριος) tatsächlich den Herrn Jesus meint. Sogar bei großzügiger Zählung kommt man also zu dem Ergebnis, dass das Gebet zu Jesus im Neuen Testament lediglich fünfmal erwähnt wird. Zählt man noch kritischer, enthält das Neue Testament sogar nur zwei Gebete zu Jesus, nämlich das am Ende der Apokalypse sowie das des Stephanus in den kanonischen Acta.

Im Gegensatz zum kanonischen Neuen Testament als Ganzem und zur kanonischen Apostelgeschichte im Speziellen finden sich in den fünf großen apokryphen Apostelgeschichten aus dem zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert n. Chr., das heisst in den Acta des Andreas (ActAndr), Johannes (ActJoh), Paulus (ActPaul), Petrus (ActPetr) und Thomas (ActThom), zahlreiche Gebete zu Jesus. Nach der Statistik von Hugh A.G. Houghton enthalten diese apokryphen Acta nicht weniger als etwa hundert Gebete zu Jesus.[6] Die Frage nach der Herkunft dieser Christusgebete liegt auf der Hand: Wie kam es, dass man sich im zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert in einigen christlichen Kreisen im Gebet nicht mehr – wie im sogenannten "Vaterunser" gefordert (Mt 6,9; Lk 11,2) – lediglich an den Vater, sondern direkt – und ausschließlich – an Jesus wandte?

Bei der Beantwortung dieser Frage ist es naheliegend, das Gebet des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 als möglichen literarischen Hintergrund für die Christusgebete der apokryphen Acta in Betracht zu ziehen. Und das umso mehr, als sich zwischen dem Christusgebet des Stephanus und den Christusgebeten der apokryphen Acta zahlreiche enge Parallelen ausmachen lassen. Diese Parallelen sind in der neutestamentlichen Forschung bisher noch nicht herausgestellt, geschweige denn untersucht worden. So findet sich in den Veröffentlichungen, die sich speziell den Parallelen zwischen kanonischen und apokryphen Acta widmen,[7] kein Hinweis auf Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60. Lediglich Adalbert Gautier Hammans einschlägige Studie zum frühchristlichen Gebet, *La prière*, enthält dazu einen kurzen Hinweis. In Acta Johannes 115 betet der sterbende Apostel Johannes: "Du (seiest) mit mir, Herr Jesus Christus."[8] Hamman bemerkt dazu im Vorübergehen, dass Johannes – wie Stephanus – mit einem Gebet zu Jesus auf den Lippen stirbt.[9] Es kann also festgehalten werden, dass die Parallelen zwischen kanonischen und apokryphen Acta im Hinblick auf das Gebet zu Jesus bisher noch nicht untersucht worden sind.

Dies soll in diesem Aufsatz geschehen, und zwar in folgenden drei Schritten: (1) Zunächst wird das Christusgebet des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 kurz vorgestellt. (2) Sodann werden die zwischen diesem Gebet und den Christusgebeten der apokryphen Acta bestehenden Parallelen aufgezeigt. (3) Schließlich wird danach gefragt, inwiefern Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 als literarischer Hintergrund für die Christusgebete der apokryphen Acta in Frage kommt. Aufgrund seiner Fragestellung liefert der Aufsatz einen Beitrag zu den drei folgenden Bereichen der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft und Patristik: (1) Erforschung der Beziehung/Parallelen zwischen kanonischen und apokryphen Acta; (2) Wirkungsgeschichte von Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60; und (3) Entwicklung der frühchristlichen Spiritualität, das heisst Entstehung des Christusgebets.

1. Das Christusgebet des Stephanus

In der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte wird im siebten Kapitel erzählt (7,59–60):

καὶ ἐλιθοβόλουν τὸν Στέφανον ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα· κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου. θεὶς δὲ τὰ γόνατα ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· κύριε, μὴ στήσῃς αὐτοῖς ταύτην τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη.

> So steinigten sie Stephanus; er aber betete und rief: Herr Jesus, nimm meinen Geist auf! Dann sank er in die Knie und schrie laut: Herr, rechne ihnen diese Sünde nicht an! Nach diesen Worten starb er.

Die Bitte des Stephanus "Herr Jesus, nimm meinen Geist auf!" (Apg 7,59; κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου) erinnert an die Bitte des gekreuzigten Jesus "Vater, in deine Hände lege ich meinen Geist" (Lk 23,46; πάτερ, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου), welche wiederum aus Psalm 31,5 (LXX 31,6) stammt. Während Jesus zum Vater betet, richtet Stephanus sein Gebet an den Herrn Jesus. Die Bitte des Stephanus "Herr, rechne ihnen diese Sünde nicht an!" (Apg 7,60; κύριε, μὴ στήσῃς αὐτοῖς ταύτην τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) erinnert an Lukas 23,34a, wo der gekreuzigte Jesus betet "Vater, vergib ihnen" (πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς). Diese Bitte Jesu ist textkritisch jedoch unsicher und gehört wahrscheinlich nicht zum ursprünglichen Text.[10] Im Hinblick auf den beziehungsweise die Adressaten von Stephanus' zweiter Bitte gehen die Meinungen der Exegeten auseinander. Die Mehrheit der Forscher sehen im κύριος hier – parallel zum vorausgehenden Vers – den Herrn Jesus.[11] Einige Exegeten verstehen κύριος jedoch als Titel für Gott dem Vater.[12] Rudolf Pesch argumentiert folgendermaßen: "[D]a die Bitte der – freilich textkritisch nicht gesicherten – Bitte Jesu (Lk 23,34a) entspricht, dürfte jedoch eher an eine Anrufung Gottes selbst als des 'Herrn' zu denken sein."[13] Gegen diese Auslegung spricht jedoch erstens, dass – was Pesch ja auch einräumt – Lukas 23,34a textkritisch nicht gesichert ist. Und zweitens zeigt doch ein Vergleich von Lukas 23,46 und Apostelgeschichte 7,59, dass im lukanischen Doppelwerk eine an Gott den Vater gerichtete Bitte sehr wohl in eine Bitte an Jesus verändert werden kann. Es ist somit naheliegender, auch die zweite Bitte des Stephanus als an den Herrn Jesus gerichtet aufzufassen.

2. Parallelen zwischen Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 und den Christusgebeten der apokryphen Acta

In Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 richtet sich Stephanus zweimal mit dem Vokativ κύριε an Jesus. Im Hinblick auf die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten stellt Houghton fest: "There is a remarkably high proportion of vocatives used in Christian prayer. Many of these consist of one or both elements of the name Jesus Christ."[14] In den apokryphen Acta findet sich der Vokativ κύριε Ἰησοῦ z.B. in Acta Andreae 13; 16; Acta Johannes 24; 77; 85; 108; Acta Petri 2; 11 (*domine Iesu Christe*) und Acta Thomae 3; 25; 54. Ähnlich wie in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 finden sich in den apokryphen Apostelgeschichten Christusgebete, in denen auf das unzweideutige κύριε Ἰησοῦ beziehungsweise *domine Iesu* ein einfaches κύριε beziehungsweise *domine* folgt (ActJoh 108; ActPetr 11; ActThom 25; vgl. ActJoh 85, 109). Für Stephanus' Bitte "Herr Jesus, nimm meinen Geist auf!" (κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου) finden sich in den apokryphen Acta erstaunliche Parallelen, welche nun detailliert vorgestellt und kommentiert werden.

Das Christusgebet des Stephanus findet sich im Kontext des lukanischen Berichts über sein Martyrium, Sterben und Begräbnis (Apg 7,54–8,2). Die apokryphen Acta schließen alle mit einer Erzählung über den Tod und das Begräbnis des jeweiligen Apostels. Mit der Ausnahme von Johannes sterben die Apostel dabei alle den Märtyrertod. In den apokryphen Berichten wenden sich die Apostel mit der Bitte an Jesus, er möge ihren Geist beziehungsweise ihre Seele aufnehmen. Diese Bitten – sowie die jeweiligen narrativen Kontexte – weisen erstaunliche Parallelen zum Martyrium und Christusgebet des Stephanus auf, die in der bisherigen Forschung noch nicht hervorgehoben, geschweige denn untersucht wurden. So kommt Bovon in seinem vergleichenden Artikel "Canonical and Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles" zwar auf die Martyriumsberichte der letzteren zu sprechen, vergleicht diese dann aber merkwürdigerweise nicht mit dem in der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte geschilderten Martyrium des Stephanus (Apg 7,54–8,1), sondern lediglich mit den Passionsberichten der kanonischen Evangelien:

> The Acts of the Apostles, depicting the ministry, travels, teaching, miracles, and passion of Jesus' disciples were written in the first centuries C.E. To date, scholarly comparison has either enhanced the value of canonical work by discrediting the apocryphal as literature of entertainment or has simply considered both canonical and apocryphal literature to be Christian novels. This paper emphasizes both differences and similarities between the canonical and apocryphal texts. Among the differences, the apostle's martyrdom story in the apocryphal acts, similar to Jesus' passion narrative in the canonical gospels,

reveals the function of the apostle as mediator of a message of salvation.[15]

Im Folgenden werden die apokryphen Martyriumsberichte beziehungsweise die betreffenden Gebete in alphabetischer Reihenfolge – das heisst Acta Andreae, Acta Johannes, Acta Pauli, Acta Petri und Acta Thomae – präsentiert und im Hinblick auf die Parallelen mit Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 kommentiert.

2.1 Acta Andreae 63

In Acta Andreae 63 wird im Kontext des Martyriums des Apostels Andreas Folgendes berichtet:

> Andreas [rief] mit lauter Stimme [μετὰ φωνῆς εἶπεν]: "Laß nicht zu, Herr, daß der an dein Kreuz gebundene Andreas wieder losgebunden wird. Vater, laß deinen Widersacher den an deiner Gnade Hängenden nicht losbinden, sondern nimm du selbst mich [με] auf, Christus [χριστέ], nach dem ich mich sehne und den ich liebe. Nimm mich auf [δέξαι με], damit durch meinen Weggang der Zugang zu dir für meine Verwandten ... entsteht, damit sie ruhen in deiner Größe." Und als der Selige dies gesagt und den Herrn gepriesen hatte, gab er den Geist auf [παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα].[16]

Zwischen dem Gebet des Andreas und dem des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 lassen sich die folgenden fünf Parallelen ausmachen: (1) In beiden Fällen handelt es sich um ein Gebet zu Jesus Christus, was aus den sehr ähnlichen Anreden κύριε Ἰησοῦ (Apg 7,59–60) beziehungsweise χριστέ (ActAndr 63) hervorgeht. (2) Der Imperativ δέξαι stellt sogar eine wörtliche Parallele dar. (3) In beiden Fällen bittet der jeweilige Beter darum, Christus möge seinen Geist aufnehmen. Während Stephanus dabei von τὸ πνεῦμά μου (Apg 7,59) spricht, benutzt Andreas das einfachere με (ActAndr 63), womit er aber, wie aus den kommentierenden Worten des Erzählers, das heisst παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα, hervorgeht, ebenfalls seinen πνεῦμα meint. (4) Sowohl Stephanus als auch Andreas beten für ihre jeweiligen Widersacher. Die Bitte des Stephanus lautet "Herr, rechne ihnen diese Sünde nicht an!" (Apg 7,60), die des Andreas "laß deinen Widersacher den an deiner Gnade Hängenden nicht losbinden." (5) In beiden Fällen wird das Gebet *mit lauter Stimme* an Christus gerichtet (Apg 7,60: ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ; ActAndr 63: μετὰ φωνῆς εἶπεν). Neben diesen fünf Parallelen in Bezug auf das Gebet selbst lassen sich noch die folgenden zwei Parallelen im Hinblick auf die Rahmenhandlungen feststellen: (1) Der Tod tritt unmittelbar nach Beendigung des Gebets ein (Apg 7,60; ActAndr 63). (2) Auf den Tod folgt in beiden Fällen Bestattung und Wehklage (Apg 8,2; ActAndr 64).

2.2 Acta Johannes 112

In Acta Johannes 112 wird der freiwillige Tod des Johannes erzählt. In diesem Zusammenhang wird folgendes Gebet des Apostels wiedergegeben:

> Gott, Herr, Jesus [θεὲ κύριε Ἰησοῦ], (du) der Vater der Überhimmlischen, (du,) der Gott der Himmlischen, (du,) das Gesetz der Ätherwesen und die Bahn der Luftwesen, (du,) der Wächter der Irdischen und Schrecken der Unterirdischen – nimm auch die Seele deines Johannes auf [δέξαι καὶ τοῦ σοῦ Ἰωάννου τὴν ψυχήν], die vielleicht von dir wertgehalten wird.[17]

Zwischen diesem Gebet des Johannes und dem des Stephanus bestehen die folgenden drei Parallelen: (1) In beiden Fällen handelt es sich um ein an Jesus gerichtetes Gebet, wobei die Anreden fast identisch sind (Apg 7,59: κύριε Ἰησοῦ; ActJoh 112: θεὲ κύριε Ἰησοῦ). (2) Der Imperativ δέξαι stellt eine wörtliche Parallele dar. (3) Beide, Stephanus und Johannes, bitten Jesus um die Aufnahme ihrer Seelen. Während Stephanus dafür das Wort πνεῦμα gebraucht (Apg 7,59), verwendet Johannes den äquivalenten Ausdruck ψυχή (ActJoh 112). Ferner ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass im narrativen Kontext der Gebete jeweils Kleidungsstücke und junge Männer eine wichtige Rolle spielen (ActJoh 111;[18] Apg 7,58). Eine weitere Parallelität besteht schließlich darin, dass auf das Gebet jeweils unmittelbar Tod und Bestattung folgen (ActJoh 115; Apg 7,60).

2.3 Martyrium Pauli 5

Die Paulusakten schließen mit dem *Martyrium des heiligen Apostels Paulus* (MartPaul), welches im fünften Abschnitt die Enthauptung des Apostels erzählt:

> Darauf stellte sich Paulus hin gegen Osten gerichtet und erhob die Hände zum Himmel und betete lange ...; und nachdem er im Gebet auf Hebräisch mit den Vätern sich unterredet hatte, neigte er den Hals, ohne noch weiter zu sprechen. Als aber der Henker [ὁ σπεκουλάτωρ] ihm den Kopf abschlug, spritzte Milch auf die Kleider des Soldaten [εἰς τοὺς χιτῶνας τοῦ στρατιώτου] (MartPaul 5).[19]

Der griechische *Papyrus Hamburgensis* (PHamb) gibt auf Seite 10 in den Zeilen 22–23 den Wortlaut des Gebets des Paulus wieder:

> πατερά ..... [εἰς χεῖρας αὐ]τοῦ παρα-
> τίθημι τὸ πνεῦμά [μου ..... δέ]ξαι αὐτό.[20]

Carl Schmidt rekonstruiert dieses "schlecht erhalten[e]"[21] Gebet folgendermaßen:

> Vater [meines Herrn Christi Jesu (?), in die Hände von] ihm (?) lege
> ich [meinen] Geist, [und Herr Christus Jesus], nimm ihn auf![22]

Wenn Schmidts Rekonstruktion zutreffend ist, würde das bedeuten, dass zwischen dem Gebet des Paulus und dem des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 die folgenden drei Parallelen bestünden: (1) Wie Stephanus würde Paulus seinen letzten Gebetsruf an Jesus richten. (2) δέξαι wäre eine wörtliche Parallele. (3) τὸ πνεῦμά μου wäre ebenfalls eine wörtliche Parallele. Im Jahr 1936 hat Schmidt auf die Parallelität zwischen dem Gebet des Paulus und Apostelgeschichte 7,59 hingewiesen.[23] In nachfolgenden Texteditionen der beziehungsweise Veröffentlichungen zu den apokryphen Paulusakten wird diese Parallele jedoch leider nicht mehr erwähnt.

Eine weitere interessante und bisher unbeachtete Parallele zwischen dem Martyrium Pauli 5 und dem in der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte geschilderten Martyrium des Stephanus besteht in der Hervorhebung der Kleidung der Scharfrichter beziehungsweise des Scharfrichters. Die Kleidung der "Zeugen" (οἱ μάρτυρες), das heisst von Stephanus' Scharfrichtern (Apg 22,20; Deut 17,7), wird in Apostelgeschichte 7,58 erwähnt: "Die Zeugen legten ihre Kleider [τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν] zu Füßen eines jungen Mannes nieder, der Saulus hieß." Das Wort ἱμάτιον bezeichnet hier ein Obergewand.[24] In Walter Bauers *Wörterbuch* heißt es mit Blick auf Apostelgeschichte 7,58: "Das Oberkleid wird abgelegt, um die Arme freizubekommen",[25] das heisst – wie Pesch kommentiert – "um für die Steinigung 'beweglicher' zu sein".[26] Auch in Martyrium Pauli 5 wird auf die Kleidung des Henkers – die Wörter σπεκουλάτωρ und στρατιώτης meinen wohl ein und dieselbe Person[27] – Bezug genommen, und zwar mit dem Wort ξιτῶνας, das heisst der Akkusativ-Pluralform von χιτών. Das Wort χιτών meint ein "Untergewand".[28] Es könnte also hiermit impliziert sein, dass der Henker beziehungsweise Soldat – ähnlich wie die "Zeugen" in Apostelgeschichte 7,58 – sein Obergewand, das heisst sein ἱμάτιον, abgelegt hat, um für die Enthauptung des Paulus beweglicher zu sein. Jedoch könnte der Plural von χιτών auch anders interpretiert werden. In Markus 14,63 heißt es in Bezug auf Jesu Verhör vor dem Hohen Rat, dass der Hohepriester "seine Kleider"[29] (τοὺς χιτῶνας αὐτοῦ) zerriss. In Bauers *Wörterbuch* heißt es dazu: "[Der] *Pl.*[*ural*] [meint] wohl nicht eine Mehrzahl v.[on] Untergewändern, sondern d.[ie] Kleider überh.[aupt]"[30] Wie dem auch sei, zwischen Apostelgeschichte 7,58 und Martyrium Pauli 5 besteht eine Parallele in der Gestalt, dass die Kleidung der jeweiligen Scharfrichter hervorgehoben wird.

2.4 Martyrium Petri 10–11

Eines der zu den Petrusakten gehörenden Dokumenten ist das *Martyrium des heiligen Apostels Petrus* (MartPetr), welches sowohl in griechischen Manuskripten als auch im lateinischen *Actus Vercellenses* (ActVerc) erhalten ist. Schneemelchers deutsche Fassung des Martyrium Petri basiert auf dem griechischen Text, ohne den lateinischen Text zu berücksichtigen.[31] Im Gegensatz dazu wird bei der folgenden Behandlung des im Martyrium enthaltenen Gebets des Apostels auch der lateinische Text berücksichtigt, sofern dieser inhaltlich vom griechischen abweicht. Während Petrus mit dem Kopf nach unten am Kreuz hängt, richtet er u.a. folgendes Gebet an Jesus:

> [M]it dieser (Stimme), Jesus Christus [Ἰησοῦ χριστέ / *domine Iesu*], ... danke ich dir: Mit dem Schweigen der Stimme, der der Geist [τὸ ἐν ἐμοὶ πνεῦμα] in mir, der dich liebt und mit dir spricht und dich sieht, begegnet (MartPetr 10 / ActVerc 39).[32]

Zwischen diesem Gebet und dem des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 bestehen die folgenden drei Parallelen: (1) In beiden Fällen handelt es sich um ein Gebet zu Jesus. (2) Die im *Actus Vercellenses* bezeugte Anrede *domine Iesu* kann sogar als wörtliche Parallele zur Anrede κύριε Ἰησοῦ in Apostelgeschichte 7,59 angesehen werden, sofern man im Hinblick auf einen griechischen und einen lateinischen Text von einer "wörtlichen" Parallele sprechen kann. (3) Wie Stephanus spricht Petrus von seinem πνεῦμα.

Der Geist des Petrus wird dann zudem unmittelbar im Anschluss an das durch "Amen" beendete Gebet erwähnt: "Als aber die herumstehende Menge mit lautem Schall das Amen rief, da übergab zugleich mit diesem Amen Petrus dem Herrn den Geist [τὸ πνεῦμα ὁ Πέτρος τῷ κυρίῳ παρέδωκεν]"

(MartPetr 11).[33] Für Adalbert Hamman ist dieser Satz eine Parallele zu Apostelgeschichte 7,59.[34]

2.5 Acta Thomae 167

Die apokryphen Thomasakten sind in ihrer Gänze sowohl in syrisch als auch in griechisch überliefert. Obwohl sie ursprünglich wohl in syrisch verfasst wurden,[35] halten die meisten Forscher die griechische Version für eine getreuere Wiedergabe des ursprünglichen Inhalts.[36] Aus diesem Grund konzentriert sich der vorliegende Beitrag auf den griechischen Text, und zwar in Gestalt des römischen Manuskripts U. Bevor der Apostel Judas Thomas erstochen wird, so erzählt es Acta Thomae 167, wendet er sich zum Gebet.

> Es war aber folgendes (Gebet): "Mein Herr und mein Gott [Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου], meine Hoffnung und mein Erlöser und mein Führer und Wegweiser in allen Ländern, sei du mit allen, die dir dienen, und führe mich heute, da ich zu dir komme! [ἐρχόμενον πρὸς σέ] Niemand nehme meine Seele, die ich dir übergeben habe [μὴ λαμβανέτω τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν μηδείς, ἣν παρέδωκά σοι]" (ActThom 167).[37]

Zwischen diesem Gebet und dem des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 bestehen die folgenden zwei Parallelen: (1) Wie Stephanus richtet Thomas sein Gebet an Jesus. Dass mit der Anrede "Mein Herr und mein Gott" (Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου) Jesus gemeint ist, ergibt sich aus Johannes 20,28, ein Vers, der hier zitiert wird und in welchem der johanneische Jünger Thomas genau diese Worte an Jesus richtet. (2) Wie Stephanus (Apg 7,59: δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου) bezieht sich Thomas auf seine Seele (τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν) und seinen 'Heim'-Gang zu Jesus (ἐρχόμενον πρὸς σέ).

3. Vergleich von Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 mit alternativen literarischen Hintergründen

3.1 Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60

Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 kommt rein zeitlich als literarischer Hintergrund für die Christusgebete in den apokryphen Acta in Frage, weil der zweite Teil des lukanischen Doppelwerks am Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts[38] und somit früher als die im zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert entstandenen Apostelgeschichten verfasst wurde. Desweiteren stimmen kanonische und apokryphe Acta im Hinblick auf sowohl die literarische Gattung (das heisst Erzählung beziehungsweise Biographie) als auch den Titel (πράξεις)[39] überein, so dass erstere auch von daher als literarischer Hintergrund für letztere in Frage kommen würden.

3.2 Andere neutestamentliche Christusgebete

Im Vergleich mit den anderen neutestamentlichen Christusgebeten beziehungsweise neutestamentlichen Bezugnahmen auf Christusgebete stellt sich Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 als der vielversprechendere literarische Hintergrund für die Christusgebete der apokryphen Apostelgeschichten heraus. Die folgenden vier Argumente sind dabei maßgeblich:[40] (1) Im Hinblick auf Johannes 14,14; 1 Korinther 16,22 und 2 Korinther 12,8 ist es noch nicht einmal sicher, ob es sich überhaupt um (Christus-)Gebete handelt. (2) Im Gegensatz zu Johannes 14,14 und 2 Korinther 12,8 präsentiert Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 ein Christusgebet in direkter Rede. Auch die meisten Christusgebete der apokryphen Acta erscheinen in direkter Rede. (3) Im Gegensatz zu 1 Korinther 16,22; 2 Korinther 12,8 und Offenbarung 22,20 ist Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 Bestandteil einer Erzählung. Auch die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten sind Erzählungen. (4) Im Gegensatz zu 1 Korinther 16,22 und 2 Korinther 12,8 wendet sich das Christusgebet in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 ausdrücklich an "Jesus". Die apokryphen Acta enthalten ebenfalls zahlreiche ausdrückliche Gebete zu "Jesus" (vgl. oben Abschnitt 2).

3.3 Die vier jeweils übrigen apokryphen Acta

Auf der Suche nach einer Alternative zu Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 als literarischem Hintergrund der Christusgebete in den apokryphen Apostelakten ist es naheliegend, auch an *diese selbst* zu denken: Das heisst ein Christusgebet in einer der fünf apokryphen Akten könnte durch Christusgebete in einer oder mehrerer der jeweils vier übrigen apokryphen Apostelgeschichten beeinflusst worden sein. Allerdings ist es leider nicht möglich, hierzu nähere Überlegungen anzustellen, da die Chronologie der apokryphen Acta und somit auch deren literarische Abhängigkeit voneinander von der Forschung bisher nicht ausreichend geklärt werden konnte. So schreibt Hans-Josef Klauck in Hinblick auf die apokryphen Apostelakten:

> Mit Ausnahme der Thomasakten … sind sie leider nur fragmentarisch erhalten. Das

erschwert die Bestimmung ihrer chronologischen Abfolge und ihrer Beziehung untereinander erheblich. Hier wird sich letzte Sicherheit der Natur der Sache nach nicht erzielen lassen.[41]

Ähnlich stellt Pieter J. Lalleman fest:

> The intertextual relationships among the five most ancient AAA [Acta Apocrypha Apostolorum] are still disputed ... [T]hese books ... are in some way related, but the exact nature of the connections is as yet a matter of dispute.[42]

Wie auch immer die Chronologie beziehungsweise gegenseitige Beeinflussung der apokryphen Acta aussehen mögen, kann man aufgrund der im vorherigen Abschnitt herausgearbeiteten Parallelen jedoch davon ausgehen, dass das Christusgebet des Stephanus in Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 die Christusgebete der apokryphen Acta wenn nicht auf *direktem*, so doch zumindest auf *indirektem* Wege (das heisst z.B. via andere Apostelakten) beeinflusst hat.

3.4 Frühchristliche Märtyrerakten

Im Hinblick auf die frühchristlichen Märtyrerakten stellt Karl Baus fest: "Wir können und müssen ... in der Gebetsanrede der Märtyrer eine *überragende Christozentrik* feststellen."[43] „Jedem, der die vorgelegten Gebetstexte hört oder liest, drängt sich die Beobachtung auf, daß sich der Märtyrer in den allermeisten Fällen in seinem Beten unmittelbar an Christus wendet."[44] Im Folgenden werden aus den Märtyrerakten[45] die deutlichsten Parallelen zu den Gebeten der sterbenden Apostel der apokryphen Apostelakten besprochen.

In der lateinischen Fassung des *Martyriums des Carpus* (Mart Carp 4.6) betet der *ad flammas* verurteilte Carpus: "Herr Jesus, nimm meinen Geist auf!" (*Domine Iesu Christe, suscipe spiritum meum*).[46] Das Martyrium des Carpus fand wahrscheinlich in der Regierungszeit von Kaiser Mark Aurel (161–180 n. Chr.) statt.[47] Im frühen 4. Jahrhundert kannte Eusebius schriftliche Berichte von Carpus' Martyrium (Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV 15.48). Es wäre also rein zeitlich möglich, dass das Christusgebet des Carpus den literarischen Hintergrund für zumindest einige der Christusgebete der apokryphen Acta darstellt. Jedoch ist Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 im Vergleich mit Martyrium Carpi 4.6 der *wahrscheinlichere* Hintergrund, weil die lukanische Apostelgeschichte wohl bekannter und weiter verbreitet war als das *Martyrium des Carpus*, und weil Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 den literarischen Hintergrund von Martyrium Carpi 4.6 darstellt.

Neben dem Gebet des Carpus in Martyrium Carpi 4.6 finden sich in den Märtyrerakten noch weitere Christusgebete, und zwar in Martyrium Pionii 21,9; Martyrium Conon 6,4; Acta Julii 4.4; und P. Iren. Sirm. [Martyrium des heiligen Bischofs Irenaeus von Sirmium] 5,4–5. Jedoch sind alle diese Berichte zu spät verfasst, um als literarische Hintergründe für die Christusgebete der apokryphen Acta in Frage zu kommen.[48]

4. Ergebnis

Zwischen dem Christusgebet des Stephanus im siebten Kapitel der kanonischen Acta (7,59–60) und den Christusgebeten der apokryphen Acta bestehen zahlreiche enge Parallelen. Ein Vergleich mit alternativen literarischen Hintergründen im übrigen Neuen Testament, in den vier jeweils übrigen apokryphen Apostelakten sowie in den frühchristlichen Märtyrerakten hat gezeigt, dass Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 der naheliegendste literarische Hintergrund für die Christusgebete der apokryphen Apostelgeschichten ist.

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Endnotes

1 Der vorliegende Artikel ist die schriftliche Fassung eines im Rahmen einer Arbeitstagung der Facharbeitsgruppe Neues Testament (FAGNT) des Arbeitskreises für evangelikale Theologie (AfeT) am 4. März 2013 in Marburg (Deutschland) gehaltenen Vortrags. Eine englische Version ist unter dem Titel "Prayer to Jesus in the Canonical and in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles" in den *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 89.1 (2013) 49–71 erschienen.

2 Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas und die Acta Pauli" in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag am 10. Dezember 1964*, Hg. W. Eltester und F.H. Kettler, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 30 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964) 237.

3 François Bovon, "Canonical and Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles", in ders., *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha: Collected Studies II*, Hg. G.E. Snyder, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum

Neuen Testament 237 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 207.

4 Wenn nicht anders vermeldet, sind deutsche Bibelzitate der *Einheitsübersetzung* entnommen. Der griechische Text des Neuen Testaments stammt aus der 28. Auflage des *Novum Testamentum Graece* (2012).

5 Es könnte sich auch um die Feststellung "Unser Herr ist gekommen" handeln.

6 Hugh A.G. Houghton, "The Discourse of Prayer in the Major Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles" in *Apocrypha* 15 (2004) 171–200.

7 Vgl. R. Gounelle, "Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres et Actes des Apôtres canoniques: État de la recherche et perspectives nouvelles (II)" in *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 84.4 (2004) 419–441; István Czachesz, *Commission Narratives: A Comparative Study of the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts*, Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha 8 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007); Bovon, "Acts"; J. Gamperl, *Die Johannesakten: Eine literarkritische und geistesgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, unveröffentlichte (maschinengeschriebene) Dissertation (Wien 1965) 81–84.

8 Knut Schäferdiek, "Johannesakten" in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Band 2, Hg. W. Schneemelcher (6. Aufl., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 190.

9 Adalbert Hamman, *La Prière*, Band 2, Bibliothèque de Théologie (Tournai: Desclée, 1963) 189: "[I]l entre dans la mort avec la prière au Christ sur les lèvres comme Étienne."

10 Vgl. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2. Aufl.; Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 154.

11 Vgl. z.B. Gerhard Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg, Herder, 1980) 478 Anm. 54; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) 141.

12 Vgl. z.B. Otto Bauernfeind, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5 (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1939) 120.

13 Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Band 1, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament V/1 (Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1986) 265.

14 Houghton, "Discourse", 176.

15 Bovon, "Acts", 197; vgl. 207, wo Bovon zwar die Martyriumsberichte der apokryphen Acta mit dem kanonischen Bericht über das Martyrium des Stephanus vergleicht, dabei aber nicht die zwischen den Berichten bestehenden Parallelen herausarbeitet, sondern lediglich auf die Rolle der Berichte im jeweiligen narrativen Kontext zu sprechen kommt: "In the endings of the *Acts of Andrew*, the *Acts of Peter*, and the *Acts of Thomas* there is a tense situation in which the apostle is ready to die for the message ... This is very different from the canonical Acts, which explicitly does not end with a martyrdom story, neglecting to mention the death of either Peter or Paul, and instead confers a different function to martyrdom by locating Stephen's death at the beginning of the book."

16 Deutsch: Jean-Marc Prieur und Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Andreasakten" in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Band 2, Hg. W. Schneemelcher (6. Aufl., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 137; Griechisch: Jean-Marc Prieur, *Acta Andreae: Textus*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989) 541–543.

17 Deutsch: Schäferdiek, "Johannesakten", 189; Griechisch: Eric Junod und Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis: Praefatio – Textus*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983) 309.

18 Schäferdiek, "Johannesakten", 188: "Als aber die jungen Leute die Grube ... vollendet hatten, da zog er [Johannes] ... die Oberkleider ... aus."

19 Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Paulusakten" in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Band 2, Hg. W. Schneemelcher (6. Aufl., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 240.

20 Carl Schmidt und Wilhelm Schubart (Hgg.), ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ / *Acta Pauli: Nach dem Papyrus der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek* (Glückstadt: J.J. Augustin, 1936) 66 und 68.

21 Schneemelcher, "Paulusakten", 240 Anm. 15.

22 Schmidt / Schubart, *Acta Pauli*, 67 und 69.

23 Schmidt / Schubart, *Acta Pauli*, 66 Anm. 22.

24 Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, Hg. Kurt Aland und Barbara Aland (6. Aufl.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988) 764.

25 Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, 764.

26 Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, Band 1, 264; vgl. Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, Band 1, 477.

27 Vgl. Willi Rordorf, "Actes de Paul" in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, Band 1, Hg. F. Bovon und P. Geoltrain, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1997) 1176: "Quand la tête de Paul tomba, du lait jaillit sur les vêtements du soldat." Diese Übersetzung von Rordorf läßt ὁ σπεκουλάτωρ unübersetzt und präsentiert so den Soldaten als alleinigen Henker.

28 Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, 1759.

29 *Revidierte Elberfelder Übersetzung.*

30 Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, 1759.

31 Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Petrusakten" in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Band 2, Hg. W.

Schneemelcher (6. Aufl., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 283 Anm. 153.

32 Deutsch: Schneemelcher, "Petrusakten", 288; Griechisch und Lateinisch: Richard A. Lipsius und Maximilian Bonnet (Hgg.), *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, Band I (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1990) 96–99.

33 Deutsch: Schneemelcher, "Petrusakten", 288; Griechisch: Lipsius / Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, Band I, 98.

34 Adalbert G. Hamman, *La Prière dans l'Église ancienne*, Traditio Christiana 7 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1989) 108.

35 Vgl. Hans-Joseph Klauck, *Apokryphe Apostelakten: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005) 153.

36 Vgl. Klauck, *Apostelakten,* 153–154.

37 Deutsch: Han J.W. Drijvers, "Thomasakten" in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Band 2, Hg. W. Schneemelcher (6. Aufl., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 366; Griechisch: Richard A. Lipsius und Maximilian Bonnet (Hgg.), *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, Bd. II.2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1990) 281.

38 Vgl. Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (6. Aufl.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007) 305; Ingo Broer, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Studienausgabe* (Würzburg: Echter, 2006) 156.

39 Vgl. Gamperl, *Johannesakten*, 81: „Der gleiche Titel (praxeis) verbindet bereits rein äußerlich die beiden Werke." Vgl. auch Broer, *Einleitung*, 163–164.

40 Es ist jedoch einzuräumen, dass Offenbarung 22,20 (und eventuell 1 Kor 16,22) im Hinblick auf speziell die Jesusepiklese in Acta Thomae 49 (ἐλθέ) als literarischer Hintergrund Apostelgeschichte 7,59–60 vorzuziehen ist.

41 Klauck, *Apostelakten,* 10.

42 Pieter J. Lalleman, "The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of John" in *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, Hg. Jan N. Bremmer, Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 5 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 140.

43 Karl Baus, „Das Gebet der Märtyrer" in *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 62.1 (1953) 29.

44 Baus, „Gebet", 29.

45 Zitiert nach Herbert A. Musurillo (Hg.), *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs: Introduction, Text and Translations*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

46 Musurillo, *Acts*, 34.

47 Musurillo, *Acts*, xv.

48 Vgl. die entsprechenden Datierungen in Musurillo, *Acts.*

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'Kicking the Daylights out of the Devil': The Victory Motif in Some Recent Atonement Theology

Ben Pugh

SUMMARY

In 1930, the Swedish theologian Gustav Aulén began to bring back into vogue the patristic notion of Christ's triumph over demonic powers (*Christus Victor*). There have been further re-appropriations of this theme in the 'Word of Faith' theology (Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland), feminist theology and by the Emerging Church movement. In these new contexts the Ransom to Satan idea is never appropriated wholesale. Rather, adaptations of the patristic model are being formulated within the context of a desire to move away from submissive, defeatist or austere styles of religion in favour of something more muscular and less individualistic. The present article analyses this new trend.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

En 1930, le théologien suédois Gustav Aulén a remis en vogue la conception patristique de la victoire de Christ sur les puissances démoniaques (*Christus Victor*). Cela a donné lieu par la suite à plusieurs ré-appropriations de ce thème, notamment dans la théologie de la « Parole de Foi » (chez Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland), dans la théologie féministe ou encore au sein du mouvement de l'Église émergente. Dans ces nouvelles approches, la notion de rançon versée à Satan n'est jamais reprise telle quelle. Ce schème patristique subit plutôt des adaptations dans ces nouveaux contextes où se rencontre le désir d'abandonner un style de religion caractérisé par la soumission, le défaitisme et l'austérité pour aller vers quelque chose de plus musclé et moins individualiste. Le présent article analyse cette nouvelle tendance.

* * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im Jahr 1930 begann der schwedische Theologe Gustav Aulén den patristischen Begriff vom Triumph Christi über die dämonischen Mächte (*Christus Victor*) wieder populär zu machen. Seitdem hat man sich dieses Motiv erneut in der „Wort des Glaubens" Theologie (Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland), in der feministischen Theologie und der „Emerging Church" Bewegung („Gemeinde in Entwicklung") angeeignet. In solch einem neuen Kontext hat man sich nicht die These einer Lösegeldzahlung an Satan als solche angeeignet. Man nimmt eher Anpassungen an das patristische Modell vor im Zusammenhang mit dem Wunsch, sich von einer untertänigen, defätistischen oder streng religiösen Sichtweise abzuwenden zugunsten einer eher kraftvollen und weniger individualistischen Perspektive. Der vorliegende Artikel analysiert diese neue Tendenz.

* * * *

1. Introduction

The subject of this article will be those theories of the atonement that, in various ways, emphasise that the death of Christ was a victory over evil. Normally classed as a single theory of the atonement with a number of subdivisions,[1] this is the classical patristic view of the atonement which, at the hands of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, came to be dominated by notions of a ransom paid to the devil, before finally transmuting, at the hands of Augustine and Gregory the Great, into a legal theory, anticipating Anselm.[2] This patristic concept is one that has, perhaps surprisingly, been seen as an especially attractive option for those seeking

a theory of the atonement that pictures God as having dealt in a very decisive, cosmic and supernatural way with the problem of evil. Especially notable is the way in which this particular theory of the atonement is being busily re-invented not just within the academies but, as we shall see, at a popular level among leading ministry practitioners.

Serious theological reflection on the patristic doctrine of the atonement dates back to the origins of the discipline of historical theology itself, with a number of historical theologians including significant discussion of the origins and development of the Ransom to Satan,[3] culminating in 1919 with Hastings Rashdall writing one of the most scathing treatments of the Ransom to Satan theory that would ever be written.[4] Complementing the offerings of the historical theology tradition came a serious treatment of the patristic theory from the Anglican Nathaniel Dimock.[5] The three British historians of the atonement, Franks,[6] Grensted[7] and (much later) McDonald,[8] helpfully summarise the findings of the earlier Continental historians of dogma without adding anything new to the discussion. The contributions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were important in producing a body of critical reflection on the history of the theory sufficient to bring it to the attention of a new generation of theologians at mid-century.

Not until bishop Gustav Aulén's Olaus Petri Lectures of 1930[9] was there any serious attempt at a contemporary re-appropriation of the doctrine. Until him, the Ransom to Satan was treated entirely as an historical curiosity. Further similar treatments of the doctrine would yet appear[10] but it seems that there was no going back from this point. Within a few decades, discussions of the *Christus Victor* model from a great variety of perspectives appeared in articles,[11] especially after the American edition of the book went to press in 1951.[12] In 1953, F.W. Dillistone[13] persuasively added his advocacy of a *Christus Victor* approach as the one most in line with the general tenor of salvation history in both Old and New Testament. John Macquarrie also lent his weight.[14] Volume 2 of Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, appearing in 1957, broke new ground in re-appropriating *Christus Victor* categories in the service of his existentialist vision of the Christian faith.[15] Oscar Cullmann also gave some support.[16]

Next, in apparent isolation from the still growing *Christus Victor* debate, there arose within the Neo-Pentecostalism of the 1970s an extraordinarily dramatic and, at times, grotesque view of the atonement that utilised the patristic belief in a descent into Hades as a key component in the defeat of Satan.[17] The *Christus Victor* view also spoke to liberation theology better than other models of the atonement.[18] Darby Kathleen Ray,[19] taking her cue from Paul Fiddes,[20] adapted and demythologised the Ransom to Satan for the feminist argument. She was followed by J. Denny Weaver, who, during the 1990s, began to recognise the non-violent appeal of the model. He applied a similar re-appropriation to black and womanist contexts, culminating in his *The Nonviolent Atonement*.[21] Euegene TeSelle, in a short but significant work, also retrieved the model in the interests of social and political justice.[22] More recently still, the Emerging Church movement favours a transition from penal substitution to *Christus Victor* as the preferred model.[23] Other Evangelical responses have also continued to flow steadily.[24]

It is to the first appearance of this new paradigm in modern theology that I will now turn in more detail.

2. Re-appropriations 1: Mid-twentieth-century forays

2.1 Aulén's *Christus Victor*

By the 1930s, while Europe was recovering from unprecedented military bloodshed and careering into unknown new worlds fashioned by increasingly powerful dictators and their ideologies, the patristic ways of looking at the cross of Christ took on a new value to the Swedish professor and bishop Gustav Aulén (1879-1977).[25] The decline of Enlightenment naturalism is also named, and very plausibly, as a factor that allowed a resurgence of interest in and belief in the existence of supernatural evil powers at work in the world today and probably accounts for the increasing popularity of the Aulén paradigm over the past 80 years.[26]

Aulén essentially rewrote church history in favour of his view, claiming that it always was the 'classic' view of the atonement. To argue that this was the case from the Fathers was straightforward enough. But to get around the overtly penal views of the atonement held during the Reformation, he had to claim that Luther himself held the *Christus Victor* view of Christ's death as a victory over Satan, and that this had been ignored by subsequent advocates of penal substitution, beginning with Luther's successor, Melanchthon. Aulén,

not surprisingly, calls into question all subsequent scholarship, urging a return to the classic view of the Fathers and Luther. Here is a definitive passage from Aulén:

> This type of view may be described provisionally as the 'dramatic'. Its central theme is the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ – *Christus Victor* – fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him reconciles the world to Himself.[27]

As we saw, a wave of responses followed the American edition of the book in 1951. Some of these were serious evaluations while others seem to use the term *Christus Victor* as a trendy slogan related only in the most general way to the Aulén paradigm.[28] Colin Gunton's biblical critique is among the more serious treatments.[29] His two main concerns are, firstly, that Aulén's view needs to be extended from a mythology of a past event into something of ongoing significance. Paul speaks of an ongoing life of victory that is available to believers (Rom 8:37) but Aulén seems content with a mere 'story of the gods'.[30] Aulén claims that his purpose in writing the book was not 'apologetic' but 'historical'.[31] He argues that his primary intention was not to advance the theory as something that should inform contemporary praxis, though he clearly believed that it should; and he concludes:

> I am persuaded that no form of Christian teaching has any future before it except such as can keep steadily in view the reality of evil in the world, and go to meet the evil with a battle-song of triumph. Therefore I believe that the classic idea of the Atonement and of Christianity is coming back – that is to say, the genuine, authentic Christian faith.[32]

Secondly, according to Gunton, Aulén is too triumphalistic, not taking into account 'the human and even tragic elements in the story'.[33] These two observations, namely, that the model is too dualistic and mythological and, arising out of this very other-worldliness of the theory, that it fails to acknowledge tragedy and suffering both in the Gospel narrative itself and in human life, generally recur in the critiques surrounding *Christus Victor*.

2.2 Tillich's *Christus Victor*

Paul Tillich is among those who, mid-century, made some preliminary forays into a re-appropriation of the patristic model. This was not to say that he was especially favourable to the patristic doctrine in its original forms; he describes Origen's depictions as 'almost a comedy'.[34] He understood the world of early Christianity to be steeped in fear of demonic powers from which people were in need of liberation. Life was filled with a fear that he describes as existential estrangement: 'Without the experience of the conquest of existential estrangement, the *Christus Victor* symbol never could have arisen either in Paul or in Origen.'[35]

Tillich's analysis of *Christus Victor* as part of a conversation between the questions of philosophy and the answers of theology anticipates the recent efforts on the part of Emerging Church advocates to re-contextualise the model within Postmodernity.

3. Re-appropriations 2: The late twentieth century

3.1 Word of Faith *Christus Victor*

Fundamental to Word of Faith theology is the belief that humanity came under the authority of Satan at the Fall. Salvation therefore had to involve a decisive blow to Satan's dominion. The consequent re-titling of humanity with a renewed authority over creation and over Satan himself is commonly appropriated via various spiritual warfare strategies.[36] However, the Word of Faith theory of the atonement goes significantly beyond this basic understanding and envisages a highly dramatic showdown between Jesus and the devil in hell.

William Atkinson's dissertation was the first major analysis of the atonement in Word of Faith teaching.[37] Like all other aspects of Word of Faith teaching,[38] the genealogy of the Word of Faith view of the atonement is traceable to the nineteenth-century New England preacher and prolific writer, E.W. Kenyon.[39] He in turn appears to have been influenced at least by Irenaeus and possibly by other patristic writings.[40] From Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin[41] and then Kenneth Copeland[42] derive all their leading ideas. At the heart of the Word of Faith concept of the atonement is the 'Jesus Died Spiritually' idea, a doctrine so controversial as to have aroused some opposition from within the Word of Faith movement itself.[43] On this view, the substitutionary nature of Christ's death is taken to dramatic extremes. The notion is introduced that, if the sinful nature of humanity is

at its core satanic, Christ must have taken on himself a satanic nature on the cross.[44] This was what caused him to die spiritually, that is, to be cut off from God. But not only was he cut off from God, he descended into hell where, as the bearer now of a satanic nature, he was required to 'serve time'.[45] Satan mistakenly thought he had the Son of God in his grasp. I will let Hagin tell the rest:

> I'm certain that all the devils of hell raced up and down the back alleys of hell rejoicing, 'We've got the Son of God in our hands! We've defeated God's purpose!' But on that third morning, the God who is more than enough said, 'It is enough! He has satisfied the claims of justice.'[46]

Copeland is still more theatrical as he describes the climactic moment:

> ... the power of the Almighty God began to stream down from heaven and break the locks off the gates of hell... Jesus began to stir. The power of heaven penetrated and re-created His spirit. He rose up and in a moment of super conquest, He kicked the daylights out of the devil and all those who were doing his work... Then Jesus came up out of that place of torment in triumph, went back through the tomb, into His body, and walked out of there.[47]

This version of events clearly falls within the *Christus Victor* tradition but to what extent it resembles the patristic Ransom to Satan theories has been the subject of debate.[48] The dissimilarities, according to Atkinson, are these:

1. Nowhere in these writings is the atonement referred to as a ransom. There is no concept that anything was paid to the devil. Instead, as we saw from the extracts, it is God's justice that is satisfied in true penal substitutionary fashion.
2. The location of Christ's victory over the devil is hell. In the patristic theories, there is a descent into hell, which is understood to be plundered by Jesus, yet the moment of victory occurs on the cross itself.[49]

3.2 Feminist *Christus Victor*: Darby Kathleen Ray

The fact that such a triumphalistic view of the cross has recently begun to appeal to feminism has come as a huge surprise. Darby Kathleen Ray has been the strongest advocate of this feminist re-appropriation of the patristic view of the atonement.[50] Its attraction to her appears to be the fact that, on this view – and this is especially noticeable in Irenaeus to whom she refers often – God demonstrates the ultimate nonviolent resistance of evil to us. Even though God is almighty, he chooses, Narnia style,[51] to enter into negotiations with the enemy and to set humankind free from the power of evil by observing the rights ceded to it by human sin.

Even the later developments of the ransom theory from Origen and Gregory of Nyssa onwards, in which the deception of Satan is overtly included, seem not to present a stumbling block to Ray. Regarding the bait, mousetrap and snare metaphors so despised by Rashdall,[52] she claims that, 'All were metaphorical attempts to express the conviction that the powers of evil were defeated at the moment of their apparent victory, and that, paradoxically, Christ was triumphant at the moment of his defeat on the cross.'[53]

Ray's crucial move as she attempts to retrieve the patristic theory is to demythologise and broaden the concept of a ransom paid to the devil into a ransom paid to evil. She takes her cue from Paul Fiddes' work, *Past Event and Present Salvation*.[54] Fiddes wrestles with the question of just how, in the face of so much present-day evil, we can claim that a comprehensive victory has been won, or even that a turning point in the war has been reached, as had been Aulén's claim. He begins to answer this by more clearly identifying the 'tyrants' that held humankind so that we then understand in what realm, from God's viewpoint, this victory is meant to have been won. For Fiddes, there are three tyrants, all taken from Paul's letters: sin, the law and death. It is this move away from a victory over demons into a theory resting on a victory over less mythological and more specific evils that seems to have caught Ray's eye.

However, her broadening of the concept into a general evil threatens to lead her into a corner where she could be accused, in an age rampant with evil, of describing a fictitious victory. This she anticipates by emphasising the volitional element. We have all given evil permission to reign whenever we failed to resist it. In the case of women, this is the failure to assert oneself, which is understood to be just as serious a sin as the more masculine sin of pride that traditional depictions of the cross are intended to address. It is not lack of humility, Ray argues, that needs atoning for in women – at least not typically. It is lack of self-assertion. She cites a Methodist set prayer that emphasises obedience, saying, 'Prayers such as this one, though seemingly innocuous, inscribe their petitioners

with an ideology of quietude that treats resistance to authority as a shameful transgression.'[55] Using this female kind of sin on the one hand and the male kind of sin, '...the unjust or avaricious use of power',[56] on the other as definitive of evil, she is in a position to disable the main objection to the Ransom to Satan theory, namely that it presupposes that the devil has rights. In her version, there is no devil and there are no rights to bestow upon him. Evil, however, has been given great power by both men and women, such that it 'seems to take on a life of its own'.[57] We have given evil rights by not resisting it. Evil is thus depersonalised, but then begins to be re-personified as a power that, to quote Irenaeus, 'transgresses all boundaries'.[58] Her ideas are summed up in the following appraisal of Irenaeus. She agrees with his conviction that:

> ... in the person of Jesus, God has acted not only to reveal the true nature of evil but also to decenter and delegitimate its authority by luring it into exposing its own moral bankruptcy and thus defeating itself, hence opening up the possibility for human beings to escape enslavement to evil.[59]

She identifies the following weaknesses of the patristic view: firstly, it is too dualistic, by which she means that it implies a moral, over-simplistic, self-justifying dualism that demonises certain groups. Definitions of good and evil are too clear-cut.[60] Secondly, it is too cosmic. Humans are passive and irresponsible. It is susceptible of a comic-book superhero interpretation.[61] Lastly, it is too triumphalistic. The patristic view portrays the victory as a done deal, whereas 'the suggestion that good has defeated evil, even from an eschatological perspective, seems impossible to confirm'.[62]

3.3 Broadening the appeal: J. Denny Weaver

Another writer who is attracted to the notion of nonviolent resistance in the patristic model is the Mennonite, J. Denny Weaver.[63] He takes up the cause not only of feminists but also of black theologians generally,[64] and womanist theologians specifically. He also sides clearly with the primitivism of Anabaptist churchmanship by drawing parallels between the post-Christian West and the pre-Constantine Church in which *Christus Victor* views of atonement held sway.[65]

His particular theory is 'narrative *Christus Victor*', by which he means, '*Christus Victor* depicted in the realm of history'.[66] Reflecting on the Book of Revelation, he explains that narrative *Christus Victor* is 'The historical framework of emperors and the construct of church confronting empire'.[67] He further claims that the Gospels fit Revelation in this regard, reinforcing this 'universal and cosmic story of the confrontation of reign of God and rule of Satan'.[68]

Narrative *Christus Victor* is indeed atonement if one means a story in which the death and resurrection of Jesus definitively reveal the basis of power in the universe, so that the invitation from God to participate in his rule overcomes the forces of sin and reconciles sinners to God.[69]

Weaver understands that the devil is not a literal person but an accumulation of evil within human institutions, organisations and cultures. These are the 'principalities and powers' of which Paul speaks. Chief of these was the accumulation of evils that conspired to kill Jesus. Christ's nonviolent resistance to these abusive powers is good news for victims of abuse today:

> When Jesus confronts the rule of evil ... there is no longer the difficulty of a problematic image for victims of abuse. Jesus depicted in narrative *Christus Victor* is no passive victim. He is an active participant in confronting evil...[70]

4. Re-appropriations 3: Emerging *Christus Victor*

Though anticipated by earlier movements elsewhere in the English-speaking world,[71] from the late 1990s in America there arose a scattered movement that sought to deconstruct modernist ways of being church in favour of a wholesale adoption of postmodernism by the Church.[72] A leading light has been Brian McLaren whose interest mostly lies in deconstructing North American Evangelical churchmanship. A typical effect of this style of deconstruction on atonement theology has been what has recently been termed the kaleidoscopic view of the atonement[73] – a commitment-free embrace of all ways of looking at the atonement.

Leading the way in theological reflection on behalf of the Emerging Church movement has been Gregory Boyd. He is distinct in his attempt to offer some positive alternatives to traditional Evangelicalism. While McLaren is known more for his relentless and provocative criticism of Evangelical orthodoxy, Boyd attempts something more constructive. He insists that, while diversity in atonement theology should be celebrated, there

is an underlying and unified reality to it that repays careful study.[74] He presents a convincing case for the fundamentally cosmic and demonological context in which salvation is understood in both Testaments.[75] In a nuanced way, he is even able to support from Scripture the patristic notions of God deceiving the devil and he successfully retrieves the notion from its notorious crudity.[76] He does this by ingeniously appealing to the fact that, while demons clearly understood who Jesus was, they were seemingly not aware (as in 1 Cor 2:8) of why he came since their evil blinded them to the sacrificial love that had sent the Son into their realm.

Via the Emerging Church, the *Christus Victor* approach promises to speak to a new generation of church-goers who are conscious as never before of pernicious global evils to which more individualistic versions of the gospel message seem to have few answers. However, it is significant that the leaders of the Emerging Church movement are classic members of 'Generation X' (people born between 1960 and 1980), which is characterised by distrust of authority and established social structures. The generation succeeding them, often termed the 'Millennials' (because they were born within the two decades before the year 2000), are much less prone to deconstruction and much more concerned with connectedness. It remains to be seen whether the other major facet to patristic atonement theology – the participation in Christ – will prove popular amongst them.[77]

5. Summary and evaluation

The views considered in this article can be summed up by saying that the cross is seen as a victory over evil, often either personified as the devil or as other equally personal powers that are in perpetual antipathy towards God and His rule. This evil is dealt with in one of three ways:

1. Undoing its basis. The patristic theories understand humanity as having come under the authority of the devil or under the control of corruptibility. A ransom is paid to buy off the devil's claims. The Emerging Church retrieval makes use of this original patristic understanding that evil somehow implodes and defeats itself at the cross. Evil, through its ignorance of the Son's mission, oversteps the mark and is forced to relinquish its claims.
2. Non-violently resisting it. This is the feminist approach to the patristic theory, that takes note of the way in which the devil is overcome in the ransom theory. He is not overcome by force, even though it lies within God's power to do so. God instead stoops to overcome the devil's hold on humankind in a nonviolent way that honours claims made by the devil, however legitimate or otherwise these are. This amplifies the element identified above of evil defeating itself.
3. Taking power from it. This is the Word of Faith understanding, which shares the fundamental patristic starting point, namely, that humans surrendered their authority to the devil at the fall. From that time the devil has held a legal right over humanity and over what was intended as man's domain, creation. With this understanding of the problem, the cross and resurrection are construed as a dethroning of the devil and an enthronement of born-again humans.

A number of things worked together to bring the victory motif in from the cold within Christian reflection both at an academic and a practitioner level. Firstly, the existence of systemic evil attaching itself to ideologies and governments to the point of bringing about two world wars has made a cosmic understanding of evil much more imaginable than it could have been before the twentieth century. Secondly, advances in biblical theology have allowed us to see that the Bible itself was all along infused with this kind of world view, so that whatever we understand salvation by the cross to be, it must fit in with this framework in order to be exegetically credible, before we even begin to apply such insights to the Church or the life of faith. Thirdly, the retreat of Christianity from public life and socio-political privileges has inevitably spawned religious radicalism such as that found within the Word of Faith movement. A gospel that aligns itself with the victory of Christ over evil powers finds a ready audience amongst those whose faith claims are newly marginalised by a pluralist, relativist and radically secular society.

By way of evaluation, the least credible of the various attempts at retrieving the ransom theory would seem to be the Word of Faith version because it misunderstands the crucial inner logic of the theory. In the context of the systemic evil of Rome, the persecuted church of Irenaeus' era was comforted by the idea of a God who did not stoop to the level of the brutally oppressive, satanic methods of the empire but subverted and

dismantled their power in a nonviolent way.[78] Seizing upon the dramatic flavour of *Christus Victor*, Hagin and Copeland (however they came by this model) instead end up distorting the model into something intensely violent in which Christ 'kicks the living daylights out of the devil'. For similar reasons, the strongest of the retrievals would be that of Darby Kathleen Ray. She depersonalises Irenaeus' devil and pictures humankind as needing liberation from the power of systemic evil, to which humans have ceded their authority. This hubristic evil is made to implode by Christ drawing its sting, concentrating all its powers on achieving the death of the Son of God, only to find that death could not hold him. This retains the spirit of Irenaeus' original view, which was dominated by the thought that divine ingenuity proved more powerful than brute force, at the same time as bringing us back to what Boyd correctly observed was the biblical as well as the early church worldview of a cosmos locked in combat.[79]

6. Application

What are we to do in light of this victory if it is to amount to more than a mythic fiction? Darby Ray's outcomes are perhaps a little too exemplarist for our liking, though surely worth reproducing here:

> His [Christ's] use of courage, creativity, and the power of truth to uncover and disrupt the hegemony of power-as-control becomes a prototype for further strategies and action.[80]

Thus, at the cross, we are shown what it looks like for 'power-as-control' to be replaced by 'power-as-compassion'.[81] But to be true to Irenaeus (and to the Bible), something more than this is needed, and Irenaeus supplies it. The other half of Irenaeus' theory was his 'recapitulation' model: Christ's participation in every aspect of the human, which was always coupled with what would later be called *theosis*: our partaking of the divine nature: '[Christ became] what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.'[82] Our actual participation by faith in the risen life of the Victorious Christ empowers us to live in the good of that victory as part of the answer to, no longer part of the problem of, satanically-inspired human evil.

And so this model of the work of Christ seems worthy of continued attention from those who seek culturally relevant ways of communicating the Christian gospel. There remain, I believe, untapped riches within the many facets of this model that could be received and understood as truly good news by people caught at a personal, social or political level in the terrible power of evil.

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Endnotes

1 In 1949, H.E.W. Turner gave his Passion Week lectures a title in the singular; they were later published as *The Patristic Doctrine of the Atonement* (London: Mowbray, 1952). More recent taxonomies have, as part of a trend that is now familiar, emphasised the multifarious nature of patristic approaches to the atonement; TeSelle, e.g., has three variants: ransom, abuse of power and the overcoming of death, see E. TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.2 (1996) 147-154, while Shelton also divides patristic atonement theory into three but has recapitulation, ransom and *Christus Victor*, using 'dramatic' as the one unifying epithet: R.L. Shelton, *Cross and Covenant: Interpreting the Atonement for 21st Century Mission* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006) 159-172.

2 See S. Finlan, *Problems with Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005) 67-69. Aulén understood judicial categories to be already poised for takeover as early as Tertullian and Cyprian: G. Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (London: SPCK, 1931) 97-99.

3 R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* Vol. I (originally 1898) English translation: *Text-Book of the History of Dogma* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956); A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma* Vol. II, transl. from 3rd German ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1901) 367-368; F. Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studien der Dogmengeschichte* (Halle: Max Niemayer, 1906); J. Riviere, *Le dogme de la Redemption* (Paris: Librairie Victor LeCoffre, 1914).

4 H. Rashdall, *The Christian Idea of Atonement* (London: Macmillan, 1919).

5 N. Dimock, *The Doctrine of the Death of Christ* (London: E. Stock, 1903).

6 R.S. Franks, *A History of the Work of Christ in its Ecclesiastical Development* Vol. I [1918] (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1962).

7 L.W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1920).

8 H.D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

9 Originally entitled *Den kristna försoningstanken* (The Christian Idea of the Atonement). This was published in 1930 following his series of lectures

that were delivered in Uppsala that same year. The English translation appeared in 1931, cf. note 2.

10 Most notably, Turner, *Patristic Doctrine of the Atonement.*

11 First, not surprisingly given Aulén's radical reinterpretation of Luther, there came a Lutheran response: George O. Evenson, 'A Critique of Aulén's *Christus Victor*', *Concordia Theological Monthly* 28.10 (1957) 738-749; later Ted Peters, 'The Atonement in Anselm and Luther, Second Thoughts About Aulén's *Christus Victor*', *Lutheran Quarterly* 24.3 (1972) 301-314; then, from an Anglo-Catholic perspective, Eugene Fairweather, 'Incarnation and Atonement: An Anselmian Response to Aulén's *Christus Victor*', *Canadian Journal of Theology* 7.3 (1961) 167-175. There appeared a study around *Christus Victor* and J.S. Bach: Charles B. Naylor, 'Bach's Interpretation of the Cross', *Theology* 78 (1975) 397-404, followed by Calvin Stapert, '*Christus Victor*: Bach's St. John Passion', *Reformed Journal* 39 (1989) 17-23; then *Christus Victor* and youth work: R.H. Edwin Espy, 'In Celebration of Amsterdam 1939', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 16 (1979) 1-212; now, a Roman Catholic response: Mark Heath, 'Salvation: A Roman Catholic Perspective', *Review & Expositor* 79.2 (1982) 275-278; and from an Anglican perspective came William P. Loewe, 'Irenaeus' Soteriology: *Christus Victor* Revisited', *Anglican Theological Review* 67.1 (1985) 1-15; and more recently, Michael Ovey, 'Appropriating Aulén? Employing *Christus Victor* models of the atonement', *Churchman* 124.4 (2010) 297-330. Colin Gunton engaged with the model in '*Christus Victor* Revisited: A study in Metaphor and the Transformation of Meaning', *Journal of Theological Studies* 36.1 (1985) 129-145 and in *The Actuality of Atonement: A study of metaphor, rationality and the Christian tradition* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) esp. 57-58. Rather more recently came a series of Mennonite responses: J. Denny Weaver, '*Christus Victor*, Ecclesiology and Christology', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 68.3 (1994) 433-576; and *idem*, 'Some Theological Implications of *Christus Victor*', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70 (1996) 483-499; a Mennonite response to Weaver is Thomas Finger, '*Christus Victor* and the Creeds: Some Historical Considerations', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 72 (1998) 31-51 and his, 'Pilgram Marpeck and the *Christus Victor* Motif', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78 (2004) 53-77; later Thomas Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004) 331-365. From a Nazarene perspective William M. Greathouse, 'Sanctfication and the *Christus Victor* Motif in Wesleyan Theology', *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 38.2 (2003) 217-229. There is also a recent Brethren response to Weaver's particular version of *Christus Victor:* Kate Eisenbise, 'Resurrection as Victory? The eschatological implications of J. Denny Weaver's "Narrative *Christus Victor*" model of the atonement', *Brethren Life and Thought* 53.3 (2008) 9-22.

12 G. Aulén, *Christus Victor: A Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement,* (New York: Macmillan, 1951). Boersma goes so far as to say that the 'earlier publication of Aulén's work in 1931 was an isolated occurrence': H. Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004) 194 n.52.

13 F.W. Dillistone, 'A Biblical and Historical Appraisal of Theories of the Atonement', *Theology Today* 10 (1953) 185-195.

14 J. Macquarrie, 'Demonology and the Classic Idea of the Atonement', *Expository Times* 68 (1956) 5-6, 60-63.

15 P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol II (London: James Nisbet, 1957) 197-198.

16 O. Cullmann, *Christus und die Zeit*; English *Christ and Time* (London: SCM, 1962), especially his discussion of Psalm 110:1 on page 193.

17 Analysed most recently by William Atkinson, 'A Theological Appraisal of the Doctrine that Jesus Died Spiritually, as Taught by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Edinburgh University, 2007).

18 S. Maimela, 'The Atonement in the Context of Liberation Theology', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 39 (1982) 45-54.

19 D.K. Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, abuse and ransom* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998); similarly T. Megill-Cobbler, 'A Feminist Rethinking of Punishment Imagery in Atonement', *Dialog* 35.1 (1996)14-20.

20 P. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian idea of atonement* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989).

21 J.D. Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); see also his 'Narrative *Christus Victor*: The Answer to Anselmian Atonement Violence' in John Sanders (ed), *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006) 1-32.

22 E. TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.2 (1996) 147-170.

23 Greg Boyd, popular within the Emerging Church movement, is co-author of G. Boyd, J.B. Green, B.R. Reichenbach and T.R. Schreiner, *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Nottingham: IVP, 2006) and *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1997). He has also named his ministry '*Christus Victor* Ministries'. See a number of recent studies of *Christus Victor* in dialogue with contemporary culture, in particular Brad Harper, '*Christus Victor*, Postmodernism and

the Shaping of Atonement Theology', *Cultural Encounters* 2.1 (2005) 37-51, and Charles Brown, 'The Atonement: Healing in a Postmodern Society', *Interpretation* 53 (1999) 34-43.

24 Youssouf Dembele, 'Salvation as Victory: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Salvation in the Light of Jesus Christ's Life and Work Viewed as a Triumph Over the Personal Powers of Evil' (PhD Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2001); Henri Blocher, 'Agnus Victor: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment' in J. Stackhouse (ed), *What Does it Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

25 Reflecting on the 1951 edition: 'In the wake of Auschwitz and Hiroshima the notion that malevolent forces twist and pervert relations among nations and persons, spawning countless forms of sin, began to sound strangely plausible.' Finger, 'Pilgram Marpeck and the *Christus Victor* Motif', 54.

26 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 193-194, who cites in support Aulén, *Christus Victor* (1951 edn) 7-15, Boyd, *God at War,* 61-72 and Dembele, 'Salvation as Victory', 12. Weaver notes that '... cosmic and demonic imagery ...' had been '... incompatible with a modern world view ...': J.D. Weaver, 'Atonement for the NonConstantinian Church', *Modern Theology* 6.4 (1990) 307.

27 Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 20.

28 E.g. Stapert, '*Christus Victor*: Bach's St. John Passion', *passim* and Espy *et al*, 'In Celebration of Amsterdam 1939', *passim.*

29 Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, esp. 57-58.

30 Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, 57.

31 Aulén's closing caveat does not appear to have been persuasive for most reviewers, however, e.g. Boersma: 'It is clear that Aulén feels that we need a return to the *Christus Victor* theme...' Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 182, a fact that Boersma clearly agrees with: Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 181-182.

32 Aulén, *Christus Victor,* 176.

33 Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement,* 58. He is similarly accused of being too 'monergistic', making salvation into the work of God alone to the point of effectively denying the full humanity of Christ in docetic fashion: Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 185, who also cites Fairweather, 'Incarnation and Atonement', 161-175, and Dembele, 'Salvation as Victory', 65-66 in support. Boersma also calls for a more participatory element to Aulén's model: Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,*185.

34 Tillich, *Systematic Theology* II, 198.

35 Tillich, *Systematic Theology* II, 198.

36 Scholarly works relating to spiritual warfare include W. Carr, *Angels and Principalities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); W. Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); A. Walker, *Enemy Territory: The Christian Struggle for the World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987); N.G. Wright, *The Fair Face of Evil* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1989); R. Guelich, 'Spiritual Warfare: Jesus, Paul and Peretti', *Pneuma* 13.1 (1991) 33-64; C.E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1992); P. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 203-215; Andrew Walker, 'The Devil You Think You Know: Demonology and the Charismatic Movement' in T.A. Smail, A. Walker and N.G. Wright (eds.), *Charismatic Renewal* (London: SPCK, 1995) 86-105; C.E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); W. Ellis, *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religious Movements, and the Media* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

37 Atkinson, 'Theological Appraisal'; it is also available as a book: *The Death of Jesus: A Pentecostal Investigation* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). An earlier version of part of the work appeared as an article: William Atkinson, 'The Nature of the Crucified Christ in Word-Faith Teaching', *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31.2 (2007) 169-184.

38 See my 'What the Faith Teachers Mean by "Faith" – An evaluation of the Faith Teachers' concept of faith in the light of Hebrews 11:1 and Mark 11:22-24' (Unpublished MA dissertation, Manchester, 2004) for an analysis of the faith concept.

39 Three books of his are significant: E.W. Kenyon, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1989 [1945]); *Identification: A Romance in Redemption* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1986); and *The Wonderful Name of Jesus* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, first published 1927).

40 Atkinson, 'Theological Appraisal', 227-228.

41 See his *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1979); *Authority of the Believer* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1967); and *El Shaddai* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1980).

42 Especially his *Jesus Died Spiritually* (Fort Worth: KCM, n.d.) and his *Jesus in Hell* (Fort Worth: KCM, n.d.).

43 H. Freeman, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually? Exposing the JDS Heresy* (Warsaw: Faith Ministries & Publications, n.d.).

44 Humanity must apparently '... partake either of God's nature or of Satan's nature', see E.W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption* 2nd ed. (Lynnwood: Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society, 1969) 28; see also Dan McConnell's appraisal: 'Spiritual death is thus "a nature" leading to a "new Satanic creation"' in D. McConnell, *The Promise*

of Health and Wealth: A Historical and Biblical Evaluation of the Modern Faith Movement (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990) 118, citing E.W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of our Redemption,* 28. Likewise Hagin: 'Spiritual death means having Satan's nature.' K. Hagin, *Redemption* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1981) 29.

45 Fred Price, writing in his *Ever Increasing Faith Messenger.* The most reliable citation of this seems to be that it was June 1980 (page 7), quoted in McConnell, *Promise of Health and Wealth,* 120. Original source not found. The saying attributed to him is this: 'Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case, the two thieves could have paid our price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God.' Of some interest on this subject is Wayne Grudem, 'He Did Not Descend into Hell: A Plea for Following Scripture Instead of the Apostle's Creed', *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 34.1 (1991) 103-113.

46 Hagin, *El Shaddai,* 7.

47 Kenneth Copeland, 'The Gates of Hell Shall not Prevail', *The Believer's Voice of Victory* 25.4 (1997) 4-7. I am indebted to Atkinson for both of these extraordinary extracts.

48 According to Atkinson, those who stress the similarities include A. Perriman (ed.), *Faith, Health and Prosperity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003) 115; McConnell, *The Promise of Health and Wealth,* 119, 125-126; T.A. Smail, Andrew Walker and Nigel Wright, '"Revelation Knowledge" and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy' in Smail, Walker and Wright, *Charismatic Renewal,* 70-71; W. DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit* (Altamonte Springs: Creation House, 1992) 240, 270-271; J.R. Spencer, *Heresy Hunters: Character Assassination in the Church* (Lafayette: Huntington House, 1993) 102. Emphasising the differences there is a mere footnote in H. Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1993) 395 n.2.

49 Atkinson, 'Theological Appraisal', 225-226.

50 She is at the moderate end of a scale that, at its most radical, despairs of any existing soteriology that is relevant to women; Elaine Storkey provides a helpful summary of viewpoints in 'Atonement and Feminism', *Anvil* 11.3 (1994) 227-235 [227-228]. From a similar perspective see also Margo Houts, 'Classical Atonement Imagery: Feminist and Evangelical Challenges', *Catalyst* 19.3 (1993) 1-6. Darby Kathleen Ray is given a very positive review by Evangelicals Joel Green and Mark Baker in *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000) 171-183. Much cooler is Boersma's treatment in *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 196-199. Besides feminism, Ray also speaks to Latin American liberation issues: 'Together [Christ conquering and conquered], these two sides of the same Christological coin feed the violence of the few and the passivity of the many.' Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 88.

51 See Charles Taliaferro, 'A Narnian Theory of the Atonement', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41.1 (1988) 75-92.

52 Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology,* 241-310.

53 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 121.

54 Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation,* especially 115-124.

55 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 25. Storkey sums up the view of many feminist theologians in saying that all that is involved with Christ being a sacrificial victim 'leaves women anchored in their own victim status which is justified and romanticised as identification with the Saviour'; Storkey, 'Atonement and Feminism', 231. In a similar vein is Rita Nakashima Brock: 'The shadow of the punitive father must always lurk behind the atonement. He haunts images of forgiving grace.' R.N. Brock, 'And a Little Child will lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse', in J. Brown and C. Bohm (eds), *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique* (New York: Pilgrim, 1989) 53.

56 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 121.

57 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 122.

58 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 123 endnote 13, citing *Against Heresies* V.21.2 and V. 21.112.

59 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 123. Similarly, TeSelle gives an important insight into what the cross does to the abuse of power. He defines the abuse of power as: 'overstepping one's authority and consequently being discredited'; TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom', 161.

60 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 126-127.

61 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 126-128.

62 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil,* 128.

63 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement.* This book is most rigorously critiqued from within the Mennonite movement by Peter Martens, 'The Quest for an Anabaptist Atonement: Violence and Nonviolence in J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement*', *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 82 (2008) 281-311.

64 See also J. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1975) 131-132; Black liberation theology seemingly frowns upon all models of the atonement but least so when it comes to the patristic ransom approach: Maimela, 'Atonement in the Context of Liberation Theology', 50. For an interesting discussion of the cross and Afro-American Christians from the lynching period onwards see A. Yong and E. Y. Alexander (eds), *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) chapter 6.

65 'It is the modern "post-Christian generation" which has rediscovered *Christus Victor*. That is, the renewal of attention to this view of atonement has come at a time when the western world is starting to be aware of the disintegration of the Constantinian synthesis.' Weaver, 'Atonement for the NonConstantinian Church', 316.
66 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 25.
67 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 27.
68 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 34.
69 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 45-46.
70 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 211-212.
71 For instance, the now discredited 'Nine o'Clock Service' in the UK.
72 The earliest significant work was R. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); he recommends a return to the *Christus Victor* approach on pages 43-61. Attracting far more attention, however, was B. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001). A fairly reactionary appraisal of the movement has come from D.A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). The most recent assessment is J. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).
73 Boyd *et al*, *The Nature of the Atonement*, chapter 4; Rob Bell's *Love Wins* (London: Collins, 2011) 121-157 is a typical example; see also Stephen Burnhope's critique of this approach: 'Beyond the Kaleidoscope: Towards a Synthesis of Views on the Atonement', *Evangelical Quarterly* 84.4 (2012) 345-368.
74 Greg Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', in Boyd *et al*, *The Nature of the Atonement*, 24.
75 '... the biblical narrative could in fact be accurately described as a story of God's ongoing conflict with and ultimate victory over cosmic and human agents who oppose him and who threaten his creation'; Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', 25; also, 'Everything the New Testament says about the soteriological significance of Christ's work is predicated on the cosmic significance of his work.' Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', 34.
76 '... the truth embodied in the most ancient ways of thinking about the atonement was that God did, in a sense, deceive Satan and the powers, and that Jesus was, in a sense, bait'; Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', 36-38.
77 The classic text so far on Millennials is N. Howe and B. Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Generation* (New York: Vintage, 2000); for a Christian take on the subject T. and J. Rainer, *The Millennials* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2010). For a critique of generational approaches in popular Christian writings see D. Hilborn and M. Bird (eds) *God and the Generations* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002).
78 This critique of empire is, for Wink, definitive of the shape that pre-Constantinian atonement theology took, in contrast to the later legal, punitive approaches more acceptable to a church that was now part of the empire: Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 150.
79 The New Testament belief in a personal devil who orchestrates systemic evil need not be abandoned, of course.
80 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 144.
81 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 144.
82 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V Preface.

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Wolfhart Pannenberg's *imago Dei* doctrine as interpreted by F. LeRon Shults and Kam Ming Wong

Jan Valeš

RÉSUMÉ

L'interprétation de la conception de l'image de Dieu chez Wolfhart Pannenberg est sujette à débat. Le présent article expose le point de vue de deux auteurs sur cette question. F. LeRon Shults, dont l'analyse est exposée dans son étude consacrée à Pannenberg en 1999 et dans l'ouvrage *Reforming Theological Anthropology* (2003), considère l'anthropologie de Pannenberg comme une « interprétation eschatologique » dans le cadre de son projet plus large d'appliquer la notion de « réciprocité relationnelle » à des thèmes théologiques majeurs. Le second auteur, Kam Ming Wong, dans l'ouvrage intitulé *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny* (2007), caractérise l'anthropologie de Pannenberg comme étant « salvifique et eschatologique » et il établit un lien entre ses concepts et l'hamartiologie. La fin de cet article considère les conséquences des deux points de vue pour la question des « droits de l'homme ».

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SUMMARY

In the study of theological anthropology, a debate is raging about how to interpret Wolfhart Pannenberg's concept of the *imago Dei* doctrine. This article presents the views of two authors on Pannenberg's handling of the *imago Dei* concept, F. LeRon Shults and Kam Ming Wong. Shults' reflections can be found in *Reforming Theological Anthropology* (2003) and in his 1999 study on Pannenberg. He calls Pannenberg's anthropology an 'eschatological interpretation' within his larger project of applying 'relational reciprocity' to major theological themes. The second author, Wong, characterises Pannenberg's anthropology as 'salvific and eschatological' and relates Pannenberg's concepts to hamartiology. Wong's interpretation appears in the book *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny* (2007). At the end of this article, the consequences of both viewpoints will specifically be applied to the issue of 'human rights'.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im Bereich der theologischen Anthropologie findet eine heftige Debatte darüber statt, wie Wolfhart Pannenbergs Konzept der *Imago Dei* Lehre zu interpretieren sei. Dieser Artikel legt die Ansichten zweiter Autoren – F. LeRon Shults und Kam Ming Wong – dar, wie Pannenberg selbst mit dem *Imago Dei* Konzept umgeht. Shults Gedanken dazu sind in *Reforming Theological Anthropology* (2003) enthalten sowie in seiner Studie über Pannenberg aus dem Jahr 1999. Er nennt Pannenbergs Anthropologie eine ‚eschatologische Interpretation' innerhalb seines größeren Plans, bei dem letzterer „relationale Reziprozität" auf bedeutende theologische Themen anwendet. Der zweite Autor, Wong, charakterisiert Pannenbergs Anthropologie als „soteriologisch und eschatologisch" und bringt Pannenbergs Konzept mit dem Bereich der Hamartologie in Verbindung. Wongs Darstellung erscheint in seinem Buch *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny* (2007). Am Ende des Artikels werden die Auswirkungen beider Standpunkte insbesondere auf das Anliegen der Menschenrechte angewandt.

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1. Introduction

The distinct and inspiring theological anthropology of Wolfhart Pannenberg draws considerable scholarly attention, as is illustrated by the existence of several monographs on his work. Examples are the general theological introduction by Stanley Grenz, the North American evangelical scholar and student of Pannenberg (1990, revised 2008), and the textbook by Gunther Wenz, Pannenberg's successor on the chair of systematic theology at the University of Munich, Germany (2003). There are studies of Pannenberg with a Trinitarian perspective by Timothy Bradshaw (1988 and 2009), Iain Taylor (2007) and Daniel Munteanu (2010). Concerning hermeneutics, methodology and the dialogue between theology and philosophy, one may look at Reginald Nnamdi (1993), M.W. Worthing (1996) and F. LeRon Shults (1999). Then there is Elisabeth Dieckmann's (1995) work on Pannenberg's theological anthropology, concentrating on the personality of God and humankind, and work by Kam Ming Wong (2007) and Mary E. Lowe (2010), which gives special attention to sin and gender issues.

This article deals with two of these authors, Shults and Wong, scholars who have more than once published on Pannenberg's thought and have summarised their perspective in recent monographs. F. LeRon Shults is an American theologian in the Reformed tradition who teaches at the University of Agder, Norway, and is a former lecturer at Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. Shults' ongoing project is to reform major theological doctrines from the perspective of what he calls a 'turn to relationality'. In 2003 he published *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality*. This book is foundational for the present article. Kam Ming Wong, associated with Wolfson College and King's College in Oxford, England and with Hong Kong Baptist University, has published several articles on Pannenberg since 2004. These served as preparation for a major study on Pannenberg's anthropology under the title *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny* (2007), in which Wong offers a theological interpretation which – he believes – is fully in accord with Pannenberg, yet at the same time not found explicitly in Pannenberg's writings. He expresses his intention at the beginning of the last chapter of the book: 'We have made a conscious effort to fill in those doctrinal gaps left undeveloped by Pannenberg.'[1] This statement stands like a thesis for the book.

2. The *Imago Dei* doctrine

In theology and the history of Christian doctrine, there is a distinction between the biblical expression 'created after the image of God' and its synonym *imago Dei*. In the Old Testament the biblical term is used five times in Genesis 1, 5 and 9 – including Hebrew parallelism in those chapters. In the New Testament we see that this general concept includes every human being (1 Cor 11:7, Jas 3:9).[2] But in the New Testament epistles there is also the concept that Jesus is the image of God and that Christians are to grow into the image of Christ (cf. Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18, Eph 4:24, Col 1:15, 3:10 and other places). This biblical testimony sets the tension and dilemma for later theological development.

Pannenberg published his first monograph in 1962 on the question *Was ist der Mensch: die Anthropologie der Gegenwart im Lichte der Theologie*; it was translated into English as *What is Man?* (1970). The book came a year after the joint publication of *Offenbarung als Geschichte* with Rolf Rendtorff, Ulrich Wilckens and Trutz Rendtorff. Pannenberg's 1962 book aims at a large audience and revolves around the notion of 'Weltoffenheit', that is, openness to the world. Two years later in his Christological proposal Pannenberg develops the notion of 'prolepsis' – meaning the way in which the eschatological resurrection is already present in history through the resurrection of Jesus Christ – and he applies the concept of revelation as history to the resurrection of Jesus (*Grundzüge der Christologie*, translated as *Jesus – God and Man*, 1968). In the 1960s and 70s, Pannenberg's anthropology was reflected in a number of articles on the method of theology. At the end of this period he published an anthropological monograph offering a theological interpretation of philosophical, psychological and social anthropology, *Anthropologie in theologischer Perspektive* (1983; English *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, 1985). Here he states two key themes of his theological anthropology: 1) humanity as created after the image of God and (2) human sin, its root and effects. The work stresses the importance of the individual as well as the social development of the human being:

> Human 'openness to the world' [Weltoffenheit] thus loses the character of a given state which it has in many remarks of Scheler and even of Gehlen; instead, it is seen as describing a direction in the process of human 'self-realization,'

> a process through which alone a human being takes form as a self and which therefore may not, with Gehlen, be one-sidedly reduced to human action.[3]

For Pannenberg anthropology is the starting point for thinking about God in the public square. More than before, in this book he elaborates the doctrine of sin. He makes it clear that his intention is to make sin recognisable for every human being, though its full clarity is part of God's special revelation which is accessible only through faith in Jesus Christ:

> If this relatedness of everything to the ego is, in the form of *amor sui*, the essential element in sin or the failure of human beings in regard to themselves, then sin is not simply or first of all something moral but is closely connected with the natural conditions of our existence.[4]

Pannenberg published his magnum opus *Systematische Theologie volumes 1-3* in 1988-1993 and it was translated into English in 1991-1998. In the larger context of theological anthropology, Pannenberg's idea of the independence of creatures as God's goal for creation is important (vol. 2 chapter 7). From the beginning, Pannenberg's theology has a strong eschatological accent which grows out of his historical, diachronic thinking. For this reason Pannenberg is often understood under the heading 'theology of hope'. In addition to this, there are other strong features to his theology: the dialogue with the sciences, the underlying relation of revealed and empirical knowledge, the presence of pneumatology in every volume of his systematic theology and his ecumenical involvement. Pannenberg's thinking prompted several other controversial issues related to theological anthropology, which are not elaborated further in this article, such as the interdisciplinary method of interaction between theology and philosophy, psychology and sociology; the rejection of the notion of *iustitia originalis*; and the role of anthropology in theology as a whole.

3. Shults: Relational reciprocity

In his doctoral dissertation, written under the guidance of J.W. van Huyssteen at Princeton Theological Seminary and published in 1999, F. L. Shults studies a debate over the nature of rationality. Following his Doktorvater Van Huyssteen, Shults points to a postfoundationalist approach as a better solution than foundationalism (objectivity of reason) or nonfoundationalism (extreme relativism). Pannenberg serves as an example of a theologian who does not align himself with either of these approaches and yet develops a methodology and a position which are quite close to those of the postfoundationalists. In the foreword to Shults' 1999 book Pannenberg himself declares: 'I feel rather sympathetic with the position he [Shults] describes as postfoundationalist.'[5] Shults then applies the postfoundationalist approach to the basic tasks of theology. He develops the argument which leads to a thesis of *reciprocity* between epistemology and hermeneutics. In subsequent years he expressed the same idea with the term *relationality*[6] and applied it to other questions as well. In philosophy this relationality refers to the development of a relation as a category for defining the substance of an object (like quantity or shape). Shults' project of re-forming theological anthropology means 'to thematize the reciprocity between conceptions of relationality and doctrinal formulations'.[7]

Shults is asserting two things about Pannenberg.[8] First, that the exocentric human nature is a constitutive relational concept (also called reciprocal) and secondly, he contends that this concept has a regulative function outside of theological anthropology, namely in Trinitarian theology. This article concentrates on the first assertion.

Before we go further in this direction, let us review all three constitutive reciprocal elements in Pannenberg's theological anthropology according to Shults' 1999 book: exocentric human nature (in relation to the image of God), personal identity (in relation to the concept of Spirit) and centrality (in relation to the sin).[9]

3.1 Relational reciprocity expressed by exocentricity

We need to begin with the term 'openness to the world'[10] as Pannenberg does in *What is Man?* At the beginning of the book he explains the term 'openness to the world' as a prism through which he reads anthropological themes. Seven out of the book's ten chapters are organised around this notion, showing clearly how important this term is. The term *Weltoffenheit* originates from the philosophical anthropology in the German tradition, especially from Max Scheler (1874-1928). Pannenberg declares: 'Openness to the world must mean that man is completely directed into the "open".' He clarifies the idea in a summarising paragraph:

> It can be misunderstood to mean that man is oriented toward the world, while it really involves the necessity that man enquire beyond everything that he comes across as his world. This peculiarity of human existence, man's infinite dependence, is understandable only as the question about God. Man's unlimited openness to the world results only from his destiny beyond the world.[11]

Twenty-one years later in *Anthropology*, the notion of openness to the world stands again proudly in the centre of the *imago Dei* doctrine, as we see clearly in the quote above. Even so, the roots of this term go back beyond Scheler, to Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). Pannenberg compares Scheler's notion of Weltoffenheit with the notion of exocentricity of the German philosopher and sociologist Helmuth Plessner (1892-1985) and he concludes that openness is the essential term:

> [Plessner] intends to express the same content, however, and the new term [exocentricity] points only to a critical limitation of that content and represents an effort to define it more precisely.[12]

But as soon as Pannenberg moves to the doctrine of sin, preference is given to Plessner's exocentricity:

> It is perhaps the most important merit of Plessner's description of the human form of life that it provides a way of interpreting the ambiguity of human behaviour, namely, in the light of the tension between centrality and exocentricity in the human being. Plessner himself has not fully developed the potentialities of his anthropological approach in this direction, because he has not thought out in a fully radical way the implications of the tension between centralized position – subjection to the here and now – and exocentricity in human beings.[13]

In this way Pannenberg shows the nature of the relationship between these two terms. Openness to the world embodies the doctrine of the *imago Dei*; exocentricity expresses something of the nature of sin. Pannenberg then – for the rest of the book – uses both terms almost interchangeably in their theological implications.[14] The notion of exocentricity developed by Plessner is based on the biological knowledge of central organisation of animals. Humans share with other animals a central organisation of the body, yet we possess an incomparable capacity of stepping out of this centrality, and Plessner calls this stepping out exocentricity. Humans can step outside of their situation and become their own object. Besides the capacity of exocentricity, Plessner also speaks about the tension between the self and the body which results from the dual structure of humans. This is the point where Pannenberg uses exocentricity to explain the universality of sin. He does so, let us note, without using the concept of hereditary sin. Rather, he says that sinfulness is connected to the elementary structure of human beings. Somehow our reality always leads to sinful behaviour. Exocentricity is thus both a capacity and an occasion for sin.

How are these terms used in the second volume of Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology* (1991)? Two things happen. First, nothing essential changes on the precise relation and content of these terms. Yet, secondly, they clearly do not replace traditional terminology and they are used less than might be anticipated on the basis of his earlier *Anthropology*.

As we come back to Shults there are two questions worth asking: 1) What is lost due to the fact that the notion of openness largely disappears from Shults' analysis? 2) What does Shults gain by employing the term exocentricity for grounding human nature in fellowship with God rather than employing the term together – with Pannenberg – as an explanation of human sinfulness?

As to the first question, *what is lost by the dropping of 'openness'* after establishing the concept of relational reciprocity? Shults tests Pannenberg in three areas, using two related terms in each of them.[15] Spirit, Shults suggests, is the movement from above, with personal identity coming from below. *Imago Dei* relates to exocentricity. Sin relates with centrality. Exocentricity – with the implied concept of centrality – in large measure replaces the notion of openness. However, this does not represent the real content of Pannenberg's *Anthropology*. In 2003 Shults described Pannenberg's anthropology solely as 'exocentric relationality'. The tension between openness and exocentricity does not appear. Shults' approach, then, may be compared with that of E. A. Johnson, who writes: 'While the connection of exocentricity with the doctrine of the image of God is felicitous and productive of insight, Pannenberg's way of equating centrality and sin seems to me to be highly problematic.'[16] Shults evaluates the terms quite differently without explaining why.

According to Pannenberg, openness well

describes the human situation in relation to the world – including God's revelation. Exocentricity, meanwhile, expresses well the problem of the human ego.[17] These are central concerns which the notion of openness of humanity addresses: How can we, on the basis of the Christian message, explain the uniqueness of human beings in the universe? What are we to make of the fact that human sin does not prevent humans from receiving God's grace?[18] The next crucial question deals with soteriology: What can we say about human nature so that God's supernatural grace will not be just another dimension of human subjectivity? These questions underline Pannenberg's use of the term openness.[19] Shults, as we have observed, prefers exocentricity over openness but in this preference he loses important aspects of openness: Exocentricity lacks the human reaching-beyond-every-horizon to transcendental reality; it does not explain aspects of human culture which grow out of openness. Exocentricity describes the outer centre of the human subject, but it cannot include God if it is understood in the way Plessner intends. Exocentricity well describes inner conflicts, yet how is it possible, in soteriological terms, that these are not just dead ends?

3.2 Dropping exocentricity

Turning to the second question, I would like to ask Shults: What does he gain by employing the term exocentricity for grounding human nature in fellowship with God rather than using the term – with Pannenberg – as an explanation of human sinfulness?

Shults draws a major application from Pannenberg's thinking: the legitimacy of talking about God. He writes, 'For Pannenberg, "exocentricity" is a tensional relation grounded in our biological nature, and its effects point ultimately to the "religious thematic" of human life.'[20] Yet, this answers only one of the questions mentioned above. Shults prefers the term exocentricity. My conclusion is that exocentricity probably fits his concept of relational reciprocity better. In 2001, Shults reiterated this concept with fewer technical details and with wider application, saying:

> My thesis is that understanding Pannenberg's interdisciplinary method requires a recognition of the dynamics of reciprocity and sublation that hold his anthropological works together in an asymmetric bipolar relational unity. Pannenberg does not start in a foundational sense either with theology or science but rather holds the two together in a mutually conditioning relationship. I take this opportunity to outline these dynamics again and illustrate both Stewart's failure to see them and the interpretive stumbles that follow this failure.[21]

Relational reciprocity, let us be clear, involves two moves: 1) reciprocity from above and the move from below and 2) sublation (*Aufhebung* in German) of the fundamental task (move from below) by the systematic task.[22]

Human nature consists of two centres – one centred and the other exocentric. Shults traces this dual structure of the human subject back to Friedrich Schleiermacher and argues persuasively for a constant and a variable element: 'the one expresses the existence of the subject for itself, the other its co-existence with an Other'.[23] The relationship between these two plays a regulative role in Schleiermacher's anthropology. Although Pannenberg interprets Schleiermacher differently, Shults sees a similar dual structure of the human subject in the term exocentricity.[24]

4. Wong: Salvific interpretation

Since 2004 K. M. Wong has been publishing on Pannenberg and his writings. His monograph, *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny* (2007), shows his long-term interest: theological anthropology. His thoughts revolve around the *imago Dei* doctrine and around hamartiology, adding a perspective of eschatology and ethics. The final picture is 'theological anthropology destiny-centred, history-focused' as is the title of the summarising chapter of his book. Unlike Shults, Wong understands openness as the central notion in Pannenberg. Pannenberg's interpretation of the *imago Dei*, Wong contends, is one of the theologian's unique contributions to the current theological discourse:

> This allows him to place the image of God in relation not only to creation, but also to salvation and eschatology. Indeed, this specific idea of the image of God is probably the most distinct theological claim in Pannenberg's anthropology, and forms the starting point upon which the rest of his anthropology is constructed.[25]

4.1 Pannenberg and Herder on humanity

Here is the question: When and how is the image of God realised in humanity and to what does it

refer? Wong reads Pannenberg with special reference to Herder and his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791),[26] noting that Pannenberg follows Herder in seeing the *imago Dei* as the direction of humanity. Herder elaborates this idea from the point of anthropology, philosophical anthropology and ethnology; Pannenberg does it from the point of philosophy, psychology and sociology (1983). To quote Wong,

> Indeed, both Herder and Pannenberg are at pains to insist that a disposition for the image of God exists in the initial human natural state, and that the image must not be regarded as existing only in a realm beyond the natural human existence, while at the same time they emphasise repeatedly the dependence of the disposition, destiny and its fulfilment on God himself.[27]

Wong continues to summarise similarities and differences between Herder and Pannenberg, saying they share a synthetic approach to the knowledge of humanity from different sources (anthropology, ethnology etc.). For both of them, this knowledge is provisional and subject to revision based on subsequent experience, and for both God is the all-determining reality. Herder, however, makes a sharper distinction between dogmatics and religion; under the influence of Aristotle he 'views the final human purpose as happiness (Glückseligkeit or eudaimonia)'.[28] The greatest distinction between Herder and Pannenberg, though, pertains to the question of how humanity develops and what the processes are behind human becoming. Herder gives four answers to this question: tradition, learning, reason and experience. These four together carve out of stone the image which is already present within that stone. Pannenberg's answer, Wong asserts, is Christological:

> The destiny is not in a human being already; rather, it can be found only beyond him in God and in the new Adam, the man who is united with God. To put it more elegantly, the image of God as the destiny of humanity is completed by, and proleptically present in, Jesus Christ. This is the most central and distinct theological claim of Pannenberg's concept of human destiny, and forms the basis for his theological anthropology.[29]

In *Offenbarung als Geschichte* (1962) Pannenberg works with the concept of anticipation. Since *Jesus – God and Man* (1964) he uses the term 'prolepsis', meaning that in the Christ event the end of the world is revealed and present in the centre of the world's history. And so resurrection is the real goal and end of humanity. Jesus' claims anticipate their confirmation in the future. Pannenberg writes, 'The anticipation of the future verdict ... is the proleptic structure of Jesus' claim.'[30] Since the resurrection of one person, Jesus, concerns all humanity, it reveals the common and communal destiny of all humans. Wong says about Pannenberg: 'The human destiny to be in fellowship with God cannot be realised apart from the community of human beings among themselves' and at the same time: 'God's power is at work in the encounter between human beings.'[31]

> Only the occurrence of what is ultimate, no longer superseded, is capable of qualifying the whole of the temporal course of time, beyond the moment of its own occurrence, that it can be strictly conceived as true in eternity and therefore as united with God's eternity.[32]

4.2 The openness of humanity

Wong starts his exposition of the notion of the openness of humanity with the same application as Shults: 'We shall see the irreducible dimension of human religiosity, which underlies all structures of human culture.'[33] There are, however, important implications of human openness. Humans are not limited to their environment. We have the task of 'constituting ourselves', Wong says, in that we are capable of experiencing ourselves in terms of the world and also in contrast to the world. Openness signifies infinite dependence. It is debated whether this dependence can offer an anthropological proof of God's existence. Pannenberg refused to say this, yet his commentators work with it, Wong being one of them: 'Openness to God becomes, for Pannenberg, the bridge out of the poverty of the natural beginning point of humanity into the full realisation of human destiny.'[34]

The great importance of trust is the last implication mentioned by Wong. He takes it further than Pannenberg, connecting openness with salvation and covenant:

> In short, through human openness, the eternity of what is represented becomes present in time, or the visibly material becomes a sign of the invisibly spiritual. For human beings are orientated to the presence of future eschatological salvation in Jesus Christ that is bound up with the institution of a sacrament. In the

> sacrament of the new covenant, and above all in the Eucharistic bread and wine, all believers in their openness are taken up into the sacramental action of praising and honouring God.[35]

In a chapter on the openness of humanity Wong spends a considerable amount of space on the terms openness and exocentricity. Both terms, he contends, though differing in philosophical background, refer to 'beyondness' for the human subject. Openness is a header for both of them. This reflects Pannenberg's writings more precisely than the words of Shults.

4.3 Sin as passivity to destiny

Wong is clearly interested in the ethical dimensions of Pannenberg's anthropology. Among other things, openness to the world answers the question about the character of salvation. The direct connection of openness with covenant and covenantal sacraments is a creative thought of Wong, but it will need further elaboration to be convincing. Even so, he writes:

> As such, we believe that the image of God, which constitutes the worth of individual human life and finds its expression in fellowship with God, is the true ground of ethics.[36]

The major ethical question now becomes the question of sin. As stated above, Pannenberg uses the notion of openness mainly in the area of the *imago Dei* doctrine, whereas when dealing with sin he prefers the term exocentricity. Pannenberg here follows the Reformed teaching on the sinfulness of humanity. As always, sin is a major problem. Pannenberg's chapters on sin in *Anthropology* and *Systematic Theology* deal primarily with the question of the root of sin. He follows Augustine, contending that the sinful 'nature' of humans lies in their natural conditions which are broken by disobedience and mistrust of God.

Wong builds on Pannenberg's understanding as he brings openness to the core of hamartiology, writing: 'We argue, therefore, that for Pannenberg, sin is essentially passivity to destiny or weakness to destiny.'[37] The tension between self-centredness and openness (or exocentricity), Pannenberg believes, becomes the opportunity for sin, since humans are unable to preserve unity in the tension. Centredness means independence, while openness requires trust in God. Sin, then, is either selfishness or mistrust. According to Wong, sin lies in passivity to the destiny that is expressed proleptically in Jesus Christ: fellowship with God. Sin goes against humanity in Jesus. It means that the self turns away from being open through the world to God, thus turning away from the true basis of the self, which is found in God alone. This vivid exposition of sin involves the concept of freedom to turn away from God and against the self. Sin as passivity to destiny is clearly anti-thesis, not having any thesis of its own. Wong's conception of sin as passivity to destiny, he believes, 'is sufficiently general and conceptual to be an all-inclusive expression of sin, and yet it is concrete enough to be explicitly about the goal of human existence'.[38]

4.4 Soteriological interpretation

Wong does not draw any general typology of interpretations of the *imago Dei* but he does label Wolfhart Pannenberg's interpretation of *imago Dei* in comparison with J.G. Herder's:

> Pannenberg attempts to ground Herder's anthropology on a Christological foundation in order to present a salvific, rather than a providential, account of the renewal of the imago Dei, though Pannenberg himself has not explicitly said so.[39]

Herder's approach is called 'providential' by Wong, who introduces Herder in his book under the question of how the image of God is to be realised. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* Herder speaks about mankind's development in history. Humans exhibit, he says, a unique position in nature in that, while other animals excel in 'this' or 'that', humans excel all other animals by the combination and subordination of instincts under the capacities of art, speech and freedom of act. Humanity has the gift of speech and cultural institutions which grow out of tradition, the crown of traditions being the art of writing. Book four of Herder's *Outlines* is about the structure of humanity and culminates in the thesis that humanity is formed 1) for humanism and religion, and 2) for the hope of immortality. Religion, he claims, is the aim of humanity's natural state. As such, Jesus of Nazareth does not play any essential role in Herder's anthropology. God's role is in the creation of humans, thus setting the direction which we can recognise in human natural conditions.

By contrast, Pannenberg is profoundly 'Christian' in his anthropology. He agrees with Herder that God's design in creation is humanity's disposition, but this disposition is fully expressed

in the person of Jesus, to be realised in the lives of women and men only in connection with Jesus himself. Wong puts it this way:

> Thus, we believe that the Christological foundation of Pannenberg's concept of human destiny is at its core soteriological and eschatological, for it speaks of the eschatological destiny of humanity embodied by Jesus, the eschatological salvation that springs from the appearance of Jesus and the eschatological lordship of God proclaimed by Jesus.[40]

5. Typology of interpretations of the *imago Dei*

Wong distinguishes two types of answers to the 'how' question when the *imago Dei* is understood as the design or the destiny of human person and of mankind. Shults uses two typologies: classic distinctions between rationality and righteousness, and between image and likeness.[41] Shults also employs three contemporary interpretive types: functional, existential / relational and eschatological[42]. The eschatological interpretation points to fulfilment or growth in the *imago Dei* concept. This interpretation has a tradition dating back to Irenaeus in the second century AD and to Herder during the Enlightenment; recent representatives of this approach are Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann. Pannenberg himself, however, uses no typology; he mentions the functional interpretation but he chooses to interpret the *imago Dei* as *Bestimmung* (destiny).

In the following paragraphs North American and European thinking merge. As a Slav I understand the importance of typologies or classifications – as much as they are simplistic and misleading – as an occasion to ask good questions. After all, they serve as a powerful clarification on the way of leaving all classifications behind.

5.1 Erickson

It will be helpful to put all three authors into the larger context of classifications of the interpretations of the *imago Dei* in systematic theology. One such classification is offered by Millard J. Erickson[43] who distinguishes three such interpretations:

1 a substantive view: the image of God is seen in some specific human capacity or ability such as rationality or freedom;
2 relational views, of which Emil Brunner and Karl Barth provide examples. Their views differ somewhat but both essentially emphasise relationality;
3 a functional view: the image of God is not situated in a capacity but in one specific function of humanity, namely that they rule over the creation.[44]

Erickson strongly argues against the substantive view because people differ sharply in the amount and development of their capacities, such as rationality and freedom. Shults helps us to see the difference between rationality and righteousness as the capacity which represents the image of God. Both of these interpretations are based on the understanding that humans need to be saved from sin and death by the mercy of God through the salvation in Jesus Christ. It was understood that the gift of human rationality is part of what it means to be created in the image of God. It is difficult to believe, though, that salvation somehow radically enhances this human capacity. It is also possible to see the image of God present in humanity in the form of moral qualities such as righteousness. Yet even then it is not always obvious that an unsaved person is morally less developed.

Thus we are able to differentiate two versions of Erickson's substantive view:

1 a substance in humanity which belongs fully to the fallen human as we know him today – like rationality or freedom. In this perspective the capacity of sinful humanity has a godly origin; let us call it the 'earthly substance view'.
2 a substance in the sanctified person – like holiness or righteousness. Thus God's character is expected from sinful man; this is the 'heavenly substance view'.

The earthly substance is usually identified with that which distinguishes humans from higher animals. The godly substance is usually that which lies at the heart of salvation according to this or that theological tradition.

The functional view mentioned by Pannenberg and used in the typology of Shults is different because it identifies the *imago Dei* with a verb, not a noun. Rationality or holiness is a noun, a static feature of a person. Ruling over creation is an action. Verbs are often overlooked in theology, though not as much in recent generations. Yet if 'substance' includes nouns as well as verbs then even the functional interpretation is included in the substantive view as an 'earthly substance'.

5.2 Grenz

Stanley J. Grenz (1950-2005) was a younger contemporary of Pannenberg (born 1928), actually one of his students and later a commentator on his work. Grenz presents a variation on Erickson's typology in which he replaces the third view with a 'dynamic' view. The dynamic view emphasises *becoming* in the image of God by the power of the Spirit and of the Word.[45] Grenz quotes Martin Luther's commentary on Genesis 9:6 and summarises the history of this interpretation with the help of Pannenberg's term openness:

> Working from the idea of 'openness to the world,' his [i.e. Herder's] followers have posited a link between the biblical concept of the image of God and the future human destiny. This link introduces a dynamic dimension into the concept of the divine image. The image of God is a reality toward which we are moving. It is what we are enroute to becoming.[46]

The approach of Grenz reminds us of Wong's salvific interpretation and also of the classic distinction between image and likeness. This distinction was mentioned by Shults under the perspective of the classical history of salvation between *imago* and *similitudo*, between the lost aspect of the image and that which is present even in a fallen world. The main point is the difference which God's salvation makes to human destiny. How is salvation part of creation in God's image? Here Erickson's classification does not help us enough. In a broader sense we can see this perennial question in most of the philosophical interpretations of the human being, that is, the human being is on the way to becoming human. Development, this lifelong path from one point to another, from disposition to realisation, is what is intrinsic to being truly human. And so, whoever stops, whoever resigns from the struggle to become fully human, has lost the battle already. In the history of humankind there is a corporate dimension to this struggle of becoming.

5.3 Brunner

We cannot overlook Emil Brunner's interpretation of the *imago Dei*. When Brunner attempted to clarify disagreements between himself and Karl Barth over the relationship of grace and nature, Barth strongly refused this with his response 'No!' (1934). Then Brunner, after the publication of *Mensch im Wiederspruch* (1937) and *Wahrheit als Begegnung* (1938), summarised his understanding in volume 2 of his *Dogmatics*. He distinguishes two sides of the *imago Dei*, two aspects, two lines of interpretation. According to him these two belong together, they are not alternatives. They are the formal (structural) and the material aspect of the *imago Dei*. Humanity was created in relation to God, we are capable of answering to God, which means that we are responsible. But it is not clear what kind of answer a human will give. This freedom Brunner calls the formal aspect. The material aspect is the responsible existence of Jesus, who is the 'being-in-the-Word' of God.[47] Along these two lines he also arranges the historical interpretations of the *imago Dei*.[48] The distinction between image and likeness in patristic and scholastic theology refers to the distinction between the formal and the material aspect of the *imago Dei*. Luther was, according to Brunner, the first theologian who recognised both aspects and, at the same time, understood the Hebrew parallelism in Genesis 1:26 as one entity; Luther uses the words *imago publica et privata*. The Reformers, then, rightly protested against any separation of these two aspects; they refused the view of their contemporaries that image means a natural endowment of reason and that likeness means supernatural holiness. Yet, Brunner continues, the Reformers offered an equally unsatisfactory 'relic' interpretation. He then summarises his own position thus:

> First of all, that the formal structural *Imago* does not consist in the possession of reason, or a 'rational nature' existing in its own right (as it were), but in man's relation to God as responsibility (a relation which cannot be lost), as responsible personal being; secondly, that the existence of a merely formal responsibility, without its material fulfilment through the love of God, is the result of the Fall and of Sin.[49]

As I see it, Brunner's strength is in his faithful presentation of scriptural testimony and in holding two different points of view together rather than just one.

Pannenberg chooses not to enter into a dialogue with Brunner on this issue. He mentions interpretations of others but comments only on those who influenced him. How does his distinction between disposition and destiny relate to Brunner's formal and material aspects of the *imago Dei*? *Imago* as Bestimmung, i.e. destiny for fellowship with God probably falls under the material aspect while *imago* as openness or exocentricity falls under the formal aspect.

So the typology of interpretations of the *imago Dei* with regard to Pannenberg has brought the following insights:

1 Pannenberg does not build on any substantial interpretation of the *imago Dei*. His line of argument points toward the future, exploring God's design and goal.
2 Pannenberg argues that natural conditions of the human being, such as openness and exocentricity, point toward theological or revealed future destiny. Thus notions of openness and exocentricity only resemble the substantial interpretation.
3 Wong strongly argues for a Christological reading of Pannenberg, so that the *imago Dei* cannot be interpreted as describing any natural conditions of all humanity; Shults on the other hand emphasises the temporal aspect. Pannenberg's interpretation is eschatological: the fullness of creation in God's image is still ahead and must be understood as such.
4 Comparing Pannenberg with Brunner, we can almost say that Pannenberg also has two aspects rather than just one: There is a disposition, a natural condition of humanity as we know it in the present – and there is also a destiny, goal and fullness which is indispensably connected with the person of Jesus Christ and which will be fulfilled at the end of time.
5 The *Imago Dei* is primarily and essentially the connection between humanity and God. There is no God the creator without 'his humans' and there is no human person without 'our God'. This connection with God does not have the form of a noun, it is not a human attribute. Humans do not 'have it'. As Brunner observed, 'And this is the most important point to grasp. Responsibility is a relation; it is not a substance.'[50] The *humanum* flows from the way God relates to humanity, his covenant partner. Simply put, God and humans belong together because God has chosen so. As Brunner insists, human beings cannot be thought of as separate from God.

6. Application to human rights

By way of application, let us evaluate the content of this article from the point of view of human rights. Parenthetically it can be said that the next paragraphs are quite brief and assume some acquaintance on the reader's part with human rights issues. The human rights movement reached decisive world-wide influence in 1948 with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.[51] In a broad sense we can say that in modern times human rights primarily have the function of protecting individuals and groups against violence by the powerful (states and international corporations). Thus human rights set publicly enforceable standards.[52] There is a close connection between human rights and the Christian faith.[53] An important question for Christians today in relation to human rights is whether in a pluralistic world we can present and interpret human rights as universally valid and binding. Are human rights reasonable and righteous in religious and cultural contexts other than Christianity? How obvious is the truth of the Gospel without the Christian faith? Regarding the relationship of human rights and natural law, I follow the thinking of Thomas K. Johnson rather than that of Božena Komárková as outlined by Pavel Hošek.[54] Johnson argues for the use of a certain kind of natural law which contains important aspects of God's general revelation in setting ethical standards in law. Pannenberg's understanding of general revelation and of the role of reason and experience in theology and ethics is essentially in line with the approach of Johnson.[55]

6.1 Interpersonal dimension

In order to apply the *imago Dei* doctrine in the area of human rights we need to interpret the relationship between an individual and a group/society in a way that is ethically applicable. Human rights must be enforceable as they deal with relationships between individuals, between individuals and groups, and between groups.

Generally speaking, the *imago Dei* doctrine is primarily about the individual before God. Rationality and righteousness are understood as attributes of an individual which have (only) outward expression in social relationships. The functional view of the *imago Dei* is different since it is corporate and deals with authority. Karl Barth understands the relational view as to do with the relationship between a man and a woman, between husband and wife; yet these male-female aspects are left behind by Barth, as he emphasises the individual in relationship with God.[56] As much as Brunner was inspired by the I-Thou existential philosophy of Martin Buber,[57] for him too the critical relationship is between the individual and God.

On the other hand Pannenberg, with empha-

sis on the future destiny which is proleptically present in world history in the resurrection of Christ, has a definite social dimension to his thought and he makes some important intentional steps toward the social dimension of the *imago Dei*.[58] However, these social dimensions remain largely undeveloped by Shults and Wong. It is Pannenberg's emphasis on ego development that involves other human beings as necessary partners for the individual. Openness to the world includes others. Positively, others are part of the 'world'. Negatively, others are a target of our misdirected trust. Openness requires space to enter; it contains the possibility of reaching beyond the horizon. To the extent that openness is understood as the key term for Pannenberg's theological anthropology (Wong), there is an unusually strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships. Openness in the process of understanding – that is, epistemology – corresponds with freedom of movement, of thought, conscience and religion, of opinion and expression. Openness in the process of becoming – that is, ontology – corresponds with the right to live, with freedom of movement, of thought, conscience and religion. Exocentricity describes subjects without special attention to others, i.e. to those around them. To the extent that exocentricity is understood as the key term for Pannenberg's theological anthropology (Shults), it becomes more deficient in the area of interpersonal relationships.

6.2 *Imago Dei*

Human rights do not grow out of scientific or philosophical study of humans in comparison with animals. They are not the result of principles for distinguishing which rights belongs to humans and which rights people share with animals or living nature in general. Nor do human rights reflect inner structures of the human person, for example Shults' concept of regulative relationality which opens up the dynamism of the human person.

Among the interpretations of the *imago Dei*, human rights tend toward the substantial approach. Pannenberg understands that being created in the image of God means that we are destined for the fellowship with God as it is accomplished and embodied in Jesus Christ. The most essential aspect of being created after God's image is the inalienable connection between humans and God. God is the main partner in this relationship. The condition of the human heart, its readiness for this communion, is never certain. The words openness and exocentricity describe in non-religious language what Christianity understands about this condition.

6.3 Crime against the *imago Dei*

To state what is theologically and ethically inalienable to human beings is at the same time to point towards the remedy of the human problem. In a chapter called 'Why do we need to be protected from each other?' T.K. Johnson says emphatically: 'The entire human rights movement is a gigantic protest against human nature as it is.'[59]

Pannenberg's notion of exocentricity describes well the inner conflict in human subjects. That is what human rights protect us from. Sin has a form of centrality according to Shults, who also shows how centrality (in relation to sin) corresponds with exocentricity (in relation to image of God). Wong defines sin as passivity towards our destiny which is a relationship with God.

What then constitutes a crime against humanity, a crime against the *imago Dei*? To what extent is the doctrine of sin defined by the doctrine of the *imago Dei*? Pannenberg uses the term exocentricity for expressing the fact that the natural human condition inevitably leads to sin. Yet Pannenberg does not mirror the *imago Dei* and sin. Exocentricity expresses the structural tension in the human ego. Wong searches for a way to interpret sin Christologically, arguing that the core of sin is defined by passivity to human destiny. The advantage of this approach is that it connects hamartiology with the doctrine of the *imago Dei* in a similar way as a crime against humanity is a crime against human dignity. The disadvantage is that it, again, puts more emphasis on individuals before God rather than on the interpersonal, relational constitution of our humanity. This individualistic bias means that sin is primarily an offence against God and against one's potentiality; with this focus on the individual, the social aspect of sin is often only implicitly present.

7. Conclusion

Shults and Wong both appreciate the thinking and theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg. They try to understand him, build on him and progress in the direction in which he has pointed. Shults finds Pannenberg valuable for his own programme of reforming theology after the turn to relationality. Wong applies Pannenberg's exposition of

the *imago Dei* to the area of hamartiology and ethics. Shults compares Pannenberg primarily with Schleiermacher and Barth; Wong compares him with Herder. Shults prefers the notion of exocentricity as central to Pannenberg's theological anthropology; Wong prefers the notion of openness. The evidence of Pannenberg's own writings is that openness plays a greater role than Shults admits. Wong characterises Pannenberg's theological anthropology by the answer to how the image of God is realised in the human person: it is in Christ and by Christ's work for the salvation of humanity. Pannenberg himself interprets the *imago Dei* as disposition and as destiny. The disposition is in the openness and exocentricity of the human subject in the present situation as we know it under the influence of sin; the destiny is in the fullness of humanity in Christ and in the resurrection. Our application of their ideas to human rights pointed out the importance of the interpersonal dimensions both of the *imago Dei* and of sin. We also noticed differences in their interpretations of the type of *imago Dei*, and thirdly we saw the unique approach of Wong who connects the *imago Dei* doctrine with hamartiology.

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Endnotes

1 K.M. Wong, *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 159.

2 Regarding the New Testament situation I follow Emil Brunner who adds to this first group of texts also Acts 17:28. This meaning he calls the 'formal structural idea of the *imago*', while the other group of texts he calls the 'material concept'. E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, Dogmatics vol. II* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980) 76.

3 W. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985) 42.

4 Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 107.

5 W. Pannenberg, 'Foreword' in F.L. Shults, *The Postfoundationalist Task of Theology: Wolfhart Pannenberg and the new theological rationality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) ix.

6 It is interesting to see how Shults, *Postfoundationalist Task*, actually starts with the word 'relational' and comes back to it after using a few other terms. He introduces the question on page 28: 'In order to draw these similarities into sharper relief, my strategy is to define a "postfoundationalist" as one who would assert a particular kind of relationality as obtaining between four conceptual pairs: experience and belief, truth and knowledge, individual and community, explanation and understanding.' In the conclusion of this early chapter he says: 'Because the term "fusion" [van Huyssteen's term] might imply a conflation or a melding of the two … I prefer the term "link" for the relation of epistemology and hermeneutics, although this might be too weak. … I will thematize this relational unity and attempt a more thorough presentation of this "linking".' (79) He builds this argumentation to reach the term 'reciprocity' in a major chapter which analyses the theology of Pannenberg: 'Several characteristics of the "reciprocity" in Pannenberg's methodology will emerge that are not captured by the simple concept of sublation [Aufhebung]. These include *asymmetry* (material primacy of the "from above" movement), *bipolarity* (two clearly differentiated tasks), and a real relational *unity* (a single process with two moments).' (166) In later years he comes back to 'relationality' as a broad general term which he uses from the very beginning to explain the other terms.

7 Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the philosophical turn to relationality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 35.

8 This is the content of chapter 6 in the part which deals with Pannenberg; see *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 117ff, esp. 132.

9 Shults, *Postfoundationalist Task*, 210-235.

10 After World War I there is just one other theologian who uses the term 'openness' (Offenheit) in an anthropological sense in a comparable extent, viz. Karl Rahner (1904-1984). The philosophical background for Rahner's notion of openness is the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger with transcendental analysis as the main method.

11 W. Pannenberg, *What is Man?: Contemporary anthropology in theological perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970) 8 and 12.

12 Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 35.

13 Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 80. See the critique of Pannenberg's interpretation of Plessner in T. Pröpper, *Theologische Anthropologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 2011) 425.

14 An example: 'If the peculiarity of human beings among the higher animals is correctly captured in the concept of exocentricity or is correctly described as an objectivity that is open to the world and help human beings achieve distance from themselves and therefore self-consciousness or reflection on themselves, then such a description calls for a clarification of human identity in terms of the twofold reference of human self-consciousness that corresponds to

the tension between centrality and exocentricity.' Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 105.

15 Shults, *Postfoundationalist Task*, 210.

16 E.A. Johnson, 'The legitimacy of the God question', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 52.4 (1986) 301.

17 Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, 80, quoted above.

18 This underlying question Pannenberg shares with Karl Rahner (cf. note 10 above). Both of them say that God's grace and salvation is not altogether alien or external to the human subject. Pannenberg argues on the basis of Romans 1:22-30 that God's intention with creation is not external, yet is not fully realised in it either (*Systematic Theology* 261). Rahner criticises the so-called 'extrinsicism' of grace and explains his understanding using the term openness in 'Concerning the relation between nature and grace' in his *Theological Investigations* Vol. I (1961) 309-310; see also *Grundkurs des Glaubens* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976) part four, namely 129-130.

19 As was mentioned above, the term is not used extensively in *Systematic Theology*, so here I refer mainly to *What is Man?* as the introductory book and to *Anthropology* as the most thorough interpretation of the openness of humanity. The three questions mentioned are taken from my unpublished doctoral research on human openness in the thinking of Rahner and Pannenberg.

20 Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 132.

21 F.L. Shults, 'Theology, science, and relationality: Interdisciplinary reciprocity in the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg', *Zygon* 36.4 (2001) 812-813.

22 Shults, 'Theology, science, and relationality', 814-818.

23 Quoted from F. Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube* [*The Christian Faith*], §3-5, cited by Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 100.

24 Shults examines three critiques of Schleiermacher by Pannenberg which can be solved by the regulative relationship of the two elements of the human subject, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 105-108.

25 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 160.

26 *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (1800).

27 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 27.

28 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 38.

29 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 40.

30 W. Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man* (London: SCM, 1968) 60.

31 Both quotes: Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 34.

32 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 52.

33 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 60.

34 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 61.

35 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 75.

36 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 155.

37 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 111.

38 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 115-116.

39 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 39.

40 Wong, *Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, 50.

41 Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 220-230.

42 Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 230-242.

43 There is also a less conceptual classification in G.R. Lewis and B.A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) II, 123-134. They recognise six historical approaches: the early church view which emphasizes rationality, the traditional Roman Catholic view (Irenaeus, Lombard, Aquinas), the Lutheran postulate of righteousness and holiness, the functional view of Pelagians, Socinians and others, the relational view of neo-orthodox and theistic existentialists, and the view of Augustine and some Reformed and evangelical authorities.

44 M.J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (ninth edition; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 498-512.

45 S.J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994) 223-224.

46 Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 224. A few years later he pushed this interpretation even further. He talks about movement 'from structure to destiny', it is *imago Dei* 'as a goal'. He starts with Irenaeus who perceives the creation of humankind as starting with a child which then grows to maturity. S.J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A trinitarian theology of the imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 162.

47 E. Brunner, *Dogmatics* Vol. II (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952) 55-61.

48 The following lines are based on Brunner, *Dogmatics* II, 75-78.

49 Brunner, *Dogmatics* II, 77-78.

50 Brunner, *Dogmatics* II, 59.

51 See the text at www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/.

52 J. Filip, *Ústavní právo* Vol. I (Constitutional law) (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 1993) 106-107.

53 P. Hošek, 'Christian claims for universal human rights in relation to natural law. Two perspectives', *International Journal for Religious Freedom* 5.2 (2012) 147-148. Hošek refers further to William H. Brackney, *Human Rights and the World's Major Religions* (Westport: Praeger, 2005).

54 Hošek, 'Christian claims', 147-160.

55 Pannenberg seldom touches explicitly on human rights; in *Systematic Theology* there is only one short comment, vol. 2, 177.

56 Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* [*Church Dogmatics*] III/2 §45. Compare the introductory summary and the content of the chapters themselves.

57 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* [1922] (Stuttgart:

Reclam, 2008); English *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937; reprint London: Continuum, 2004).

58 Here I refer to Pannenberg, *Anthropology*, Part 2: *The human person as a social being.*

59 T.K. Johnson, *Human Rights. A Christian Primer* (The WEA Global Issues Series; Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft) 43.

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Die Gnade repräsentieren: ein Plädoyer für den evangeliumszentrierten Aufbau freier Gottesdienste[1]

Philipp F. Bartholomä

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der freie (beziehungsweise freikirchliche) Gottesdienst befindet sich in einem gestalterischen Spannungsfeld zwischen traditioneller Liturgie und pragmatischer Beliebigkeit. Der vorliegende Aufsatz plädiert dafür, die Kernelemente des Evangeliums als strukturgebenden Handlungsrahmen für den Aufbau des Gottesdienstes zu installieren. Für einen solchen evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienstablauf werden dabei anhand von zehn Thesen sowohl dezidiert liturgische als auch stärker theologisch beziehungsweise missiologisch akzentuierte Argumente vorgetragen. Die im Evangelium enthaltene Sequenz des Gnadenhandelns Gottes ist liturgisch in besonderer Weise geeignet, einerseits die Freiheit und Vielfalt als identitätsstiftende Charakteristika eines freien Gottesdienstes zu bewahren, andererseits aber einen stringenten und theologisch durchdachten Ablauf zu gewährleisten, der dem freien Gottesdienst inhaltliche Orientierung zu geben vermag.

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SUMMARY

The open (free or non-denominational) church service finds itself in a creative tension between the poles of traditional liturgy and pragmatic randomness. This article advocates establishing the basic elements of the Gospel as a structural building frame for worship services. Sketching such a Gospel-centered style of service, ten theses are put forward with both decidedly liturgical and expressly theological or missiological emphases. From a liturgical point of view, the sequence of God's grace inherent in the Gospel is particularly suitable to safeguard as identity markers the freedom and diversity of an open worship service on the one hand, and to guarantee its careful and theologically reflected presentation on the other. This approach will be suitable to offer substance and direction for free church services.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

Dans les Églises libres (non officielles allemandes), la célébration du culte donne lieu à une large palette de créativité allant du pôle de la liturgie traditionnelle à un pragmatisme aléatoire. L'auteur recommande de structurer les cultes à l'aide d'un cadre constitué des éléments fondamentaux de l'Évangile. Il indique quel style pourrait prendre un tel culte centré sur l'Évangile et avance dix thèses prenant en compte des considérations à la fois liturgiques et théologiques ou missiologiques. Du point de vue liturgique, la séquence de la grâce divine inhérente à l'Évangile doit permettre d'une part de préserver la liberté et la diversité caractéristiques des cultes dans ces Églises, mais aussi d'autre part de garantir une présentation soignée et théologiquement réfléchie. Cette approche permettra de fournir à l'exercice du culte à la fois orientation et substance.

* * * *

In ihrer handlichen Einleitung zur Praktischen Theologie unterscheiden Alexander Deeg und Daniel Meier zwischen einer historischen, einer systematischen und einer praktischen Dimension der Liturgik.[2] Die historische Dimension zeichnet zunächst die geschichtliche Entwicklung des Gottesdienstes nach, während sich die systematische Dimension damit beschäftigt, was christlicher Gottesdienst eigentlich ist. Basierend auf einigen systematischen Überlegungen widmet sich der vorliegende Aufsatz nun stärker der praktischen liturgischen Reflexion, die in erster Linie danach

fragt, wie Gottesdienst zu gestalten sei, „damit er seiner Aufgabe gegenwärtig gerecht wird".[3] Es geht dabei gezielt um die Gestaltung *freier beziehungsweise freikirchlicher Gottesdienste*.[4] Denn während das „Evangelium" als strukturgebendes Element in traditionellen Liturgien verschiedenster Bekenntnisse seinen Niederschlag gefunden hat,[5] soll hier gezeigt werden, dass die im Evangelium enthaltene Sequenz des Gnadenhandelns Gottes in besonderer Weise geeignet ist, gerade auch den Aufbau eines freien Gottesdienstes zu durchdringen und zu prägen.[6]

Zunächst möchte ich daher in aller Kürze darlegen, was – zumindest aus meiner Perspektive – in struktureller Hinsicht unter einem evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienstaufbau zu verstehen ist. Anschließend formuliere ich zehn Thesen, anhand derer ich dafür plädiere, die Handlungslogik freier Gottesdienste an den (theologischen) Kernelementen des Evangeliums auszurichten. Als „Sparringspartner" wird mir dabei u.a. der freikirchliche Praktische Theologe Stefan Schweyer dienen, der vor nicht all zu langer Zeit in ganz grundsätzlichem Sinn eine reflektiertere Gestaltung freier Gottesdienste angemahnt hat.[7] Abschließend soll dann der konkrete Aufbau eines solchen am Evangelium orientierten Gottesdienstes skizziert werden.

1. Die Gnade repräsentieren: Evangeliumszentrierter Gottesdienstaufbau

Ein christlicher Gottesdienst sollte in grundsätzlicher Weise evangeliumsgemäß sein; er besitzt im Evangelium Jesu Christi den entscheidenden Bezugspunkt.[8] Insofern ergibt sich als ein substantielles Kriterium für dessen Gestaltung die Frage: „Wird das Evangelium laut?"[9] Die zentralen Kapitel dieses Evangeliums (des Erlösungshandelns Gottes in Christus) lassen sich anhand eines bewährten vierteiligen Schemas zusammenfassen:[10] 1) Zunächst ist wahrzunehmen, wer *Gott* ist. Der dreieinige Gott stellt sich uns als Schöpfer vor, der den Menschen erschaffen hat und der sich in seinem heiligen, liebevollen und beziehungsorientierten Wesen offenbart. Als Geschöpf ist der Mensch diesem Schöpfergott Rechenschaft schuldig. 2) In einem zweiten Schritt kommt das Problem *menschlicher Sünde* in den Blick. Durch den Sündenfall ist die Beziehung Gott-Mensch zerbrochen, der Mensch ist schuldig vor Gott. Er befindet sich grundsätzlich im Machtbereich der Sünde und leidet unter den geistlichen, psychologischen, sozialen und physischen Folgen des Falls. 3) Um den Menschen aus dieser Verlorenheit zu retten, sendet Gott *Christus*, das lebendige Wort. Christus wird durch sein Leben, seinen Tod am Kreuz und seine Auferstehung zu unserem Stellvertreter, erlöst uns aus der Sklaverei der Sünde, schafft in seiner Gnade die Voraussetzung für eine erneuerte Beziehung des Menschen zu Gott und deutet so auch voraus auf die letztendliche Erneuerung einer gebrochenen Welt. 4) Durch den *Glauben* gewinnt der Mensch schließlich Anteil an dieser „guten Nachricht", erfährt Vergebung der Sünden und antwortet dankbar auf die erfahrene Gnade durch ein gehorsames, Gott hingegebenes Leben. Die damit umrissene Kapitelfolge kann nun in der Tat stärker individualistisch zugespitzt werden (als Antwort auf die Frage: „Was muss ich tun, um gerettet zu werden?") oder stärker heilsgeschichtlich gewichtet sein (als Antwort auf die Frage: „Welche Hoffnung gibt es für die Welt?"). Beide Ansätze sollten jedoch nicht gegeneinander ausgespielt werden; die auf den einzelnen Menschen und seine Rettung fokussierte Perspektive liefert die notwendige Grundlage für die heilsgeschichtliche Betrachtung.[11]

Wenn ich hier für einen evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienst*aufbau* plädiere, dann lässt sich dies am besten als *liturgische Konkretion* eines häufig geäußerten Gottesdienstverständnisses verstehen, das zwar sprachlich am Evangelium orientiert ist, im Blick auf die tatsächlichen Gestaltungsabläufe vielfach aber doch lediglich im Ansatz bleibt.[12] Von einem in umfassenderer Weise evangeliumsgemäßen freien Gottesdienst kann man meines Erachtens aber erst dann sprechen, wenn das Evangelium nicht nur auf inhaltlicher Ebene „laut wird" (durch das gelesene, gesprochene oder gesungene Wort), sondern wenn sich dessen zentrale Eckpunkte in der „Architektur" des Gottesdienstes gestalterisch niederschlagen.[13] Damit soll die zentrale Bedeutung der verkündeten Inhalte keinesfalls abgeschwächt werden. Vielmehr geht es um eine Gottesdienstarchitektur, die die Inhalte wirksam unterstützt beziehungsweise unterstreicht. So verstanden, wird das Evangelium in den Ablauf „eingebaut". Die liturgische Makrostruktur wird dabei bewusst von Evangeliumsinhalten geformt, der Gottesdienst erhält von daher seine liturgischen Konturen. In den einzelnen Teilen wird jeweils speziell ein Kapitel des oben skizzierten Gnadenhandelns Gottes thematisiert und transportiert. Die Bewegung des Gottesdienstes

stellt sich dabei wie folgt dar: Zu Beginn des Gottesdienstes wird der Fokus auf die Größe und Heiligkeit Gottes gelenkt. Im Licht dieser Gottesbegegnung erkennt sich der Mensch sodann in seiner Sündhaftigkeit und Begrenztheit. In der Folge zielt das Gottesdienstgeschehen auf die notwendige geistliche Erneuerung ab. Erneuerung geschieht im Kern durch das Rekapitulieren der gnädigen Zuwendung Gottes in Christus und durch das Hören auf Gottes lebensspendendes Wort. Regelmäßig findet sie auch durch die Feier des Abendmahls ihren Ausdruck. Abschließend gibt ein solcher Aufbau den Teilnehmern die Möglichkeit, auf das von Gott Empfangene dankbar zu reagieren und im Wissen um Gottes Gegenwart in den Alltag zu gehen.

Das Ziel einer solchen Gottesdienststruktur besteht darin, dass Gottesdienstbesucher das Evangelium nicht nur hören, sondern „liturgisch nachvollziehen“[14] und dadurch immer wieder aufs Neue persönlich hineingenommen werden in die Geschichte des göttlichen Heilshandelns.[15] Es geht darum, „[that we are] moving worshipers down a path structured to parallel the progress of grace in the life of the believer“.[16] Dieser „Prozess [oder: Ablauf] der Gnade“ soll im evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienst abgebildet, „re-präsentiert“ werden und letztlich dabei helfen, ein tieferes Verständnis der im Evangelium enthaltenen Wahrheiten zu entwickeln.[17] Beschreibt man den Gottesdienst mit Martin Nicol anhand der Wegmetapher, so „[führt der Gottesdienst] hindurch zwischen dem, was nicht gesagt werden kann, und dem, was gesagt werden muss“.[18] Um diesen Weg zu beschreiten, bedarf es nun der genannten „Re-Präsentation der Gnade“, damit Inhalt und Form sich ergänzen und im Miteinander das kommuniziert und dargestellt wird, was alleine nur schwer gesagt werden kann.[19] Man kann in dieser Hinsicht auch mit Mike Cosper von „Rhythmen der Gnade“ sprechen, die darauf angelegt sind, das Leben der versammelten Gemeinde zu durchpulsen und folglich eben in der Sequenz der einzelnen Gottesdienstelemente abgebildet werden.[20] Wo die spezifischen Vorzüge eines evangeliumszentrierten Ansatzes *für die Gestaltung freier Gottesdienste* liegen, soll in der Folge deutlich werden.

2. Die evangeliumszentrierte Struktur freier Gottesdienste: Ein Plädoyer in zehn Thesen

Ich formuliere nun in Form einiger Thesen meine Überzeugungen im Hinblick auf einen freikirchlichen Gottesdienstaufbau, der anhand einer evangeliumszentrierten Struktur die Gnade Gottes re-präsentiert. Die Thesen 1 bis 6 befassen sich zunächst stärker mit liturgischen Überlegungen im Bezug auf freie Gottesdienste. Die Thesen 7 und 8 führen hinein in die Frage nach der Korrespondenz zwischen theologischem Inhalt und liturgischer Gestalt eines Gottesdienstes. Im Anschluß daran reflektiert These 9 den evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienst als Konzentrat des alltäglichen christlichen Lebens. These 10 betrifft schließlich die evangelistische Dimension einer entsprechenden Gottesdienstpraxis.

These 1: Ein evangeliumszentrierter Aufbau behebt den oft festgestellten Mangel an Liturgik in freien Gottesdiensten.

In seinem Essay „Frei liturgisch: Ein Plädoyer für die reflektierte Gestaltung freier Gottesdienste“ verortet Stefan Schweyer das Hauptdefizit freier Gottesdienste nicht in deren „fehlender Liturgie“, sondern in ihrer „fehlenden Liturgik“.[21] Er bemängelt in diesem Zusammenhang die „fehlende theologische Reflexion dessen, was im Gottesdienst geschieht“.[22] Diese fehlende Reflexion unterstütze zwei gegenläufige Entwicklungen. Entweder käme es in der Folge einerseits zu einer Verkrustung ursprünglich freier Gottesdienstformen oder andererseits zu einer pragmatischen, stark trendlastigen Beliebigkeit dessen, was im Gottesdienst passiert (vgl. dazu auch unten These 5).

Hier genügt es zunächst lediglich festzuhalten, dass ein gezielt evangeliumszentrierter Aufbau, wie ich ihn oben umrissen habe, gerade diese oft vermisste theologische Reflexion eines Gottesdienstes nicht nur voraussetzt, sondern auch fördert. Ein am Evangelium orientierter Ablauf legt ein theologisch durchdachtes Fundament für die Struktur des Gottesdienstes. Davon ausgehend, ist man folglich bei der Planung des Gottesdienstes gezwungen, die einzelnen Elemente innerhalb dieses vorgegebenen Rasters durchdacht zu platzieren und auszugestalten. In diesem Sinn ist eine evangeliumszentrierte Gottesdienststruktur sicher nicht der einzige, aber ein praktisch-theologisch bestens geeigneter Weg, um dem Mangel an Liturgik in freien Gottesdiensten wirksam zu begegnen.

These 2: Eine am Evangelium orientierte Struktur freier Gottesdienste ist nicht mit deren Reliturgisierung gleichzusetzen, sondern zielt

lediglich auf eine reflektierte Gestaltung ab.

Dass die traditionellen Liturgien der Großkirchen einen reichen liturgischen Schatz bieten, wird inzwischen auch von vielen freikirchlichen Christen wahrgenommen. Allerdings ist Schweyer zuzustimmen, wenn er diesbezüglich anmerkt, dass die unmittelbare Folge aus dieser Einsicht *nicht* eine konsequente „Reliturgisierung" freier Gottesdienste sein könne, sondern vielmehr deren „reflektierte Gestaltung".[23] Der Mangel an Liturgik in freien Gottesdiensten soll also nicht in erster Linie durch eine strikte Einführung liturgischer Gottesdienstbestandteile behoben werden.[24] Denn bei aller grundsätzlichen Sympathie für solche liturgischen Elemente, weist Schweyer zurecht darauf hin, dass beim übertriebenen Versuch einer Reliturgisierung freier Gottesdienste gerade deren „besondere Würze" verloren geht und ihr eigener, bewahrenswerter Charakter konterkariert wird.[25] Folglich geht es also auch bei dem hier vorgeschlagenen Gottesdienstaufbau nicht um eine Liturgisierung im engeren Sinn, das heisst eine strikte Aneinanderreihung klassisch-liturgischer Elemente. Vielmehr lässt sich zeigen (vgl. unter anderen unten Abschnitt 3), dass eine am Evangelium orientierte Struktur ein probates Mittel darstellt, um einerseits eine durchdachte und theologisch fundierte Gottesdienstgestaltung zu gewährleisten (vgl. These 1), gleichzeitig jedoch die besonderen Charakteristiken eines freien Gottesdienstes zu bewahren.

These 3: Das Potenzial freier Gottesdienste liegt darin, das befreiende Evangelium erfahrbar zu machen. Dieses Potenzial wird durch einen am Evangelium orientierten Ansatz liturgisch ausgeschöpft.

Im Schlussplädoyer seines Aufsatzes betont Schweyer, dass eine bewusstere Gestaltung dazu beitragen kann, dass freie Gottesdienste ihr Potential als „Erfahrungsräume des befreienden Evangeliums" besser entfalten.[26] In direktem Anschluss daran, lässt sich nun die Überzeugung formulieren, dass das Potential freier Gottesdienste gerade durch einen evangeliumszentrierten Aufbau in besonderer Weise zum Tragen kommt. Mit anderen Worten: Soll ein Gottesdienst tatsächlich „Erfahrungsraum des Evangeliums" sein, dann muss er mehr bieten als die punktuelle Kommunikation dieses Evangeliums durch beispielsweise Schriftlesung, Predigt oder Lied. Die Reduktion der Verkündigung des Evangeliums auf eines oder mehrere dieser Elemente wäre in diesem Fall zu wenig. Erst wenn das Evangelium inhaltlich *und* strukturell „nachvollziehbar" re-präsentiert wird, entsteht ein Gottesdienst, der im Vollsinn des Wortes ein „Erfahrungsraum" ist. Erst wenn ich (um die oben bereits zitierten Worte von Bryan Chapell aufzugreifen) den Gottesdienstbesucher auch liturgisch diesen Evangeliumspfad entlang führe, wird der Gesamtgottesdienst zu einer wöchentlichen Erfahrung der Gnade Gottes, zu einem wiederholten liturgischen Durchleben und Erleben des Evangeliums.[27]

These 4: Ein evangeliumszentrierter Ansatz bietet sowohl einen liturgischen Handlungsrahmen als auch die (für den freien Gottesdienst grundsätzlich wünschenswerte) Möglichkeit einer Vielfalt kreativer Konkretionen.

„Freie Gottesdienste leben von kreativer und stimmiger Menügestaltung", hat Stefan Schweyer unter Rückgriff auf eine kulinarische Metapher zurecht festgestellt.[28] Die Gestaltung eines Gottesdienstes gleiche dabei der „Kochkunst", wobei der *Chef de cuisine* ein aus mehreren Gängen bestehendes Menü zusammenstellt. Dabei folgen die Gänge einer in der Regel vorgegebenen Grundstruktur. Diese grundsätzliche Struktur erlaubt dennoch „eine enorme Vielfalt an Konkretionen".[29] Innerhalb des vorgegebenen Rahmens besteht somit eine gewisse Freiheit in der kulinarischen Ausgestaltung des Menüs. Wichtig ist letztlich nur, dass die einzelnen Menü-Teile in einem stimmigen Verhältnis zueinander stehen. Struktur und Kreativität schließen sich nicht aus, sondern können in fruchtbarer Weise aufeinander bezogen werden.

Ein evangeliumszentrierter Aufbau bildet nun im Bereich des Gottesdienstes genau diese kreative und trotzdem stimmige Menügestaltung ab. Stimmig, weil sich der Gottesdienst an einem vorgegebenen Handlungsrahmen orientiert, indem er die einzelnen Inhalte des Evangeliums in einer nachvollziehbaren Weise abbildet. Kreativ bleibt die konkrete Ausgestaltung deshalb, weil innerhalb dieses grundsätzlichen Handlungsrahmens eine Vielfalt von Konkretionen und Gottesdienstelementen denkbar ist.[30] Jedes Hauptelement des Evangeliums kann auf unterschiedliche Art und Weise sichtbar gemacht werden. Wie sich ein vom Evangelium her geplanter Handlungsrahmen und die Freiheit zur Ausgestaltung des Gottesdienst-Menüs letztlich konkret zueinander verhalten, soll im letzten Teil

dieses Aufsatzes skizziert werden. Dort wird auch die Vielfalt an möglichen Menüelementen zumindest angedeutet. Dass durch das hier propagierte liturgische Konzept auch in grundsätzlicher Weise die notwendige Freiheit zur Kontextualisierung des Gottesdienstes in verschiedene (Sub-) Kulturen hinein gegeben ist, sei hier nur angedeutet.[31]

These 5: Ein im Sinne des Evangeliums strukturierter freier Gottesdienst vermeidet die vielfach zu beobachtenden Extreme einer liturgischen „Metrodoxie" (ruheloser Veränderungsdrang) beziehungsweise „Petrodoxie" (traditionalistische Erstarrung).

Bereits im Zusammenhang von These 1 war von den korrespondierenden Gefahren der liturgischen Beliebigkeit und Verkrustung die Rede. Man kann in dieser Hinsicht von den zwei Extremen einer liturgischen „Metrodoxie" und „Petrodoxie" sprechen.[32] Metrodoxie (wobei semantisch auf die trendige *Metropolis* angespielt wird) steht dabei für eine sich ständig ändernde, übermäßig dynamische und vom Reiz des Neuen getriebene Praxis. Petrodoxie (im Englischen: *petrified* = versteinert; griechisch *petra* = [unbeweglicher] Fels) bezeichnet demgegenüber eine im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes versteinerte, verknöcherte, starre und letztlich übermäßig traditionalistische Praxis. Im liturgischen Sinne steht die Metrodoxie also für einen sich ständig verändernden Gottesdienstaufbau, der wenig Kontinuität beinhaltet. Es herrscht tatsächlich eine rastlose Beliebigeit. Ein unreflektierter Veränderungsdrang und pragmatische Kreativität sind (häufig unbewusst) zum Götzen geworden. Am anderen Ende des Spektrums findet sich dagegen die liturgische Petrodoxie, die sich jeder Art von Veränderung verweigert. Sie führt zu einer drögen Gleichförmigkeit der Gottesdienste. Alles, was sich außerhalb der traditionellen Muster befindet wird dann *per se* als gefährlich oder „unbiblisch" klassifiziert.

Beide Extreme lassen sich durch einen am Evangelium orientierten Gottesdienstaufbau vermeiden. Der „Nachvollzug des Evangeliums" als zentrales Strukturmerkmal bietet theologisch eine dauerhaft wünschenswerte Kontinuität und inhaltliche Orientierung. Sowohl die Eckpfeiler als auch der gewünschte Duktus der gottesdienstlichen Handlung sind vorgegeben. Dadurch ist (ungeachtet der Diskussion zwischen Befürwortern eines normativen beziehungsweise regulativen Gottesdienst-Prinzips) ein für die freikirchliche Praxis notwendiger und sinnvoller Maßstab vorhanden, um zu entscheiden, „was" in einem Gottesdienst „wann", in gewissem Sinne auch „wie", vor allem aber „wozu" getan werden sollte.[33] Gleichzeitig besteht aber Raum für neue beziehungsweise veränderte, durchaus auch überraschende Gottesdienstelemente, die der Kommunikation des Evangeliums in unterschiedlichen Facetten dienlich sind und die thematische Orientierung des jeweiligen Gottesdienstes untermauern. Damit kann einer Verkrustung nach dem Motto „Das Altbekannte muss immer besser sein" oder „Das haben wir immer so gemacht" vorgebeugt werden. Hat man darüber hinaus im Evangelium ein einheitsstiftendes, theologisches Kriterium gefunden, ist man leichter in der Lage, jenseits aller (häufig an den musikalischen Formen festgemachten) „worship wars" sowohl traditionell-liturgische als auch modernzeitgenössische Elemente und (Musik-)Stile auf sinnvolle (und nicht künstliche oder willkürliche) Weise zu integrieren.[34] Denn, „wo die Mitte [das heisst in unserem Fall: die am Evangelium orientierte Struktur] klar ist, (...) da kann eine große Vielfalt und Verschiedenheit ihren legitimen Platz haben".[35] Insofern hat man es bei einem evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienst mit einem zutiefst integrativen Ansatz zu tun, der das Potential hat, die Gemeinde durch einen gemeinsamen (theologischen) Fokus und ein gemeinsames (geistliches) Anliegen zu einen.

These 6: Ein evangeliumsgemäßer Aufbau bietet Raum für die notwendigen vertikalen und horizontalen (beziehungsweise katabatischen und anabatischen) Elemente eines freien Gottesdienstes.

Es gehört zu den liturgischen Grundeinsichten, dass in einem Gottesdienst sowohl vertikale als auch horizontale Komponenten ihren Platz haben und unterschieden werden sollten. Als vertikale Kompenenten sind dabei die Gottesdienstteile bezeichnet, die etwas mit der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und Mensch/Gemeinde beziehungsweise Mensch/Gemeinde und Gott zu tun haben (Predigt, Schriftlesung, Gebet, Bekenntnis, usw.). Horizontale Komponenten haben dagegen speziell die inner-gemeindlichen Beziehungen im Fokus (Begrüßung, Informationen, Zeugnisse, usw.). Manche Elemente vereinen in sich vertikale und horizontale Charakteristiken (Abendmahl, Taufe, Segen).[36] Vom Neuen Testament her ist offensichtlich, dass der urchristliche Gottesdienst nicht nur eine vertikale Dimension hatte (mit Fokus auf eine erneuerte Gottesbeziehung), sondern ebenso

auch einen horizontalen Gemeinschaftsbezug (mit Fokus auf das gemeinschaftliche Leben als erlöstes Gottesvolk).[37] Weil nun Gottes vertikales Gnadenhandeln unmittelbar Auswirkungen auf die horizontale Lebensführung und zwischenmenschliche Gemeinschaft auch innerhalb der Gemeinde hat, bietet ein am Evangelium ausgerichteter Gottesdienst folgerichtig Raum für beide Dimensionen. Wir werden weiter unten noch genauer sehen (siehe Abschnitt 3), dass ein evangeliumsgemäßer Aufbau sehr gut in der Lage ist, sowohl vertikalen als auch horizontalen Gottesdienstkomponenten in angemessener Weise (beziehungsweise am angemessenen Ort) Geltung zu verschaffen.

Ein verwandtes liturgisches Spannungsfeld ergibt sich aus der Frage, ob der Gottesdienst primär ein katabatisches Geschehen (eines, das von oben, von Gott aus absteigt) oder ein anabatisches Geschehen (eines, das von unten, vom Menschen aus, aufsteigt) sei.[38] Unter Berufung auf Luthers berühmte „Torgauer Formel"[39] hat sich im Bereich der evangelischen Kirchen die Einsicht durchgesetzt, dass ein Gottesdienst beides sein müsse: Wort Gottes und Antwort des Menschen, ein dialogisches Geschehen also.[40] In diesem Sinne – und doch mit kritikwürdigem Akzent – formulieren auch Deeg und Meier: „Gottesdienst muss beides sein: Katabase und Anabase, menschliches Handeln in der Erwartung und Hoffnung, dass auch Gott handelt."[41] Hier wird veschleiert, dass das katabatische Handeln Gottes dem anabatischen Handeln des Menschen stets vorangeht. Unter bewusster Anknüpfung an die „Chronologie des Evangeliums" ist daher entsprechend anders zu gewichten und treffender zu formulieren: Weil Gott *zuerst* in Christus gehandelt hat, kommt es zu einer menschlichen Reaktion und Antwort auf das göttliche Gnadenhandeln.[42] Bezieht man nun diese theologische Einsicht auf die Frage nach einem geeigneten Gottesdienstablauf, so scheint es mir erneut einleuchtend zu sein, dass sich dieser dialogische Prozess gerade auch in einem freien Gottesdienst liturgisch kaum sinnvoller umsetzen lässt als durch einen strukturellen Bezug auf die benannten Kernelemente des Evangeliums.

These 7: Da Glaubensüberzeugungen nicht nur explizit gelehrt, sondern auch unbewusst übernommen werden, erfüllt eine evangeliumsgemäße Gottesdienststruktur eine pädagogische Funktion und dient langfristig der gesunden theologischen Prägung einer Gemeinde

Die durchdachte Planung von freien Gottesdiensten, deren Ablauf die grundlegenden Inhalte des Evangeliums abbildet, prägt eine Gemeinde langfristig auch theologisch. Denn die Art, wie wir Gottesdienst feiern, hat Auswirkungen auf das, was wir glauben.[43] Glaubensüberzeugungen entwickeln sich nicht alleine durch die kognitive Verarbeitung von expliziten Lehrinhalten. Gottesdienstbesucher „lernen" Theologie in gewissem Umfang auch unbewusst und instinktiv durch die liturgisch transportierten Inhalte und Abläufe (vgl. dazu etwas anders akzentuiert auch These 3).[44] Theologische Überzeugungen werden – um es mit einem englischen Idiom zu sagen – „taught *and* caught".[45] Kindliche Lernprozesse mögen an dieser Stelle als Analogie dienen. Vor allem jüngere Kinder lernen zunächst nicht in formell-schulischen Kontexten, sondern werden geprägt von dem, was sie beispielsweise ihre Eltern sagen hören beziehungsweise tun sehen. Im familiären Kontext werden durch Beobachtung und Teilnahme Handlungsweisen erlernt und Überzeugungen geformt. Gleiches gilt für den Gottesdienst.

Daraus ergibt sich nun eine notwendige gemeindepädagogische Folgerung: Da tragfähige Glaubensüberzeugungen meines Erachtens wesentlich von den Kernwahrheiten des Evangeliums her erschlossen werden müssen, dient es der gesunden theologischen Prägung der Gottesdienstbesucher, wenn die liturgische Struktur und Schwerpunktsetzung das ganzheitliche „Erlernen" von evangeliumsgemäßen (Denk-)Gewohnheiten unterstützt.[46] Wer nun also eine vom Evangelium gesättigte Theologie dauerhaft fest in den Köpfen und Herzen der Gottesdienstbesucher verankern will, der wird eben diese zentralen Eckpunkte des Gnadenhandelns Gottes gerade auch strukturell zur Sprache bringen. Gottesdienste, in deren Ablauf die eingangs skizzierten Inhalte nachvollziehbar und verständlich abgebildet werden, helfen dem aktiven, gedanklich präsenten Teilnehmer, die prägende „Grammatik des Evangeliums" immer mehr zu verinnerlichen (vgl. daran anknüpfend auch These 9).[47] Liturgik fungiert hier sozusagen als bewusst eingesetztes didaktisches Mittel.

These 8: Wenn auch für den freien Gottesdienst gilt: „The medium is the message", dann spricht vieles dafür, sich auch liturgisch an der Grundbotschaft des Evangeliums zu orientieren.

Ein dem Evangelium korrespondierender Ablauf des Gottesdienstes dient folglich u.a. dazu, die Kommunikation der christlichen „Message" langfristig nicht dadurch zu verfälschen, dass das liturgische „Medium" gewisse Inhalte nicht transportiert, die wesentlich zum Evangelium gehören.

Über die universale Gültigkeit und die Implikationen von Marshall McLuhans bekanntem Kommunikationsprinzip „The medium is the message"[48] lässt sich trefflich diskutieren. Gehen wir allerdings vorsichtig davon aus, dass diese Formel ein beachtenswertes Wahrheitselement enthält und im liturgischen Sinn zurecht Anwendung findet (zumindest im Sinne von „The medium is *part* of the message" oder „The medium *deeply contours* the message"[49]), dann gilt Folgendes: Wenn Gottesdienste grundsätzlich die Botschaft des Evangeliums (durchaus auch in dessen Vielschichtigkeit) kommunizieren sollen, dann muss das „Medium" (in unserem Fall: die Liturgik) mit dieser „Evangeliums-Message" korrespondieren. Leider ist dies gerade in freien Gottesdiensten vielfach nicht der Fall. Doch es ist unmöglich, das Evangelium in seiner Gesamtheit hochzuhalten und gleichzeitig dauerhaft in einer Art und Weise Gottesdienst zu feiern, die wesentliche Elemente dieses Evangeliums liturgisch unter den Tisch fallen lässt oder durch mangelnde beziehungsweise manchmal auch übertriebene Betonung verzerrt.[50] Thomas Schirrmacher merkt diesbezüglich zurecht an:

> Liturgie ist immer im Gottesdienst ausgedrückte Lehre. Liturgie zeigt, was aus der jeweiligen Lehre so wichtig ist, dass es Woche für Woche wiederholt wird. (...) Dabei kann das Fehlen bestimmter Elemente in der sonntäglichen Liturgie darauf hinweisen, dass bestimmte Teile der Lehre allen schönen Worten zum Trotz dennoch keine maßgebliche Rolle spielen.[51]

Im freikirchlichen Kontext könnte das beispielsweise bedeuten, dass wir die eigentliche Botschaft dadurch untergraben, dass wir zwar in der Predigt immer wieder von Sünde und Buße reden, dieses wesentlich zum Evangelium gehörige Element des Erkennens und Bekennens von Schuld im Ablauf des Gottesdienstes aber konsequent ausklammern. Ähnliches ist zu beobachten, wenn Elemente der Hingabe (wie zum Beispiel die Kollekte) unterschwellig einen „moralistischen Touch" erhalten (das heisst als gesetzliche Leistung missverstanden werden), weil wir sie liturgisch nicht stark genug als dankbare Antwort auf Gottes gnädiges Erlösungshandeln markiert haben.

Die zentralen Komponenten des Evangeliums (vgl. oben 1.) sind derart wichtig, dass sie wöchentlich wiederholt werden müssen. Daher geht mein Plädoyer dahin, der Formel „The medium is the message" in freien Gottesdiensten Gültigkeit zu verschaffen, und zwar dadurch, dass tatsächlich die theologische „Message" dem liturgischen „Medium" Form und Struktur verleiht.

These 9: Ein evangeliumszentrierter Gottesdienstaufbau trägt der Tatsache Rechnung, dass angestrebte Veränderungsprozesse im Leben eines Christen nach neutestamentlicher Überzeugung im Wesentlichen durch einen konsequenten Rückbezug auf die Grundwahrheiten des Evangeliums angestoßen und gefördert werden. Ein Gottesdienst, dessen Gestaltung sich am Evangelium orientiert, bildet damit einen Vorgang ab, der im alltäglichen Leben eines Christen ständig rekapituliert werden muss.

„Der freie Gottesdienst ist eine konzentrierte Form des alltäglichen Lebens von Christen und christlichen Gemeinschaften."[52] So umschreibt Stefan Schweyer eine Funktion des freien Gottesdienstes und ergänzt wenig später die These, wonach Gottesdienst „ein Konzentrat alltäglichen Christenlebens, gleichsam eine verdichtete Form der alltäglichen christlichen Praxis [sei]".[53] Damit rückt der bewusste Alltagsbezug als besondere Chance des freien Gottesdienstes in den Fokus. Will man nun diesen Alltagsbezug stärken, so muss der Gottesdienst notwendigerweise gerade die Elemente enthalten, die für das alltägliche christliche Leben wesentlich sind. Hier knüpft meine These an, indem ich die Frage nach dem wünschenswerten Alltagsbezug noch etwas anders akzentuiere und theologisch zuspitze.

Vom Neuen Testament her lässt sich argumentieren, dass das alltägliche Christenleben im Kern davon geprägt ist (beziehungsweise geprägt sein sollte), sich wiederholt der Wahrheit des Evangeliums auszusetzen. Was nach Überzeugung der neutestamentlichen Autoren ihre christlichen Leser zunehmend in die angestrebten Prozesse der (Charakter-)Veränderung hineinführt, ist der kontinuierliche Nachvollzug des göttlichen Gnadenhandelns. Das ständige, wiederholte Erkennen der eigenen Sündhaftigkeit im Spiegel Gottes, das darauf folgende Eintauchen in den Reichtum der göttlichen Gnade in Christus und die daraus resultierende Freude an den Privilegien

der Kindschaft – all das bildet die Grundlage und Kraftquelle der christlichen Heiligung. So kann Paulus beispielsweise in Titus 2,11-12 formulieren, dass uns die „Gnade" (mit anderen Worten: das Evangelium) dazu erzieht, uns von aller „Gottlosigkeit" und den „Begierden dieser Welt" abzuwenden.[54] Auch in Römer 12,1-9 basieren die Ermahnungen zu einem Gott wohlgefälligen Leben auf dem Indikativ der Gnade Gottes. Paulus macht wiederum deutlich, dass die gewünschten Veränderungsprozesse durch „Gottes Erbarmen" (mit anderen Worten: durch das Evangelium) motiviert werden sollen, welches er den Christen in Rom im bisherigen Verlauf seines Briefes vor Augen geführt hat.[55] Ähnlich gelagerte Aussagen finden sich auch in Römer 2,2; 2.Korinther 5,14-15; 1.Petrus 1,13-15 und manchen anderen Stellen des Neuen Testaments.

Insgesamt lässt sich nun aus dem bisher Gesagten ein argumentativer Dreischritt konstruieren: 1) Ein freier Gottesdienst sollte den Anspruch haben, verdichtete Form alltäglicher christlicher Praxis zu sein. 2) Im alltäglichen Heiligungsprozess eines Christen stellt das Eintauchen in die Grundwahrheiten des Evangeliums aus neutestamentlicher Perspektive eine zentrale geistliche Übung dar. Verbindet man nun diese beiden Prämissen, ergibt sich folgende Folgerung: 3) Ein freier Gottesdienst, der ein Konzentrat alltäglichen Christenlebens sein will, manifestiert dies am konsequentesten, indem er die Dreh- und Angelpunkte des Evangeliums abbildet und in seinen Ablauf integriert. „Liturgy that immerses the people of God in the rhythms of grace doesn't merely train them for gospel-centered worship; it trains them for gospel-centered lives."[56] Anders ausgedrückt: Der Gottesdienst wird zum Kristallisationspunkt eines vom Evangelium durchpulsten Lebens.

These 10: Bei der Gottesdienstplanung sollte man im Sinne neutestamentlicher Gastfreundschaft von der Anwesenheit von Christen und Nichtchristen ausgehen. Ein evangeliumsgemäßer Gottesdienstaufbau vermittelt gerade Noch-nicht-Glaubenden die Essenz der christlichen Botschaft in anschaulicher Form und bietet Gästen darüber hinaus die Sicherheit einer nachvollziehbaren Struktur.

Der neutestamentliche Befund lässt in grundsätzlicher Weise darauf schließen, dass den urchristlichen Gottesdiensten ein Öffentlichkeitscharakter zu eigen war. Ein Gottesdienst war „öffentliches Geschehen, aus dem schon der Möglichkeit nach die Unkundigen und Ungläubigen nicht ausgeschlossen werden dürfen."[57] Zwar werden nicht-gläubige Besucher nicht als bestimmender Faktor für eine gottesdienstliche Versammlung wahrgenommen, aber aus neutestamentlicher Sicht muss in jedem Fall mit ihrer Anwesenheit gerechnet werden (1.Kor 14,23-25).[58] Christliche Gottesdienste sind folglich keine Insider-Veranstaltungen sondern offen für Gäste – und müssen daher eingebettet sein in eine Kultur der Gastfreundschaft.[59] Die Anwesenheit von Gästen erfordert eine liebevolle Rücksichtnahme in der Gestaltung des Gottesdienstes (bis hinein in den Aufbau); sie verleiht dem Gottesdienst eine evangelistische Dimension.[60]

Noch-nicht-glaubende Teilnehmer sollen im Rahmen eines sprachlich verständlichen und inhaltlich nachvollziehbaren Gottesdienstes mit dem Evangelium in Berührung kommen.[61] Als fürsorgliche Gastgeber sind wir ihnen dabei Rechenschaft schuldig über „die Hoffnung, die uns erfüllt" (1.Petr 3,15) – selbstverständlich nicht nur, aber auch durch die Art und Weise, wie wir Gottesdienst feiern. In besonderer Weise gilt hier im Blick auf nicht-christliche Besucher: „We tell the gospel by the way we worship."[62] Wer in dieser Hinsicht also damit rechnet (ob aus guten Gründen oder auf Hoffnung), dass Nichtchristen im Gottesdienst anwesend sind, dem bietet sich durch einen Ablauf, der die wesentlichen Elemente des Evangeliums strukturell repräsentiert, eine zusätzliche Chance, die christliche Kernbotschaft anschaulich zu transportieren. Wer als Gottesdienstverantwortlicher außerdem das Thema Gastfreundschaft ernstnimmt, der wird Gästen, Suchenden und Noch-nicht-Glaubenden bei aller wünschenswerten Kreativität nicht jedes Mal einen komplett runderneuerten Gottesdienstablauf zumuten. Eine nachvollziehbare Struktur gibt dem Besucher Sicherheit und Vertrauen; Wesentliches prägt sich ein. Und wenn diese Struktur die Kernelemente des Evangeliums aufgreift und veranschaulicht, dann trägt dies vor den Augen und Ohren des Nichtchristen zur Betonung und Verstärkung der durch Lied, Schriftlesung und Predigt verkündigten Botschaft bei.

3. Der Aufbau eines evangeliumszentrierten freien Gottesdienstes: Eine Skizze

Analog zu den eingangs skizzierten „Kapiteln des Evangeliums", bietet es sich im Hinblick auf einen

freien Gottesdienst an, ebenfalls einem vierteiligen Aufbau zu folgen: 1. Anbetung, 2. Bekenntnis, 3. Erneuerung, 4. Hingabe und Sendung. Damit ist an ein letztlich uraltes Grundschema der Liturgie angeknüpft, das auch im Gottesdienstbuch der evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland als vierfache Struktur Verwendung gefunden hat.[63] Das Profil dieser bewährten liturgischen Makrostruktur soll nun im Sinne eines „Nachvollzugs des Evangeliums" geschärft und speziell für die freikirchliche Gottesdienstpraxis fruchtbar gemacht werden.[64] Im Folgenden werde ich daher abschließend die einzelnen Teile der Gottesdienststruktur näher entfalten. Dabei umreiße ich jeweils kurz den konkreten *inhaltlichen Fokus* eines Abschnitts, nenne die spezifisch *evangeliumszentrierten Aspekte* und stelle stichwortartig *mögliche Gottesdienst-Komponenten* vor, die im entsprechenden Teil zur Anwendung kommen könnten. Einzelne Elemente sind dabei sicher nicht immer eindeutig zuzuordnen. Für noch detailliertere Hinweise zur Ausgestaltung und Durchführung ist hier allerdings nicht der Platz.[65]

3.1 Anbetung

Der spezifische *Fokus* dieses eröffnenden Teils liegt darauf, die Teilnehmer des Gottesdienstes abzuholen und bewusst vor Gott zu versammeln. Dahinter steht die liturgische Grundeinsicht, dass am Anfang des Gottesdienstes Gott steht. Die Teilnehmer begegnen einem allmächtigen, heiligen und liebevollen Gott, der uns aus Gnade in seine Gegenwart ruft. Die Begegnung mit dem Gott, der redet und der sich dem Menschen wohlwollend zuwendet, führt die Gemeinde hinein in eine erste Antwort der Anbetung. Der perfekte Charakter und die Anbetungswürdigkeit dessen, der „Himmel und Erde gemacht hat", wird dabei herausgestellt und unterstrichen. Gott ist Gott – wir sind es nicht, deshalb gebührt ihm die Ehre.

Als *evangeliumszentrierter Aspekt* kristallisiert sich also die Heiligkeit und Transzendenz des Schöpfergottes heraus, der in seiner Gnade an einer Beziehung zu uns Menschen interessiert ist, dem gegenüber wir als Geschöpfe aber auch zur Rechenschaft verpflichtet sind. Die anbetende Begegnung mit Gott bereitet insofern auch darauf vor, im Anschluss auf Gottes Anrede (sein Wort) zu hören.

Mögliche *Komponenten* innerhalb eines freien Gottesdienstes sind u.a. folgende:

- *Musikalisches Vorspiel*
- *Eröffnungslied*, das bewusst hineinführt in die Begegnung mit Gott
- *Begrüßung*, die die Teilnehmer gastfreundlich willkommen heißt, dabei eventuell den Gemeinschaftscharakter christlichen Gottesdienstes unterstreicht und dennoch eine theozentrische Ausrichtung fördert, indem der Blick zunächst auf Gott gelenkt wird
- *Ruf zu Anbetung* (zum Beispiel unter bewusster Bezugnahme auf entsprechende Psalmen wie Ps 100,1-4; 105,1-3; 118,24)
- *Block von Anbetungsliedern*, die tatsächlich auf das Wesen, die Heiligkeit und Souveränität Gottes abzielen und weniger auf das, was der Mensch Gott zu bringen hat
- *Schriftlesung(en)*, durchaus auch im Wechsel gelesen
- *(freies) Gebet*, als Gebetsgemeinschaft oder stellvertretend
- *Glaubensbekenntnis*, gemeinsam gesprochen[66]
- *weitere kreative Elemente*, die Gottes Charakter hervorheben und die Anbetung fördern

3.2 Bekenntnis

Die liturgische Bewegung eines evangeliumszentrierten freien Gottesdienstes führt dann hinein in einen Teil des Bekennens. Im *Fokus* steht dabei, dass die Teilnehmer des Gottesdienstes sich im Angesicht Gottes realistisch als Sünder erkennen, die den Maßstäben Gottes nicht gerecht werden. Sie nehmen Gottes Willen für ihr Leben wahr. Es geht letztlich um eine Rekapitulation der Erfahrung des Propheten Jesaja, der die Herrlichkeit Gottes erblickt und mit folgenden Worten reagiert:

> Da sprach ich: Weh mir, ich vergehe! Denn ich bin unreiner Lippen und wohne unter einem Volk von unreinen Lippen; denn ich habe den König, den Herrn Zebaoth, gesehen mit meinen Augen. (Jes 6,5; vgl. auch Ps 51,4)

Wer so im Licht der Heiligkeit Gottes steht, muss auch erkennen, wie sehr unser menschliches Herz dazu neigt, die Anbetung des wahren Gottes durch die Anbetung von falschen Göttern zu ersetzen.[67] Wir bekennen daher im Gottesdienst, unserem Schöpfer nicht den gebührenden Wert beigemessen und unser Glück und unsere Zufriedenheit häufig von anderen geschöpflichen Dingen und Personen abhängig gemacht zu haben.

Darüber hinaus gilt: Der Mensch ist nicht nur im engeren Sinn Sünder, sondern hat in vielfältiger Weise unter den Folgen des Sündenfalls zu leiden.

Nicht nur der einzelne Mensch ist nicht mehr der, der er sein sollte; auch die Welt, in der wir leben, ist zu unserem Leidwesen aus den Fugen geraten. So bietet ein am Evangelium orientierter Gottesdienst belasteten Seelen den Rahmen, neben der eigenen Schuld auch notvolles Erleben und die eigenen (intellektuellen, emotionalen und körperlichen) Einschränkungen klagend vor Gott zu bringen.

Als *evangeliumszentrierte Aspekte* kommen somit insbesondere die Sündhaftigkeit, Verlorenheit, aber auch die vielfältige Begrenztheit des Menschen in den Blick. Die Notwendigkeit der Umkehr wird deutlich und führt direkt hin zum entlastenden Zuspruch der Vergebung und zur Verheißung der Zuwendung Gottes angesichts der Herausforderungen des Lebens in einer gefallenen Welt.[68] Das evangeliumsgemäße Gewicht dieses „Gottesdienst-Kapitels" fasst Mike Cosper treffend zusammen:

> As Christians acknowledge their failures together, they testify to the world that the plausibility of the gospel is rooted not in their performance, but in the faithful mercy of God.[69]

Als mögliche *Komponenten* innerhalb eines freien Gottesdienstes könnten in diesem zweiten Teil unter anderen folgende Elemente Verwendung finden:

- *Lesung* von Texten, die Gottes Gesetz (Gottes Maßstäbe) beinhalten und von Sünde überführen (beispielsweise aus dem Alten Testament, der Bergpredigt, Texte wie Mt 22,37-39 u.a.) oder auf andere Art die Thematik des Abschnitts aufgreifen (beispielsweise Hiob 31,24-28)
- *Einladung zum stillen persönlichen Sündenbekenntnis*
- *Stellvertretendes oder gemeinsames Bekenntnisgebet*
- *Fürbitte* (siehe auch unter 3.4)
- *Elemente der Klage*, eher allgemein gehalten oder angesicht konkreter Nöte innerhalb der Gemeinde (hilfreich als Orientierungspunkte sind zum Beispiel Klagepsalmen wie Ps 13, 35, 42, 43, u.a.)
- *Lieder*, die das Themenfeld „Sünde", „Umkehr", „Bekenntnis", „Klage" zum Inhalt haben

3.3 Erneuerung

Nur wer seine eigene Sündhaftigkeit und Gebrochenheit in gebührender Weise (auch im Gottesdienst) „durchlitten" hat, kann den Reichtum der göttlichen Gnade in der ganzen Tiefe erfassen. Darauf liegt nun der *Fokus* dieses dritten Gottesdienstteils: Die Teilnehmer werden der befreienden und vergebenden Gnade Gottes und seiner liebevollen Zuwendung versichert. Gott antwortet in seiner Barmherzigkeit auf den menschlichen Zerbruch. Dies führt zu einer erneuerten Dankbarkeit für das, was Gott durch das Kreuz und die Auferstehung Jesu Christi getan hat. Im Wissen um ihre Annahme bei Gott in Christus hört die Gemeinde auf Gottes Wort, das seine Kraft entfalten und unser Fühlen, Denken und in der Folge auch Handeln erneuern soll. Evangeliumsgemäß ist die Predigt dabei nur dann, wenn sie nicht in moralistischen Anwendungen steckenbleibt, sondern den Inhalt des Bibeltextes in direkter Weise auf Christus und sein Werk bezieht und dabei aufzeigt, wie die Wahrheit des Evangeliums uns hilft, so zu leben, wie die Schrift es uns vor Augen stellt. Als Antwort auf das von Gott her vernommene Wort sind – je nach Inhalt und Stoßrichtung der Predigt – liturgisch die unterschiedlichsten Reaktionen denkbar. Die gemeinsame Feier des Abendmahls ist in besonderer Weise geeignet, das im Evangelium verborgene Erlösungs- und Erneuerungsgeschehen nachzuvollziehen und zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Es ist ein „komprimierter Mikrokosmos" des gesamten Gottesdienstgeschehens und verdichtet das Evangelium in einer Handlung.[70] Das Abendmahl stellt in „schmeckbarer Weise" das Kreuz als Grundlage der Erlösung und des christlichen Lebens in den Mittelpunkt, repräsentiert die erneuerte (horizontale) Gemeinschaft von Jesus-Nachfolgern und weist über die individuelle Rettung hinaus auf die Wiederherstellung aller Dinge, wenn „der Herr kommt" (1.Kor 11,23-26) und mit den Seinen das „Hochzeitsmahl des Lammes" feiert (Offb 19,7-9).

Als *evangeliumszentrierter Aspekt* innerhalb dieses Gottesdienstteils lässt sich somit das gnädige Rettungshandeln Gottes in Christus bestimmen. Es geht primär und grundsätzlich nicht um das, was wir als Menschen für Gott tun, sondern um das, was Jesus Christus für uns getan hat. Dieses Evangelium der Gnade als erlösende, erneuernde und verändernde Kraft soll durch die entsprechenden Komponenten im Ablauf kommuniziert und abgebildet werden.

In einem freien Gottesdienst sind demzufolge in diesem Abschnitt unter anderen folgende Elemente denkbar:

- *Zuspruch der Vergebung* (beispielsweise durch Texte wie Ps 130,3-4; 1.Joh 1,7-9) *und/oder des Trostes* (durch Texte wie 2.Kor 4,16-18; Offb 21,3-5)
- *Lied(er)*, die das Thema „Erlösung, Vergebung" zum Inhalt haben
- *Dankgebete*
- *Anspiel, Videoclip, oder änderes,* als anschauliche Hinführung zur Predigt
- *Lesung des Predigttextes*
- *Gebet vor der Predigt,* als Zeichen der Abhängigkeit von Gottes Reden und als Bitte um das nötige Verständnis
- *Predigt*
- *Möglichkeit für Fragen nach der Predigt*
- *Stilles Gebet,* als Antwort auf die Predigt
- *Vortrags- oder Gemeindelied*, als Antwort auf die Predigt oder als Überleitung zum Abendmahl
- *Zeugnisse*, als Ausdruck erfahrener geistlicher Erneuerung (siehe auch unter 3.4)
- *Abendmahl*, umrahmt von entsprechenden Texten und Liedern (siehe auch unter 3.4)

3.4 Hingabe und Sendung

In diesem abschließenden Teil des Gottesdienstes liegt der besondere *Fokus* auf den Auswirkungen der Erlösung. Die Teilnehmer des Gottesdienstes werden herausgefordert und ermutigt, aus Dankbarkeit für die erfahrene Gnade ihr Leben für Gottes Sache zu investieren und ihrer Berufung würdig als Teil der Gemeinde Jesu auch im Alltag gehorsam zu leben. Gewichtet man in diesem Zusammenhang das Abendmahl stärker als Gemeinschaftsmahl der erlösten Familie Gottes, dann kann es – sozusagen als Zeichen horizontal erneuerter Gemeinschaft – auch durchaus hier seinen Platz haben. Hingabe an Gott, seine Gemeinde, sein Reich kann sich auf vielfältige Weise ausdrücken und sich folglich ganz unterschiedlich innerhalb des Gottesdienstes konkretisieren. Wichtig ist dabei, dass die entsprechenden Elemente nicht als verdienstvolle Leistung oder religiöses Programm konnotiert sind, sondern tatsächlich als essentieller Teil des Evangeliums als eine dankbare und gehorsame Antwort auf die Gnade Gottes transportiert werden.

Damit ist dann auch der *evangeliumszentrierte Akzent* dieses Schlussabschnitts genannt: ein hingebenes, nach Heiligung strebendes, opferbereites, zeugnishaftes Leben als natürliche Folge des von Gott her Empfangenen. Auf dem Fundament des Evangeliums und in Erwartung der dauerhaften Präsenz des gnädigen Gottes findet schließlich am Ende des Gottesdienstes die stärkende Sendung hinein in den Alltag statt.

Zum Abschluss eines evangeliumszentrierten freien Gottesdienstes bieten sich folgende mögliche *Komponenten* an:

- *Abendmahl*
- *Kreative Elemente*, die zur Reaktion auf das Gehörte animieren
- *Lied(er)*, die Hingabe an Gottes Sache zum Ausdruck bringen
- *Zeugnisse*, als Ausdruck erneuerter Hingabe
- *Fürbitten*, die Anliegen aus der Gemeinde, aus dem kommunalen beziehungsweise städtischen Umfeld oder aus dem Weltgeschehen aufgreifen[71]
- *Vater Unser*
- *Einsetzung neuer Mitarbeiter*, wie zum Beispiel Älteste, Diakone, Bereichsleiter
- *Informationen*, die sich teilweise erstaunlich gut als „Elemente der Hingabe" kommunizieren lassen[72]
- *Kollekte*, als dankbare Antwort auf Gottes Großzügigkeit
- *Segen*, als ermutigende Geste der Zuwendung Gottes für den Alltag
- *Musikalisches Nachspiel*

4. Zusammenfassendes Fazit

Der freie Gottesdienst befindet sich bisweilen in einer gestalterischen „Identitätskrise". Zwischen traditioneller Liturgie und pragmatischer Beliebigkeit gilt es, einen theologisch fundierten und kontextuell flexiblen Weg der Gottesdienstgestaltung zu finden. Dafür wird es – gerade für den freien Gottesdienst – keine simplizistische „One size fits all"-Lösung geben. Dennoch legen die hier präsentierten Überlegungen nahe, die Kernelemente des Evangeliums als strukturgebenden Handlungsrahmen für den Aufbau des Gottesdienstes zu nutzen (1.). Dahinter steht die Einsicht, dass ein christlicher Gottesdienst grundsätzlich im Evangelium von Jesus Christus seinen entscheidenden Bezugspunkt hat. Für einen evangeliumszentrierten Gottesdienstablauf sprechen insgesamt neben dezidiert liturgischen, auch stärker theologisch beziehungsweise missiologisch akzentuierte Argumente (2.). Es lässt sich zeigen, dass die im Evangelium enthaltene Sequenz des Gnadenhandelns Gottes liturgisch in besonderer Weise geeignet ist, einerseits die bewahrenswerte Freiheit und Vielfalt als

identitätsstiftende Charakteristika eines freien Gottesdienstes zu ermöglichen, andererseits aber einen theologisch reflektierten Ablauf zu gewährleisten, der dem freien Gottesdienst inhaltlich Orientierung gibt. Eine so definierte evangeliumszentrierte Makrostruktur hat das Ziel, die wesentlichen Inhalte des christlichen Evangeliums liturgisch „nachvollziehbar" zu machen, die Gnade Gottes durch den Zusammenhang der einzelnen Gottesdienstelemente sozusagen zu „repräsentieren". Daraus ergibt sich auch im freien Gottesdienst die Möglichkeit, wöchentlich die Kernbotschaft des christlichen Glaubens nicht nur durch Lied, Schriftlesung oder Predigt, sondern auf einem weiteren (liturgischen) Kanal zu transportieren. Als Kontrast zur häufig beobachtbaren Praxis unverbunden nebeneinander stehender Gottesdienstteile wird so ein stringenter und durchdachter Gottesdienstaufbau möglich, der innerhalb der einzelnen Abschnitte flexibel eine für den freien Gottesdienst typische Vielfalt an Konkretionen zu integrieren vermag (3.).

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Endnotes

1 Beim vorliegenden Aufsatz handelt es sich um eine überarbeitete und erweiterte Version eines auf der jährlichen Tagung der Facharbeitsgruppe Praktische Theologie des Arbeitskreises für evangelikale Theologie (AfeT) am 25. Februar 2013 in Gießen gehaltenen Seminarvortrags.

2 A. Deeg und D. Meier, *Praktische Theologie* (Module der Theologie, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009) 24.

3 Deeg und Meier, *Praktische Theologie*, 24.

4 Mit dem Ausdruck „freier Gottesdienst" ist dabei ein Gottesdienst bezeichnet, der in grundsätzlicher Weise liturgisch *ungebunden* ist. Innerhalb dieses Aufsatzes verwende ich die Begriffe „freier Gottesdienst" und „freikirchlicher Gottesdienst" weitgehend synonym, wobei mir bewusst ist, dass auch ein freikirchlicher Gottesdienst liturgisch *gebunden* sein kann; vgl. dazu H. Eschmann, „Zwischen Ordnung und Freiheit: Anmerkungen zu Gottesdienst und Agende der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche" in S. Schweyer (Hg.), *Freie Gottesdienste zwischen Liturgie und Event* (Studien zu Theologie und Bibel, Münster: LIT, 2012) 39-46, im Blick auf den methodistischen Gottesdienst und dessen hochkirchliches Erbe.

5 Vgl. dazu u.a. die Übersicht bei B. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009) 85-101. M. Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells The Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013) 18, bemerkt: „If you look at almost any historical worship service or worship order, you'll find that all basically engage in the same dialogue; they all rehearse the gospel story."

6 Für grundsätzliche Überlegungen zum freikirchlichen Gottesdienst vgl. S. Nösser und E. Reglin, *Wir feiern Gottesdienst: Entwurf einer freikirchlichen Liturgik* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 2001); J. F. White, „Gottesdienst in freikirchlichen und charismatischen Kontexten" in *Handbuch der Liturgik. Liturgiewissenschaft in Theologie und Praxis der Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003) 186-194; C. J. Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM, 2004). Die besonderen Herausforderungen des freikirchlichen Gottesdienstes werden auch treffend behandelt von R. K. Hughes, „Free Church Worship: The Challenges of Freedom" in D. A. Carson (Hg.), *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 136-192.

7 S. Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch: Ein Plädoyer für die reflektierte Gestaltung freier Gottesdienste" in S. Schweyer (Hg.), *Freie Gottesdienste zwischen Liturgie und Event* (Studien zu Theologie und Bibel, Münster: LIT, 2012) 75-91. Schweyer verweist u.a. auf P. Zimmerling, *Charismatische Bewegungen* (UTB 3199, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 129, der speziell im Blick auf charismatische Gottesdienste konstatiert, dass diese „ihr Gottesdienstverständnis nur wenig reflektiert haben".

8 Vgl. dazu stellvertretend: *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch: Agende für die EKU und für die VELKD* (Berlin: Verlagsgemeinschaft Ev. Gottesdienstbuch, 2005), sowie die ebenfalls von der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland herausgegebene Schrift *Der Gottesdienst: Eine Orientierungshilfe zu Verständnis und Praxis des Gottesdienstes in der evangelischen Kirche* (2. Auflage; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2010) 31ff. Siehe auch Endnote 63.

9 J. Zimmermann, *Zwischen Tradition und Event: Kirche wächst durch Gottesdienst* (Gießen: Brunnen, 2010) 38.

10 Vgl. zum Folgenden die hilfreiche Übersicht bei T. Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012) 32-36 („The Gospel Has Chapters").

11 Keller, *Center Church*, 32-33.

12 Man hat in diesem Zusammenhang oft recht allgemein von „evangeliumsgemäßen

Gottesdiensten" (siehe oben Endnote 8) oder von der „Kommunikation des Evangeliums" gesprochen (siehe neuerdings C. Grethlein, *Praktische Theologie* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012] 278-300). Am deutlichsten (ohne dann liturgisch ganz konkret zu werden) äußern sich im deutschsprachig-freikirchlichen Raum (so weit ich sehen kann) Nösser und Reglin, *Wir feiern Gottesdienst*, 15: „[Freikirchliche Gottesdienste sollen helfen], die Brücke zu schlagen zwischen dem Evangelium Jesu Christi, wie es uns im Neuen Testament überliefert und durch die Reformation neu erschlossen worden ist (»Theorie«) und seiner entsprechenden Übermittlung in der gottesdienstlichen Gestaltung (»Praxis«)."

13 Zur Verwendung der Architektur-Metapher für den Bereich der Liturgie siehe C. M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010).

14 Zur Beschreibung christlicher Liturgie als Nachvollzug der „story of God in Christ" vgl. grundlegend J. K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009).

15 Ich vermeide es, in diesem Zusammenhang von einer „Inszenierung des Evangeliums" zu sprechen, weil dieser Ausdruck in der liturgischen Diskussion stärker im Rahmen einer theatralen, dramaturgischen bzw. ästhetischen Reflexion des Gottesdienstes Verwendung findet und dabei (so weit ich sehen kann) nicht primär auf dessen Aufbau bezogen ist. Vgl. in dieser Hinsicht vor allem M. Meyer-Blanck, *Inszenierung des Evangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); neuerdings in knapper Zusammenfassung auch M. Meyer-Blanck, *Gottesdienstlehre* (Neue Theologische Grundrisse, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 383-387. Für eine knappe Kritik am Begriff der „Inszenierung" aus freikirchlicher Sicht siehe Nösser und Reglin, *Wir feiern Gottesdienst*, 22, Fußnote 4.

16 Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 118.

17 Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 17: „Gospel understanding is (…) communicated in the worship patterns of the church." Siehe auch R. E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 110.

18 M. Nicol, *Weg im Geheimnis: Plädoyer für den Evangelischen Gottesdienst* (3. Auflage; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) 9.

19 Vgl. auch Nicol, *Weg im Geheimnis*, 13: „Aber hinter diese Grundeinsicht gibt es kein Zurück: dass der Gottesdienst ein Kunstwerk darstellt, das nur im Wechselspiel von Inhalt und Form angemessen wahrgenommen wird." Den Hinweis auf Martin Nicol (hier und in Endnote 64) verdanke ich meinem Kollegen und Freund Thomas Richter.

20 M. Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013) 19: „Worship, too, was all about the gospel, rehearsing the story and allowing it to shape the lives of the worshiping church."

21 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 82.

22 Man kann in manchen freikirchlichen Kreisen sogar durchaus von einem „liturgischen Analphabetismus" sprechen. Zur geschichtlich bedingten anti-liturgischen Haltung in vielen freikirchlichen Kreisen, vgl. Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 77-80, und die dort zitierte Literatur. Siehe auch Nösser und Reglin, *Wir feiern Gottesdienst*, 11-12, wo die liturgische Skepsis in Freikirchen auf deren Selbstverständnis als „Kontrastkirchen" zurückgeführt wird: „Gerade junge freikirchliche Gemeinden versuchen deshalb oftmals, alles zu vermeiden, was ihre Mitglieder an eine kirchliche Liturgie erinnern könnte. Sie sehen in einer liturgischen Ordnung eine Art ‚Sündenfall', das Ende jener erfrischenden Spontaneität und Lebendigkeit, die für den freikirchlichen Gottesdienst gewöhnlich charakteristisch sind." Vgl. diesbezüglich auch D. A. Carson, „Worship under the Word" in D. A. Carson (Hg.), *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 61: „… the freedom and creativity that is the strength of the 'free church' tradition is squandered where careful planning, prayer, and thought have not gone into the preparation of a public meeting."

23 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 83; ebenso Nösser und Reglin, *Wir feiern Gottesdienst*, 12.

24 Etwas anders akzentuiert dagegen T. Schirrmacher, *Gottesdienst ist mehr: Plädoyer für eine liturgische Gottesdienstgestaltung* (Theologisches Lehr- und Studienmaterial 2, Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1998), dem es grundsätzlich um „einen Brückenschlag zwischen einer eher freikirchlichen und eher landeskirchlichen Gottesdienstgestaltung" geht (siehe Rückentext des Buches). Allerdings legt Schirrmacher den Schwerpunkt tendenziell stärker auf eine klassisch liturgische Gestaltung des Gottesdienstes.

25 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 83.

26 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 91.

27 Derart verstanden ist es m.E. auch im Blick auf einen freien Gottesdienst legitim, von einem „Ritual" zu sprechen, im Sinne einer „bewussten Wiederholung von etwas, das nicht neu erfunden, sondern erneut begangen wird, und zwar gerade im Bewusstsein der Wiederholung"; so allgemein im Blick auf den evangelischen Gottesdienst M. Meyer-Blanck und B. Weyel, *Studien- und Arbeitsbuch Praktische Theologie* (UTB 3149, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008) 127ff.

28 Schweyer, „Frei Liturgisch", 88.

29 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 88.

30 Vgl. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 137: „The witness of the gospel requires some structure, but it

requires some freedom too."

31 Zum Zueinander von Kontextualisierung (Inkulturation) und Gottesdienst vgl. Zimmermann, *Zwischen Tradition und Event*, 72-75.

32 Die pointierten Begriffe „Metrodoxie" und „Petrodoxie" gehen auf M. J. Svigel, *Retrochristianity: Reclaiming the Forgotten Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012) 64-66, zurück, bei dem sie im Blick auf umfassendere theologische bzw. ekklesiologische Fragen zur Anwendung kommen. Die beiden genannten extremen Optionen werden auch beschrieben bei H. M. Dober, „'Kommunikation des Evangeliums': Die verantwortliche Gestaltung des Gottesdienstes nach Ernst Lange" in *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9.2 (2005) 253-254.

33 Siehe dazu auch Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 85: „So, if our worship structures are to tell this story consistently, then there must be certain aspects of our worship that remain consistent."

34 Ein prägnanter Aufriß der Diskussion zwischen Verfechtern einer historisch-klassischen und einer stärker zeitgenössischen Gottesdienstgestaltung findet sich bei T. Keller, „Reformed Worship in the Global City" in D. A. Carson (Hg.), *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 193-198. Seine Beobachtungen innerhalb des amerikanischen Kontextes spiegeln sich (soweit ich das beurteilen kann) durchaus in der Lebenswelt europäischer (Frei-)Kirchen; siehe zu den Fronten zwischen Traditionellen und Progressiven auch Zimmermann, *Zwischen Tradition und Event*, 39-40. Vgl. auch die pointierten Gegenüberstellungen verschiedenster liturgischer Spannungsfelder in R. Kunz, A. Marti und D. Plüss (Hg.), *Reformierte Liturgik – kontrovers* (Praktische Theologie im Reformierten Kontext 1, Zürich: TVZ, 2011).

35 Zimmermann, *Zwischen Tradition und Event*, 39-40.

36 H. Stadelmann, *Evangelikale Predigtlehre: Plädoyer und Anleitung für die Auslegungspredigt* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 2005) 260.

37 Vgl. dazu u.a. J. Roloff, „Der Gottesdienst im Urchristentum" in H.-C. Schmidt-Lauber und K.-H. Bieritz (Hg.), *Handbuch der Liturgik: Liturgiewissenschaft in Theologie und Praxis der Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995) 43-71; H.-J. Eckstein, „Der Gottesdienst im Neuen Testament" in H.-J. Eckstein, U. Heckel und B. Weyel, *Kompendium Gottesdienst: Der evangelische Gottesdienst in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (UTB 3630, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 22-41; umfassender L. W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999) und P. Wick, *Die urchristlichen Gottesdienste: Entstehung und Entwicklung im Rahmen der frühjüdischen Tempel-, Synagogen- und Hausfrömmigkeit* (2. Aufl.; BWANT, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003).

38 Deeg und Meier, *Praktische Theologie*, 26; ebenso J. Arnold, *Theologie des Gottesdienstes: Eine Verhältnisbestimmung von Liturgie und Dogmatik* (2. Aufl.; Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 2008) 19-23; Meyer-Blank, *Gottesdienstlehre*, 123-134, und viele andere.

39 Vgl. Martin Luthers Predigt am 5. Oktober 1544 zur Einweihung der Schlosskirche in Torgau: „... dass dieses neue Haus dahin gerichtet werde, dass nichts anderes darin geschehe, als dass unser lieber Herr selbst mit uns rede durch sein heiliges Wort und wir umgekehrt mit ihm reden durch unser Gebet und Lobgesang" (WA 49, 588, 12-18; zitiert nach M. Meyer-Blanck, *Liturgie und Liturgik: Der Evangelische Gottesdienst aus Quellentexten erklärt* [Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser, 2001] 29).

40 M. Nicol, *Grundwissen Praktische Theologie: Ein Arbeitsbuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000) 47; K.-H. Bieritz, *Liturgik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004) 258-259. Zu Luthers Verständnis des Gottesdienstes als Dialog vgl. C. Spehr, „Luthers Theologie des Gottesdienstes" in Eckstein, Heckel und Weyel, *Kompendium Gottesdienst*, 102-103.

41 Deeg und Meier, *Praktische Theologie*, 26-27.

42 Ähnlich beispielsweise auch Bieritz, *Liturgik*, 259: „Wort und Antwort ist christlicher Gottesdienst nur in Beziehung auf das Werk und die Geschichte Jesu Christi, die sich in ihm vergegenwärtigt ..."

43 Vgl. in dieser Hinsicht die verdichtete kirchliche Formel *lex orandi, lex credendi.*

44 Vgl. beispielsweise Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 166-167.

45 Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace*, 118-119.

46 Eine spezifisch evangeliumsgemäße Liturgik wird dabei an mehreren Stellen deutlich gegen-kulturelle Inhalte vermitteln. J. K. A. Smith hat in diesem Zusammenhang zurecht darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass eine wesensmäßig christliche Liturgie in deutlichem Gegensatz zu den prägenden „kulturellen Liturgien" unserer Zeit steht; vgl. u.a. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 205: „The reconciled and redeemed body of Christ is marked by cruciform practices that counter the liturgies of ... our late modern culture." So steht beispielsweise der gottesdienstliche Teil des Bekennens mit darauf folgender Zusage der Vergebung (siehe Abschnitt 3) gegen das zeitgenössische Leugnen von Schuld bzw. den fragwürdigen (teilweise laxen, teilweise manipulativen) Umgang mit vorhandenen Schuldgefühlen.

47 Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace*, 124: „So it is with the grammar of grace. We submerge ourselves in it weekly, learning not merely through passive receptivity, but in very participatory ways."

48 Diese Formel wurde ursprünglich eingeführt in M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Routledge, 1964).

49 In seiner Kritik an McLuhans Statement plädiert T.

Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishers, 2012) 140, für diese nuanciertere Formulierung.

50 Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 100: „We cannot honor the gospel and at the same time worship in ways that distort it."

51 Schirrmacher, *Gottesdienst ist mehr*, 31.

52 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 84.

53 Schweyer, „Frei liturgisch", 85. Ähnlich Möller, *Einführung in die Praktische Theologie*, 100: „So führt Gottesdienst wie von selbst in den Aufbau der Gemeinde hinein, weil derartig elementares Lernen, Erfahren, Teilen und Beten notwendig Folgen in das ganze Leben hinein hat, ja, in sich selbst schon höchst verdichtetes Leben ist."

54 Vgl. u.a. W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46, Nashville: Nelson, 2000) 422: „... the ethics ... grow out of an awareness of God's salvific work for the believer. ... 'grace' is a one-word summary of God's saving act in Christ. ... Grace provides the ongoing empowerment for Paul to conduct himself 'with holiness and godly sincerity' (2 Cor 1:12)."

55 Vgl. u.a. D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 748-750: „Paul wants to show that the exhortations of 12:1–15:13 are built firmly on the theology of chaps. 1–11. ... That God's mercy does not automatically produce the obedience God expects is clear from the imperatives in this passage. But God's mercy manifested in his Spirit's work of inward renewal (see v. 2) does impel us toward the obedience that the gospel demands."

56 Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace*, 124.

57 Möller, *Einführung in die Praktische Theologie*, 101.

58 Die neutestamentliche Perspektive bezüglich der Teilnahme von Nichtchristen am Gottesdienst ist prägnant zusammengefasst in H. Nikesch, *Gottesdienst ohne Mauern: Die neutestamentliche Gemeinde und ihre Wirkung auf Gemeindeferne* (Hammerbrücke: Jota, 2008) besonders 49-86. Zur Interpretation von 1.Kor 14,23-25 vgl. E. J. Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (HTA, Wuppertal: Brockhaus) 821-826; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 1126-1130. Siehe auch C. Böttrich, „Kirche als Minderheit mit Mission" in M. Herbst, J. Ohlemacher und J. Zimmermann (Hg.), *Missionarische Perspektiven für die Kirche der Zukunft* (BEG 1, Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2005) 59-60.

59 Das Thema Gastfreundschaft und Gottesdienst wird u.a. reflektiert bei Nikesch, *Gottesdienst ohne Mauern*, 87-112; sowie P. R. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

60 Unter Rückbezug auf Edmund Clowney spricht Keller, „Reformed Worship in the Global City", 218, hier von „doxological evangelism". Die Argumente für das Für und Wider eines „missionarischen" Gottesdienstes werden dargelegt in Zimmermann, *Zwischen Tradition und Event*, 48-54. Vgl. zur „gesunden Spannung" eines Gottesdienstes für Christen und Nichtchristen auch B. Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008) 201-204.

61 Bezüglich der Verständlichkeit des gottesdienstlichen Sprachgebrauchs vgl. die auch für den europäischen Kontext hilfreichen Hinweise bei Keller, „Reformed Worship in the Global City", 224-225.

62 Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 19.

63 Möller, *Praktische Theologie*, 85, mit Hinweis auf das *Evangelische Gottesdienstbuch* (siehe Endnote 8): 1. Eröffnung und Anrufung, 2. Verkündigung und Bekenntnis, 3. Abendmahl, 4. Sendung und Segen.

64 Über den dezidiert freikirchlichen Bereich hinaus scheint mir im Übrigen das hier geäußerte Anliegen der Profilschärfung des Gottesdienstablaufs mit der beispielsweise von Martin Nicol geäußerten Kritik am *Evangelischen Gottesdienstbuch* zu korrespondieren. Dessen Schwäche sieht Nicol, *Weg im Geheimnis*, 15, in einem „Theologieverzicht"; aufgrund einer mangelnden Reflexion über den „Geist der Liturgie" bzw. das „Wesen des Gottesdienstes" verkomme das Gottesdienstbuch zu einem bloßen „Baukasten", aus dem man sich – mal mehr mal weniger durchdacht – bediene. Die Frage nach Geist und Wesen des (evangelischen) Gottesdienstes und in der Folge dann eben auch gerade die Frage nach dessen liturgischem Ablauf lässt sich nun kaum besser als „am Evangelium orientiert" beantworten.

65 Vgl. zu den unterschiedlichen Gottesdienstteilen und ihrem jeweiligen Fokus u.a. die hilfreichen Ausführungen bei Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, 53-121 und Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 155-214. Beide folgen nicht in allen Teilen der hier dargelegten Struktur, benennen aber eine Vielfalt an Gottesdienst-Komponenten, die auch innerhalb des hier propagierten Ablaufs Verwendung finden können.

66 Als „skeletal structure of the story in which we find our identity" (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 192) ist das Glaubensbekenntnis natürlich auch an anderen Stellen innerhalb des Gottesdienstes denkbar.

67 Vgl. dazu auch Carson, „Worship under the Word", 34.

68 Die Elemente des vergebenden Zuspruchs und der tröstenden Zuwendung gehören streng genommen bereits in den Teil der Erneuerung hinein (siehe 3.3). Als Abbildung der göttlichen Reaktion auf das menschliche Bekenntnis erfüllen sie eine gewisse Scharnierfunktion zwischen dem zweiten und dritten Hauptteil des hier beschriebenen

Gottesdienstes.

69 Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace*, 131. Angesichts der erwartbaren Skepsis gegenüber derartigen Elementen der Buße und des Bekennens, weist Cosper bemerkenswerterweise darauf hin, dass ein Sündenbekenntnis im Gottesdienst nicht nur äußerst hilfreich sei für Christen, sondern vor allem auch für Nichtchristen, „[who] are all too well aware of their sin and their shortcomings and are busily spinning their wheels in attempts to surmount them". Ich gebe Cosper dahingehend Recht, dass ein ausnahmslos fröhlicher, völlig von Elementen des Sündenbekenntnisses und der Klage gereinigter Gottesdienst auf einen Nichtchristen realitätsfern, vor allem aber Evangeliums-verhüllend wirken kann (vgl. These 8). Im post-christlichen Kontext Europas wird das Bewusstsein der eigenen Sündhaftigkeit allerdings viel weniger stark vorhanden sein, als das Bewusstsein einer allgemeinen Unzulänglichkeit oder Gebrochenheit. Hier stehen wir (nicht nur liturgisch gesehen) vor einer großen missionalen Herausforderung und müssen sorgfältig nachdenken, wie „das Problem der Sünde" biblisch angemessen und kontextuell verständlich transportiert werden kann. Vgl. zu dieser Thematik auch J. Block, „Der Sünder im Spiegel des Evangeliums: Ein homiletisch-liturgischer Vorschlag für das Sündenbekenntnis im Gottesdienst" in J. Block und I. Mildenberger (Hg.), *Herausforderung: missionarischer Gottesdienst – Liturgie kommt zur Welt: Wolfgang Ratzmann zum 60. Geburtstag* (Beiträge zu Liturgie und Spiritualität, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007) 173-188. Block macht in diesem Zusammenhang den bedenkenswerten Vorschlag, speziell das Sündenbekenntnis *nach* der Predigt und damit im Spiegel des Evangeliums zu verorten.

70 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 197-198.

71 Darunter fiele zum Beispiel auch das oft vernachlässigte Gebet für die Regierenden (1.Tim 2,1-2).

72 Vor allem dann, wenn auf bestimmte Kurse oder Seminare hingewiesen wird, die der Glaubensvertiefung beziehungsweise der Schulung bestimmter (zum Beispiel evangelistischer) Fertigkeiten dienen oder wenn dazu eingeladen wird, Gaben und Zeit für das Reich Gottes einzusetzen.

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Apophaticism and Cataphaticism in Protestantism

Constantine Prokhorov

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Aufsatz legt die grundlegende Überlegenheit des aphophatischen Ansatzes [negative Gottesaussagen] über den kataphatischen [positive Gottesaussagen] dar, wenn es um Gotteserkenntnis in der christlichen Theologie geht. Der Protestantismus, der häufig (und oft verdientermaßen) des unmäßigen Rationalismus beschuldigt wurde, steht diesem Problem eigentlich gleichgültig gegenüber. Die vorliegende kurze Studie beabsichtigt aufzuzeigen, dass Protestanten mehr Anlass haben (im Vergleich zur römisch-katholischen und orthodoxen Kirche), apophatische Theologie in ihr übliches epistemologisches Konzept zu integrieren. Die meisten Nachfahren der Reformation haben es sich in Glaubensdingen bewusst versagt, ihr Vertrauen auf materielle Grundlagen zu setzen, und beten daher den unsichtbaren Gott an, der nicht abgebildet werden kann. Darüberhinaus legt der Autor einen besonderen Schwerpunkt auf einen apophatischen Umgang mit dem Herrenmahl und schlägt vor, dass russische Baptisten diesen Ritus neu überdenken und es offen als ein Sakrament begehen.

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur de cet article considère que la voie apophatique de la connaissance de Dieu est fondamentalement supérieure à la voie cataphatique en théologie chrétienne. Le protestantisme, qui est fréquemment (et souvent injustement) accusé de rationalisme excessif, est en fait resté indifférent à cette question. Le présent et bref travail de recherche veut montrer que les protestants ont davantage de raisons (que le catholicisme romain et l'orthodoxie orientale) d'inclure l'apophatisme dans leur approche épistémologique courante. Ayant intentionnellement rejeté l'appui sur des objets matériels pour servir de point de départ à la foi, la plupart de ceux qui se situent dans la ligne de la réforme adorent le Dieu invisible, qu'on ne peut pas représenter par un portrait. L'auteur met en outre un accent particulier sur l'approche apophatique de la cène et suggère que les baptistes russes reconsidèrent ce rite en lui accordant le label de sacrement.

* * * *

SUMMARY

This paper shows the essential superiority of the apophatic way of knowing God over the cataphatic way in Christian theology. Protestantism, which is frequently (and often deservedly) accused of excessive rationalism, has actually remained indifferent to this problem. The present brief research intends to show that Protestants have even more grounds than Roman Catholics and Orthodox believers to include apophaticism in their epistemology. Having deprived themselves intentionally of reliance on a material beginning in issues of faith, most followers of the Reformation worship the God Invisible, who cannot be portrayed. Additionally, the paper puts special emphasis on the apophatic approach to the Lord's Supper, suggesting that (Russian) Baptists should reconsider this rite and openly style it as a sacrament.

* * * *

1. Introduction

In his marvellous treatise *Mystic Theology*, which probably stems from the early Middle Ages, the Christian author (Pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite introduced the notion of the two ways of the Christian knowledge of God.[1] The first way

is cataphatic (καταφατικός) and consists of traditional positive statements, for example 'God is light' (1 Jn 1:5). This is a theological approach which describes God through affirmative assertions – who or what he is. The second way is apophatic (ἀποφατικός) and rejects any attempt at rational definition of the Deity. It is based on complete negation, for example, continuing the thought in 1 John 1:5, 'There is no darkness in him'. This is the approach which describes God through negative statements – who or what he is not. This is the so-called 'more excellent way' (cf. 1 Cor 12:31) which fearlessly proclaims the benefit of the humble Christian lack of knowledge over any intellectual effort. Whatever a human would think about God, it is disproportionate to his essence and greatness (Isa 55:8-9).

Cataphatic knowledge is the more accessible and customary of the two. At the same time, it has obvious, previously determined borders that cannot be transcended. Apophaticism, on the other hand, is capable of breaking through the vicious circle and of accomplishing a spiritual ascension to the Lord. However, knowledge in the usual sense of the word disappears; language becomes silent, proving itself powerless to express the inexpressible, and primacy is given to prayerful, mystical fellowship with the invisible, incomprehensible God who cannot be depicted and, at the same time, loves us without limit and is close to us. The feasible combination of both methods of knowing God is, apparently, the very blessing that a Christian ought to strive for, until God himself answers all questions in eternity.

2. Biblical apophaticism

When we immerse ourselves in the divine wisdom of Scripture, we meet apophatic statements on almost every page. The foundation of God's law, the Ten Commandments, is almost completely apophatic. The Decalogue, which uniquely gives people freedom in the Lord, teaches the (few) things that a person should *not* do, rather than (many) things to do: You shall not make for yourself an idol; you shall not take the name of the Lord in vain; you shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour; you shall not covet your neighbour's house... What is the sense of all this? The cataphatic way of thinking is so limited and superficial that it can normally be considered only as an addition (or some small part) in relation to apophaticism, which has an inexpressibly wider and deeper world view.

In Isaiah 64:4 and 1 Corinthians 2:9 we find a surprising promise: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.' At first glance the apophatic approach to the theme of eternity suggested here (by means of several negations) carries little information and seems to lose out to the cataphatic approach, for instance, if we compare it with the detailed description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 21. However, this impression immediately disappears as soon as we somehow manage to master the apophatic method, and then even the brief 'negative' description of heaven in the Bible is wonderfully transformed.

'Things that the eye has not seen...' apophatically exclaim the prophet Isaiah and the apostle Paul. Let us simplify the idea, reducing it to the cataphatic level: what things have our eyes seen on earth? Certainly, in the fallen world we meet much evil and sin. At the same time, we have the opportunity to enjoy the masterpieces of great artists, sculptors and architects; we can see the magnificence of divine creation all around. Yet, according to Isaiah and Paul, that is *nothing*[2] when compared to the things God has prepared for his children from all eternity.

'Things that the ear has not heard...' Living on earth we hear declarations of love from people who are dear to our hearts, the penetrating word of Christian preaching, and moving singing – yet even these things are *nothing*, bearing heaven in mind!

'Things that have not entered the heart of man...' Although many wonderful, spirit-ennobling ideas and creative revelations already occur to us, all these things are absolutely *nothing* in comparison with what will come true in eternity!

Thus, starting from cataphaticism, which is usual for most people, we gradually move to the apophatic way, which was already meditated on by some of the church fathers, a way which fearlessly proclaims the superiority of a person's ignorance.[3] As it is written:

> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body *I do not know,* or out of the body *I do not know*, God knows – such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man – whether in the body or apart from the body *I do not know,* God knows – was caught up into Paradise and heard *inex-*

pressible words, which a man *is not permitted* to speak (2 Cor 12:2-4).

The most educated of people, who only a short while before belonged to the elite of Jewish society, the apostle Paul, humbly recognises the inability of his mind and language to describe divine mysteries. What then can be said about other people? 'We know in part and we prophesy in part; for now we see in a mirror dimly…' (1 Cor 13:9, 12). This is the destiny of every person living on earth. As a poet said: 'I pity people who do not know God; I pity people who know all about Him.'[4]

3. Protestant apophaticism

Mystical theology, based on the apophatic method, in due time received sufficient recognition in the Christian world in both the West and East,[5] although the Orthodox Church has so far probably expressed greater respect for apophaticism. Protestantism, which is frequently (and often deservedly) accused of excessive rationalism, has actually remained indifferent to this issue. The present brief research intends to show, strange as it may seem, that Protestants have even more grounds (in comparison with Roman Catholics and Orthodox believers) to include apophaticism in their common epistemological concept.

First of all, we see Protestant apophaticism in the refusal to worship any kind of sacred images and objects such as icons, statues, holy relics and holy water. Having intentionally deprived themselves of reliance on a material beginning, most followers of the Reformation worship the God Invisible, who cannot be portrayed. Having put their trust in statements of Scripture,[6] and having declined ambiguous, frequently inconsistent church traditions on the given theme, Protestants, unexpectedly for themselves, have a number of doubtless theological advantages over historical churches. For even the most perfect of icons is inherently similar to anthropomorphic statements about God in the Bible, which, undoubtedly, condescend to the cataphatic thinking of feeble humanity, as though God actually had ears,[7] eyes,[8] lips,[9] hands,[10] feet,[11] wings,[12] feathers,[13] etc. Such imaginative illustrations are probably in a certain way necessary for infants in faith and knowledge, including Protestants. But just as it would be unthinkable to set oneself the task of portraying, for example, a living human soul,[14] so it is likewise unreal to paint a picture of the soul's Origin, the invisible God. In fact, few people doubt that humankind is created in the image of God and according to his likeness, not in terms of the body but of the soul (reason, feelings, will). And apophaticism – as a more perfect way – points directly to the invisible God, both in the Old (Ex 33:20) and the New Testament: '… who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honour and eternal dominion! Amen' (1 Tim 6:16).

Thus, mature Protestantism, following Scripture, involuntarily moves to the way of apophaticism which is only accessible to those who have left infancy behind. And then much more is revealed to a Christian than he knew before. In this context, Protestant indifference to pilgrimage to the Holy Land (during the Reformation and later) becomes more understandable, because for a Christian the true Jerusalem is a heavenly Jerusalem and not an earthly one.[15] On occasions when an Orthodox or Roman Catholic believer must cross himself, it is sufficient for Protestants to pray mentally; and usually they do it with their eyes closed, not resorting to the mediation of any material image. The Protestant worship service is inherently apophatic, as are their church architecture, the internal decoration of their prayer houses, their 'Puritan' lifestyle, etc. The Russian poet F. I. Tiutchev, who was sensitive to issues of faith, perfectly expressed this peculiarity of Protestantism in 1834:

> I love the Lutherans' divine service,
> Their ritual strict, significant, and simple –
> These bare walls and empty Temple
> I understand the high teaching of.[16]

At Sunday school Protestants do not forbid children to use drawings (= use the cataphatic method); they do not, however, accept any worship of such images. Here we can remember a curious paradox which can be observed many times in the history of Christianity: churches in which icons were painted quite often persecuted secular painting (mainly in the Middle Ages) but Protestants were usually not so strict in this regard.[17] Thus followers of the Reformation, as a rule, distinguished fundamentally between religious and secular art, showing severity in the former case and condescension in the latter. The heavenly Original is too great and inexpressible to dare to show him by any selection of paints, while the inaccuracy of artists in depicting the fallen material world is quite pardonable. That which is useful and permissible

for children quite often is not so for adults; that is why most Protestants recommend leaving behind imperfect images and, with fear and trembling, moving to a more excellent way, directly addressing the invisible God.

4. Eucharistic apophaticism

But Christ came to earth in the flesh, people will tell us. In the New Testament we read: 'No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him known' (Jn 1:18); '[Christ] ... is the image of God invisible' (2 Cor 4:4). Does this mean, then, that it is possible to portray the invisible Lord? Hardly. Christ did, indeed, come to people in flesh as a true human being, but that does not diminish apophaticism in knowing the Lord, for who is capable of depicting Christ as the Son of God and God the Son? Here the brush in the hands of the icon painter fails.[18]

It is not difficult to imagine a situation in which the Lord Jesus would choose an apostle not only from the Jews, who were not trained to draw and sculpt, but a Greek, competent in the fine arts, who would then take care to preserve the Lord's image and statue for future generations – a way which was common in the ancient world. But this was not pleasing to the Saviour at all. He went in the completely opposite direction, which all of his future disciples must respect:

> While they were eating, he took [some] bread, and after a blessing he broke [it], and gave [it] to them, and said, 'Take [it], this is my body.' And when he had taken a cup [and] given thanks ... said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many' (Mk 14:22-24).

Thus, it was not an icon of himself that Christ left behind, but the Lord's Supper.[19] The Eucharistic bread and cup, which are outwardly unlike a human being, apophatically reveal the Lord completely to Christians: 'Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?' (1 Cor 10:16). Hence, Christ left the bread and cup to us for Holy Communion, and the New Testament everywhere mentions them along with the words which rationalistic understanding cannot comprehend, that they are, in essence, the body and blood of Christ.[20] At the same time, the statement about the invisible presence of the body and blood of the Saviour at the Lord's Supper in the biblical text invariably switches over to a repeated mention of the bread and cup, meaning completely interchangeable, synonymous concepts. In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 this pattern could be expressed by the following scheme:

cup – blood
bread – body – bread – body – bread

In the Eucharistic text which is most frequently quoted, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, the given scheme is more complex:

bread – body – bread – bread – body – bread – body
cup – blood – cup – cup – blood – cup

Here we can remember John 6:48-58 in which Jesus calls himself the bread of life:

bread – bread – bread – bread – bread – flesh – flesh – flesh – flesh – flesh – flesh – bread – bread

Bearing in mind the known differences between the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant approaches to the interpretation of the Lord's Supper, can the apophatic approach to the problem help us in any way? Certainly! Already in the Athanasian Creed there appears a statement about the unconfoundability and indivisibility of the Holy Trinity.[21] The fathers of the Fourth (Chalcedon, 451) and Sixth (Constantinople, 680-681) Ecumenical Councils arrived at the same idea, only in connection with a Christological problem – in what way the two natures and two wills of the Lord Jesus Christ relate to each other.[22] The father of the Reformation, Martin Luther, in his most important work *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), came very close to the same idea concerning Holy Communion:

> I ... after floating in a sea of doubt, at last found rest for my conscience in the view ... that it is real bread and real wine, in which Christ's real flesh and blood are present ... No one may fear to become guilty of heresy if he should believe in the presence of real bread and real wine on the altar, and that every one may feel at liberty to ponder, hold and believe either one view or the other, without endangering his salvation ... I firmly believe not only that the body of Christ is in the bread, but that the bread is the body of Christ ... In order that the real body and the real blood of Christ may be present in the sacrament, it is not necessary that the bread and wine be transubstantiated ...[23]

There are various interpretations of these amazing words. Often Luther is even accused of not making a complete break with Catholic tradition[24] but the fact remains that he rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation. But how is it possible to reconcile these apparently mutually exclusive statements: 1) In the sacrament of communion, together with the bread and the cup of wine, the true body and blood of Christ are present; and 2) Transubstantiation does not happen? Lutheran theologians explain it in the following, seemingly not too successful, manner:

> We accept the true Body and true Blood of our Lord 'in, with and under the blessed bread and wine' (i.e. in bread and wine, with bread and wine, and under the appearance of bread and wine ...).[25]

It is not completely clear how Luther understood this delicate question, but his respectful attitude to the literal sense of the Bible text (as opposed to Calvin and Zwingli, who directed their thoughts to an allegorical or 'spiritual' interpretation of the Eucharistic verses of the New Testament)[26] seems to us worthy of the highest estimation. Yes, it may appear 'unreasonable', 'irrational', bordering on mysticism, and yet Holy Scripture, the immutable word of God, affirms exactly the same things.

In a similar way we 'unreasonably' believe in the Triune God (in his unconfoundability and indivisibility) or in the harmonious combination of the divine and human natures in our Saviour (also necessarily uncounfounded and inseparable). It may seem that from the point of view of common sense nothing can be more absurd than these apophatic affirmations. Nevertheless, this belief is professed with rare unanimity by the entire Christian world, including all basic Protestant churches, and no one feels deranged or lacking in understanding. Why is it then that such a remarkable theological method, tested over time, has not been applied to our consideration of the Lord's Supper? It is a well known fact that Scripture asserts that the Eucharistic bread is actual bread and the body of Christ at the same time,[27] and that the cup is actual wine and the blood of Christ at the same time.[28] Maybe we are afraid to deviate from the Protestant foundation of faith? But who was a greater Protestant than Martin Luther? Yet he, standing on the firm foundation of Scripture, was not afraid to recognise its literal sense!

In the upper room where Christ shared the Last Supper with his disciples, there were, at the same time, ordinary bread, a cup of wine and Christ (his flesh and blood, and the wholeness of his Person). The same mysterious event occurs, as a matter of fact, at the very moment of Communion (breaking bread), without any transubstantiation.[29] This means that – even after the common prayer of an elder and a congregation – the Eucharistic bread remains, undoubtedly, ordinary bread and yet simultaneously becomes the genuine body of Christ. And these two natures remain unconfounded and inseparable from each other, just like the two natures of Christ: one hundred percent bread and one hundred percent his body. The same thing happens to the cup during Communion: the wine remains wine and, at the same time, becomes the genuine blood of our Saviour, unconfounded and inseparable, one hundred percent wine and one hundred percent blood, as we apophatically confess the humanly incomprehensible harmony of the two natures and wills of Jesus Christ, the true God and the true Man.

A similar view of the Lord's Supper was held by the Eastern Church in ancient times. Professor N. D. Uspensky gives a number of curious citations on the given theme from the works of the fathers of the church.[30] However, beginning with the Middle Ages, cataphatic teaching about transubstantiation almost completely superseded the old (apophatic) understanding of Communion.[31] In this sense the condemnation of the Orthodox theologian, professor A. I. Osipov, is remarkable in that he dared recently to give a reminder concerning the 'Chalcedonian' approach to the Eucharist.[32]

But even if we take the most extreme statement of the problem, including transubstantiation, we ought not to fear it, in my opinion. Some argue that Protestants are even frightened by the word 'transubstantiation', which is traditional for Roman Catholic and Orthodox believers in explaining the Lord's Supper. But the interchangeability of Eucharistic concepts shown above, bread-body (body-bread) and cup-blood (blood-cup), lays a New Testament foundation for us to deal with the topic. If, after the prayer over the bread and wine, they are really transformed (only, exclusively) into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, then immediately during participation in the Lord's Supper by members of the church, at the moment of tasting, if we can put it this way, the opposite transubstantiation occurs – into bread and wine[33] (which is why they taste accordingly).[34] Having admitted this point of view,

we avoid the well-known restraint of Protestant 'spiritual' interpretations regarding the ontology of the Lord's Supper, thereby preserving a Protestant position in its essence: bread remains bread, and wine remains wine.[35]

5. Russian Baptist apophaticism in practice

The church is the Body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:24), in which Christ himself is the Head (Col 1:18; Eph 5:23) and we are members (parts) of this living united body (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27). Christ, stopping Saul on his way to Damascus, says: 'Why are you persecuting me? ... I am Jesus whom you are persecuting...' (Acts 9:4-5). By these words the Saviour, abiding in heaven, unmistakably identifies himself with the Church (his body) suffering on earth. 'And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it' (1 Cor 12:26). We see the same thing in Communion: all members (parts) of the Church, belonging to the living Body of Christ in order not to perish, must necessarily feed on his life-giving essence, on flesh and blood, even if they do not quite understand how this sacrament works. It may even be true that the less they understand, the better; then they will trust the incomprehensible God even more. The profound theologian Ephraim the Syrian (fourth century) once said in humility:

> And I, brothers, do not become bold because I can meditate upon the mysteries of the Lord, or even touch these arcane and dreadful mysteries. And if I wanted to be daring and began to muse on them, then I would not be capable of comprehending them... I am mortal, from the dust and of dust, made by grace of earthly essence; voluntarily I understand the nothingness of my being and I do not want to enter into the investigation of my Creator, because the Incomprehensible One is dreadful in His essence.[36]

It is surprising but true: the thinking of most Russian Baptists is apophatic, even if they are not familiar with the term. This is fully manifested in their confession of God as great, unfathomable, and as the one who cannot be portrayed.[37] It is difficult to find as much reverence in any other church at Communion, which is not officially called a sacrament at all among Russian Baptists, although it is such in its essence.

To substantiate this statement, suffice it to remember the all-congregation Friday fast (with full abstention from food and often from water) before Communion; the personal fast on the morning of the day of the Lord's Supper; the penitential prayers; the minor key congregational singing about the suffering Christ, frequently accompanied by tears; the crumb of Eucharistic bread, accidentally dropped on the floor and immediately picked up in reverence; the elders and deacons' fear of spilling the precious cup;[38] and finally the most serious attitude of ordinary members of the church towards the apostolic warning (understood, by the way, literally and not allegorically!): 'For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment on himself. ... For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 11:29-30).[39] These eloquent details precisely testify to the sacramental nature of the domestic Baptist Communion service, which is not a traditional 'remembrance' of Jesus' sufferings,[40] as is often stated officially. No, Russian Baptists not merely see bread on a tray and wine in a cup!

Undoubtedly, there are rationalists among them, lovers of Western theological books and textbooks on theology. Still, the majority of church members (including a considerable number of presbyters, even contrary to the teaching they received at Bible schools and seminaries),[41] under the influence of the general Eastern Orthodox tradition successfully intertwined with fundamental Protestant apophatism, tend to Christian mystical theology, refusing the attempt to comprehend God with their mind. It is for this reason that Russian Baptists so frequently and with especial feeling repeat the following apophatic texts, intuitively chosen from the Scripture:

> Behold, God is exalted, and we *do not know* him; the number of his years is *unsearchable* (Job 36:26).
>
> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, *I cannot attain it!* (Ps 139: 6)
>
> Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and his greatness is *unsearchable* (Ps 145:3).
>
> The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding *no one can fathom* (Isa 40:28).
>
> 'For *my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are*

your ways my ways', declares the Lord (Isa 55:8).

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How *unsearchable* are his judgments and *unfathomable* his ways! (Rom 11:33).

Because *the foolishness* of God is wiser than men, and *the weakness* of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brethren, that there were *not many* wise according to the flesh, *not many* mighty, *not many* noble; but God has chosen the *foolish things* of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the *weak things* of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the *base things* of the world and the *despised* God has chosen, *the things that are not*, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that *no man may boast* before God (1 Cor 1:25-29).

Thanks be to God for his *indescribable* gift! (2 Cor 9:5).

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the *unfathomable* riches of Christ (Eph 3:8).

Now to the King eternal, *immortal, invisible*, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen (1 Tim 1:17).

6. Conclusion

At some moment in their history, Russian Evangelical Christians unofficially joined the early Christian apophatic tradition, known to them from the Eastern Orthodox sources. Their way of combining the Eastern mystical thinking with some Protestant beliefs is unique. Many traditional sermons, devotions, hymns and prayers at the meetings of the Slavic Evangelical communities reflect their historical and cultural peculiarities. The apophatic thinking of Russian Evangelicals manifests itself in particular through their voluntary renunciation of worldly values (which was especially noticeable in Soviet times), anti-intellectualism and 'foolishness' for Christ's sake. 'I speak with Him often, but I cannot reproduce His marvellous conversation', Russian Baptists sing in one of their popular hymns. Realising that some points expressed in the present article can be debated, I nevertheless find it necessary to draw the attention of as many theologians and ministers of local congregations as possible to this topic for deeper meditation on these features of the Slavic Baptist evangelical spiritual tradition.

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Endnotes

1 See also other treatises of Dionysius the Areopagite, especially 'Bozhestvennye imena' [Divine names] in *Misticheskoe bogoslovie* [Mystical theology] (Kiev: Put' k istine, 1991).

2 Elsewhere in the Pauline epistles we also find a complete negation (οὐδείς) of whatever is good or loving in humans: 'If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am *nothing*. And if I give all my possessions to feed [the poor], and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me *nothing*' (1 Cor 13:2-3).

3 V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976) 23-36.

4 Ieromonach Roman, <http://tropinka.orthodoxy.ru/zal/poezija/roman/index.htm> [accessed 5 November 2012].

5 Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 23-24. In European theological life, the most famous apophatic sources were the writings of St. John of the Cross and the anonymous *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

6 Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 4:15-19. It is relevant to remember that the Ten Commandments belong to the eternal ordinances. It would be just as inconceivable for Protestants to break the prohibition concerning 'sacred images' as it would be absurd to cast doubt on the commands not to use God's name in vain, not to commit adultery, not to steal, etc.

7 2 Kings 19:16; Psalm 17:6.

8 Ezra 5:5; Psalm 33:18.

9 Numbers 12:8; Isaiah 58:14.

10 Exodus 24:11; Acts 2:33

11 Exodus 24:10; Luke 20:43.

12 Ruth 2:12; Psalm 17:8.

13 Psalm 91:4.

14 Although some people try to do it on the level of comics today.

15 Hebrews 13:14; Philippians 3:20.

16 F. Tiutchev, *Stikhotvoreniia* [Poetry] (Moscow: Pravda, 1978) 108.

17 Even John Calvin, famous for his extreme strictness toward all 'secular' things, wrote: 'And yet I am not gripped by the superstition of thinking absolutely no images are permissible. But because sculpture and painting are gifts of God, I seek a pure and

legitimate use of each…' Calvin allowed the use of creative talents outside the religious realm to depict historical events, people and nature; he even considered it useful and aesthetically pleasant. See Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973) I,112.

18 Gregory Palamas (fourteenth century) and his followers solved this problem by separating God's essence (which cannot be comprehended and portrayed) and his 'energies' (which are efficaciously displayed in any theophany even by means of material objects, for instance icons). See J. Meyendorff, *Zhizn' i trudy Svyatitelia Grigoriia Palamy. Vvedenie v izuchenie* [Life and works of the Blessed Gregory of Palamas: Introduction to the study] (St. Petersburg: Byzantinorossica, 1997). Yet we cannot help but notice a hidden theological attempt to give preference to the cataphatic method of knowing God. For if the matter is put this way, people still 'see God' not as he is, but in the extremely simplified form in which the Unfathomable One reveals himself to humans who cannot comprehend his fullness. This also relates to God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, who was certainly visible as Man and incomprehensible as God.

19 This biblical fact was pointed out by Byzantine theologians more than once during the iconoclast movement in the eighth century, but also long before them; John Chrysostom e.g. taught: 'How many today say, "I wish I could see the face of Christ, His image, clothing, shoes." Lo! Thou seest Him [in the Eucharist], Thou touchest Him, thou eatest Him. And thou indeed desirest to see His clothes, but He giveth Himself to thee not to see only, but also to touch and eat…' (*Homily 82 on the Gospel of Matthew)* <http://oldes.tstu.ru/orthodox/library/mirror/ccel/Zlatmat2/Mat2_82.html> [accessed 6 November 2012].

20 Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20, and so on.

21 'And the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons (*neque confundentes personas*) nor dividing the substance (*neque substantiam seperantes*).' <http://inokinf.by.ru/docs/symbols/athanas_latin.html?extract=1129550216> [accessed 6 November 2012].

22 'We teach with one voice that the Son [of God] and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [Person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man… This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly (ἀσυγχύτως), immutably (ἀτρέπτως), indivisibly (ἀδιαιρέτως), inseparably [united] (ἀχωρίστως).' See A. Kartashev, *Vselenskie sobory* [The ecumenical councils] (Moscow: Respublica, 1994) 273.

'Defining all this we likewise declare that in him are two natural wills and two natural operations indivisibly (ἀδιαιρέτως), inconvertibly (ἀτρέπτως), inseparably (ἀμερίστως), unconfusedly (ἀσυγχύτως), according to the teaching of the holy Fathers. And these two natural wills are not contrary the one to the other (God forbid!) as the impious heretics assert, but his human will follows and that not as resisting and reluctant, but rather as subject to his divine and omnipotent will.' See V. Bolotov, *Lektsii po istorii drevnei Tserkvi* [Lectures on the history of the ancient Church], 4 vols. (Moscow, 1994) v. IV, 498-499.

23 See <http://svitlo.by.ru/bibloteka/luter/vavilon.htm> [accessed 23 December 2011].

24 M. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 1125.

25 G. Kretschmar, 'Sviatoe prichastie soglasno ucheniiu i ukladu Liuteranskoi Tserkvi' [Holy communion according to the teaching and structure of the Lutheran Church], *Der Bote: Zhurnal Evangelichesko-Luteranskoy Tserkvi* [*The messenger: Journal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*] 1 (2002) 8.

26 Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1126-1128.

27 Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper we read Paul's words that Jesus, breaking bread, said, 'this is my body', not some abstract or 'spiritual' body, but the one which 'is broken for you' (1 Cor 11:24).

28 It is said about the Eucharistic cup, 'This is My Blood of the new covenant' and, again, it is not some imaginary blood, but the blood that 'is poured out for many' (Mk 14:24).

29 The expression 'without any transubstantiation' can again be compared with the negative adverb ἀτρέπτως ('immutably,' 'inconvertibly') from the creeds of the Fourth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils.

30 N.D. Uspensky, 'Anafora (Opyt istoriko-liturgicheskogo analiza)' [Anafora (An Attempt at historical-liturgical analysis)], *Bogoslovskie trudy* vol. 13 (1975) 125-147.

31 For example, the classical work of Metropolitan Makary, most frequently quoted by domestic theologians, tells about the sacrament of the Eucharist exclusively as transubstantiation or its synonyms, *prelozhenie* and *pretvorenie*. See Metropolitan Makary (Bulgakov), *Pravoslavno-dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie* [*The Orthodox-Dogmatic Theology*, 1883], 2 vols. (Moscow: Palomnik, 1999) v. II.367, 385, 396.

32 'Bread does not transmute invisibly, deceptively for the senses into the body of Christ, but in a Chalcedonian way unites with him, with God the incarnate Word, communes with him just as he took upon himself the human nature of incarnation' (A. I. Osipov, 'Evkharistiia i sviashchenstvo' [Eucharist and priesthood] <http://www.sedmitza.ru/index.

html?sid=253&did=3971&p_comment=&call_action= print1(default)> [accessed 10 November 2012]. For criticism of this work, see for example: Archimandrite Rafail (Karelin), 'Eshche raz o ereticheskikh zabliuzhdeniiakh professora MDA, A. I. Osipova' [More on the heretical errors of Professor MDA, A. I. Osipov], <http://theologym.narod.ru/rafail.htm> [accessed 10 November 2012].

33 It is curious to note that a similar idea is present in the Orthodox *Drevnii paterik* [Ancient patristics], 18.4 (published in 1899). Actually, the church editor comments on it in the context as 'an obvious vision from the devil'. See <http://www.krotov.info/acts/04/0399ptr6.html> [accessed 6 November 2012].

34 Here we may remember the 'transubstantiation' of water into blood by Moses and Aaron in Egypt (Ex 7:19-21), and water into wine by Christ during the wedding in Cana of Galilee (Jn 2:1-10). It is worth noting that neither the blood in Egypt nor the wine in Cana were imaginary, but genuine, tasting (and probably in colour, looking) like blood (Ex 7:18.21) and wine (Jn 2:9-10). It is hardly godly after such examples to pose the question of the 'expedience' of turning wine into blood, or blood into wine by our Lord.

35 It is quite possible, sparing the feelings of 'unbending' Protestants, to go without mentioning transubstantiation. In other words, whoever sees only the bread and the cup of wine during communion partakes of only bread and wine, not completely realising the sacrament of communing in the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16). However, communion takes place with each sincere Christian anyway; and whoever sees Jesus himself in the Lord's Supper, partaking of the same bread and wine, is already consciously communing in his broken body and pure blood poured out for sinners.

36 Ephraim the Syrian, 'Protiv issledovatelei estestva Syna Bozhia' [Against researchers of the nature of the Son of God]. <http://www.pagez.ru/lsn/0451.php> [accessed 6 November 2012].

37 The lyrics of hymns 114 and 440 from the collection *Pesn' vozrozhdeniia* [Song of Revival, 1978], in particular, include the following lines: 'To behold You with our eyes // is not granted to us, sinners, but to embrace by faith // with love we can, although invisible //You give inexpressible // delight to the soul ...'; 'Oh, immeasurable love // deed wonderful and holy, // unfathomable goodness // my mind cannot comprehend. // Lamb, offered as a sacrifice! // How can I reward you // for the unspeakable gift?' Such apophatic ideas are present in many other hymns in the main worship book of domestic Baptists; see e.g. numbers 66, 91, 98, 108 and 187.

38 I remember an old presbyter in a Baptist church in Omsk (Russia), who artlessly said to his congregation during the Lord's Supper, 'Please be careful, brothers and sisters, not to spill the blood of Christ!'

39 Regarding illnesses, by the way, it is common to hear something like the following from church ministers: 'It still hasn't happened that anyone ever became ill because of taking Communion from the common cup ("they say this is unsanitary"); on the contrary, we often hear about illnesses being healed...' In addition, the traditional domestic Baptist churches do not consider the 'holy kiss' after the Lord's Supper allegorically at all, and it is still widely practised in Russia, reluctantly giving way to the Western practice of the ordinary handclasp.

40 On this topic see the excellent work by S.V. Sannikov, 'Vecheria Gospodnia' [The Lord's Supper], *Almanakh Bogomyslie* 1 (1990) 65-116.

41 Where, obviously, Western theology, which is not always acceptable to the Russian Baptist brotherhood, prevails.

Book Reviews – Recensions – Buchbesprechungen

* * * * * * * *

Geen verbond, geen genade. Analyse en evaluatie van het gebod om de Kanaänieten uit te roeien (Deuteronomium 7)

A. Versluis

Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Academic, 2012; hb., 367 pp., € 29,90; ISBN 978-90-239-2106-6

SUMMARY

This PhD thesis in Dutch (with Summary in English) offers an excellent interpretation of the command to annihilate the Canaanites as found in Deuteronomy 7. The exegesis is followed by a discussion of the biblical and historical contexts, and a biblical-theological interpretation. The author does not explain the command away but says that its reach was limited in time.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Doktoraldissertation auf Holländisch (mit Zusammenfassung auf Englisch) bietet eine ausgezeichnete Interpretation des Gebotes, die Kanaanäer zu vertilgen, wie wir es in Deuteronomium 7 vorfinden. Der Exegese folgt eine Darstellung des biblischen und historischen Umfelds sowie eine biblisch-theologische Auslegung. Der Autor leugnet nicht diesen Befehl, doch er sagt, dass dessen Reichweite zeitlich begrenzt war.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de doctorat en hollandais (accompagnée d'un résumé en anglais) considère le commandement d'exterminer les Cananéens en Deutéronome chapitre 7. Une excellente exégèse est suivie d'un examen du contexte biblique et du contexte historique, puis d'une approche de théologie biblique. L'auteur ne verse pas dans une interprétation qui évacuerait le commandement, mais considère que sa portée était limitée dans le temps.

* * * *

In recent years the question whether religion causes violence has been asked repeatedly by non-Christians and answered in the affirmative. Of course, (evangelical) Christians will say, 'No, it doesn't.' They will emphasize God's love shown in the life and death of Jesus Christ. However, the same Christians may struggle with parts of the Bible, in particular in the Old Testament, which seem to suggest that violence was an integral part of Israel's religion. Many have expressed their doubts and questions in this respect: is the Old Testament not a violent book and is the New Testament not completely different?

In order to answer this question, thorough exegesis of difficult texts and passages is needed and that is what Dr Arie Versluis has done in his study of Deuteronomy 7. The book *Geen verbond, geen genade* is his published PhD thesis – in true Dutch fashion only his initial is given on the cover. Translated into English the book's title is *No covenant, no mercy: An analysis and evaluation of the commandment to exterminate the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7)*. At the end of the book there is a 4.5 page English Summary.

Versluis studied the commandment to exterminate the nations of Canaan as found in Deuteronomy 7:2: '...and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.' (NIV) In great detail the author offers a plausible exegesis of this verse and the entire chapter. He concludes that the commandment implies the killing of the Canaanites and should not be interpreted as just removing them. The command does not apply to 'all nations' but is restricted to the Canaanites and only for a particular period, that is the time of entering the land. The reason given in Deuteronomy 7 for this radical measure is that they form a threat to Israel's identity: they would keep Israel from worshipping only the God who led them out of Egypt by tempting them to serve other gods. Hence only a radical removal of anything Canaanite can prevent Israel from losing its special position as the chosen people of God.

Besides, other reasons for the same course of action are given in texts such as Genesis 15:16, Deuteronomy 12:29-31 and 18:9-14, where the Canaanites are linked to terrible things such as child sacrifice and witchcraft. Their sin had reached 'its full measure' (Gen. 15:16, where the name 'Amorites' is a *pars pro toto* for the Canaanites). Versluis investigates the use of child sacrifice which in later times even took place in Israel. He concludes that it is highly probable that this was indeed practised in Canaan.

The thesis also explores ancient and modern interpretations of this difficult command and the way in which people have tried to modify it. Versluis cannot conclude anything else than that the order was given by God, albeit for a restricted period of time. He also pays ample attention to the biblical-theological context of the command, emphasizing Israel's election, which cannot be understood fully. (Why did God choose the people of Israel and no others?) He also points to the progressive revelation of God from the Old to the New Testament; since God's judgement became fully visible in the cross of his Son Jesus, things have changed. The final judgement is still to come and therefore no human beings are asked to perform judgement in the way Israel was once asked to do.

The chapter on the biblical-theological issues con-

tains some comments which I do not find helpful. On page 305 Versluis uses the word 'genocide' ('volkerenmoord') for the commandment to kill the Canaanites. This has the association of xenophobia, destroying people different from ourselves. However, elsewhere he rightly argues that it was not a matter of xenophobia; therefore I think it is better to omit the term genocide. On page 317 Versluis comments (translation mine): 'I cannot understand or explain how God, who in the Old and New Testament is pictured as a God full of love and mercy, commands to destroy complete nations without discernment, apparently without warning or possibility of salvation.' I wonder whether this is a correct description of Israel's entry into the land. After all, Rahab was saved; she indicates that she and all in the land had heard of what God had done for Israel and 'our hearts sank and everyone's courage failed because of you…' (Jos 2:11) Besides, at the Tyndale Old Testament study group 2013, where these issues were discussed again, professor Kenneth Kitchen commented that people have focussed too much on 'large numbers of people being killed', whereas this only happened to a few military posts.

On the whole, however, Versluis offers an extensive and excellent contribution to a difficult issue. I hope his work will be translated into English or German so that many can benefit from this excellent doctoral thesis.

Hetty Lalleman-de Winkel
London

The Lion has Roared: Theological Themes in the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament

H.G.L. Peels and S.D. Snyman (eds)

Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2012; 241 pp, pb,
$ 25,20; ISBN 978-1-61097-659-6

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch bietet eine systematische Analyse eines jeden prophetischen Buchs im Alten Testament; es konzentriert sich dabei eher auf die Bücher als auf die Propheten selbst und widmet besondere Aufmerksamkeit ihren jeweiligen theologischen Anliegen. Hier handelt es sich um ein Gemeinschaftswerk mit sechzehn Autoren, welche die Hauptrichtung evangelikaler Theologie repräsentieren. Trotz der Vielzahl der Autoren weist der Band einen logischen Zusammenhang auf und eignet sich gut als Arbeitsbuch für Studenten im Grundstudium.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage contient une analyse systématique de chaque livre prophétique de l'Ancien Testament, en s'intéressant aux livres plutôt qu'aux prophètes eux-mêmes, et en considérant plus particulièrement l'apport théologique de chacun d'eux. Il est le fruit de la collaboration de seize auteurs représentant la ligne académique évangélique principale. Cette diversité d'auteurs ne nuit aucunement à sa cohérence et il constitue un bon manuel pour des étudiants.

SUMMARY

The book offers a systematic analysis of each prophetic book in the Old Testament, focusing on the books rather than on the prophets themselves, and paying particular attention to their respective theological concerns. It is a collaborative work with sixteen contributors representing mainline evangelical scholarship, but in spite of its many authors it is coherent and it is well fit as a textbook for undergraduate students.

* * * *

Academia is currently witnessing a flood of publications on prophecy and prophetic literature in the Old Testament. Any new contribution should therefore be met with the critical question of what scholarly concerns and assumed purpose in academia this particular publication is supposed to have. The present book can defend its place in current Old Testament studies on two grounds, I think. First, because it has a theological focus, allowing the theological characteristics and concerns of each prophetic book in the Old Testament to be voiced and given constructive attention. Second, it is precisely because of this theological focus that it is suitable as a textbook for undergraduate studies of the Old Testament. Much of the literature that is currently available on the textbook market concentrates on historical and/or literary questions, to some extent shying away from theological questions.

The present book is a joint enterprise with as many as sixteen contributors. The editors and many of the others come from the Netherlands (Peels) and South Africa (Snyman), but there are also contributors from Belgium, France, Germany, South Korea and the USA. Most of them could probably be characterized as 'evangelical' but not in the fundamentalist sense of the word. In spite of the large number of authors, the book does not fall to pieces. The editors have managed to create a unified whole, where each chapter approaches its particular prophetic book in the same way: (i) the historical setting of the book, (ii) the content and structure of the book, (iii) the theology of the book (to which most of the space is devoted) and (iv) a select bibliography. The book has 18 chapters, that is an introductory chapter and then the expected 15 prophetic books (the three 'large' prophets and the 12 'small' ones) plus Daniel and then also Isaiah 40-66, which is treated as a separate book (cf. below).

A brief review can hardly do justice to all contributors and I will confine myself to one general issue, namely the relationship between prophet and prophetic book. It comes as no surprise that the book emphasizes the role of the prophetic book rather than the prophet. This concurs both with general trends in recent research on prophecy and prophetic literature, and with the kind of canonical approach that seems to be underlying here.

The introductory chapter discusses the relationship between the two at some length (10-12), acknowledging that the books may have been composed by others than the prophets themselves and that these later writers may have 'updated' the words of the prophets to their own time. In spite of this dynamic opening for later elaborations of the words of the prophets, the prophetic books are organized 'according to their respective time of origin as far as possible' (vii) and in practice this 'time of origin' is the assumed time of the prophet. Although the introductory chapter acknowledges that the sixth-century BC Babylonian exile might have stimulated the process of collecting and writing down earlier prophetic material (11-12), I still get the impression that this dynamic perspective is soon lost and replaced by a more static understanding of the prophetic books. The decision to divide the book of Isaiah into two separate chapters (1-39 as part of the section on 'Eighth-century prophets' and 40-66 as part of the section on 'Sixth-century prophets') illustrates this problem. The authors accept that the voice addressing us in Isaiah 40-66 is not that of pre-exilic Isaiah of Jerusalem, but rather voices from exilic and post-exilic times. Still, by dividing Isaiah into two separate chapters, the literary and theological (!) connection between the two parts of the book is unfortunately lost.

In spite of this last critical remark, I would like to emphasize that I find this to be a good book which I will recommend to my undergraduate students doing Old Testament exegesis and theology.

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Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary
Tyndale OT Commentaries 21
Hetty Lalleman

Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic; Nottingham: IVP, 2013; 373pp, $16; £12.99, pb
ISBN 978-1-84474-605-7

RÉSUMÉ

Voici le dernier volume paru dans la nouvelle série des commentaires Tyndale. On y trouve un commentaire substantiel du livre de Jérémie et une partie moindre consacrée au livre des Lamentations. Hetty Lalleman apporte ici une bonne interprétation du texte biblique, avec un apport académique et pertinent dans ses commentaires, en particulier pour le livre de Jérémie, son domaine particulier de recherche. Les questions d'introduction, la présentation du contexte et les points théologiques sont bien abordés. On pourrait parfois souhaiter davantage de références permettant d'aller plus loin, ce qui accroîtrait encore son utilité, mais, déjà tel quel, le volume est tout à fait bienvenu dans cette série et à recommander chaudement.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser zuletzt erschienene Band in der neuen Tyndale Reihe zum Alten Testament, TOTC, enthält einen umfangreicheren Kommentar über Jeremia und einen kleineren über Klagelieder. Darin setzt sich Lalleman ausführlich mit dem biblischen Text auseinander und vermittelt wertvolle wissenschaftliche Einblicke, insbesondere zu ihrem Spezialgebiet Jeremia. Die Bereiche Einführung, Kontext und Theologie sind gleichfalls gut abgedeckt und machen diesen Band zu einer willkommenen Bereicherung der gesamten Reihe. An manchen Stellen hätte es noch mehr Literaturhinweise geben können, was eine bereits sehr hilfreiche Informationsquelle noch nützlicher machen würde. Im Ganzen betrachtet ein empfehlenswertes Werk.

SUMMARY

This latest volume in the new TOTC series contains a substantial commentary on Jeremiah and a smaller section on Lamentations. In it Lalleman engages well with the biblical text and includes scholarly and insightful comments particularly on Jeremiah, her area of particular expertise. Introductory, contextual and theological issues are also well covered, making this a welcome addition to the series. There are occasions where the inclusion of more references for further reading would make an already very useful resource even more useful. Overall, a volume to be recommended.

* * * *

This commentary is part of the new TOTC series, which, in common with its iconic predecessor, seeks to engage, critically, with the biblical text, from an evangelical perspective. This volume, which is both scholarly and readable, achieves that aim admirably.

This book includes commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations. Lamentations has traditionally been associated with Jeremiah, and, though Lalleman does not think Jeremiah wrote it, she points, helpfully, to a relationship between the messages of the two books. Including commentaries on both books in the same volume is not uncommon, though given their relative sizes, the commentary on Lamentations can sometimes appear as an appendix. In this case, whilst the section on Lamentations is inevitably shorter (55 pages, compared to 300 pages on Jeremiah), the treatment is good, covering key introductory and exegetical issues, and there is an ample bibliography for further referencing. As might be expected, Lalleman's long association with the book of Jeremiah, and her clear expertise in this area, contributes to the high quality of that part of the volume.

The commentary follows the standard layout: introductory material, followed by an analysis of the book, and then the more detailed commentary which, in keeping with the updated format of this new series, looks at longer sections of text under the headings Context, Comment and Meaning, and focuses respectively on the passage's literary and historical setting, a more detailed exegesis of the text, and key theological themes. Within

this framework, the first and last sections can be relatively brief, with the main focus on exegesis. In my view, engagement with the biblical text is the most important role of a commentary, and certainly one with this heritage, and Lalleman fulfils that role with comments that are both insightful and scholarly, and which help the reader understand the text. Theological significance is also important, though can be overlooked in exegesis. This format is therefore to be welcomed. However, because the theology of a passage is (or should be) integral to its exegesis, it is not always possible to separate these things in a meaningful way, and occasionally the discussion of meaning is quite brief, and may add little to what has already been said. This is evident, for example, in the discussion of Jeremiah 31:1-40, where most of the discussion – including key aspects of the passage's theology – is in the exegetical comment. Overall, though, the format, and the way it is used here, is to be commended. Lalleman sets the text carefully within its immediate context and within the overall structure and theological emphases of the book. Where appropriate, she also links the text to the New Testament – though in a way that does not lose sight of its significance within its Old Testament setting.

Whilst engagement with the text is paramount, introduction is also important, and the material in the introductory sections is helpful, with key issues covered with characteristic insight and understanding – including how the book of Jeremiah originated and its use of the verb *súb*. Space has probably prevented more substantial discussion in some areas – though there could, perhaps, have been more references, either to support the conclusions stated or for supplementary reading. For example, in the commentary on Jeremiah the discovery of the Book of the Law and its relationship to the dating of Deuteronomy is covered in a couple of sentences with only one reference. The relationship between the Greek and Hebrew texts of Jeremiah is also dealt with quite briefly. These are details that not every reader wants to explore, and this volume is intended to appeal to the more general reader as well as to students, teachers and preachers, but for those who do want to look at these things in more depth suggestions for further reading might be appreciated. Part of this need is met, though, in the substantial and helpful bibliography.

The exegesis and theological comment is all that I might expect from a scholar with Lalleman's considerable expertise in this area. However, there are some points where additional references would have been helpful – for example in relation to the 'divine council' (Jer 23:18, 22) and the 'covenant with the Levites' (Jer 33:21). This is already a substantial volume, and space for further discussion and referencing is limited. It is, though, precisely because this is, in my view, a substantial commentary, and one to which I intend to direct students, that references for further reading would be useful.

Overall, I enjoyed reading this volume, and consider it to be a very useful addition to the range of commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations. Notwithstanding some of the minor criticisms, it is one that I will use, and will be happy to recommend to others.

Robin Routledge
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Jesus Tried and Tested. Why the four Canonical Gospels provide the best picture of Jesus

H. H. Drake Williams III

Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013. 168pp, pb, $22,
ISBN 978-1-61097-526-1

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem einführenden Werk vertritt Drake Williams das Argument, dass die kanonischen Evangelien älter und verlässlicher sind als die außerkanonischen. Er stimmt mit Bauckham darin überein, dass sich erstere auf Augenzeugenberichte gründen. Der Nutzen des Buches wird durch die Tatsache eingeschränkt, dass der Autor kein Experte auf diesem Gebiet ist.

SUMMARY

In this introductory book Drake Williams argues that the canonical gospels are older and more reliable than the extra-canonical gospels. He joins Bauckham in arguing that they are based on eyewitness testimony. The helpfulness of the book is limited by the fact that the author is not a subject expert.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage à caractère d'introduction, Drake Williams s'efforce de montrer que les évangiles canoniques sont plus ancien et plus fiable que les évangiles non canoniques. Il rejoint Bauckham en soutenant qu'ils sont basés sur le témoignage de témoins oculaires. L'utilité du livre reste limitée par le fait que l'auteur n'est pas un expert sur ce sujet.

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With this book, Drake Williams enters the debate about the non-canonical gospels and his conclusion is indicated in his subtitle: the non-canonical gospels do not inform us reliably about Jesus and the canonical texts are to be preferred. In the first chapter Williams focuses on the dates of the various gospels. Over against the traditional dates of the canonical ones, he specifically discusses the Gospels of Peter and Thomas, to conclude that they are much later and hence less reliable. This chapter is effective and convincing. Chapter 2 is about the gospels as eyewitness testimonies and leans rather heavily on Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (2006). Williams is less sure-footed here and occasionally he overstates what we know, e.g. about the purposes of Papias' books (48). He shows no familiarity with key secondary literature on Papias.

The third chapter discusses the reception of the gospels in later centuries and it is here that the problems begin. Williams regards the Apostolic Fathers as a kind of unified group – which they are not. He seems to imply that we still have the Diatessaron and states: 'The reception of Tatian's *Diatessaron* witnesses further to the widespread acceptance of a fourfold gospel.' Charles E. Hill's *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* is underused in this chapter. Chapter 4 displays how the 'other' gospels depict Jesus, showing that their contents tell us nothing about the historical Jesus. In doing this Williams quotes a passage from *The Gospel of Philip* 55 which raises numerous questions that are left unanswered. A footnote on page 110 refers to the Gnostic texts *Apocryphon of John* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* as gospels; the former is not a gospel and the second is not normally seen as one. Again on page 117 the *Epistle of the Apostles* is referred to as a gospel and the impression is given that we have many manuscripts of it.

Williams has the habit of stating the same idea in two consecutive sentences, the second repeating the content of the first in different words. This makes the reader feel underestimated. The book reflects the culture of the USA, not that of Europe; for example, the importance of modern books is indicated by saying that they were New York Times bestsellers. The cover designer who put a crown of thorns on the cover clearly misunderstood the book's title and probably never saw the subtitle.

As a primer on the subject this book can be recommended with caution; the ten-page bibliography points readers to further literature.

Pieter J. Lalleman
London

Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism

Christopher M. Hays and Christopher B. Ansberry (eds)

London: SPCK, 2013; 241pp, pb, £17.99;
ISBN 978-0-281-06732-9

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, les auteurs tentent d'intégrer les résultats de la recherche historico-critique à une position théologique évangélique. Ses nombreux auteurs y traitent en neuf chapitres de divers aspects relatifs à l'Ancien Testament, à Jésus et au Nouveau Testament. Ils s'accordent sur le point de vue selon lequel l'approche historico-critique de l'Ancien Testament peut s'harmoniser avec une position évangélique mais se montrent plus réservés concernant le Nouveau Testament. Ce livre aurait été plus utile s'il avait présenté divers points de vue.

SUMMARY

This book is an attempt to combine the results of the historical-critical investigation of the Bible with the evangelical faith. In nine chapters the many contributors discuss aspects of the Old Testament, Jesus and the New Testament. They agree that critical views of the Old Testament can be harmonised with an evangelical faith but they are more reluctant regarding the New Testament. The book would have been more useful if it had contained a diversity of views.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch stellt einen Versuch dar, die Ergebnisse historisch-kritischer Forschung zur Bibel mit evangelikalem Glauben zu verbinden. In neun Kapiteln diskutieren die beitragenden Autoren Ansichten zum Alten Testament, zu Jesus und zum Neuen Testament. Sie stimmen darin überein, dass kritische Perspektiven zum Alten Testament in Einklang mit einem evangelikalen Glauben gebracht werden können, doch sie sind eher zurückhaltend im Blick auf das Neue Testament. Das Werk wäre hilfreicher gewesen, wenn es eine Vielfalt von Meinungen berücksichtigt hätte.

* * * *

So does it matter that Moses did not write Deuteronomy, that the exodus never happened, that many prophecies were written after the event and that Paul did not write all thirteen letters attributed to him? Can we still be evangelical Christians if we accept such results of critical scholarship? In the present volume a group of young biblical scholars attempts to bring together the results of the historical-critical investigation of the Bible with their evangelical faith. Most of them appear to be Americans who are working in Western Europe and much of the literature cited is American. The questions they ask are legitimate but the book as a whole is disappointing.

Chapter 1 (by Hays) sets the agenda, stating that 'it is the goal of the present volume to illustrate that historical criticism need not imperil any of the fundamental dogmatic tenets of Christianity' (5). Hence the book tries to stimulate evangelicals to engage seriously with this method. Chapter 2 (Hays + one other) discusses the fact that Genesis 1-3 is not historical and asks what this means for the doctrine of sin. This chapter has the same pattern as the subsequent chapters on the Old Testament in the book: at the outset the hypothetical conclusions of critical scholarship are accepted, then the effects on our theology are assessed. I found it disappointing that this particular chapter has more to say about Romans 5 and Augustine than about Genesis 1-3. Chapter 3 (Ansberry) seems to swallow the critical conclusion that the exodus was probably not a historical fact, although something must have happened (72), and then again asks what this implies for the faith. The writer concludes that 'As Christians, our commitment to the fundamental dogmatic tenets of the faith may preclude us from adopting this radical position and its nihilistic view of history' (73).

Chapter 4 (Ansberry + one other) focuses on Deu-

teronomy; it gives an overview over positions on the origin of the book and – rightly in my view – argues that the value of the message of a book like this does not depend on its date or authorship. However, the voice of those who don't agree that Deuteronomy is 'a somewhat uneven combination of old and new elements' (88) is not heard. Chapter 5 (Hays + two others) deals with unfulfilled prophecy and defends the existence of numerous *vaticinia ex eventu* in the Bible. The argument is almost as simple as saying that because we find *vaticinia ex eventu* among other nations, they must also exist in Israel, and moreover be acceptable. The Book of Daniel is discussed without any attention to the views of those who argue that the book does *not* date from the second century BC. This is the chapter I liked least because of its simplistic reasoning.

Chapter 6 (Ansberry + three others) is on pseudepigraphy in both parts of the Bible, and discusses the Pentateuch, Isaiah, John's Gospel and the Pauline corpus. The authors are probably right to say that before the Hellenistic period the authorship of texts was hardly an issue, hence the anonymity of much of the Old Testament. Valid points are being made here. Yet the argumentation in the chapter is often weak: the Pentateuch as a whole hardly claims Mosaic authorship and therefore can hardly be used as an example of pseudepigraphy. Once again critical hypotheses are simply accepted as facts and the conclusion 'that the acceptance of pseudepigraphy or pseudonymity in the biblical canon' is not 'outside the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy' (157) is as predictable and inevitable as it is unconvincing.

With chapter 7 on Jesus (Hays + one other) the tone changes: the probability of miracles is defended and the virgin birth is seen as a vital element of the faith (174). Suddenly (at least for the present reader) 'the witness of Scripture and the apostles' (164) is taken as authoritative. Chapter 8 (by two others) deals with the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the Epistles from a chronological as well as a theological perspective. The range of literature used is disappointing; Rainer Riesner is just one of the many who are missing. Finally in chapter 9 the two editors restate the book's plea for an attitude of faithful criticism. For this reader, their positive words could not take away the feeling of disappointment about the previous eight chapters.

The book would have been more attractive – and potentially more convincing – if the many contributors had entered into discussions with each other. Rather than multi-author chapters in unison which spend much time reproducing what critical scholarship says and which in the end give just one view, it would be good to have statements of alternative points of view followed by discussions. Another omission is any interaction with how other evangelicals such as the members of the Tyndale Fellowship, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians and the Evangelical Theological Society handle the issues at stake. And rather than a reiteration of the well-known critical hypotheses I would have liked to see a more in-depth discussion of methodology. To repeat what I said at the outset, the questions raised here are real and they will not go away, but the present book is only a modest contribution to the debate. There is no index of authors

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Biblical Interpretation in the Early Christian Gospels III: The Gospel of Luke
Library of New Testament Studies 376
Thomas R. Hatina

London, New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010, xii + 228 pp., hb., £65; ISBN 978-0-567-03309-3

SUMMARY

The volume offers eleven essays on various aspects of the use of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel. The authors use various methods and approach the subject from different angles. The book is a representative summary of current scholarship on Luke's use of Scripture, but is not comprehensive and does not present a synthesis or comparison with other ways of usage of the Old Testament in the New.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage se compose de onze contributions traitant de divers aspects de l'usage de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Évangile de Luc. Les auteurs mettent en œuvre diverses méthodes et abordent le sujet sous des angles différents. Ils donnent ainsi un bon aperçu de l'état actuel de la recherche sur l'usage lucanien de l'Écriture. L'ouvrage n'est cependant pas exhaustif et n'offre pas de tentative de synthèse ni de comparaison avec la façon dont d'autres auteurs du Nouveau Testament utilisent l'Ancien.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Band umfasst elf Aufsätze mit unterschiedlichen Aspekten zum Gebrauch des Alten Testaments im Lukasevangelium. Die Autoren bedienen sich verschiedener Methoden und nähern sich dem Thema aus unterschiedlichen Blickwinkeln. Das Buch stellt eine repräsentative Zusammenfassung der gegenwärtigen Forschung zum lukanischen Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift dar, doch es ist nicht umfassend und bietet weder eine Synthese noch einen Vergleich mit anderen Möglichkeiten, wie das Alte Testament im Neuen verwendet wird.

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The present book is volume three in a five-volume series on the interpretation of Scripture in the four canonical gospels and on the extracanonical gospels (*The Gospel of Matthew*, LNTS 310, 2008; *The Gospel of Mark*, LNTS 304, 2006). Their aim is 'to situate the current state of research and to advance our understanding of the function of embedded Scripture texts and their traditions in the narrative and socio-religious contexts of early

Christian gospels. Though methodologically broad, the series aims to bridge the concerns of narrative, social-scientific, and historical critics' (vii).

The introductory essay by the editor, 'Complexity of Contexts and the Study of Luke's Use of Scripture', sets the Lukan use of Scripture in the wider context of Lukan studies. It follows three major trends, namely historical, theological and literary quests. While this is a helpful survey of Lukan studies, the significance of the use of the Old Testament in each trend is not sufficiently clear nor what the issues are in current research. It might also have been helpful to survey the various types of use of Scripture in the Gospel.

The essays in the volume are: A.E. Arterbury, 'Zacchaeus: a "Son of Abraham"'; C.A. Evans, 'Luke's Good Samaritan and the Chronicler's Good Samaritans'; M.E. Fuller, 'Isaiah 40:3-5 and Luke's Understanding of the Wilderness of John the Baptist'; T.R. Hatina, 'The Voice of Northrop Frye Crying in the Wilderness: The Myth-making Function of Isaiah 40:3 in Luke's Annunciation of the Baptist'; S. Huebenthal, 'Luke 24:13-35, Collective Memory, and Cultural Frames'; A. Le Donne, 'Greater than Solomon: Orality, Mnemonics, and Scriptural Narrativization in Luke'; K.D. Litwak, 'A Coat of Many Colours: The Role of the Scriptures of Israel in Luke 2'; J. Nolland, '"The Times of the Nations" and a Prophetic Pattern in Luke 21'; L. Perkins, '"The Finger of God": Lukan Irony and Old Testament Allusion as Narrative Strategy (Luke 11:20 and Exodus 8:19 [LXX 8:15])'; G.E. Sterling, 'Luke as a Reader of the LXX' and F.S. Tappenden, 'Aural Performance, Conceptual Blending, and Intertextuality: The (Non-)Use of Scripture in Luke 24:45–48'.

At the end of the introductory essay the editor concludes:

> The methodological implications that emerge from this collection are consistent with those that have been presented in the introductions to the previous two volumes on Mark and Matthew. What stands apart in this volume is the variance in two methods, generally speaking. Several contributors are still content with, and continue to find value in, the historical-critical approach which applies traditional comparative strategies in search of the best explanation of how embedded Scripture texts function in Luke. Other contributors have applied social-scientific theories in their analyses of the function of embedded texts. These tend not so much to understand the theological function of embedded texts for Luke, but they tend toward explaining why embedded texts needed to be included by Luke. The answers that are generated are not theological in the Christian sense, but socio-religious in nature and point more directly to the quest for meaning and identity formation that can be expanded beyond a single religion, culture, and time. As such they more readily engage in an interplay between description and prescription, fact and meaning, and text and reader(s) (17).

Further essays might have addressed the use of the Old Testament in Luke 1 and 2 (including the canticles and the many Semitisms) and the Lukan genealogy. In view of the nature of Luke's gospel as volume one of two volumes, it would also have been interesting to relate the use of the Old Testament in the Gospel to that of Acts; for a survey see D. Rusam, *Das Alte Testament bei Lukas*, BZNW 122 (Berlin & New York: W. de Gruyter, 2003; see my review in *Novum Testamentum* 47 [2005] 309–312). It should also be noted that a recent detailed monograph has persuasively argued that the Lukan passion narrative and its interpretation of the death of Jesus are heavily influenced by the sufferings and merits of the Isaianic Servant of the Lord; see U. Mittmann-Richert, *Der Sühnetod des Gottesknechts: Jesaja 53 im Lukasevangelium*, WUNT 220 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

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Hermeneutica Sacra: Studien zur Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert: Studies of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Torbjörn Johansson, Robert Kolb, Johann Anselm Steiger (eds)

Historia Hermeneutica: Series Studia 9; Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 2010, viii + 496 pp., € 130, hb, ISBN 978-3-11-023686-6

SUMMARY

This volume is dedicated to the interpretation of Holy Scripture as to theoretical reflection and practical interpretation during the periods of the Reformation and Protestant orthodoxy. It sketches how the Reformed inheritance developed between the eras of the Reformation and beginning Enlightenment and which influences can be identified. From selected examples, the essays demonstrate the chances and limits of hermeneutics during these epochs, to which evangelical hermeneutics has always referred in exchanges with approaches from the Enlightenment.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Sammelband gilt der Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift in theoretischer Reflexion und praktischer Auslegung in der Reformationszeit und während der protestantischen Orthodoxie. Er skizziert, wie das diesbezügliche reformatorische Erbe zwischen Reformation und beginnender Aufklärung entwickelt wurde und welche Einflüsse dabei auszumachen sind. Die Aufsätze zeigen an gewählten Beispielen die Chancen, aber auch die Grenzen der Hermeneutik dieser Epochen, auf die evangelikale Hermeneutik in der Auseinandersetzung mit Ansätzen aus der Aufklärung immer wieder Bezug genommen hat.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage traite de l'interprétation biblique à l'époque de la réforme et de l'orthodoxie protestante en considérant la réflexion théorique menée alors et la pratique interprétative. Il montre comment l'héritage de la réforme s'est développé jusqu'au début du siècle des lumières et tente de déceler quelles influences il a subies. Les contributions illustrent à partir d'exemples choisis les facteurs qui ont favorisé l'élaboration de l'herméneutique durant cette période, ainsi que ses limites. Elles présentent un intérêt particulier dans la mesure où l'herméneutique évangélique s'est continuellement référée à l'héritage de la réforme dans le débat avec les approches promues au siècle des lumières.

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Die vorliegende Festschrift für den schwedischen systematischen Theologen und Dogmenhistoriker Bengt Hägglund (zum 90. Geburtstag) gilt Epochen aus der Geschichte der Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung die, was die sogenannten „großen Reformatoren" betrifft, gut bearbeitet, aber anderweitig nur lückenhaft erforscht sind. Während katholische Theologen auf der Suche nach einer geistlichen Schriftauslegung gerne an die patristische Exegese anknüpfen, hat die Epoche der Reformation bis hin zum Vorabend der Aufklärung evangelikale Hermeneutik besonders fasziniert und in ihrer Suche nach Alternativen zur historisch-kritischen Methode interessiert. Hier sah man das reformatorische Erbe vor dem Sündenfall der Aufklärung, an das es anzuknüpfen gilt. Für diese Fragestellung bietet dieser Sammelband Anregungen, zeigt aber auch die Grenzen deutlich auf.

Der Band beginnt mit einer Laudatio auf Bengt Hägglund von E. Koch, der sich über mehrere Jahrzehnte besonders mit der Reformation und der lutherischen Orthodoxie beschäftigt hat; am Ende des Bandes befindet sich eine vollständige Bibliographie der Schriften Hägglunds zwischen 1947 und 2009.

Die sechzehn Beiträge von internationalen Forschern lauten: J.A. Steiger, „Christopherus – ‚ein Ebenbild aller Christen': Ein nicht-biblisches Bild und dessen Relevanz für die Schrift- und Bildhermeneutik, aufgezeigt an Texten Martin Luthers und Sigmund von Birkens"; J. Wolff, „Ursprung der Bilder. Luthers Rhetorik der (Inter-) Passivität"; K. Alfsväg, "Deification as creatio ex nihilo: On Luther's appreciation of Dionysian spirituality in Operationes in Psalmos"; S.D. Paulson, "Internal Clarity of Scripture and the Modern World: Luther and Erasmus Revisited"; A.Chr. Højlund: „'The one who does them shall live by them': Luther's Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in the Light of his Understanding of Law and Gospel in his Commentary on Galatians"; L. Erikson, "The Treasure of Salvation – Acquired and Delivered: Martin Luther on the Function of the Gospel as Means of Grace"; T.J. Wengert, "Commentary As Polemic: Philip Melanchthon's 1556 Enarratio ad Romanos against Andreas Oslander"; C.P. Arand, "Melanchthon's Rhetorical Composition of the Apology"; R. Kolb, "The First Protestant 'Biblical Theology': The Syntagma of Johannes Wigand and Matthaeus Judex"; R. Söderlund, "Sola scriptura in Theorie und Praxis: Eine kritische Prüfung der Bibelargumentation in der Konkordienformel"; E. Lund, "modus docendi mysticus: The Interpretation of the Bible in Johann Arndt's Postilla"; E. Koch, "Schöne Gottesdienste: Beobachtungen an Psalmenauslegungen des 17. Jahrhunderts"; T. Johansson, „Das Leiden Christi vom Alten Testament her gedeutet: Beobachtungen zur frühen evangelisch-lutherischen Passionsauslegung"; K.G. Appold, „Abraham Calov on the ‚Usefulness' of Doctrine: Blueprints for a Theological Mind"; L. Danneberg, „Von der accommodatio ad captum vulgi über die accommodatio secundum apparentiam nostri visus zur aesthetica als scientia cognitionis sensitivae" und T. Mahlmann, "'Ecclesia semper reformanda': Eine historische Aufklärung. Neue Bearbeitung". Leider fehlen abstracts zu den einzelnen Beiträgen und ein einführender Aufsatz.

Der anregende Band für Fragen der Hermeneutik, Bibelwissenschaft und Dogmengeschichte endet mit Register der Bibelstellen und der erwähnten Personen. Neben den bereits vorliegenden Darstellungen der Geschichte der Bibelauslegung erwartet man zum Thema den dritten Band der New Cambridge History of the Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), der dem gleichen Zeitraum gelten dürfte.

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Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth, and Protestant Theology

Michael P. DeJonge

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, xiv + 158 pp., £51.40, ISBN 978-0-19-963978-6

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

DeJonge präsentiert eine erstklassige Interpretation von Dietrich Bonhoeffers komplexer These *Akt und Sein*. Er erläutert Bonhoeffers Frühwerk und vertritt dabei die Ansicht, dass Bonhoeffer ein auf die historische Person von Christus konzentriertes „Personenkonzept" von Offenbarung entwickelt, welches das Problem von *Akt und Sein* löst. DeJonge sieht Akt und Sein und dessen personengebundene Auffassung von Offenbarung als den Schlüssel zum Verständnis der Kontinuität in Bonhoeffers Gesamtwerk an. Sein Argument dreht sich hauptsächlich um den Unterschied zwischen Bonhoeffer und Barth, demzufolge Bonhoeffer eine lutherische Alternative zu Barths reformierter Theologie vorstellt. Bei näherem Hinsehen mag sich Bonhoeffers Beziehung zur reformierten Tradition als vielschichtiger und positiver erweisen, als DeJonge meint.

SUMMARY

DeJonge presents a first-class interpretation of Dietrich

Bonhoeffer's complex thesis *Act and Being*. Through an exposition of Bonhoeffer's early work, he argues that Bonhoeffer advanced a 'person-concept' of revelation centred on the historical person of Christ which resolved the problem of act and being. DeJonge sees *Act and Being* and its person-concept of revelation as the key to understanding the continuity in Bonhoeffer's *oeuvre*. Central to his argument is the difference between Bonhoeffer and Barth, according to which Bonhoeffer proposes a Lutheran alternative to Barth's Reformed theology. A closer look at Bonhoeffer's relationship with the Reformed tradition may yield more ambiguity and even positive relation than DeJonge suggests.

RÉSUMÉ

DeJonge offre ici une excellente analyse de la thèse complexe de Dietrich Bonhoeffer sur l'Agir et l'Être. En se fondant sur une présentation des premières œuvres de Bonhoeffer, il considère que celui-ci a proposé un concept-personne de la révélation centré sur la personne de Christ pour résoudre le problème du rapport entre l'acte et l'être et il voit cette problématique comme la clé pour appréhender la continuité dans l'œuvre de Bonhoeffer. La différence qu'il perçoit entre l'approche luthérienne de Bonhoeffer et la théologie réformée de Barth joue un rôle central dans son argumentation. Un examen plus approfondi du rapport de Bonhoeffer à la tradition réformée pourrait cependant révéler davantage d'ambiguïté et même une appréciation plus positive de cette tradition que DeJonge ne le suggère.

* * * *

Michael DeJonge presents a *tour de force* historical and systematic interpretation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's unforgivingly complex habilitation thesis *Act and Being*, which, in the estimation of Bonhoeffer scholar Clifford Green, propels it to the 'top rank of Bonhoeffer studies'. Through a lucid technical exposition of Bonhoeffer's early work within the context of contemporary theological debates over transcendence, DeJonge argues persuasively that Bonhoeffer advanced a maverick 'person-concept' of revelation centred on the historical person of Christ, which effectively resolved the problem of act and being.

DeJonge sets the scene by describing the theological impasse between Berlin and Barth, which compelled Bonhoeffer to propose a conceptual solution. As he tells the story, the general problem of transcendence, or the issue of how humans can connect to a transcendent divine sphere, dominated European theology after the First World War. This situation was exacerbated by Karl Barth's clarion call that revelation must be contingent in order for it not to become a human possession or possibility. Although Bonhoeffer agreed on the need for contingent revelation, he nevertheless refused to break ties with the Berlin tradition and its orientation towards the world.

The young Bonhoeffer tried to reconcile the seemingly opposing poles of orientation to the Word (Barth) and to the world (Berlin) in a new concept of revelation. He gives technical expression to this impasse in *Act and Being*. Being-concepts of revelation, as epitomised by Berlin professor Karl Holl, compromise the transcendence of revelation by delivering it into the power of epistemological structures; rather than coming from outside the self, revelation finally exists as a possibility inside the self. Conversely, act-concepts of revelation, with Barth as their champion, fail to account for the fullness of the Christian life or the continuity of historical existence. Bonhoeffer solves the problem of act and being, and its corollary of transcendence and historical continuity, through his person-theology.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of DeJonge's argument is the way he constructs Bonhoeffer's unique concept of revelation through a confessional lens. According to him, Bonhoeffer's problems with Barth's act-theology stem largely from their dependence upon the Reformed tradition. From the *Göttingen Dogmatics* DeJonge views Barth's concept of revelation as dominated by the act of God speaking in God's word (*Deus dixit*), where the *diastasis* between God and man is maintained through God's freedom both to reveal and veil himself as subject in his self-revelation. Barth moulds his doctrine of the Trinity under this schema with the three persons of the Trinity as the three subjects of revelation. These moves incorporate the act-elements of his thought into the very fabric of his early dogmatic structure. DeJonge concludes that Barth's is a Reformed act-theology, which everywhere adopts the emphases of the tradition, most importantly in building his theology not on the 'Jesus Christ-pit' of the Lutherans – which takes the fact of Christ's incarnation as a given and is therefore susceptible to Feuerbach's attack on Christianity – but instead on the Trinity, which preserves God's freedom from humanity.

DeJonge rejects recent accounts that either rely upon or downplay the confessional question naturally at play in a theologian most influenced by Martin Luther and Karl Barth. Instead, he construes Bonhoeffer's person theology as seeking to be thoroughly and authentically Lutheran, in a way that both counters Barth's Reformed alternative and corrects various manifestations of pseudo-Lutheranism, including his teacher Holl. To make this confessional provenance clear, DeJonge turns to the 'Christology Lectures' (1933), which provide a Christological foil for the problem of act and being. Bonhoeffer claims the Lutheran tradition that privileges the *givenness* of the historical person of Christ (as illustrated in the exclusive priority of the 'who question'), which renders revelation both contingent and historical. By recasting the concept of revelation in light of the person of Christ with the Lutherans rather than the subject of God as Barth and the Reformed do, Bonhoeffer reconciles and satisfies the transcendence and historicity he is after. In revealing himself as person, Christ both *is* and *acts* in history, in a way that is fully contingent, but also fully *given*, contra Barth. As Bonhoeffer famously

put it in *Act and Being,* God in Christ binds himself to humanity, thereby demonstrating his freedom *for* rather than *from* humanity.

In a final consequence of these confessional dynamics, DeJonge points to contrasting 'thought-forms' at the heart of Bonhoeffer and Barth's theologies. Barth adheres to a strictly dialectical thought-form to maintain the distinction between God and humanity by both affirming and denying their coming together in revelation. Instead, Bonhoeffer employs a hermeneutical thought-form that reflects that 'God's being is pulled into history' in the person of Jesus Christ by stressing the reconciliation and unity of oppositional pairs such as act and being, faith and works, etc. DeJonge sees Bonhoeffer's person-concept of revelation, along with these accompanying elements, as demonstrating the continuity of his *oeuvre* including the later works *Discipleship*, *Ethics* and *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

The book offers a very helpful explanation and analysis of an otherwise notoriously impenetrable text in Bonhoeffer's *corpus*. It is recommended for all who have an interest in Bonhoeffer studies or more generally in twentieth-century German theology. Its technicality demands much of readers, but its clarity promises equal reward. The only problem this author foresees with DeJonge's depiction of the issues is the clear-cut manner he presents his argument. Although beneficial for pedagogical reasons, it may gloss too easily over the ambiguity and complexity of Bonhoeffer's thought. Most notably, DeJonge's opposition of Barth's Reformed act-theology to Bonhoeffer's Lutheran person-theology, though convenient, does not tell the full tale of Bonhoeffer's positive relationship to Reformed theology and overall confessional generosity. Since his early days as a youth delegate in the ecumenical movement and his involvement in drafting the joint confessional effort in the Barmen Declaration, Bonhoeffer seemed more interested in finding theological cooperation between the classic Reformation traditions than in stressing their difference. In this spirit, he wrote in his final days of 'Outdated controversies, especially the interconfessional ones', stating, 'the differences between Lutheran and Reformed (and to some extent Roman Catholic) are no longer real…' DeJonge opens the way to dig deeper into the confessional quandary at the heart of Bonhoeffer's theology. The full story has yet to be told.

Javier Garcia,
Cambridge, England

Hating God: The Untold Story of Misotheism

Bernard Schweizer

Oxford University Press, 2011, 246 pp., hb., £19.99,
ISBN 978-0-19-975138-9

SUMMARY

This fascinating book attempts to distinguish *atheism*, as the belief that God does not exist, from *misotheism*, as a range of postures (of hatred) towards God. It does so by sketching a range of misotheisms drawn from literary history: these are categorised as varying degrees of absolute and agnostic misotheism. Although this is not strictly a theological work, it nonetheless lends contemporary theologians a useful and subtle set of tools with which to understand what is often inaccurately labelled *New Atheism* in much post-Christian Western culture.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses fesselnde Buch ist bemüht zwischen den Begriffen *Atheismus* und *Misotheismus* zu unterscheiden; ersterer bezieht sich auf den Glauben, dass Gott nicht existiert, und letzterer auf vielfältige (Hass)Bezeugungen Gott gegenüber. Der Autor skizziert dabei eine Vielfalt von Misotheismus anhand von Beispielen aus der Literaturgeschichte: sie variieren zwischen absolutem und agnostischem Misotheismus. Obgleich es sich hier streng genommen nicht um ein theologisches Werk handelt, gibt es nichtsdestoweniger den Theologen von heute ein hilfreiches und kluges Instrumentarium an die Hand; dieses Werkzeug mag ihnen helfen dieses Phänomen zu verstehen, was oft fälschlicherweise in der post-christlichen westlichen Kultur als *Neuer Atheismus* bezeichnet wird.

RÉSUMÉ

Voilà une étude fascinante qui distingue l'*athéisme* – la croyance que Dieu n'existe pas – du *misothéisme*, c'est-à-dire un ensemble d'attitudes (de haine) à l'égard de Dieu. L'auteur procède en présentant diverses formes de misothéisme telles qu'elles se manifestent dans l'histoire de la littérature : il les classe en diverses catégories selon des degrés variables allant du misothéisme absolu au misothéisme agnostique. Bien que cet ouvrage n'ait pas un caractère strictement théologique, il peut être utile aux théologiens contemporains en leur apportant des outils pour comprendre avec finesse ce qui est souvent nommé, improprement, le *Nouvel Athéisme* dans notre culture occidentale post-chrétienne.

* * * *

This fascinating book is grounded on a worthwhile observation: the term 'atheism' is unsuited to many of the instances in which it is invoked. In short, Schweizer perceives the denial of God's existence as substantially different in character from the passionate hatred of God as found in many 'atheist' works.

> I repeatedly bumped up against a similar religious stance in their [Philip Pullman and Rebecca West] work: an aversion to divinity verging on God-hatred.

> I couldn't place that affect on the spectrum of religious dissent ranging from atheism to Satanism: it was not atheism, since hostility to God obviously presumes the existence of God; and it wasn't Satanism either, since opposition to God doesn't automatically lead to reverence for God's adversary. (1)

Accordingly, Schweizer attempts to characterise this particular form of God-hatred, noting various pre-existing terms (*theostuges*, *passionate atheist*, *metaphysical rebel*) but expressing preference for his own neologism: *misotheist*.

Central to his dissatisfaction with the misuse of 'atheism' for postures of hatred towards God is that, 'To the atheist, both the loving and the cruel god are irrelevant since to her neither exists.' (10) As such, his book develops *misotheism* as a more accurate term to describe instances of God-hatred.

Schweizer first provides a helpful 'Brief History of Misotheism', beginning with Job's wife (Job 2:9), whom he describes as 'the original misotheist' (29). Following this, he moves to discuss Epicurus, Thomas Paine, James Mill, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Albert Camus, William Empson and Gore Vidal.

The remainder of the book provides six case studies in literary misotheism: four in what Schweizer labels 'agnostic misotheism', and two in 'absolute misotheism'. The decision to focus his study on God-hatred in literary works is grounded in the conviction that literature is perhaps the most natural context in which misotheism will be made manifest. According to Schweizer, the common feature found in misotheists is that, 'misotheism is a response to suffering, injustice, and disorder in a troubled world. Misotheists feel that humanity is the subject of divine carelessness or sadism, and they question God's love for humanity'. (8) To find exploration of those themes, he argues, one must turn to literary works. On that basis, Schweizer offers careful analyses of misotheistic themes in the writings of Zora Neale Hurston, Rebecca West, Elie Wiesel, Peter Shaffer and Philip Pullman.

Although this is not strictly a theological work, it is nonetheless very useful to theologians – particularly those in secular post-Christian contexts. It offers a subtle, nuanced set of tools with which one can be better equipped to interact with Pullman, Dawkins *et al.* Its central observation – that many of those assumed not to believe in God ('atheists') may be better understood as those who hate God ('misotheists', and that for a range of reasons) – also offers much stimulation for theological thought, particularly as one considers theological practice in secular contexts.

James Eglinton
Edinburgh, Scotland

Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches. International Perspectives

Ian Jones, Kirsty Thorpe and Janet Wootton (eds)

London & New York: T & T Clark, 2008, xii + 242 pp., £70, hb, ISBN 0-567-03154-3

SUMMARY

This interesting and useful volume reflects on the current situation of women's ordination worldwide. Its stated aim is to fill a gap in the subject, that of 'extended comparative research'. Different chapters analyse the experience of ordained women in a wide selection of countries and denominations, including the continued existence of a 'stained glass ceiling' in denominations that have ordained women for many years. The beliefs of some churches that do not yet ordain women are also discussed. Whatever the readers' theological position on the topic, they will find this a thought-provoking publication.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser interessante und hilfreiche Band weist auf die gegenwärtige Situation zur Frauenordination weltweit hin. Sein erklärtes Ziel besteht darin eine Themenlücke zu schließen, nämlich jene einer „erweiterten vergleichenden Forschung". Verschiedene Kapitel analysieren die Erfahrungen ordinierten Frauen aus einem breiten Spektrum von Nationen und Denominationen; sie untersuchen auch die fortwährende Existenz einer [durch männliche Hierarchie bedingten] „undurchlässigen Kirchendecke" in Denominationen, die bereits seit vielen Jahren Frauenordination praktizieren. Ebenfalls diskutiert werden die Positionen einiger Kirchen, die noch keine Frauen ordinieren. Wie auch immer die theologische Meinung der Leserschaft aussehen mag, sie wird hier eine Ausgabe vorfinden, die weitere Denkanstöße gibt.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage intéressant et utile considère quel est l'état de choses dans les Églises chrétiennes dans le monde pour ce qui concerne l'ordination des femmes. Les auteurs visent à combler un manque en la matière par l'apport d'une recherche comparative très vaste. Divers chapitres analysent l'expérience des femmes ayant reçu l'ordination dans une large sélection de pays et de dénominations en notant aussi l'existence d'un plafond de verre dans certaines dénominations qui pratiquent l'ordination des femmes depuis de nombreuses années. Les points de vue d'Églises qui n'accordent pas l'ordination aux femmes sont aussi présentés. Quelle que soit la position théologique du lecteur sur le sujet, il trouvera ici matière à stimuler sa réflexion.

* * * *

This book consists of fifteen articles, the majority of which were first given as papers at a conference in 2006 on Women and Ordination. They are divided into three main subject areas of theological, historical and socio-

logical perspectives that between them offer 'a range of different windows onto the past and present experience of women in ordained ministry'. The (female) contributors include a Swedish bishop, more than one Professor of Theology, and several women involved in training within their denominations, including a college Principal, all of whom can speak with some authority on their subject. Before this reviewer finished the introduction she was wishing she had been at the conference, and been able to talk to some of these women; by the time I had read the many different articles, that inclination only grew. However, readers will, like me, have to be content with the stimulating variety of papers, and the glimpses they give of some of the very different worlds in which women are increasingly taking ordained roles.

The articles both provide a thorough investigation of situations some readers might already be familiar with, and insights into other countries and denominations which are new, as well as the challenges and issues that have been, and are still, involved in these pioneering situations. It is interesting, but not surprising, to discover that migration played a significant part in the development of ministry opportunities for Congregationalist women in Australia, or that despite the influence of Catherine Booth, women do not have complete equality in practice in the Salvation Army. More surprising was the realisation that in 1996 the first women were ordained into the Old Catholic Church of Germany. It was fascinating to realise the significance of women's role in the New Generation Churches of Nigeria. Other countries and regions discussed include French Polynesia, the Caribbean and Sweden. The spread of churches covered and topics discussed is thus considerable; even so, as the editors acknowledge, it is only a sample: it is simply not possible to have a comprehensive study. Many countries and several denominations are thus necessarily missing from these explorations, including Baptists and the 'new' charismatic churches in the UK, my own tradition.

The different sections work well, and all the articles add a useful contribution to the mix, shedding light on each other. Together they build a mosaic of the situation, past and present, relating to women's ordination, and draw a picture of the many challenges to be faced before such ministry is generally accepted, even in denominations which now have women as priests or pastors. Indeed, it is a sad fact that, although most denominations now ordain women, there is still both a 'stained glass ceiling' in many denominations and continuing suspicion of women's ministry among Christians of various persuasions, including within some of the congregations within which women are serving. Thus when Ellen Blue suggests in her chapter on theological education that 'the primary task of a pastor is to stay sane in the pastorate' and that this guarding of sanity, for the sake of continued ministry to a congregation, has to be even more intentional for women than for men, she is communicating some much-needed practical wisdom. Another valuable observation is Christina Odenberg's point that women's ordination also changes the nature of the priesthood for men, and that it is only one expression of the changing nature of the church. As well as some capable research and analysis, many such insightful comments are to be found in this selection of papers.

Theological arguments about the ministry of women are largely absent, apart from a thought-provoking first paper on the misuse of typology in the arguments against women's ordination. Similarly, some other important issues are intentionally not engaged with. In the foreword, the editors comment that these papers confine themselves largely to the current situation, and do not engage with more fundamental questions such as whether women are simply buying in to largely male-constructed systems of leadership, or indeed whether ordination is desirable at all. Whilst reasons of space clearly preclude extensive discussion, I would have been interested in more engagement with some of these crucial issues. For instance, Esther Mombo raises the question as to whether ordination makes women into 'pseudo men' but decides not to address the problem at this stage. Perhaps another conference or volume could explore some of the aspects and denominations not covered here. In the meantime, this book stands as a celebration of all that has been achieved so far regarding the ordination and continuing ministry of women, and how much more has yet to be done. As Odenberg comments: 'it should be in the Church's very nature to be the place where the Spirit of God may soar freely and find new ways to reach people by God's call'. This volume encourages those possibilities, especially for women.

Linda Wilson
University of Gloucestershire

John McClean, *From the Future.*
Getting to Grips with Pannenberg's Thought

This fascinating book gives an exposition of Wolfhart Pannenberg's thought by tracing the important theme of anticipation through the doctrines of revelation, Christ, redemption and God.

'Rigorous in method and expansive in the integration of various disciplines, Wolfhart Pannenberg's theological contributions are of lasting significance and yet susceptible to varied verdicts. John McClean makes Pannenberg accessible without being simplistic, sympathetic without avoiding criticism. *From the Future* is more than a survey of Pannenberg and his reception. It places Pannenberg in context and leads us into the world of his thought with a fascinating narrative.'
Michael Horton. Westminster Seminary California

'Among systematic theologians of the last half-century, Wolfhart Pannenberg stands as a giant. His theological project is as comprehensive as it is profound; and his exposition of the orthodox faith is as courageous as it is consummate. John McClean's lucid and thought-provoking account of Pannenberg's work provides a great service to evangelical teachers and students; for to come to grips with Pannenberg's thought (as readers of this book surely will) is to come to grips with the whole matter of proclaiming Christ in the contemporary world. This is an invaluable work.'
Michael Jenson, Moore College, Sydney

'This new book is the fruit of a long and intense engagement with the rich and complex thought of a seminal modern theologian. It offers a reliable and very readable survey of major aspects of Pannenberg's theology, coupled with a strong affirmation of Pannenberg's theological project as well as criticism of some particular points. There is much to be learnt from this intellectual journey with Pannenberg, not least for those beginning their own study of Pannenberg. It will undoubtedly help them to become better theologians themselves.'
Professor Christiaan Mostert, MCD University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia

John McLean is Vice-Principal, Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney

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Michael D. O'Neil, *Church as Moral Community. Karl Barth's Vision of Christian Life, 1915-1922*

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Joseph L. Mangina, Professor of Theology & Academic Dean, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology

'It is well known that Karl Barth ceased his plans to write a Christian Dogmatics, and reconceived the project as the Church Dogmatics. Among other things, this theologically significant shift impressed that theology is a work of the Church, and is undertaken for the health of the Church's witness to the ordering agency of the God of Jesus Christ. In his richly detailed study of Barth's earlier work Michael O'Neil does a fine job identifying and explicating the ecclesiological determination and the ethico-political concern with the shape that faithful living takes. Readers will be well served by the range of these reflections on the Swiss theologian's pre-CD theological development.'
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Michael O'Neil teaches theology and directs the postgraduate research program at Vose Seminary in Perth, Western Australia.

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'*Aspects of Reforming* is an essential purchase for theologians, clergy, and laity with more than a passing interest in the the Reformation There are insights galore in every included essay [in] this exceedingly valuable collection.' *John Warwick Montgomery, Patrick Henry College, Virginia*

Michael Parsons is Commissioning Editor for Paternoster, Associate Research Fellow of Spurgeon's College, London

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Author affiliations. A suitable note of the author's position, in no more than 25 words, should be included at the end of the manuscript.

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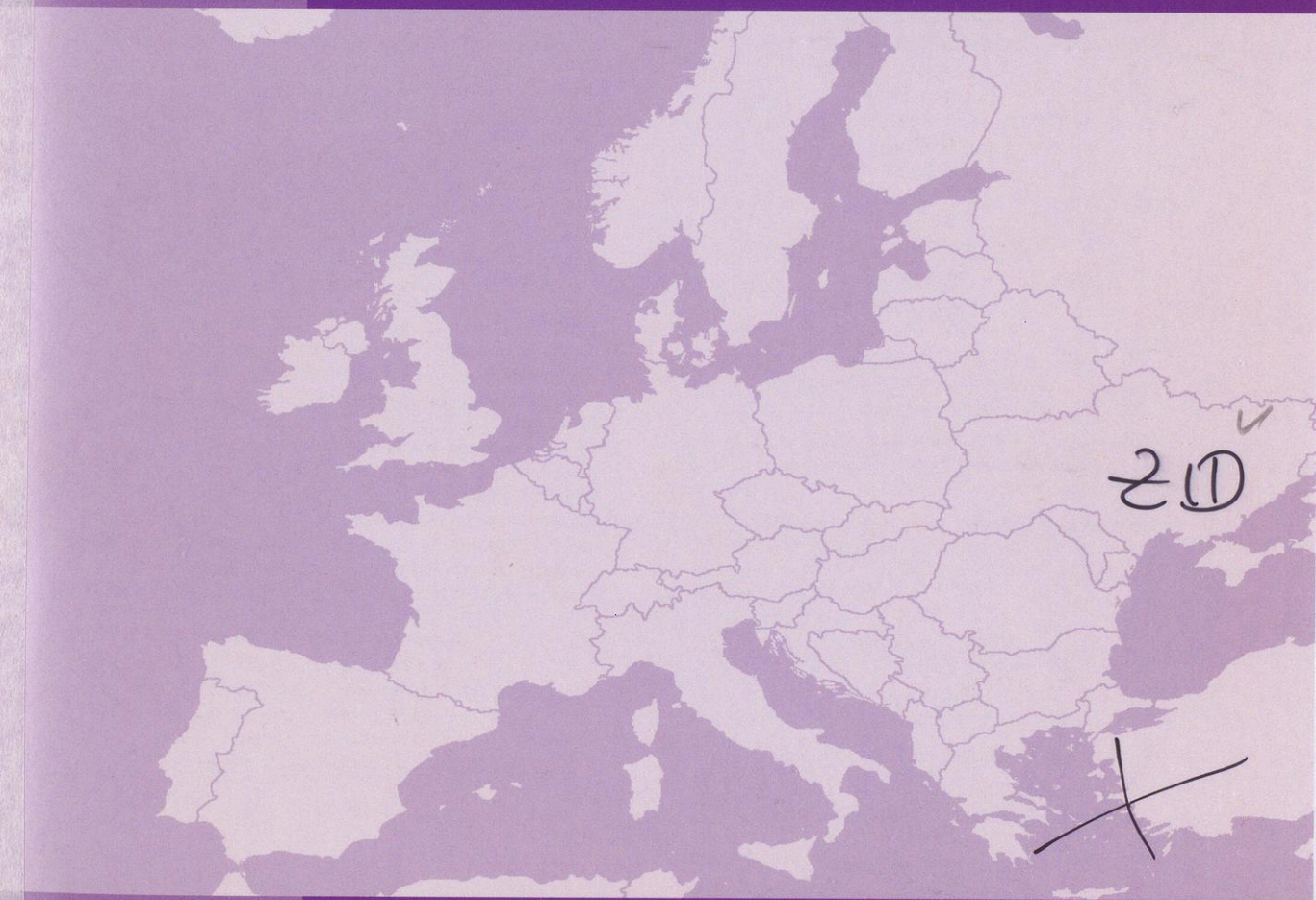

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Editorial
World War One: Personal Reflections, Wider Issues and Some Tasks Ahead for European Theology

Christoph Stenschke

A hundred years ago, in August 1914, the 'Great War' started. Naïvely meant to end war or all wars (so H.G. Wells in 1914), it was not the end of war, but one of the biggest carnages that the world has seen and the beginning of several wars in Europe and far beyond. It was the end of Europe as it had developed over centuries and the end of its credibility and leading role in the world.

Neither I, nor anybody else I know of, thought of producing a collection of essays to remember the occasion. A group like the *Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians* would have been predestined to reflect on the occasion, its theological repercussions and their present day significance. At the moment, only a few publications from a Christian perspective have appeared. A British example is the *World War 1 Bible*, published by the Bible Society of Britain,[1] itself an interesting project.[2] (It is unthinkable that the *Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft* would produce such a volume, the criticism *in* Germany would be massive.)

It would be easy and perhaps appropriate for a journal of theology to base a few reflections on the beginning of WWI on the basis of the standard treatments.[3] I have chosen a different route by reflecting on the traces of WWI in my own life, born some fifty years after this war (although I will refer to some of the wider theological discussions raised by WWI in the notes). I do not claim that this is representative in any sense. Obviously this is a German perspective.

My grandfather on my mother's side fought in the war as a young man (for whatever reason, I know nothing of his experiences). My great grandfather on my father's side served as a captain with his Prussian regiment on the German Eastern front until 1919. His personal 'highlight' must have been the battle of Tannenberg. An oil-painting of him in his uniform from 1917 hangs in my lounge. (Few Germans have that kind of thing at home and are willing to display it. No worries, this is not a sign of German militarism!). Both men survived the war, but must have been different men ever after. Presumably they never spoke much about it. Because they had opted for Germany in a referendum after the war, my father's family had to leave their home in Posen, when the region which had been part of the *Deutsche Reich* became Polish after the war.

As a schoolboy I read Erich Maria Remarque's (1898–1970) *Im Westen nichts Neues* from the year 1928. Remarque was personally involved as a wounded soldier and the book is a sobering account, which had and has every potential to turn its readers into pacifists. On the day when a wounded friend of the novel's main character, Paul Bäumer, dies on his shoulders as Bäumer carries him to safety, the official war report states that there was 'nothing new' to report from the German Western frontline. During a holiday in France one summer, my parents stopped for a day at the memorial sites around Verdun to show us Fort Douaumont, the Ossuary, the 'Bayonets Trench' and endless graves upon graves. Perhaps for this reason, in my own perception, WWI was mainly a French-German event.

When I grew up, one day my great grandfather's war medals were stolen when my grandfather's house was burgled. They probably ended up at some flea market – *sic transit Gloria mundi* or perhaps *Germaniae*! Curiously and perhaps revealing, the medals were not on display in the house, but kept in a safe! In some parts of Europe, war medals were (and are) not to be worn in public!

In 1984, when remembering 70 years of the beginning of WWI in France, there was the moving gesture when the French president and the German chancellor were standing next to each other before the Ossuary of Verdun during a memorial ceremony (itself a strong sign). François Mitterand stretched out his hand to hold Helmut Kohl's hand during a melancholic trumpet tune. There are moments that bond together humans of all kinds.[4]

As a student of theology, I learned in church history class that on October 4th 1914, both Adolf Schlatter and Adolf von Harnack signed the *Manifest der 93*: *Aufruf an die Kulturwelt*. This document refuted the arguments of the opponents of the war and called the German people to solidarity as they guard the highest goods of humanity (together with their enemies in the war).[5] The document was surpassed in the same month by the *Erklärung der Hochschullehrer des Deutschen Reiches*, which was signed by most German professors of theology.[6] I was shocked. As an evangelical student I was not surprised that Harnack, the champion of liberalism, had signed; but the signature of Schlatter, a scholar whom German evangelicals gladly adopted as a predecessor, was deeply worrying.[7] How could they have blended their faith, the universal Church of Jews and Gentiles for which they stood, with the nationalist, martial cause? For the student in his early twenties it was clear that a Schlatter should have known better! Schlatter's reflections on the death of his son in the war in 1914 are as moving as they are difficult to understand. Apparently at the beginning of the war, few Christians spoke out against it openly. 'Gott mit uns' was written on the belt buckles of the German soldiers and many will have been convinced of this, at least initially. Obviously divine support and legitimatisation were also claimed by the British, the French, etc. ... It took the hundred of thousands dying in atrocious circumstances, and endless numbers of maimed and wounded men, to realise that God was not with us or anybody else – at least not in the sense in which he was claimed by all.

During my years as a postgraduate student in Aberdeen, I saw some striking war memorials. I remember remote places on the Shetland Islands, where young men were remembered who had died in the trenches along the rivers Somme and Marne in France. What on earth were they doing there? I also remember the impressive reconstruction of trench warfare, the suffering caused by German and other troops and the challenges and bravery of the British medical corps in the Florence Nightingale Museum in London.[8]

Each day when I take my son to school, we pass the local war memorial.[9] The names of more than forty men of the village who died in WWI are still there. I cannot tell who still remembers them. (Few other dead are remembered publicly for such a long time.) It is daunting to see many of the same last names on the panel which lists those who died in the war that started a mere 25 years after WWI and which was intimately linked to the first war.

A further encounter with WWI came with the 2005 anti-war movie *Merry Christmas*, *Joyeux Noël*, *Frohe Weihnachten*, a British, French and German co-production which is based on true accounts of Christmas 1914, when ordinary soldiers of the warring nations fraternised with each other in the trenches.[10] The hero of this film is a Scottish priest who voluntarily accompanies the men of his village to war. He later reads a mass in the no man's land between the trenches for Scottish, French and German troops, nurses wounded British soldiers and then is dismissed by his unsympathetic, martial bishop who is shown motivating young soldiers in a vitriolic tirade of hatred for their turn in the trenches. The contrast between the two clergymen could not have been greater. Rarely is a Christian minister portrayed as sympathetic as the Scottish country priest. It is comforting to know that there were people like him on all sides.

Recently I came across the WWI (and WWII) memorial in the Jesuit church in Heidelberg. Like many other such memorials, it mixes memory of the war dead and Christian motives (understandable in a church) in an uncomfortable manner. At the top of the monument, under the empty cross, is a fine stone sculpture of the *Pietà*, Mary grieving over her dead son Jesus in her lap.[11] Below are the words *Den Toten der beiden großen Kriege* and the words of Psalm 126:5-6 are written in golden letters: 'May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.' The hermeneutic of this post-war composition is ambiguous. Is the cross of Jesus at the top the clue to understanding? Does the monument claim that all this happened under the cross of Jesus? Is it, at best, an acknowledgement of guilt and need of forgiveness? Is there a perceived parallel in sacrifice? Who has sown in tears? Mary? The dead soldiers? Their

mothers? Was there any 'reaping' other than by Death? Who came home in joy and for how long in view of the trauma they had experienced? Is it a mere pious wish or an attempt to make some spiritual sense of the unfathomable? Can the verses be applied in this way?

The long term consequences of WWI are still with many of us – not only through memorials and movies. How different would the world be today if the millions of mainly young men who died from all the nations involved, had lived and made their contributions to their societies? How different would it have been for their children and grandchildren, had these men, but also their relatives at home, not been traumatised and unable to speak of their horrendous experiences?

In view of these encounters with WWI and the nations involved (and obviously the even more prominent traces of WWII), my encounters with Christians and other people from other countries have been crucial and tremendously enriching experiences. There is no alternative to meeting real people from abroad. The biannual conferences of the *Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians* and the meetings of its Executive Committee have been part of this experience. As a young student I was warmly received in this Fellowship and could meet evangelicals from all over Europe; some of them became friends, some even role models of evangelical scholarship and personal integrity.

Back to Schlatter. I am more lenient with the old man than I was twenty-five years ago. I know more of his personal circumstances at the time. I now know Schlatter's signature was not his only response to the war. In his sermon on 9th August 1914 in the Tübinger Stiftskirche, Schlatter reminded the audience that they were not only placed in their own nation, but 'auch in den noch größeren Zusammenhang der Gemeinde Jesu …, die durch alle Länder geht'.[12] How both positions relate to each other remains unclear. We do not know how much independent information was available to Schlatter. In addition, the discussion of the complex political situation in summer 1914 and of the various failures and misunderstandings that eventually led to the war and the question of responsibility has moved on. With all that remains questionable, Schlatter, Swiss by origin, had identified with the people among whom he lived and ministered. What issues does Schlatter's and Harnack's response and that of many other theologians in Germany and in the other warring nations (explicable within their situation) raise regarding Christians and their stance towards their countries and their activities and propaganda?[13] What does it mean for Christians to be at the same time part of the world wide body of Christ, of a larger *Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians*, and of a particular family, municipality, region and country? Sometimes identification with the former is easier than with the latter. Obviously a war intensifies such tensions! At times it is easier to identify with the universal Church than with a particular congregation or denomination.

Some of the theological lessons were perhaps easier to learn for the nations that lost WWI than for the victors – if real and lasting 'winners' there were! But the following three decades showed that many, most strikingly the *Deutsche Christen*, had not learnt the lesson and followed the old pattern.[14]

At times I am bewildered at the naïve identification of some Christians with their national causes. Others are so heavenly minded that they appear to be detached from the society in which they live. Have we found answers to some of the questions raised by this war? What lessons were there to learn and must be reformulated and learnt again? Have we developed a proper 'theology of nationhood' or do we leave it to others to address this issue? But perhaps these reflections are a typical German response, strongly influenced by the *Third Reich* and its aftermath.[15]

What else has the war taught us? It would be interesting to start a dialogue among evangelical Christians on these issues.[16] What other journal than the *European Journal of Theology* would be equipped to host such a discussion? As a member of the editorial board of this journal, I would encourage such a discussion.

If my great grandfather's portrait in the lounge helps to keep such questions awake and to remind me of the lessons to learn, then a relative in uniform on the wall is not a burden.

Endnotes

1 See www.worldwar1bible.com [accessed 10-05-14].

2 Publications in German are M. Lätzel, *Die Katholische Kirche im Ersten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalismus und Friedenswillen* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2014); B. Cabanes & A. Duménil (eds), *Der Erste Weltkrieg: eine europäische Katastrophe* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2013); N. Ferguson, *Der falsche Krieg: der Erste Weltkrieg und das 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Pantheon, 2013); J.

Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (München: Beck, 2014); E. Piper, *Nacht über Europa: Kulturgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2013); M. Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie: 1914 – 1918* (Wien: Böhlau, 2013); B. Tuchman, *August 1914* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2013).

3 For instance J. Leonhard, 'Weltkrieg, Erster I. Kirchengeschichtlich', *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 8 (2005) 1442–1445.

4 See the reflections by the renowned journalist and eyewitness Ulrich Wickert on http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/kohl-und-mitterrand-in-verdun-warum-reichten-sie-sich-die-hand-1857470.html [accessed 10-05-14]. Wickert reports: 'Da stehen an diesem Samstagnachmittag der Franzose, der im Zweiten Weltkrieg kämpfte, und der Deutsche, der seinen älteren Bruder in diesem Krieg verlor, inmitten von Kreuzen vor dem Gebeinhaus. Höhepunkt ist ihr stummes Verweilen vor dem mit Fahnen beider Länder bedecktem Sarg. Es ist kalt. Sie tragen Wintermäntel. Neben dem Sarg hängt auf kurzen Lattenständern jeweils ein Kranz. Und in die Stille hinein ertönt der langgezogene Ton der Trompete. Wer jetzt hier steht, den bedrückt allein das Wissen um den Wahnsinn der Menschen, die sich hier gemordet haben. Meist junge Männer um die zwanzig. Ganze Dörfer sind in Frankreich ausgestorben, weil die Mädchen wegzogen, nachdem die Männer nicht zurückkamen. Mit jedem Ton, den die Trompete zur Klage formt, steigt das Gefühl der Hilflosigkeit. Und der Einsamkeit. Jeder schaut in sich hinein. Auch ich achtete auf den Trompeter und habe die Bewegung der Hände zueinander nicht gesehen. Später fragte ich François Mitterrand, wer von beiden die symbolische Geste initiiert habe. Mitterrand antwortete, er habe plötzlich das Bedürfnis gespürt, aus seiner Vereinsamung herauszutreten und mit einer Geste Helmut Kohl zu erreichen. Da habe er seine Hand ausgestreckt, und Kohl habe sie ergriffen. Helmut Kohl hat mir dies später bestätigt. Der deutsche Kanzler war erleichtert über die Geste Mitterrands. Mitterrand, der seine Gefühle stets für sich bewahrte, blickte trotz seiner Gebärde weiter in sich hinein, während Helmut Kohl in diesem beklemmenden Augenblick erleichtert zu dem Franzosen hinüberschaut, dankbar für diesen scheinbar kleinen Ausdruck von Menschlichkeit.'

5 For the text see http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest_der_93 [accessed 10-05-14].

6 F.W. Graf, 'Nationalismus IV. Stellung der Kirchen 1. Europa', *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 5 (2003) (71–74) 72 notes that this was not merely a German phenomenon: 'Im 1. Weltkrieg waren die Theologen aller kriegführenden Nationen mit großer Mehrheit bereit, trotz des von vielen bekundeten übernationalen, universalistischen Charakters des christlichen Glaubens das bedingungslose Eintreten für die jeweils als gerecht erklärte Sache der eigenen Nation zur „heiligen Pflicht" zu erklären. Der „Kulturkrieg" um konkurrierende Freiheitsideen bewirkte auf allen Seiten auch eine aggressiv nationalistische Fundamentalpolitisierung von theologischem Diskurs und kirchlicher Verkündigung. ... In den einstigen Feindstaaten, vor allem in Deutschland und in Frankreich, blieben die kirchlichen Diskurse aber weiter stark nationalistischen Leitvorstellungen verpflichtet.'

7 For Schlatter's response to the war see Werner Neuer, *Adolf Schlatter, Ein Leben für Theologie und Kirche* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1996) 522-569. Surprisingly, Neuer does not mention the *Manifest*.

8 See www.florence-nightingale.co.uk [accessed 10-05-14].

9 For a survey and evaluation of German war memorials see M. Lurz, 'Kriegerdenkmäler', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 20 (1990) 55-61.

10 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joyeux_Noël [accessed 10-05-14].

11 Lurz, 'Kriegerdenkmäler', 58.33–37 notes: 'Bei katholischen Stiftungen kam daher häufig die Pietà vor. Es gab sie in allen Varianten von einer christlichen bis zu einer national-profanen, von der zeitlosen Kleidung des Urtyps bis zur Uniform des Ersten Weltkriegs. Dabei fanden sich die trauernden Angehörigen – speziell Frau oder Mutter – auf dem Denkmal wieder, mit dessen Geschehen sie sich als Betrachter identifizierten. ... Die katholische Kirche erkannte in der Weimarer Republik ihre Chance darin, den Hinterbliebenen Stütze und Trost in ihrer Trauer zu bieten. Deutlicher als bei den Protestanten stand in katholischen Denkmälern die christliche Sinngebung im Vordergrund. Im Nachhinein betrachtet, versagten beide Kirchen vor der Aufgabe, ein Gegengewicht zum Nationalismus und Revanchismus der Kriegervereine und Traditionsverbände zu bieten'. Later, Lurz notes: 'Wo angesichts der Überhöhung des Krieges dessen Verständnis als Folge der Sünde zurücktrat, konnte sich verschärft die Theodizeefrage stellen, die allerdings explizit auf Denkmälern nie auftauchte, sondern mit dem Hinweis auf den Opfertod Christi beantwortet wurde. Trost spendete der Gedanke an die Auferstehung und das Jüngste Gericht' (59.10–15). In view of Lurz's summary, the analogy between the soldiers' death and the violent death of Jesus of the Heidelberg type war memorial, is noteworthy: 'Der Überblick über die Geschichte der Kriegerdenkmäler zeigt, dass vom Unterschied zwischen Kriegs- und natürlichem Tod immer wieder abgelenkt wurde; von der Tatsache nämlich, dass der Kriegstod von Menschenhand herbeigeführt wird und sich infolgedessen die Frage

nach der Berechtigung des Tötens stellt. Statt den Blick auf die damit verbundenen Probleme christlicher Ethik zu lenken, gingen die Kirchen eine mehr oder weniger enge Symbiose mit den säkularen und nationalen Interessen ein' (60.23–28).

12 Neuer, *Schlatter*, 525. On strong loyalty with the national cause as a common Christian response to the war, by no means limited to Germans, see Leonhard, 'Weltkrieg'.

13 Graf, 'Nationalismus', 73 notes: ‚In den Kirchen der westlichen Hemisphäre galt der Nationalismus nach dem Ende des 2. Weltkriegs als Ausdruck kollektiver Sünde. Beeinflusst von der Sozialethik der nordamerikanischen Protestantismen wurde in der Genfer Ökumene programmatisch der transnationale Charakter des Christentums betont. Die Nationaltheologien des 19. Jh. und die theologische Verstärkung der Radikalnationalismen des frühen 20. Jh. wurden als theologisch illegitim kritisiert. ... Trotz der verbreiteten Nationalismuskritik blieben die systematischen Probleme der Verhältnisbestimmung von Glaubensgewissheit und moralischer Bindung an die eigene Nation in allen europäischen Kirchen diskussionsbestimmend. ... In den Kirchen der Siegerstaaten des 2. Weltkrieges fiel die kritische Revision älterer religiöser Nationalismen deshalb zurückhaltender als in Deutschland aus, und auch in den kleineren, von NS-Deutschland besetzten europäischen Ländern blieben in der *memoria* der erlittenen Leiden traditionelle Synthesen von Volk, Nation und Christlichkeit stark erhalten.'

14 See M. Honecker, 'Volk 4. Die Auseinandersetzung der deutschen evangelischen Theologie mit der völkischen Bewegung und dem Volksgedanken', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 35 (2003) 199-204.

15 However, F.W. Graf, 'Völkische Theologie', *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 8 (2005) 1169 notes: 'Die im theologischen Diskurs insbesondere Deutschlands seit 1945 vertretene Auffassung, dass sich Entstehung und Faszination von völkischer Theologie im deutschen Sprachraum einem nationalspezifischen theologisch-ideologischen Sonderweg verdankten, wird durch die ungebrochene Attraktivität von volksbezogenen Befreiungstheologien vor allem in zahlreichen Ländern der Dritten Welt, aber auch in einigen vom orthodoxen Christentum geprägten Gesellschaften im östlichen Europa vielfältig dementiert.'

16 A point of departure might be M. Honecker, 'Volk 5. Sozialethische Überlegungen', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 35 (2003) 205-207.

With this issue ends the work of Dr James Eglinton as review editor. The new review editor is Dr Joel White of the Freie Theologische Hochschule Giessen, Germany, email address white@fthgiessen.de.

Diese Ausgabe ist die letzte, für die Dr James Eglinton Rezensionsbeauftragter war. Der neue Rezensionsbeauftragter ist Dr Joel White, Freie Theologische Hochschule Giessen, Deutschland, white@fthgiessen.de.

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From Christian Worldview to Kingdom Formation: Theological Education as Mission in the Former Soviet Union

Joshua T. Searle

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die evangelikale theologische Ausbildung in der früheren Sowjetunion befindet sich in einer entscheidenden Phase ihrer Geschichte. Überall in dieser riesengroßen Region halten evangelikale Pastoren und akademische Leiter Ausschau nach jenen Visionen und Werten, die nötig sind, um einen neuen Kurs in eine ungewisse, aber spannende Zukunft vorzugeben. Dieser Artikel zielt darauf ab, eine Gesamtperspektive für theologische Ausbildung zu umreißen, die sowohl über eine Bildung von Weltanschauung als auch über eine praktische Ausbildung für den Gemeindedienst hinausgeht. Es wird das Argument vertreten, dass die Entwicklung eines kontextuellen missionalen Paradigmas, das dabei hilft, die evangelikale theologische Ausbildung und Mission in der früheren Sowjetunion anzuregen, heute eine der dringlichsten Aufgaben evangelikaler Theologie in einem slawischen Umfeld darstellt.

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SUMMARY

Evangelical theological education in the Former Soviet Union has reached a crucial phase in its history. Evangelical pastors and academic leaders throughout this huge region are seeking the kind of visions and values that are needed to navigate a new course into an uncertain but exhilarating future. The aim of this article is to outline the contours of a holistic vision of theological education that goes beyond both worldview formation and practical training in church activities. It is argued that the development of a contextual missional paradigm that could be used to invigorate evangelical theological education and mission in the Former Soviet Union is one of the most urgent tasks of evangelical theology in Slavic contexts today.

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RÉSUMÉ

L'enseignement théologique évangélique dans l'ex-Union Soviétique a atteint une phase cruciale de son développement. Les pasteurs évangéliques et les responsables académiques de cette immense région du monde sont en quête de la vision et des valeurs qui permettront de frayer une voie nouvelle vers un futur incertain mais réjouissant. Cet article vise à dessiner les contours d'une vision holistique de l'enseignement théologique qui irait au-delà de l'élaboration d'une vision du monde et de la formation pratique aux activités ecclésiales. L'auteur soutient que l'une des tâches les plus urgentes pour la théologie évangélique dans le contexte slave est l'élaboration d'un paradigme missionnel contextuel qui pourrait donner davantage de vigueur à l'enseignement théologique et à l'œuvre missionnaire dans l'ex-Union Soviétique.

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1. Introduction

In his thought-provoking article in a recent issue of the *European Journal of Theology*, Johannes Reimer laments the lack of an 'appropriate Evangelical missiology for the Slavic world'.[1] Reimer argues convincingly that such a missiology must arise out of 'a continuous conversation between Scripture, a discerning community of believers and the socio-political context in which mission is being done'.[2] He calls upon evangelicals to engage in dialogue with Orthodox believers to develop a transformative missiology appropriate to

the post-Soviet context.[3] Following a well-trodden path in recent scholarship, Reimer decries what he calls the 'mixed blessing of Western assistance'[4] and claims that the dominance of Western thinking and practices has left the evangelical churches in the Former Soviet Union (hereafter FSU) ill-equipped to face the missiological challenges.[5] Reimer makes the crucial point that the churches in this region urgently need a contextual theology that connects with the spiritual, social and economic realities of the communities within which evangelicals live and work.

Building on Reimer's insights, this article is written in the conviction that the challenges confronting theological education and mission in the FSU can best be addressed not merely by developing new strategies or even by dreaming new visions; rather, what is needed above all at this time is a renewed focus on the central component of the mission of Jesus as depicted in the gospels: *compassion*.[6] Visions and aspirations come and go, but gospel values endure. Visions and grand strategies must be sustained by a clear set of values derived from gospel principles that are lived out in the context of a community (κοινωνία) that is characterised by service (διακονία) and compassion (ἀγάπη). This argument is simple and may even sound naïve and not particularly 'academic' or 'scientific', but in the flurry of missionary enthusiasm that followed the downfall of communism and the so-called 'triumph of the West',[7] it was easy to lose focus on the simple message of Jesus' compassion. In an earlier contribution to the debate, Reimer maintained that the early evangelical Protestant missionary movement in the FSU focused too much on planning and executing programmes. Instead of responding with compassion to the needs of local people and building the Kingdom of God in contextualised ways, many Western missionaries created what he disparagingly calls an 'evangelism industry'.[8] According to some critics, considerable missionary energy was expended on obtaining outcomes that were important to Western funding organisations, but which had little positive impact on the local populations of believers in the FSU.[9]

If the evangelical churches in the FSU are to offset the trend of decline and deterioration, they must learn from the mistakes of the churches in Western Europe, and develop radically new ways of living missionally in the rapidly changing cultural context. If they are to develop a contextually appropriate missiological paradigm, then Slavic evangelicals must not uncritically adopt the categories and concepts that have dominated the missiological discourse in Western Anglophone settings. Rather, as Reimer rightly insists, Russian and Eastern European evangelicalism will need to 'collect its own mission-historical memory'[10] to engage with the scriptures and to develop a post-Soviet missiological paradigm that will invigorate the missional practice of the Slavic evangelical churches. This article is offered as a contribution to an ongoing conversation concerning the characteristics of an appropriate missiology for Slavic evangelicals.[11]

2. The need for a contextual missiology

Contextual theology teaches that shifts in theological paradigms invariably occur against a background of broader cultural change. Contextual theological engagement occurs not when theologians posit theories from their armchairs, but when communities of believers ask the question, 'What would be a meaningful and empowering gospel message for the particular people in this specific culture that God has called us to serve in this particular region?' Contextual theology seeks to impart the gospel 'in the light of the respondent's worldview and then adapting the message, encoding it in such a way that it can become meaningful to the respondent'.[12] One of the most persistent themes of scholarship on mission in nations of the Former Soviet Union has been the lament over the lack of contextualisation of theological curricula and missional practices and methodologies.[13] Surveying the recent literature produced by Slavic evangelicals themselves on this issue, one of the most common themes in these writings is that of 'crisis'.[14]

Addressing this lack of a contextual post-Soviet missiology, theological education should, accordingly, be directed towards equipping people to relate effectively to the hopes, fears, anxieties and aspirations of the local people whom it serves. The first task of mission is not to build churches but to plant the seeds of the gospel by creating community. When Jesus came to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, he did so not by establishing an institution, but by building community and by reaching out to those who, for various social, political and economic reasons, were marginalised. Whereas mission was once understood as synonymous with 'evangelisation' and 'planting churches', there is now a widespread acknowledgement that mission encompasses a whole range of vocations

and gifts. Mission is nowadays acknowledged as a task that involves not only proclamation, but also community and service.[15] Mikhail Cherenkov, a young Ukrainian Baptist philosopher who has arguably done more than anyone else in recent years to develop a robust contextual Slavic missiology, insists that the evangelical communities of the FSU require a new missional paradigm that 'responds to the needs and questions of people beyond the walls of the Church'. Moreover, this paradigm must be able to serve as a 'matrix for appropriate theologies' and 'bring together the inner world of the church and outer world of culture, overcoming the spiritual and social dichotomy'.[16] On the way towards mapping the contours of a transformative contextual missional paradigm, this article will draw on archetypes from the recent history of the FSU in order to illustrate the transformative potential of an integrated vision of 'theological education as mission'.[17]

The aim of theological education is not to produce narrow academic specialists who can become experts in a minute area of Christian theology, as determined by Western practices of micro-compartmentalisation of theological research. Rather, the goal is to teach a holistic knowledge of God's work of salvation so as to imbue in students such a sense of missional vocation that they will be inspired to participate in God's plan to save the world through the redemption wrought in Christ and realised by the Holy Spirit.[18] The development of a holistic vision of theological education is particularly pertinent to Eastern Europe and the FSU. The notion of compartmentalisation tends to be alien to the Eastern Slavic mind-set which, as distinguished commentators from Berdyaev to Zernov have noted, inclines more towards integration than to atomisation of segments and components.[19] Moreover, the contextualisation of mission and theological education will necessitate a radical overhaul of the individualist modes of evangelisation that were exported to Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia by Western missionaries following the demise of the USSR, but which were unsuited to the communitarian context of the FSU.[20]

3. Worldview versus integral formation

Another unfortunate aspect of the importation of North American educational approaches to Eastern Europe and the FSU since the early 1990s has been an over-emphasis on the concept of 'worldview' and a concomitant neglect of the integrated formation of character that determines one's pre-critical orientation to the world.[21] Conservative evangelicals from North America have defined 'worldview' as 'a tapestry of interdependent ideas, principles and metaphysical claims that are derived from the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures'.[22] It has further been argued that, 'If the Christian worldview can be restored to a place of prominence and respect at the university, it will have a leavening effect throughout society.'[23] The task of theological education was thus said to consist in forming students in '*the* Christian worldview' through the teaching of abstract principles pertaining to Christian ethical norms and metaphysical postulates, supposedly derived from Scripture.

The basic problem with an educational approach which has as its primary goal the induction of students into a Christian worldview is that it is possible for learners to obtain intellectual cognition of Christian concepts in a way that does not shape their pre-critical orientation to life as embodied beings in the world. Over-reliance on 'worldview' can lead to a reductive presentation of Christian faith as a system of propositional truth claims rather than as a comprehensive mode of being that radically alters one's material participation in the world.[24] Theological education must be concerned not only with the 'life of the mind',[25] but also with the formation of hopes and passions and the transfiguration of the imagination in ways that correspond to the Kingdom values of the gospel, which 'evoke a radically transformed life of loving enemies, giving away worldly goods, and standing up against injustice'.[26]

This is not to suggest that 'worldview' is not an important aspect of formation or that the intellect, like the imagination, does not need to be transformed. But as James Smith rightly maintains, 'human beings are not primarily "thinking things" and cognitive machines'.[27] Moreover, Ernst Bloch claimed that to be human is to hope and that volition is determined primarily not by intellectual abstraction, but by vision and hope and an underlying 'passion for the possible'.[28] If we accept that, 'behind every pedagogy is a philosophical anthropology',[29] and that to be human is to hope, then it follows that theological education must go beyond inducting students into a Christian worldview through the impartation of facts and concepts and should take seriously the role of dreams, visions and the imagination as basic realities governing human volition.[30]

The need for an integrated transformative conception of theological education is even more critical in the Former Soviet Union. The idea of an armchair theologian engaging in detached academic speculation is alien to the philosophical orientations and historical experience of the Slavic peoples. There has historically been a bias towards 'practical philosophy' to the extent that, 'Pure philosophy, in the sense of exclusively theoretical inquiry, never flourished in Russia.'[31] Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) explained that for those living in the shadow of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which asserted 'an indissoluble union between theory and practice', the ultimate sin was the attempt to distinguish between 'philosophy and politics, between speculation and social building'.[32] He castigated the 'limitless social day dreaming, with no connection with actual reality', which he found in the intellectual life of parts of Europe.[33]

4. The Soviet system and its legacy

The Soviet system likewise inherited this long-established disdain for abstract theorising and the aims of Soviet philosophies of education went far beyond inducting students into the worldview of Marxism-Leninism. This becomes immediately apparent when one reads the Soviet atheist textbooks for students and teachers.[34] Examples of such works include a dense textbook, entitled *The Cultivation of an Active Atheist Position among Young Students*, published by the Soviet authorities in 1982:

> The Communist Workers Party regards education as an important front in the struggle for communism. One of the objectives of its programme is the holistic formation of the individual and the development of the whole character, subject to the conditions and requirements of the communist society, and the ability to make use of all communism's material and spiritual blessings. ... Organising the construction of a new society and purposefully carrying out this process, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has created a coherent system of communist education for all workers, covering all social strata and groups, and using every form of economic, political and, above all, ideological influence on the masses.[35]

In addition to the repeated use of the term '*всесторонний*' ('holistic' or 'comprehensive', *lit.* 'all-sided') in its description of the educational task, the book consistently argues for the need for active participation in communist practices that will change people's material reality. Another Soviet tract, entitled *Atheistic Education in Higher Learning*, published in 1982, elucidated the main aims of communist education in terms of inculcating active and comprehensive participation in the building of socialist values:

> ... through a system of higher education in our country many millions of Soviet youth representatives and new generations of educators are being trained through active labour and political activities to become the creators of new cultural values.[36]

The Soviet system of education was concerned not merely to change students' worldviews, but aimed additionally at the development of 'socially active, spiritually rich, harmoniously developed character[s]' through the comprehensive transformation of people's material practice.[37]

Although the Soviet Union no longer exists as a political entity, the Soviet aversion to abstract theorising remains an important characteristic of post-Soviet intellectual life. That being the case, evangelical theological education should relinquish its fixation with questions of knowledge and worldview and should instead be conceived as a holistic and integrated task that is directed towards the transformation of those 'material practices that shape the imaginative core of our being-in-the-world'.[38] The efforts of Christian institutions of higher learning in the Former Soviet Union should, accordingly, be directed towards not merely producing thinkers with a Christian worldview, but forming agents with a Kingdom mission. As Smith notes, 'the end (*telos*) of Christian education is *action*: the Christian university is a place from which students are *sent* as ambassadors of the coming kingdom of God'.[39]

The crucial point is that the centralised Soviet education system recognised what one commentator calls 'the supremacy of experience over purely theoretical constructions'.[40] Education was directed not so much towards forming people in a Marxist-Leninist worldview, but rather was aimed at equipping them to participate actively and energetically in the building of a utopian communist society in ways that were concrete, tangible and materially transformative. Berdyaev maintains that the communists' search for 'a synthetic philosophical system wherein all theory and

practice shall be indissolubly unified' was 'admirable in many respects'. Tellingly, Berdyaev argues that Christians '*must do the* same – but in quite another name'. Just as the Communists aimed to produce 'a new man, a new psychic entity', so too, according to Berdyaev, should Christians put their hopes in 'the birth of a new man'.[41] The term 'new man' was promoted by Marxist-Leninist ideology in the form of the 'new Soviet man' (*Новый Советскийчеловек*),[42] a concept developed to promulgate the idea of a new generation of people who would be endowed with Soviet virtues of discipline, selflessness, hard work and intelligence as a result of being nurtured in a Soviet culture and formed according to the material practices of Marxism-Leninism.[43] Ironically, this term has subsequently been lampooned by some post-Soviet commentators as depicting a new type of human being[44] known as *homo sovieticus*,[45] which is characterised by a degraded sense of self-worth, a distorted code of ethics and a deformed social conscience.

On first view, it may seem perverse even to suggest that Christians in post-Soviet countries today could learn from the methodologies of Soviet ideologues from the communist past. However, like a rebel army that captures the weapons of an tyrannical oppressor and uses them against him, post-Soviet Christians might also be able to adapt some of the educational philosophies of the Soviet Union in order to understand the importance not only of changing students' worldviews, but of transforming their material practices in ways that serve the building of the Kingdom of God rather than the Marxist-Leninist utopian society. And although the atheist-materialistic ideological content of the Soviet education was flawed, the methodologies pursued by Soviet pedagogues were remarkably effective in so far as they were directed towards peoples' material practices rather than merely focusing on abstract 'worldviews'. The Soviet authorities aimed to inculcate not intellectual acquiescence to an ideological system, but pro-active conformity to an applied social philosophy that would transform the material reality of those living under the system.[46]

5. AUCECB materials

As long as theological education was confined to the formation of a 'Christian worldview', the Soviet authorities perceived little threat to their ideological hegemony. It is therefore understandable why permission was granted to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) in the 1960s to run a part-time theological correspondence course for trainee evangelical pastors. Topics included in the first curriculum were Christian Doctrine, Exegesis, Introduction to the Bible, Preaching, Pastoral Care, History of the ECB, and the Constitution of the USSR.[47] When one looks in more detail at the lecture notes for this AUCECB course, the theoretical content soon becomes apparent.[48] Apart from brief appendices containing summary biographies of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, no attempt is made to connect the material to the Russian or Eurasian context. It is possible that these lecture notes were in fact Russian translations of a work previously published in English, although it is not clear what the original source might have been. The lack of contextualisation of the topics covered in this course may also be attributable to the strict state censorship on all material used by the AUCECB under the Soviet system, but it nevertheless illustrates the point that some evangelical theological programmes, even before the collapse of the USSR, were largely focused on the formation of a 'Christian worldview'.

This is not to say, however, that all the Baptist training programmes were concerned solely with the issue of worldview. The courses appear to have been clearly focused on church practices, most of all on preaching. Alexander Popov, a young Baptist theologian who teaches at Moscow Theological Seminary, states that Baptist theological education in the USSR was 'first of all focused on training preachers and, secondly, it addressed certain specific questions about particular ministries in the church'.[49] Furthermore, Heinrich Klassen claims that the courses offered by the AUCECB in the time of the USSR were mainly concerned with mission (or witness).[50] Referring to Soviet Baptists, Klassen maintains that 'Christianity effected [*sic*] the daily life of members in Christian churches and presented [in] this way a danger for socialism.'[51] However, if this was the case, then judging by the content of the material for the AUCECB training programmes, this was in spite of – rather than because of – the training that Baptist leaders received from the Correspondence Course. Whether these initiatives were concerned with shaping students' worldviews or whether they aimed at improving competence in the performance of certain church practices, neither of these objectives translated into subversive social trans-

formation for the sake of the Kingdom of God. They posed no great risk to the authorities and were thus to some extent tolerated by the Soviet system.

Whereas these kinds of evangelical educational initiatives were tolerated by the authorities and even began to flourish,[52] those learning communities that went beyond the notion of 'worldview' or training in specific church practices and which aimed to instigate a transformation of the material reality of contemporary society through the development of a radical Christian anthropology were mercilessly – and often brutally – suppressed by the KGB. One such initiative was the Christian Seminar, which represented a contextual utopian vision that drew deeply from the wells of the Slavic literature, theology and philosophy.

6. Building a utopian community through education: the Christian Seminar

As a learning community that represented an attempt to embody 'God's truth in the language and culture of a people',[53] the Christian Seminar offers some important lessons for leaders of all churches and seminaries (evangelical and Orthodox) in the FSU. The Christian Seminar was founded by young Orthodox intellectuals in 1974.[54] Explaining its founding, one of the key early leaders remarked that

> As we were dissatisfied with the mere performance of a religious cult, had had no opportunity to receive a religious education and needed to establish brotherly Christian relations, we began in October 1974 to hold a religious and philosophical seminar.[55]

Concerning its ultimate goals, the Christian Seminar aimed to become part of a mass youth movement that would culminate in 'a new type of human community'. A document dating from 1979 expresses the utopian aspirations of those who founded the Seminar:

> We are all in need of a deeper and warmer type of communication: the force of active love must transfigure the world around us … It has become impossible to go on living in falsehood. An unbearably aimless existence in a frenzied world, dull attendance at useless jobs, meaningless debilitating disputes, faceless socialist culture, newspaper pathos and lies, lies, lies. Corrosive, destructive, humiliating lying motivated by fear, which some justify as caution, others as inevitability, others as wisdom … From the moment we are born, socialist culture presents us with a complete, finished, essentially absolutely false image of the world. This world, excluding tragedy, compassion and in effect all Christian values from life, sets the pattern of one's life from birth to death with the inevitability of fate.[56]

This vivid and lucid critique of life under Soviet communism can be applied just as pertinently to contemporary life under post-Soviet consumer capitalism. The eschatological language employed by the participants in the Christian Seminar has a profound resonance with some key themes in Slavic history and philosophy and the indebtedness of the Seminar's leaders to figures such as Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, Solovyov and Kavelin is apparent from their *samizdat*[57] publications.[58]

Despite their deeply pessimistic appraisal of their situation, the leaders of the Christian Seminar looked to the Christian faith, in particular to the peculiar synthesis of Christian eschatology and nationalistic messianism that was expressed in the so-called 'Russian Idea', associated with Dostoevsky and Solovyov:

> We feel that we are that living material out of which Christ will make all things new: a new community, a new culture, a new family, a new kind of man and a new kind of woman. Essentially, he is creating a new people out of us. But at the same time this is a return to the primal roots of the Russian national soul, which is trustingly thrown open to receive God's world and all the nations which live in it.[59]

Particularly noteworthy was the Christian Seminar's reliance on eschatological themes, which related to key elements of the literary and philosophical heritage of the Slavic peoples. Berdyaev wrote that

> there are two dominant myths which can become dynamic in the life of a people – the myth about origins and the myth about the end. For Russians it has been the second myth, the eschatological one, that has dominated.

He thus described Russians as 'a people of the end' (*народконца*).[60] Sergei Bulgakov likewise spoke of 'apocalypse' as the defining aspect of the 'sociology of our time'.[61] The Christian Seminar was thus able to contextualise its message and connect it with deep themes in Russian history. The literature produced by the Christian Seminar testi-

fies to the philosophical sophistication and theological erudition of its authors. It is perhaps owing to the erudition and sophistication of its academic content that the Christian Seminar never became a mass movement.

The Christian Seminar, however, represented a lucid critique not only of the Marxist-Leninist worldview, but also of the mundane material practices on which the existence of the whole Soviet system depended.[62] This critique drew heavily on the resources of Christian theology, particularly eschatology and utopia, and can serve as a model and inspiration for contemporary faith-based critiques of post-Soviet society. The essence of the social critique consisted in the indictment of Soviet society's neglect of human values that had been articulated by Russia's great literary and philosophical figures such as Dostoevsky, Solovyov and Berdyaev and which was encapsulated in such concepts as *mir* (peace or world)[63], *obschschina* (community)[64] and, above all, *sobornost* (universal brotherhood).[65] Bringing these concepts into material reality would result in a 'transvaluation of values' (*'переоценка ценностей'*) – a Nietzschean term used by the members of the Christian Seminar to depict a wholesale transformation of society that would undermine all the tacit assumptions and material practices upon which the continued existence of the Soviet system depended.[66] Perhaps recognising the grave threat to their ideological hegemony posed by these cultural critiques, the Soviet authorities suppressed these educational initiatives with disproportionate brutality that involved the detainment, torture and forced confinement to psychological correction institutions of their leaders.[67]

Christian institutions of higher education in the FSU today that are looking to go beyond the 'worldview' model of theological formation could learn from the example of the Christian Seminar. Future evangelical initiatives in theological education should not be based on Western models of evangelism that emphasise the imperative of individual conversions and which promote pre-packaged versions of Christianity that are designed to sell to mass audiences on an open consumer market.[68] By importing individualistic methods of evangelism, Western missionaries unwittingly created sub-groups of 'wannabe Westerners',[69] people who were attracted not only by the message of salvation in Christ, but also by the opportunity to escape the often difficult living conditions of post-Soviet society.[70] Theological education offered by Western missionaries in the FSU has been seen by many as a bridge between the poverty of post-Soviet society and the affluence of the Western consumer society.[71] In order to avoid the problem of a lack of integration of educational methods and local cultural contexts, Christian institutions of higher education in the FSU should recognise 'the cultural dependency of all forms of gospel witness'[72] and become outward-looking, boundary-pushing communities that infiltrate the surrounding population with the transformative message of the gospel. Such an approach to theological education would facilitate the process whereby the church, as Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch put it, lives out the gospel '*within* its cultural context rather than perpetuating an institutional commitment *apart from* its cultural context'.[73] Connecting this insight to the example of the Christian Seminar and applying it to contemporary models of theological education, the emphasis should be placed on the concepts of *mir*, *obschschina* and *sobornost*. In particular these concepts can be used to connect the message of the gospel with the realities of contemporary culture in regions throughout the FSU. Any initiative that were to be built on such a foundation would not merely be more relevant and applicable to the history and traditions of Eastern European Slavic cultures, but would arguably be much more faithful to the message of the gospel – a gospel which is concerned not solely with individual conversions, but also with the creation of redeemed communities of men and women inspired with a vision to transform the wider world for the sake of the Kingdom of God (Rev 11:15).

7. The limits of contextualisation

It may be objected that this article's allusion to generalised terms such as 'Slavic missional paradigm' and 'Eastern Slavic mind-set' contradicts the main argument concerning the necessity of developing contextualised models of mission and theological education in the FSU. While acknowledging the obvious diversity between the various independent nation states, many of which have their own distinctive cultures, histories and languages, we nonetheless think that they have much in common. The cultural and linguistic differences between, for instance, Russia and Belarus or between Ukraine and Bulgaria are relatively minor compared to the differences between any of these countries and the United Kingdom or the United

States of America. Therefore, even if a 'Slavic missional paradigm' cannot be applied uniformly to every context of theological education in the FSU, if such a model were applied in this way, it would still be immeasurably more in tune with the local context than a model imported from the UK or the USA. Moreover, although missiological challenges and opportunities are always shaped by specific local factors, they can be meaningfully addressed only by a creative application of timeless biblical principles and imperatives, such as compassion, which require careful, sensitive and creative application to specific contexts.

Contrary to the misguided assumptions of some evangelical critics, contextual theology is not about being conformed to or imitative of culture; rather, a truly contextual theology is a flexible paradigm that is rooted in the Scriptures and is able to provide a critical lens through which to refract contextual realities in the light of the gospel. Recognising that 'cultures differ significantly in their reception of the word of God',[74] contextual theology attempts to grapple with the question of what a meaningful and empowering gospel would look like for people in a particular culture or community.[75] As one Orthodox theologian helpfully remarks:

> In the same manner in which it was necessary for the Second Person of the Trinity to assume human flesh to communicate the message of salvation, the truth of God must assume a form in which the message of salvation can be communicated. The Living Word became incarnate; thus the written word must also become incarnate.[76]

Moreover, the notion that contextual theology, paradoxically, can and should be applied universally is predicated on the understanding that the gospel of hope and new life in Christ has universal and cross-cultural meaning. Therefore compassion, as the universal and timeless principle of the gospel message, must be applied and practised in specific contexts in order to address particular needs.

8. Learning from the past to re-imagine the future

One lesson that we learn from the history of theological education in the FSU since the collapse of the USSR is that there are no quick fixes to the current crisis. Such is the complexity of this vast issue that this article has inevitably left several questions unanswered. Among the issues not addressed here is the practical question of how a programme of theological education pursued along the lines suggested above could obtain meaningful accreditation. Given the resonance of the Christian Seminar and the concepts of *mir*, *obschschina* and *sobornost* with Orthodox theology, it may be possible for evangelical learning communities to move towards closer partnership with Orthodox theological seminaries.[77] Perhaps evangelical seminaries in the FSU could aspire to a meaningful form of internationally recognised peer-accreditation.[78]

This article has maintained that in order to chart the course for theological education in the FSU, it is necessary for evangelicals to situate themselves historically within the context of broader trends of their regional histories. The leaders of evangelical seminaries would gain considerable insight and wisdom from reading about the history, not only of their predecessors in the Baptist movement, but also of educational initiatives that originated out of different traditions, such as the Christian Seminar. Unlike the Bible Correspondence Course of the AUCECB – and in contrast to other previous short-lived evangelical theological residential courses established in the early years of the USSR[79] whose educational aims were limited to the training of pastors and preachers – the Christian Seminar offered a more comprehensive vision of holistic theological education. It is important that its vision should be revived and contextualised for the contemporary setting, because its social critique and profound connection to the history and spiritual reality of Russia and Eastern Europe are as relevant and necessary today as they were at the height of Soviet power.

Nevertheless, a valid criticism can be made that the Christian Seminar was too idealistic and utopian in its outlook and that its aims – i.e. building 'a new community, a new culture, a new family, a new kind of man and a new kind of woman' – would have been unfeasible, even in the most auspicious social and political conditions, and utterly impossible in the adverse context of Soviet censorship and oppression. The evangelical leaders of the AUCECB may have set out fairly limited educational aims (i.e. training pastors and preachers for ministry to local congregations),[80] but they were at least achievable, even in the unfavourable circumstances created by the Soviet regime. The challenge for the next generation of evangelical leaders in the education sector working in the regions of the FSU is to learn from the example

of groups such as the Christian Seminar and the AUCECB and to develop new and creative programmes of theological education that will equip people with the conceptual resources to engage in cogent philosophical critiques of culture (in the tradition of the Christian Seminar), whilst still attending to the immediate pastoral and missional needs of churches (as the AUCECB sought to do).

9. Conclusion

The salient question that arises from the foregoing reflection is a simple one: Would it be possible to combine 1) the idealism and passion of the Christian Seminar and 2) the attention to the immediate pastoral and missional needs of local churches demonstrated by the AUCECB with 3) the focus on the transformative dimensions of material practice evinced by the Soviet educational philosophies? In engaging with this question, the aim is not to adopt uncritically the methods of the past, but to re-envision them from the perspective of the Kingdom of God in order to invigorate mission and theological education in the FSU today.

It is clear that the development of a missional paradigm that can refract the real lived experiences, hopes and fears of the people and nations of the FSU in the light of the gospel is a most urgent task of evangelical theology in Slavic contexts today. In fulfilling this task, we must remember the tremendously high stakes involved: if the churches and Christian institutions of higher education fail to work together in developing an adequate social philosophy that can connect meaningfully with the material realities of their host cultures, then the nations of the FSU could be plunged into a new dark age. If, on the other hand, the churches can fulfil their vocation by becoming a transformative presence for the renewal of culture, then the evangelical communities of the FSU could lead the way towards building strategic outposts of the Kingdom of God throughout Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia. The hope that has inspired this article is that the generation of the students that I taught at Donetsk Christian University will be able to witness and experience a new movement of the Holy Spirit that will sweep through the nations of the FSU bringing new life, redemption, reconciliation, renewal and compassion in its wake.

Endnotes

1 Johannes Reimer, 'Recovering the Missionary Memory: Russian Evangelicals in Search of an Appropriate Missiology', *European Journal of Theology* 22 (2013) 137-148.

2 Reimer, 'Recovering the Missionary Memory', 138.

3 Reimer, 'Recovering the Missionary Memory', 145.

4 This term was also used in Mark Elliott, 'Theological Education after Communism: The Mixed Blessing of Western Assistance', *Asbury Theological Journal* 50 (1995) 67.

5 Reimer thus echoes the lament of Mikhail Cherenkov, who has likewise called for a renewal of evangelical mission and theological education along the lines of a theologically-robust and contextually-relevant post-Soviet missiological paradigm. See М.Н. Черенков, 'Постсоветские евангельские церкви в поисках подходящей миссиологии: Глобальные тенденции и местные реалии', *Богословские размышления* 12 (2011) 7-16.

6 Mt 9:36; 14:14; Mk 6:34; Lk 7:13, 10:33, 15:20.

7 Walter Sawatsky argues that it is possible that no other event in the history of missions generated as much hope and excitement among evangelicals as the collapse of the Soviet Union; see Sawatsky, 'Return of Mission and Evangelization in the CIS (1980s – Present): an Assessment', in Walter Sawatsky and Peter Penner (eds), *Mission in the Former Soviet Union* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld, 2005) 94-119.

8 Johannes Reimer, 'Mission in Post-Perestroika Russia', *Missionalia* 24 (1996) 16-39.

9 For a critical analysis of the role of Western missionary activities, see Mark Elliott, 'Theological Education after Communism: The Mixed Blessing of Western Assistance' in *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 3 (1995); Wes and Cheryl Brown, 'Progress and Challenge in Theological Education in Central and Eastern Europe', *Transformation* 20 (2003) 1. A very critical account of Western missionaries can be found in Johannes Reimer's controversial and provocative 'Mission in Post-Perestroika Russia'; a more balanced criticism is offered by Peter F. Penner in his introductory article in Penner and Sawatsky (eds), *Mission in the Former Soviet Union*.

10 Reimer, 'Recovering the Missionary Memory', 139.

11 It nevertheless remains the case that, ultimately, the details of this missiology must be developed not by Western missionaries, but by the evangelical communities within the nations of the Former Soviet Union. Rather than trying to impose Western models of mission and theological education onto FSU contexts, missionaries from North America

and Western Europe should use their creative gifts to encourage, empower and equip native Christian leaders to develop a contextual theology that connects with local people in transformative, life-giving ways.

12 Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003) 83.

13 Walter Sawatsky, 'Visions in Conflict: Starting Anew Through the Prism of Leadership Training Efforts', in Niels Nielsen (ed.), *Religion after Communism in Eastern Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) 13, 20.

14 See, for example, М. Н. Черенков, *Баптизм без кавычек. Очерки и материалы к дискуссии о будущем евангельских церквей* (Черкассы: Коллоквиум, 2012); Александр Жибрик, *Бог под арестом* (Киев: Книгоноша, 2012); С. С. Хоружий, 'Кризис европейского человека и ресурсы христианской антропологии', *Дать душу Европе: Миссия и ответственность Церквей* (Москва: Культурный центр, 2006) 41-49.

15 Vladimir Fedorov, 'An Orthodox View on Theological Education as Mission', in Peter Penner (ed.), *Theological Education as Mission* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld, 2005) 69-102.

16 Черенков, *Баптизм без кавычек*, 146.

17 The notion of 'theological education *as* mission' in the European context is developed from a variety of perspectives in Penner (ed.), *Theological Education as Mission*.

18 The Orthodox theologian, Anastasios Yannoulatos, writes that, 'Since the Christian mission is incorporated into God's mission, the final goal of our mission surely cannot be different from His. And this purpose, as the Bible ... makes clear, is the 'recapitulation' (*anakephalaiosis*) of the universe in Christ and our participation in the divine glory, the eternal, final glory of God'. See Yannoulatos, 'The Purpose and Motive of Mission from an Orthodox Theological Point of View', *Porefthendes* 9 (1967) 4.

19 This point is helpfully illustrated in Parush R. Parushev, 'East and West: A Theological Conversation', *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 1 (2000) 31-44. See also Einike Pilli, 'Toward a Holistic view of Theological Education' in Penner (ed), *Theological Education as Mission*, 171-184.

20 Steven R. Chapman, 'Collectivism in the Russian World View and its Implications for Christian Ministry', *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 6 (Fall 1998).

21 James K.A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom. How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013) 13. The emphasis on 'Christian worldview' as the aim of theological education has been particularly prevalent in conservative evangelical or fundamentalist literature. For example, see D. S. Dockery and G. A. Thornbury, *Shaping a Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002).

22 Francis Beckwith, introduction to *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*, ed. Beckwith *et al* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004) 14; quoted in James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009) 31.

23 J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003) 2.

24 Pete Rollins refers to Christianity as 'a radical transformation that alters one's mode of being in the world'; see Rollins, *The Fidelity of Betrayal: Towards a Church Beyond Belief* (London: SPCK, 2008) 95.

25 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18.

26 Rollins, *Fidelity of Betrayal*, 100.

27 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 28.

28 Ernst Bloch, 'Zur Ontologie des Noch-Nicht-Seins', in Bloch, *Auswahl aus seinen Schriften* (Hamburg: Fischer, 1967) 41. The term 'passion for the possible' (*eine Leidenschaft für das Mögliche*) is found in Jürgen Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung* (München: Kaiser, 1964) 15. This phrase is attributed originally to Søren Kierkegaard, see Paul Ricoeur, 'Freiheit im Licht der Hoffnung' in *Hermeneutik und Strukturalismus: Der Konflikt der Interpretationen* I, trans. Johannes Rütsch (München: Kösel, 1973) 205.

29 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 27.

30 John Macquarrie, *In Search of Humanity* (London: SCM, 1982) 3-4.

31 Frederick C. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev* (Tunbridge Wells: Search Press, 1986) 5.

32 Nicolas Berdyaev, *The End of Our Time* [1924], transl. by Boris Jakim (San Rafael: Semantron Press, 2009) 216.

33 Nicolas Berdyaev, *Origin of Russian Communism* [1937] (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960) 25. Although Berdyaev can be accused of overstating his case, many Western observers have likewise noted that since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, Western theology has been characterised by rational, historical investigation. The prevailing assumption has been that 'real theology' is concerned with the ancient texts and the systems that theologians have built for interpreting them. All other types of theology are derived from this 'pure' theology. So-called 'real theological scholarship' involves the study of how ideas and texts interact. On this basis of this notion, Western theology has tended to separate theory from practice. 'Applied theology' is regarded as a derivative pursuit that can be undertaken only after a long process of learning about biblical and historical

issues and after gaining a sound grasp of systematic theology. See Andrew Kirk, 'Re-envisioning the Theological Curriculum as if the *Missio Dei* mattered', in Penner (ed.), *Theological Education as Mission*, 22-37.

34 Many of these have been preserved in the Keston Archive which is now at Baylor University, Waco, Texas. There are even several illustrated textbooks that were clearly aimed at young children.

35 В. К. Танчер, *Воспитание Активной Атеистической Позиции Студенческой Молодежи* (Киев: Головное издательство, 1982) 3.

36 Н.А. Пашков, *Атеистическое Воспитание в Высшей Школе* (Москва: Издательство Московского Университета, 1982) 3.

37 А.Г. Конфорович, *Атеистическое Воспитание в Процессе Препожавания Математики* (Москва: Радянська школа, 1980) 3.

38 Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 12, 15.

39 Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 15.

40 Сергей Хоружий, 'Дело христианского просвещения и парадигмы русской культуры', *Высшее образование в контексте русской культуры xxi века* (ВРФШ: Санкт-Петербург, 2000) 31.

41 Berdyaev, *The End of Our Time*, 256.

42 The notion of transfigured humanity is also a key theme of Eastern Orthodox theology; see Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 1968) 220-235.

43 Н.А. Бердяев, *Судьба России: Опыты по психологии войны и национальности* (Москва: Мысль, 1918, переиздана 1990) 196.

44 There are obvious allusions here to Ephesians 4:24, which reads: 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness' (KJV).

45 This term was invented by the prominent social critic, Aleksandr Zinovyev, in his book of the same title. See Zinoviev, *Homo Sovieticus*, transl. by Charles Janson (New York: Atlantic, 1986).

46 В.К. Танчер, *Воспитание Активной Атеистической Позиции Студенческой Молодежи* (Киев: Головное издательство, 1982); А.В. Белов, *Содержание и Методы Атеистического Воспитания Школьников* (Москва: Издательство «Педагогика», 1984); М.Е. Дуранов, *Атеистическое Воспитание Школьников: Вопросы Теории и Практики* (Москва: Издательство «Педагогика», 1986).

47 *Братский Вестник* 4 (1968) 77.

48 These notes can be found under the heading 'Нравственное богословие' in file <SU/Ort.15/18> in the Keston Archive.

49 Alexander Popov, 'The Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union as a hermeneutical community', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Wales, IBTS, Prague: 2010) 164.

50 Heinrich Klassen, *Mission als Zeugnis: Zur missionarischen Existenz in der Sowjetunion nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Logos-Verlag, 2003).

51 Heinrich Klassen, 'Mission as Bearing Witness – Immigrant Witness in Germany' in *Mission Focus* – Annual Review 14 (2006) 170.

52 According to one source (in file <SU Ort 15/18> of the Keston Archive), Leningrad Bible College, led by Ivan Prokhanov, helped to graduate more than 600 preachers and pastors before the Soviet authorities closed the college down in 1927. Between 1968 and 1980, the Keston Institute reported that 207 students had graduated from the theological correspondence course run by the AUCECB.

53 James J. Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986), 61.

54 Jane Ellis, 'USSR: The Christian Seminar', *Religion in Communist Lands* 8 (1980) 92-101. Michael Bourdeaux quotes the vivid impressions of one participant concerning the setting and content of the meetings of the Christian Seminar; see Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed: Lessons in Faith from the USSR* (New York: St Vladimir's, 1996) 35.

55 Alexander Ogorodnikov, quoted in Michael Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed: Lessons in Faith from the USSR* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983) 30.

56 Letter written by five members of the Christian Seminar to sympathisers in North America (November/December 1979) in the Keston Archive <Ort 21/1/80>.

57 '*Samizdat*', from the Russian word meaning 'to self-publish', referred to a miscellaneous variety of uncensored work on various religious, literary and journalistic topics and current affairs as well as some creative work such as poems and novels. *Samizdat* was written by dissidents in the USSR and often appeared in typed or mimeographed form. It was circulated clandestinely throughout the Soviet Union.

58 The second issue of the Seminar's *samizdat* journal, *Obshschina*, contained articles with such titles as 'The Ontological Problems of Russian Sophiology' and 'Konstantin Kavelin on Nihilism'.

59 Letter written by five members of the Christian Seminar to sympathisers in North America (November/December 1979) in the Keston Archive <Ort 21/1/80>.

60 Berdyaev, quoted in David M. Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 12.

61 Sergei Bulgakov, quoted in Jostein Bortnes, 'Religion', in Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 125.

62 For a helpful recent account of the activities of the seminar that focuses on the biography of one

of its leaders, see Koenraad De Wolf, *Dissident for Life: Alexander Ogorodnikov and the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Russia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

63 Gustav Wetter writes that 'it was only in the Russian people and their peasant institutions, the *Mir* and *Obshchina*, that the collectivist principles of an inbred solidarity were deployed to fullest effect'. See Wetter, *Dialectical Materialism: A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union*, trans. Peter Heath (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964) 64.

64 '*Obshchina*', often translated into English as 'community', can more accurately be rendered as 'the inborn spirit of collectivism'.

65 The term '*sobornost*' is more accurately translated by Boris Jakim as 'the authentic spirit of community'. See Berdyaev, *End of our Time*, 216.

66 The term '*переоценкаценностей*' was a translation from the German 'Umwertung aller Werte', which Nietzsche used in his *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-1885). Alexander Ogorodnikov, used the term in his essay entitled 'Современная русская культура'. Keston Archive <SU / Ort 12>, dated 5th August, 1976.

67 Alexander Ogorodnikov, one of the main leaders of the Christian Seminar, was only 28 years old when he was arrested in November 1978. He was sentenced to a forced labour camp for six years, followed by five years' exile. A female founder member of the seminar, Tatyana Shchipkova, was likewise arrested in 1980, charged with 'malicious hooliganism' and sentenced to three years in a labour camp.

68 A lucid critique of consumer-orientated Christianity is offered by John Drane in *The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity and the Future of the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000).

69 Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 38.

70 Vasyl Markus, 'Politics and Religion in Ukraine: In Search of a New Pluralistic Dimension', in Michael Bourdeaux (ed.), *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995) 171.

71 Scott D. Edgar, 'Faculty Development for Post-Soviet Protestant Seminaries: With Special Reference to Ukraine', *East-West Church Ministry Report* 17 (Spring 2009) 5. Others have commented on the brain drain of young evangelical leaders who have left the countries of the FSU and settled in Western Europe and the USA. See Anne-Marie Kool and Peter Penner, 'Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe: Major Developments and Challenges since 1910' in M. Raber and P. Penner (eds), *History and Mission in Europe* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld, 2011) 92-93.

72 Curtis Freeman, 'Introduction' to James W. McClendon, *Systematic Theology: Volume 3: Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012) xxxii-xxxiii.

73 Frost and Hirsch, *Shaping of Things to Come*, ix.

74 McClendon, *Witness*, 61.

75 See Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004); Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002).

76 Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission*, 62.

77 For a helpful summary of the common ground between Eastern Orthodox Christians and Slavic evangelicals, see Mikhail Cherenkov's article, 'Evangelical Christians and the Orthodox Church', available online at http://risu.org.ua/en/index/expert_thought/open_theme/40240 [accessed 1.4.2014]. For a more detailed analysis, see Donald Fairburn, *Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes* (Louisville: John Knox, 2002).

78 The Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (EAAA) has already done excellent work in this area.

79 These initiatives are summarised in Popov, 'Evangelical Christians-Baptists', 162.

80 Popov, 'Evangelical Christians-Baptists, 164.

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I Kneel Before the Father and Pray for You (Ephesians 3:14): Date and Significance of Ephesians, Part 2

Rüdiger Fuchs

SUMMARY

The first part of this three-part article discussed and defended the place of Ephesians among the letters of Paul. Part 2 grounds the proposal for the dating of Ephesians more fully upon the Pauline chronology and the Letter's character as a legacy. Specific comparisons are made with Acts 20 and 1 Timothy, and Paul's developing ideas about church order are highlighted. The third and final part of the article will discuss some arguments that for many speak against the authenticity of the Letter to the Ephesians.

* * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der erste Teil dieses dreiteiligen Artikels untersuchte und vertrat den Stand des Epheserbriefes unter den Paulusbriefen. Der zweite Teil gründet nun den Datierungsvorschlag für Epheser noch umfassender auf die paulinische Chronologie und den Charakter des Briefes als ein Vermächtnis. Es werden spezifische Vergleiche angestellt mit Apostelgeschichte 20 und dem 1. Timotheusbrief. Hervorgehoben werden die sich entfaltenden Gedanken von Paulus zur Gemeindeordnung. Der dritte und letzte Teil des Artikels wird dann einige Argumente behandeln, die für viele gegen die Authentizität des Epheserbriefes sprechen.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

La première des trois parties de cet article traitait de la place de l'épître aux Éphésiens parmi les lettres de Paul et a défendu son authenticité. Cette deuxième partie étaye plus à fond la thèse avancée au sujet de sa date en se fondant sur la chronologie de la vie de l'apôtre et sur le caractère de testament de l'épître. L'auteur établit des comparaisons avec le chapitre 20 du livre des Actes et la première épître à Timothée. Il fait ressortir le développement des idées de Paul au sujet de l'organisation d'Église. La dernière partie considérera les arguments avancés par beaucoup contre l'authenticité de l'épître aux Éphésiens.

* * * *

2. Was Ephesians written to 'the saints in Ephesus'?

The first part of this study (in the previous issue of the *European Journal of Theology*) gave an overview of the chronology of the letters of Paul, including Ephesians. In this second part, I will base my proposal for the date of Ephesians more fully upon the Pauline chronology and the Letter's character as a legacy.

2.1 Ephesians as a late letter

The character of Ephesians is not as impersonal as is frequently claimed. Rather, it carries a tone of certainty because Paul, writing at the end of the apostolic era, is expressing the things that must generally be important to all Christians after the apostolic time. He is thinking about Christians whom he will never come to know (Eph 1:21). As stated earlier, Ephesians is a circular intended for many congregations in the province of Asia, possibly for all gentile Christians in the entire mission area in the east of the Roman Empire. We too write our round-robin letters or emails in a more impersonal, general manner than letters or emails to a particular person or group. The original 'Letter to the Ephesians' will most certainly have been

sent to Ephesus but the name of the destination is missing in Ephesians 1:1 on purpose. Copies of Ephesians were passed on to all gentile Christians, similar, for example, to the decree of the apostles of Acts 15. In this way Paul wanted to establish a 'bulwark' against seducers in all congregations and in the name of all apostles.

If this view of Ephesians is correct, then some very personal elements in the Letter become visible. First of all, Ephesians 1-3 is an almost constant *prayer* in a hymnic, moving style (Ephesians 4-6 has a more normal Pauline style) and there is only one place in the Pauline letters where Paul *kneels* in prayer: Ephesians 3:14-21. Then in 2:1-10 in particular, Paul reminds the Christians from a gentile background (with the Messiah title emphasized by the use of the definite article) that the remaining Jewish Christian minorities in their assemblies are to be respected, and that their Jesus, who is Lord of all Christians, remains first of all *the* Messiah of the Jews. A third personal element is the similarity between 3:14-21 and Paul's meeting with the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20:17-38; every presbyter who, two or three years before the composing of Ephesians, had been in Miletus and prayed on their knees, weeping (Acts 20:36), would immediately be reminded of that moving hour by hearing Ephesians 3:14-21 and what Paul says and prays here.

During his years under house arrest (Acts 22-28) Paul further developed his theology, based on new questions posed and on meetings with new conversation partners. In this period he had more time to think more deeply about some things. An illustration of this development are some earlier thoughts from 1 Corinthians 10-15 which re-appear several years later in Colossians and Ephesians. For example, Christ is the 'head' of every man in the congregation and God is the head of Christ. Thus, God, through Christ, is the head of the Body of Christ which, according to 1 Corinthians 10-14, is the *ecclesia*. In addition, Christ is *Son of God*; that is, God's King of the world (Psalm 2, LXX) who will unite everything in God. At the same time, the congregation is already the 'body' of this head, led as it is by apostles, teachers, prophets and other authorities (cf. 1 Cor 4:1-21, 12:28, 16:10-18 with Eph 2:20-21, 4:1-16). These men in turn are inseparably joined to their wives (1 Cor 5-7, 11:3-16, 14:33-40; see Eph 5:21-33). The congregation in Corinth is *ecclesia*, house, temple and body of God's King (1 Cor 3:11-17, 6:14-20, 11:3-12, 28, 15:58). The body metaphor is also developed in Romans 12, although from a rather different viewpoint, and somewhat later Christ is described as the coming World Ruler, Lord (*kyrios*) and Saviour (*sotēr*) in Philippians 2:1-11 and 3:20-21.

In Colossians and Ephesians all of this is barely thought through any further. After all, there would not have been a body without a head for the Paul of 1 Corinthians and Romans. More emphatically than in 1 Corinthians, Christ is now declared 'Lord' and 'Head' of the cosmos and of the Church which consists of women and men (Col 3-4; Eph 5-6). It is not hard to see that several years after writing 1 Corinthians, Paul could formulate his thoughts more fully in Colossians, and subsequently take them from Colossians and in Ephesians convey them in a more fundamental way to a much larger circle of readers.

The apostle grows older and in prison dictates some letters to various secretaries, or commissions them to write them, sending them by means of envoys (Col 4:7-16; 2 Tim 4:9-12). His congregations preserved these final letters, which is why we still possess these late works of a Paul who, facing death, becomes more and more one of the 'Greeks and Romans, Scythians and barbarians'; in other words, one of the non-Jewish people (1 Cor 9:20-22, Col 3:11). The churches were composed more and more of Christians whom Paul no longer knew personally and he had to address different situations, problems and questions. Hence these last letters of Paul differ in many respects from the pre-prison letters.

2.2 The Roman Empire

At the time of writing of Ephesians, the rule of the Roman Empire is still desirable *or* at least acceptable to Christians. Clearly God and Jesus Christ are described as the best emperor, the best *kyrios*, king, *sotēr*, for Christians and non-Christians; Christ is even the ruler ('head') of the cosmos. When compared to the Roman emperor, it is clear that God/Christ Jesus are the true keepers of peace and the reconcilers of all humanity. At this moment in time a description of God (or Jesus) as the true emperor was still acceptable to Christians. But after the emperor Nero had Paul and Peter executed, and many other Christians as well, no Christian of the first century AD would have written 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1-8 or Ephesians. These letters must therefore be dated before AD 65. The tone of the book of

Revelation is very different: God and Christ are seen as *pantokrator* whereas the Roman emperor is clearly inspired by Satan. This idea is not expressed with the same clarity in Ephesians, but do note the first critical undertones in Ephesians 1:21, 2:2, 3:10.[1] In Revelation, Christians are victims of the emperor, *martyrs* in the new sense of the word. In Ephesians this is not yet the case. In the time of 1 Timothy 2:1-7, 6:11-16, or of Ephesians, images and language of war against earthly rulers such as in Revelation 19 are yet unthinkable.

2.3 Ephesians, Acts 20 and Miletus

Paul saw himself as the father and teacher of his congregations (e.g. 1 Cor 3-4) and the people he taught he called his children or pupils (1 Cor 4:14-17). In Acts 20:17-38 Luke tells us – without these metaphors, as an eyewitness, see the 'we' in Acts 20:15 – about the departure of the teacher Paul from the elders of the congregation in Ephesus in such a way that certain elements of Ephesians sound like echoes:

> I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. Therefore be alert [cf. Eph 2:1-10, 4:26, 6:10-20 on the theme of enemies], remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace [cf. *charis* in Eph 1:2, 6, 15, 2:5-8, 3:2, 7-8, 4:7, 29, 6:24], a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified [cf. Eph 1:1 'the saints'; the house metaphor in 2:19-22]. When [Paul] had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed.[2]

As I said before, the first chapters of Ephesians are written from prayers to a prayer, from 1:3-11 and 1:15-23 to 3:14-21. Especially 2:1-10 and 3:1-6 sound like echoes of the words of the Lucan Paul. We also noted that Paul never writes about kneeling down to pray, except in Ephesians 3:14 which is a clear allusion to Acts 20:36. Paul continues the prayer he started in Miletus and finishes it with Ephesians 3:14-21 or even 1:3 – 3:21.

In the exhortations to avoid association with pagan persons who lead questionable lives (Eph 5:1-20), Paul becomes quite personal with his pupils. The departing Paul now no longer uses the designation 'father' to refer to *his own* example – with which they would have been familiar – but rather to God the 'Father' and *his* example. The earthly, departing 'father' Paul binds his congregations – 'children of light' – to the one eternally abiding, heavenly 'Father'.

In no letter of Paul do we find God as 'Father' as often as in Ephesians: eight times in 1:2, 3, 17, 2:18, 3:14-15, 4:6, 5:20 and 6:23. In chapter 3 Paul hands his 'fatherhood' back to God (see 1 Cor 4:14-21); we also hear clearly how he hands over *his* 'children' to the 'teacher' God as their 'Father', as their teacher, their model, as he had done in Acts 20. (Is there also an allusion to the Jesus tradition as we find it in Mt 5:14-16, 45, 48?) Paul does this explicitly for his pupils who had often heard him. There are also implied references to God as Father in Ephesians 5:1 and 8 instead of *Paul* as Father, theological teacher and ethical model (as in 1 Thess 1:6, 2:7-9, 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1, Phil 3:17; 4:9). In short, in Ephesians Paul uses moving, emotion-filled words to recall the scene from Acts 20 that had remained in the minds of the church leaders at Ephesus; also compare the use of 'tears' and 'weeping' in Acts 20:31, 37-38.

However, in old manuscripts of the so-called 'Letter to the Ephesians', the location is missing in the *superscriptio* of Ephesians 1:1. Is it possible that, because of events described in Acts 19:23-41 and 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, the letter could not be delivered to Ephesus and read there as a letter of Paul? Compare the fact that according to Acts 20:17, Paul had to meet the elders of the Ephesian community in Miletus. Also note that later, during the journey to Italy (Acts 27:1-6), travelling on a ship 'to the ports along the coast of Asia' (verse 2), Paul had to leave the *Ephesian* Trophimus (Acts 21:29) behind in Myra (verse 5). In this way the (sea?)sick Trophimus could get quickly to Miletus (see 2 Tim 4:20b) before Paul and his travel companions were taken to another ship that was sailing for Italy. Can we suggest that Miletus was the new 'secret' headquarters for the Christian mission after the events mentioned in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 and Acts 19:23 – 21:29? If so, Ephesians was probably written for the purpose of being circulated among the Christians in the province of Asia and sent to Miletus, and thus intended only indirectly for the Christians in Ephesus.

2.4 Ephesians and 1 Timothy

Heinz-Werner Neudorfer has drawn up an interesting synoptic comparison of themes in Ephesians

and 1 Timothy, a letter which is clearly addressed to Ephesus. Neudorfer brings detailed similarities to light between the two letters.[3] Here are the parallel passages, which Neudorfer discusses in greater detail, with additions by me:

• **Love**

In no letter of the Pauline corpus is love discussed so intensively as in Ephesians (and Philemon), see 1 Timothy 1:5, 5:11; Ephesians 1:6, 4:15, 6:23-24 and elsewhere; Revelation 2:4.

• **Prayer**

Paul especially prays against the destruction of peace in the community and the home by Satan (1 Tim 2:1-14, Eph 5:21 – 6:20). Note the general tone of prayer in Ephesians after 1:3 and in 1 Timothy from 1:11-12 on, and also the variety and order of prayer: from praise and thanksgiving to prayers of petition, practised in Ephesians 1-3 and urged in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. In Ephesians, Paul does for the Ephesian Christians what he asks for in 1 Timothy: intensive prayer. He also casts an eye to the political authorities in Ephesians 1:21 and 3:10 (see Tit 3:1)!

• **Good works**

According to Ephesians 2:10, Christians are to be the ones who do 'good works' (cf. Tit 3:1-8). But their world is no longer being ruled with positive results by political authorities (Eph 2:1-10). Hence Paul no longer thanks or offers prayers for kings and other rulers. By the time of writing of Ephesians, the optimistic period of 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Titus 3:1-2 and Romans 13:1-7 lies in the past. Even so, the time of the Revelation to John, when Christians will become martyrs of the Roman emperor, is yet unimaginable to Paul. Felix and Festus, like several other political authorities before them (who also have no further role to play in Phil 3:20 – 4:7), had not proven to be 'gifts' for whom Christians can give thanks. They were no servants of God on the side of justice (Acts 16, 18, 22-26 and 2 Cor 6:5; 11:25-28). Prayers for political authorities (like 1 Tim 2:1-7) that were answered (Acts 19:31-40) had remained the exception. A loving God 'of peace' (1 Cor 14:33, Phil 4:9) cannot change a heart that does not *want* to make the right decisions (cf. Lk 15:11-32).

• **Women and men**

In 1 Timothy 2:1-15 as well as Ephesians 5:21-33 this theme is discussed in the context of the use of the title 'Saviour'. I also notice that both times it comes up in close proximity to references to attacks of Satan (1 Tim 2:14, Eph 5:21 – 6:20). Women are to move into the 'second row' and men into the front to protect the women. In both, letters it is a matter of the women placing themselves under the protection of the men. In both the self-offering of Christ and the salvation given by God/Christ are emphasised. In both cases prayer as a means of battle against the tempter is mandated. In Ephesians only Christ is still regent and saviour (*sotèr*; 5:23) under the Father (5:1-7).[4] In 1 Timothy, Paul still has hopes for earthly political authorities who want to become servants of the heavenly Saviour; that is, for regents and their representatives in Ephesus (Acts 19:31-40).

• ***Gnosis* (knowledge) or faith**

Ephesians contains a discussion of whether gnosis or faith expressing itself in love is the right way to knowledge of God (3:14-21). This is a developed version of Paul's answer to the Corinthians' emphasis on *gnosis* which we find in 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13 (see also Rom 2:17-24; 5:1-11; 8:1-13, 39; cf. 1 Cor 12:31 with Eph 3:20-21 'above and beyond'). In contrast, Paul emphasizes that one cannot recognise God in 'complete' fullness by means of increasing one's knowledge, but only through knowledge given through Christ and only through *love* to God. This is also a theme in 1 Timothy 1:3-10 and 6:20-21. True faith expresses itself in love (*agape*) and behaviour (1 Tim 1:5; 2:15). Note all the 'faith and love' variations in 1 and 2 Timothy as well as in Ephesians 3:14-21.[5]

• **Ideal ruler**

Julien Smith has recently argued that Ephesians presents Christ as an ideal ruler (cf. 1 Tim 3:16, 6:14-16).[6] Through Christ will be realised the reconciliation of humankind with God, the uniting of Jews and non-Jews, the establishment of harmony in the Church and the destruction of the occult forces.[7] In Ephesians 5:23 Jesus, as mentioned above, is the 'Saviour'; 1:19 mentions 'the immeasurable *greatness* of his power' and 5:32 refers to 'a *great* mystery'; similar language occurs in 1 Timothy 3:16; 6:6 and Titus 2:13. (See above; also 2 Tim 2:20, 1 Cor 16:8-9 and the use of 'great' in Acts 19:27, 34.) It seems to me that all of this is polemical against the cult of Artemis which dominated Ephesus.[8] Ephesians also presents Christ as God's true saviour and ruler, opposing the belief in spirits that abounded in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-20), and opposing the ruler cult that, together with the Artemis cult, was practised and celebrated in Ephesus. Ephesians does not use the epiphany language of the Pastoral Epistles, although the

imagery of light from Hellenistic soteriology is not completely missing in chapter 5.[9] (Cf. Eph 3:9 and especially 5:8-9, 13-14; see also 'darkness' in 5:8, 11 and 6:12.)

Other themes can be mentioned more briefly: **Repentance** (1 Tim 1:12-17; Eph 2:1-7, 3:5-10; cf. Rev. 2:5); **Hidden and obvious sin** (Eph 5:11-14a, 1 Tim 5:22-25); **Alcohol consumption** (1 Tim 3:3, 5:23, Eph 5:18); **Generational questions** (1 Tim 5:1-8; Eph 6:1-4); **Slaves and masters** (1 Tim 6:1-2; Eph 6:5-9); ***Oikonomia*** (1 Tim 1:4; Eph 1:10, cf. 3:2, 9); the key word **Mystery** (Eph 2:10; 3:2-6) which, as in 1 Corinthians 3 and 1 Timothy 3:15-16, appears at the central point of the letter.

2.5 Differences between Ephesians and 1 Timothy

There are two main differences between Ephesians and 1 Timothy: First, as stated in 2.2 above, in the prison letters and in Ephesians Paul's optimism regarding the state has disappeared. This in contrast with the optimism in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, which arose probably out of positive experiences such as we find, for example, in Acts 19:23-40, when city officials in Ephesus intervened on behalf of calm and of the Christians. Experiences of 'partial successes' by the enemy (2 Tim 1:15; Phil 1:15-17, 3:2-4) and of injustice suffered (Acts 21, 24, 25) may have contributed to this change in Paul's thinking.

Perhaps for this reason we find in 2 Timothy a description of *eusebeia* (godliness) which is formed by the sobering experience of suffering, as opposed to the form of *eusebeia* described in 1 Timothy. In other words, Christian *eusebeia* – that is, an *eusebeia* that as far as possible promotes a blameless civic and religious life and especially promotes the common good through prayer – does not prevent persecution. Instead we read in 2 Timothy 3:12 that 'all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'. And in Ephesians we find critical undertones, especially in 1:21, 2:2, 3:10 (cf. Tit 3:1!), 4:5, 9-13, where Paul clearly places Jesus above all earthly and heavenly rulers, whom he no longer sees as directed by God, such in contrast with Romans 13:1-7. In Ephesians, the true ruler and sole bringer of peace for the whole world is Christ, who is Lord above all (Eph 1-2), while the Father of Christ is the 'Father of all' (4:6) and above all rulers who see themselves as fathers (Eph 3-5).

The second difference is that Paul has abandoned the use of *seb*-words such as *eusebeia* in the prison letters, in contrast to 1 Timothy, Titus and Romans (also 2 Thess 2:4). He previously used this language from the pagan religion; when he uses it one last time in a letter to his best friend Timothy, it is with an undertone of bitterness, it seems. Second Timothy also has the situation in and around Ephesus in view. Therefore, Paul *could* have used *eusebia* and related words words in 2 Timothy, reminding Timothy especially that a few years earlier, he had used them extensively only in one letter: in his first letter to him arguing against the accusation that Christians are 'godless' (*asebes*). Timothy surely would have been able to hear the echoes of the first letter to him and also the undertone of bitterness in this repeated terminology (as, e.g., in Eph 3:14 the Ephesian elders could detect an allusion to the situation described in Acts 20:36).

2.6 Artemis and the women

According to Greek mythology, Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, defended her virginity aggressively, to the point of bloodshed. She also disallowed sexual intercourse to her female adherents, and her servants (girls older than nine years) had to be virgins. She allegedly came into the world without birth pangs and she accused men of being responsible for the birth pangs of women. When reading 1 Timothy 1:17, 2:8-15, 3:15b, 4:1-5, 10, 5:1-16, 6:13, 15, 17, it can be asked whether this letter reflects disagreements or debates with women in the church in Ephesus who were former adherents of the virginal, man-hating Artemis. Had they retained some of their views in modified form and does 1 Timothy 5:14 point toward this behaviour as 'giving the adversary … occasion to revile us'? What is at any rate certain is that 1 Timothy 2:15, 4:1-5 and 5:14-16 take a stand against some opponents of Paul who are ascetic, who reject marriage and who, consequently, are also anti-family. Some former adherents of the Artemis cult may have been opposed to marriage and to being a woman in the traditional roles of Antiquity or to living in the gender role patterns of the Old Testament. Therefore 1 Timothy 2:1-15 and 4:1-5, and also Ephesians 5:21 – 6:20, could be responses to this 'trend' among women, especially among those from the upper class.[10] According to 1 Timothy 2, women are unprotected against the attacks of Satan if

they get into a 'teaching conversation' with him without their husband at their side, as Eve once did. Using typological interpretation of the Old Testament, Paul commands man and woman, and especially husband and wife, to resist the tempter's attack with behaviour that is exactly the opposite of that of Adam and Eve. Among other things, as those who offer prayers (though without anger, 2:8) men are – so to say – commanded to go to the front line in this spiritual battle for peace, because Adam shirked his responsibility. In the case of satanic attacks, women should go into shelter, stepping back into the 'second row'.

At this point we should note Paul's thinking in Romans and 2 Corinthians. According to Romans 5, Adam bears the responsibility for the intrusion of sin into the world but according to 2 Corinthians 11:3 Eve is the site of Satan's first attack; hence, according to Paul, as it once was, so it is now. In my opinion, Paul's command that women move into the 'second row' only applies to satanic attacks, which he clearly differentiates from non-satanic 'temptations' (1 Cor 10:13). In those days women were still allowed to speak God's word from the 'front row' (1 Cor 11:3-16) but when outsiders were present, they had to remain silent in the discussions on how to understand and appreciate God's word, *after* hearing or speaking a word of prophecy (1 Cor 14:25-40). (For the order was: first prophecy, then its testing, cf. 1 Thess 5:19-22.) Female prophets are well known to non-Christians so there is no reason to be shocked at their presence in the churches; compare the main theme at the beginning and the end of the instructions regarding public worship in 1 Corinthians (10:31 – 11:16 and 14:23-40).

In Luke-Acts, Luke repeatedly and plainly presents exemplary men, women and families who are living in marriages which are conducted according to the biblical norm. He also shows that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were not exempt from this norm, thus correcting opposing propaganda that 'all things are allowed' which used a word of Jesus such as we find in Matthew 22:30 or even the example of the pregnant but unmarried Mary.[11] In addition, Luke frequently mentions exemplary women as adherents of the new faith, even (in a parable) using a woman as a model of God (Lk 15:8-10). This could indicate that Luke-Acts is taking position in the same debate as 1 Timothy.[12] Possibly Luke-Acts must also confront the slander of 'abusers' (compare Acts 19:9-10 with 1 Tim 1:18-20, 6:4) who accused the Christians, among other things, of breaking down the traditional orders of marriage. Paul's words in Romans 3:8, 6:1, 15 contain more general comments against such slander; and in Romans 7:1-6 Paul states that he is loyal to the Law of Moses, that is including the regulations for marriage, perhaps a polemics against opponents.

The instructions in Ephesians 4-6 are another Pauline attempt to minimise the potential of conflict between the non-Christians and the Christians in and around Ephesus. Christians – under whatever political authority (Eph 1:21; 3:10) – and particularly a community of men and women who live in agreement with the instructions in Ephesians 4-6, present no risk to the *pax romana*. Christ is the true Saviour (Eph 5:23) and bringer of peace for all, Jews and non-Jews (Eph 2). Note that the word *eirene* (peace) is nearly absent from Colossians (only 1:2, 3:15) but frequently found in Ephesians (1:2, 2:14-15, 17, 4:3, 6:15, 23) as well as in Romans, Paul's 'Friedensmemorandum' (memorandum of peace).[13]

2.7 Church order

Paul wrote Galatians first; then followed 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans; in this last letter he reaches a first interim position in his theology and ethics. During his six years of imprisonment he deepened his teaching, as it is reflected in further letters for his congregations. Philippians and Philemon were written before the appeal to the emperor (Acts 25:9-12); after this appeal he wrote Colossians and Ephesians shortly before his departure for Rome. Second Timothy originated soon after the arrival in Rome but this letter was intended for Timothy alone; it was Ephesians that would be Paul's true theological legacy for all Christians in his congregations in the East, including those who would come after him (Eph 1:21). In this circular letter, he summarises his teaching and sends it to all the congregations, in order to strengthen them against any attacks by enemies. He writes as one of the last apostles, looking back to the apostolic era. He entrusts the 'fatherhood' over the 'children' in the congregations which he founded to the heavenly Father, who plays a primary role in Ephesians.

If I see it correctly, in Galatians 3-6 we can meet an early, Spirit-oriented apostle. After his disputes with the 'Spirit-oriented' Corinthians (and possibly the Thessalonians, see 1 Thess 5:19-22 and 2 Thess 2-3), he changed into the Paul of Romans

nearly ten years later, and later still into the apostle of the Prison Letters. He wrestled with the question how the free working of the Holy Spirit could be combined with a hierarchical congregational leadership and with proper order in congregations and during worship (Eph 4), which would allow for the kind of order that encourages congregational growth and mission. In Ephesians, Paul describes this church order or 'house rules', to which he refers with the word *oikonomia* (1 Cor 9:17, Eph 1:10, 3:2, 9, Col 1:25, 1 Tim 1:4). These rules are to help shield Christians as the 'household of God' (Gal 6:9, 1 Tim 3:5-15, Eph 2:20 and ch. 5) from the temptation to fall away from the gospel or from the Father of that 'house'.[14] The work of the Holy Spirit, which – among other things – is protecting, is thus invoked and hoped for through prayer to God and Christ, which becomes more and more important to Paul.

Paul for the first time formulates his guidelines for the ordering of congregations and their worship in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-27. This is a fundamental order that is valid to this day:

> Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

In Romans 8 and 12-15 and Ephesians 4-6, he takes things still further in this direction.

2.8 Concluding remark

The inner and outer 'journeys' of Paul from Galatians via the interim position in Romans to Ephesians and 2 Timothy, from Jerusalem to Rome, together brought into being the specific Pauline theology, ethic and ecclesiology which he and his pupils formulated one last time in Ephesians. It has for 2000 years brought Christians more blessing than the apostle to the gentiles could have imagined. He prayed for his readers at that time and he prayed also for us, his sisters and brothers who would be living after him (Eph 3:16-21). Personally I find my joy in living in faith, hope and love, and in being allowed to grow through the teachings of the apostle of Christ, as a fulfilment of the prayers of Paul.

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Endnotes

1 To the whole compare Berger, *Kommentar*, 689.
2 Regarding this very Pauline and Jewish language see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 473-474.
3 Neudorfer, *Timotheus*, 23-25.
4 In the Prison Letters Christology often takes the place that in earlier letters belongs to Theology; see the first part of this study in the previous issue of *EJT*.
5 See R. Fuchs, 'Ist die Agape das Ziel der Unterweisung (1 Tim 1,5)?: zum unterschiedlichen Gebrauch des agapè- und des fil-Wortstamms in den Schreiben an Timotheus und Titus' in *Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie* 18 (2004) 93-125.
6 On the language of the ruler cult which is used particularly in 1 Timothy, see R. Fuchs, 'Artemis of Ephesus, the Ruler Cult, and the Language of the Pastoral Epistles. Considerations regarding differences and similarities of terminology in the Letters to Timothy and Titus' (forthcoming).
7 Julien Smith, *Christ the Ideal King: Cultural Context, Rhetorical Strategy, and the Power of Divine Monarchy in Ephesians* (WUNT 2. Reihe; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 2011) and Berger, *Kommentar*, 688-717. Compare the titles Son (in OT language: the King) and Christ in 1 Cor 15:22-28, as God's King in action.
8 See Fuchs, 'Artemis'.
9 Jung, *Soter*, 140-142.
10 See Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of the New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids / Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2003).
11 See Philip H. Towner, 'Gnosis and Realized Eschatology in Ephesus and the Corinthian Enthusiasm', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31 (1987) 95-125.
12 Cf. for example the sixty occurrences of 'woman' in Luke-Acts.
13 Haacker, 'Friedensmemorandum'.
14 In Galatians God is also emphatically the 'Father' (1:1-4; 4:6-7) of his family, of his 'house' (3:28, 6:9-10). This metaphor is developed in Ephesians, 1 Timothy and Titus.

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'Once You Were in Darkness': The Past of the Readers of Ephesians

Christoph Stenschke

SUMMARY

This article surveys and analyses how the Epistle to the Ephesians portrays the pre-conversion past of the predominantly Gentile Christian readers. After methodological considerations in the introduction, the essay gathers all such references. After a summary, the function of this portrayal in the argument of the letter is described before the question of the legitimacy of this portrayal is discussed. A final section relates the exegetical discussion to the present-day understanding of non-Christian religions and draws some conclusions for the mission of the church.

* * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht und analysiert, wie der Epheserbrief die Vergangenheit einer vorwiegend heidenchristlichen Leserschaft vor ihrer Bekehrung darstellt. Nach methodologischen Betrachtungen in der Einführung trägt die Studie all diese Angaben zusammen. Nach einer Zusammenfassung wird die Funktion dieser Darstellung im Argument des Briefes beschrieben, bevor erörtert wird, ob diese Darstellung legitim ist. Der letzte Abschnitt schlägt eine Brücke von der exegetischen Diskussion zum gegenwärtigen Verständnis nicht-christlicher Religionen und zieht daraus Schlussfolgerungen für die Aufgabe der Kirche.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article expose et analyse la présentation que l'on trouve dans l'épître aux Éphésiens du passé pré-chrétien de ses lecteurs en majorité d'origine païenne. Après des considérations méthodologiques, l'auteur enregistre toutes les références à ce passé. Puis il considère la fonction de cette évocation du passé des lecteurs dans l'argumentation et pose ensuite la question de la légitimité de cette manière de la présenter. Dans la dernière partie de l'article, l'auteur propose des applications de ses conclusions exégétiques pour la façon dont on peut considérer aujourd'hui les religions non chrétiennes et tire des conclusions pour la mission de l'Église.

* * * *

1. Introduction

Recent academic study of Ephesians has paid attention to issues of authorship and pseudonymity, to the particular historical situation for which the letter was written, to the reconstruction of the relationship between Jewish Christian and Gentile Christians and how it is addressed in the letter, to the conceptual background of the head-body metaphor,[1] to the religious background of the letter either in some form of Gnosticism or in the Old Testament and Hellenistic Judaism, and to the portrayal of Paul and its implications for issues of authorship and the nature of the letter.[2] While touching on a number of these issues, the focus of this essay is different.

In current New Testament studies issues of identity have received a fair amount of attention.[3] Such studies primarily focus on the new identity of the believers and the new community which they constitute and/or to which they now belong. Particular attention has been paid to the various strategies applied in *the construction of this new identity*.[4] What constitutes the identity of early Christians vis-à-vis other religious and social groups in the ancient world such as Jewish synagogues, Hellenistic mystery religions or the ancient associations?[5] In such discussions, one

significant aspect of identity is often neglected, namely the *former* identity and behaviour that the new converts have left behind or should have left behind.

Building and maintaining identity play a major role in Ephesians. Carson and Moo note that 'in general there is an effort to give Paul's readers a distinctively Christian identity'.[6] While not employing the concept and language of identity, Arnold describes three areas where Ephesians aims at constructing the new identity of the readers:[7]

> Being converts from a Hellenistic religious environment – mystery religions, magic, astrology – these people needed a positive grounding in the Pauline gospel from the apostle himself. Their fear of evil spirits and cosmic powers was also a great concern, especially the question of where Christ stands in relation to these forces [1]. Because of their pagan past, they also needed help and admonishment in cultivating a lifestyle consistent with their salvation in Christ, a lifestyle free from drunkenness, sexual immorality, stealing and bitterness [2]. Although there were many Jewish Christians (and former God-fearers) in the churches of the region, the flood of new Gentile converts created some significant tensions. Their lack of appreciation for the Jewish heritage of their faith prompted some serious Jewish-Gentile tension in the churches [3].

A particular emphasis in the construction of the believers' new identity is their new status 'in Christ', an expression which occurs 34 times in the six chapters of the letter and describes the 'corporate solidarity of believers with their resurrected and exalted Lord'.[8] A further noteworthy feature is the contrast between the former spiritual state of the readers with all its implications ('then') and the present state under faith with all its implications ('now'), although such contrasts also occur elsewhere in the New Testament.[9] Ernest Best has rightly noted that 'The contrast between pre-Christian and Christian existence is a commonplace in scripture (e.g. Rom 6:12-14; 8:13; 1 Pet 1:18; 2:10).'[10] Ephesians contains several statements regarding the former spiritual state of the readers (primarily in chapters 1-3) and the corresponding behaviour that they have left behind or are admonished to leave behind (primarily in chapters 4-6).

Ephesians can be read as a two-pronged exercise in early Christian identity building: dissociation from the readers' pagan past and the building of their new Christian identity in status and conduct; or, to use the language of construction: *de*-construction of their past status and behaviour and construction or perhaps *re*-construction of their new identity.

Best has examined these contrasts in Ephesians and has identified 'Two Types of Existence' – so the title of his study. He notes that 'Both types are stated in absolute and relative terms, and this creates problems. The two types are described most clearly in Ephesians 4:17-21; 4:22-24; 5:8 and 5:15-18.'[11] After surveying the passages which contrast *conduct*,[12] Best summarises the statements on the former *spiritual status* of the readers as follows:

> The contrasts identified here are put elsewhere in the letter in quite another way without the discussion of actual details of conduct. Unbelievers are dead in sin (2:1, 5) and belong to the sphere of the devil (2:2); they are under the control of 'the powers' (6:12) and subject to the wrath of God (2:3).

The present essay focuses on the portrayal of Gentiles before coming to faith. While obviously including the passages on conduct (to which Best refers and which he treats in detail in his commentary on Ephesians[13]), it wants to argue a more comprehensive case. First, what is said throughout the letter about the past that the readers left behind or should leave behind? Second, what is the function of this portrayal for determining and building the identity of the readers now that they believe? Through dissociation this 'old identity', however negatively it is portrayed, still functions in the construction of the new identity and its corresponding behaviour. Finally, we briefly survey explanations for this portrayal and discuss its legitimacy and abiding significance. In all three quests we shall return to Best's descriptions and analyses of these types of existence.

There is consensus that Ephesians addresses predominantly readers of Gentile Christian background:

> ... since a large portion of the argument of the letter relates to the acceptance of Gentiles as believers and since the readers are addressed in the second plural as Gentiles who have forsaken pagan ways (2:1f; 3:1; 4:17), the majority of them must have been Gentiles.[14]

On a number of occasions there is a differentiation between statements in the second person plural

directly addressing the readers (e.g.1:3-12, 14; 2:2-10) and statements in the first person plural (1:13; 2:11).[15] Some scholars have seen in the first person plural a reference to Jews or Jewish Christians (which is definitely the case in 1:3-12, as there is a contrast to Gentiles, v. 13); other exegetes have taken it to refer to Paul ('royal we' or *pluralis maiestatis*) or to Christians in general.[16]

Despite the several references to the former state and conduct of the readers, our quest is not obvious. Carson and Moo rightly note that in Ephesians 'in general there is an effort to give Paul's readers a distinctively Christian identity'.[17] The clear focus of Ephesians is *not* on the former life but on the change brought about by God's saving grace and on the readers' new status and privileges and the behaviour required in view of the former. Their past does not appear for its own sake and does not receive nuanced appreciation. It only serves as the negative backdrop for their present existence.

How does the extensive portrayal of Christians contribute to our quest? Do all positive statements on the status and privileges of the readers imply that they were lacking both prior to their conversion? Do all imperatives imply that the behaviour demanded of them under faith was lacking previously? For example, when the Christian children are called to obey their parents (6:1), does this suggest that there was no obedience previously or that their present obedience has a new quality as it is 'in the Lord'? When Christian slaves are called to exemplary conduct 'not only while being watched, and in order to please their masters' (6:5), does this suggest that non-Christians slaves would not act in this way? Does the charge to Christian masters to stop threatening their slaves in 6:9 suggest that some or all masters would have done so before their conversion?

2. The portrayal of people prior to faith

We begin with *direct* statements regarding the readers prior to their conversion. We follow the argument of the letter rather than employing a thematic approach, such as distinguishing between assertions on the state of the readers and on their behaviour, and dividing both areas into further subsections. (This will be our approach in the summary in 3.1.) This is followed by the indirect implications for the readers before coming to faith from the portrayal of Christians in Ephesians 1.[18]

2.1 Direct statements on the readers prior to faith

The former existence of the readers is described as a life 'in trespasses' which need to be (and can be) forgiven through the redemption through the blood of Jesus (1:7). Ephesians 2:1 describes the spiritual consequences of such trespasses: the readers were once spiritually 'dead through the trespasses and sins' in which they once lived; this is repeated in 2:5, 'we were dead through our trespasses'.[19] 2:1 combines a statement on the former state of the readers ('dead') with a statement on their behaviour or the consequences of that state. In this state, they were 'following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient' (2:2).[20] All Christians, including the Gentile readers, once lived among those who are disobedient (to God and his will) in the passions of their flesh, 'following the desires of flesh and senses', and they 'were by nature children of [God's] wrath, like everyone else' (2:3-4). This is a sweeping statement on the pre-conversion state of people: disobedient in the passions of their flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and by nature recipients of divine wrath and judgment.[21]

Ephesians 2 also contains a number of statements which define the Gentile readers negatively vis-à-vis Israel. They were Gentiles by birth ('nations according to the flesh'[22]) and therefore not born into the community of Israel (2:11). They were called the 'un-circumcision' by the Jews (who are 'called the circumcision'). Due to this default, they did not participate in the covenant and promises of the people of God.

But the negative comparison is not only with Israel: they were also at one time without Christ (2:12) and all the spiritual benefits derived from knowing him and believing in him which the letter so amply describes. Then the letter returns to the former negative characterisation in view of Israel's status and privileges: without Christ, they were 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers (alienated from, also in 4:18[23]) to the covenants of promise' (2:12). This is repeated positively in 2:19: 'you are no longer strangers and aliens'. The readers did not belong to the people of God and did not know and share in the various covenants and the promises which these covenants entailed for the present and the future. Therefore they had no hope and were 'without God in the world' (2:12c). Here it seems that recognition and

veneration of the true God is impossible without Christ, without sharing in the commonwealth of Israel and as strangers from the covenants of promise.

Once the readers were far off, now they have been brought near (2:13, 17). Now there is reconciliation to one body. The hostility between the readers and the Jews has been removed (2:14), put to death by the cross (2:16). Their former life was characterised by alienation from God and his promises and by hostility to the people of God (2:16) which is an indication of spiritual blindness.

Further direct statements occur in chapters 4 and 5, the paraenetic part of the letter, where they function repeatedly and extensively as the negative backdrop for the admonition.[24] What is said here draws on the previous characterisation of Gentiles. The readers must no longer live as the Gentiles live. This argument starts with the spiritual state and attitudes and then moves on to specific unacceptable forms of behaviour: Gentiles live in the futility of their minds (4:17; see 'dead through trespasses' in 2:1, 5).[25] They are darkened in their understanding and alienated from God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart (4:18, previously they were described as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel). Against this darkness divine enlightenment is necessary (1:18: 'that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know …'[26]). They have lost all spiritual sensitivity, they have abandoned themselves to licentiousness and they are eager to practise every kind of impurity. The contrast to their present state and required behaviour is clear: 'That is not the way you learnt in Christ' (4:20). The readers have been taught to put away their former way of life (4:22) which is characterised as the 'their old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts' (4:22). Their corrupted and deluded minds need to be divinely renewed (4:23); this 'old self' needs to be replaced with a 'new self', 'created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness' (4:24). Divine renewal, true righteousness and holiness were previously absent.

The following verses address virtues that are to replace their former behaviour. *Falsehood* in words towards neighbours is to make place for truth (4:25, as the Christians are now members of one another). Previously their *anger* led them to sin (4:26). Formerly they made room for *the schemes of the devil* in their lives (4:26-27). At least some the readers were *thieves* (4:28), now they are to work honestly with their hands;[27] sharing with the needy, rather than *stealing*, is to be their ideal. *Evil talk* is no longer to come out of their mouth (4:29), rather edifying and graceful words. Now their behaviour is not to grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30) with which they have been sealed. Previously the Holy Spirit was not in them. They must put away *all bitterness, wrath, anger, wrangling* and *slander*, together with all *malice* (4:31) which characterised their former life. Instead, there is to be mutual kindness, tender-heartedness and forgiveness.

What used to characterise their lives is again mentioned at the beginning of chapter 5 as the dark backdrop for the required present life: 'But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned, as it is proper among the saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk' (5:3). For no fornicator, no impure person, or a greedy person (that is an idolater) will partake in the kingdom of Christ and of God (5:5).[28] The theme of spiritual darkness recurs in 5:8: 'For once you were *in darkness*, but now in the Lord you are light.' Darkness as a metaphor for the spiritual state of people in alienation from God is a recurrent biblical theme.[29] If the fruit of the light is 'all that is good and right and true'(5:9), then the darkness in which the readers once lived is to be associated with all that is bad, wrong and false.

This spiritual darkness is not without practical consequences, namely 'unfruitful works' (5:11) which are now to be brought to the light. The practices of the Gentile are so perverted that it is 'shameful even to mention what such people do secretly' (5:12). The readers are called to live not as 'unwise people' (5:15, what they apparently used to do previously) and not to 'be foolish' (5:17). They are not to 'get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery' (5:18).

Possibly the charges of the Ephesian household code (5:22 – 6:9) also allow for some indirect conclusions.[30] Do these instructions suggest that the non-Christian wives are not subject to their husbands? Do the husbands not love their wives appropriately? Do children not obey their parents (6:1) or do fathers provoke their children to anger, rather than bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (6:4)? Similar questions can be raised with regard to slaves and masters (6:5-9).

Also of significance is 6:11, which places the Christian readers in a struggle against the devil. If Christians use the spiritual equipment that is

at their disposal, they will be able to withstand this onslaught. By implication those without the 'spiritual armour' which is available to Christians will be defenceless before the devil and unable to withstand (whether or not they even see a need and desire to withstand him) and will therefore be under his dominion.

Christians find themselves in a struggle not against enemies of blood and flesh; other people – knowingly or unknowingly – are under 'the rulers', 'the authorities', 'the cosmic powers of this present darkness', under the dominion of 'spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places' (6:12). Other people are indirectly characterised as unable to withstand now and on that evil day and as unable to stand firm as they lack what is available to believers (6:13-18; i.e. the belt of truth around their waist, the breastplate of righteousness, the proclamation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God). They are exposed without protection to 'all the flaming arrows of the evil one' (6:16). They are not aware of this precarious state. Therefore they do not try to resist Satan and have no desire to do so. To what extent non-Christians are in this way indirectly characterised as also under 'attack' by Satan is not clear nor is there discussion of the extent to which Satan may be blamed for their darkened state.

Carson and Moo observe on the cosmology of Ephesians that

> the cosmic conflict against 'principalities and powers' for which only the whole armour of God is adequate, depicts a world of dangerous opponents, sweeping from pure abstractions through demonology to literary personification. The breath of the vision invests the nature of the Christian struggle with breath-taking significance, while offering assurance that God and his gospel provides the only solace and hope.[31]

In view of the bleak portrayal of Gentiles prior to coming to faith in general, it is noteworthy that Ephesians does not contain direct references to the former idolatry of the readers, as is the case in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 ('how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God') and in Romans 1:21-23.

Ephesians 6:11 admonishes believers to stand against the wiles of the devil. While it is mentioned that their struggle is not against human enemies but against spiritual forces (see above), nowhere in the letter is the bleak state of Gentiles prior to their conversion directly attributed to the devil or superhuman powers. Yet there is no doubt that they were 'following the ruler of the power of the air' (2:2). Christians are charged no longer to make room for the devil (4:27).

There are some noteworthy exceptions to this bleak picture that need to be taken into account.[32] Best has also noted that next to the *absolute* statements, Ephesians also contains some '*relative*' statements on contemporary culture: 'Indeed, part of what the author says shows that he recognized the existence of good in the world.'[33] When the author writes about behaviour, he employs some ethical terms drawn from contemporary non-Christian ethics.[34] In addition to these ethical terms (however they are to be evaluated) there is further evidence: Despite all the negative attributes, the readers are assured that they were chosen by God in Christ even before the foundation of the world and long before their eventual conversion (1:4). Even then they had been destined for adoption as God's children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will (1:5), apparently regardless of their state prior to conversion. Despite their (still) being spiritually dead through their trespasses, in his great love God was at work and saved them by his grace (2:4), through faith and not through their own doing (2:9). Therefore all human boasting is excluded. The readers are now what God has made them to be, created in Christ Jesus for good works (2:9-10), which God prepared beforehand to be their way of life in the present. Their pre-conversion life, however dark and displeasing to God, was already under his claim.

Ephesians 3:15 speaks of God as the 'Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name'. This privilege applies not only to the Jewish people who are mentioned on several occasions.[35] Once there were 'two humanities' (2:15); now there is one new humanity in their place as God made peace between them.

2.2 Indirect conclusions from the state of the Christian readers

Our distinction between *direct* statements on Gentiles prior to faith and *indirect* conclusions from the portrayal of the Christian readers for the sake of clarity is artificial as both categories overlap and are inseparably linked. As we have seen in Ephesians 4-6, most of the statements in the letter regarding the Christian readers allow some indirect conclusions about their previous state. What

they now have and practise under faith, they lacked and did not do previously.[36]

There is too much material on the present positive state of the readers in the letter to gather and analyse here. The contrasts in Ephesians 1 have to suffice here to indicate the scope and range of the implicit negative conclusions: now the readers are saints and faithful in Jesus Christ, previously they were neither. Now they enjoy grace and peace from God their Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1 and 2). Previously there was enmity; now they are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (1:3). Previously they were excluded from these spiritual blessings. They were chosen to be holy and blameless before Christ in love (1:4); previously they were neither holy nor blameless. Now they are adopted as God's children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will and contribute to the praise of his glorious grace (1:6); previously they were not his children and did not contribute to the praise of God's grace. Now they have redemption through Jesus' blood/death, the forgiveness of their trespasses (1:7); previously they lacked redemption and forgiveness. The riches of God's graces are now lavished upon them; previously this was not the case. The mystery of God's will has now been made known to them (1:9); previously they did not know the will of God or divine mysteries. In Christ they have obtained an inheritance, 'having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplished all things according to his counsel and will' (1:11); previously they were without inheritance and promise.

What the Jews had experienced (described in 1:12) now also applies to the Gentiles: 'in him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit' (1:13); previously the word of truth was unknown to them and they had not received the seal of the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit is the pledge of their joint inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory (1:14); previously they neither had this pledge nor redemption. They were not part of God's own people and their lives did not contribute to the praise of his glory; they were not characterised by faith in the Lord Jesus and love toward all the saints (1:15, 3:18: 'with all the saints'). They were not part of a wider, translocal community.[37]

Previously the readers did not benefit from the author's intercession on their behalf (1:17) and presumably also from other intercession. Now God gives them wisdom and revelation so that they come to know him, and be enlightened to know the hope to which they have been called (1:18). Previously they had neither divine wisdom nor revelation and did not know God. They were without hope in the world. The readers now share in the riches of God's glorious inheritance among the saints and benefit from the immeasurable greatness of his power (1:19). Previously they did not share in this inheritance, were not part of 'the saints' and did not benefit from the immeasurable greatness of God's power. They have become part of the church (1:22), the assembly of the people of God, the body of Christ. Previously they did not belong to the church or the body of Christ.

A similar analysis of Ephesians 2-6 would yield far more material than can be analysed and summarised in this essay.

3. Summary[38]

Altogether Ephesians paints a bleak – and at first sight an absolute – picture of Gentiles prior coming to faith. *Firstly*, their spiritual state is described as one of spiritual darkness (5:8, including the unfruitful works of darkness, 5:11) and of deadness in trespasses and sins. This suggests that their state and conduct are inextricably linked. Gentiles live in the futility of their minds (4:17), are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart (4:18). They lack sensitivity (4:19), they are disobedient to God (2:2) and live without God in the world (2:12). They are corrupted and deluded by its lusts and they are by nature under the wrath of God (2:3).

Secondly, Ephesians 2 describes their state as one of deficiency vis-à-vis Israel.[39] They belong to 'the nations', not to the privileged people of God. They do not bear the covenant sign and are alien from Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise (2:12-13). They are far off (2:17) from God and his covenant people.

Thirdly, their state is described passively as under the dominion of supernatural evil forces. They follow the course of this world and the ruler of the power of the air (2:2). They are exposed to the schemes and attacks of the devil (4:26; 6:11-18). Some of these statements suggest an active contribution by the Gentiles to this situation; for example, they have hardened hearts and are disobedient.[40]

Fourthly, their state is closely linked to their behaviour. Best rightly observes:

> The sins of the Gentile world condemned by ... Ephesians are principally sexual perversions ('licentiousness' in 4:19 should be given this wide sense and not restricted to fornication alone ...) and covetousness.[41]

Gentiles are portrayed as following the passions of the flesh (2:3) and as 'greedy to practise every kind of impurity' (4:19). Ephesians 5:3 mentions fornication and impurity of any kind and greed (see also 5:5, 12). In addition to the two emphases identified by Best, they are characterised by falsehood and anger, by obscene, silly and vulgar talk, by bitterness, wrath, wrangling, slander and all malice (4:31), by lack of wisdom, foolishness and drunkenness. Therefore, a third emphasis next to sexual perversions and greed is on sins of the tongue.[42]

However, the picture is more nuanced as there are some unexpected exceptions: despite all negative characteristics, some Gentiles were chosen by God in Christ and came to faith (1:4). They had been destined for adoption as God's children according to the good pleasure of his will (1:5).[43] The merciful and loving God cared enough about them to save them by his grace (2:4-5, 8). Salvation was God's gift to them, independent of their works or achievements (2:9).[44] Works, which the Gentiles obviously did not have, are excluded, as is boasting (2:9). They had been created in Christ Jesus for good works which God had prepared beforehand to be their way of life in the present (2:10).

Other than these exceptional statements, Ephesians makes absolute statements on the readers' past and at times on Gentiles in general. There is no differentiation regarding state (all seem to be equally affected) or behaviour (all Gentiles seem to conduct themselves as described above).[45] We shall return to this observation once we have examined the rhetorical function of this portrayal in the argument of the letter.

4. Function

This portrayal of the readers has several functions which will now be discussed briefly.

4.1 Paraenesis

The dark portrayal of their past reminds the readers to appreciate their new status and to implement the new conduct that the letter calls for in some detail. Their former plight is painted in dark colours so that the solution provided in the Gospel shines all the more brightly regarding their status and their new behaviour. Let us look at this aspect in more detail. Best rightly observes and asks:

> An absolute position in respect either of the Christian life (that it is pure light [with reference to Eph 5:8]) or of the world outside the Christian community (that it is pure darkness) is impossible. What, then, led the author into the position where he appears to be making such absolute and impossible assertions?[46]

In order to find an answer, Best turns to ethical instruction in the New Testament in general.[47] Drawing on the well-known distinction between indicative and imperative,[48] he notes that 'The author was required, then, to express in absolute terms the position of believers so that he could make that position into a springboard for his advocacy of good conduct.'[49] This procedure can be seen in Ephesians 5:8: 'For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light.' Best concludes: 'But whereas this shows that there is a theological justification for the author's absolute statements in respect of believers, there is no parallel in respect of unbelievers.'[50] However, Best overlooks the fact that the absolute negative portrayal of the readers' past ('unbelievers') serves to paint the present indicative – from which the imperatives follow – all the brighter.[51] In addition, the pre-Christian conduct appears as the negative backdrop for the new Christian conduct now required of the readers. The negative portrayal of previous conduct serves to motivate Christian conduct in the present. Thus this portrayal in Ephesians has a particular but limited function. Tachau emphasises this repeatedly in his detailed treatment of Ephesians 2:

> So steht hier nicht die Geschichte der Heidenchristen im Allgemeinen zur Diskussion, sondern das alte heidnische und das neue christliche Sein der Adressaten... Das Schema dient damit hauptsächlich der Heilsvergewisserung der Adressaten. ... Auf die Vergangenheit wird trotz ihrer ausführlichen Schilderung in 2:1-3 und 11f um des Kontrastes willen verwiesen; sie ist aber nicht eigentlich Gegenstand der Betrachtung. ... Vielmehr dient die Erwähnung der Vergangenheit ausschließlich der Qualifikation der Gegenwart. .... Das 'einst-jetzt'-Schema hat die Funktion, das Herausgenommen-Sein der Christen aus ihrem Herkunftsbereich zu verdeutlichen.[52]

So Ephesians does not present a neutral, objective and generally applicable description of people before coming to faith and probably does not intend to do so.[53] The portrayal serves particular purposes and is shaped by them. Sellin speaks of the 'status of liminality' of recent Gentile Christian believers and observes:

> Die Einst-Jetzt-Schematisierung entspricht im Prinzip dem 'Schwellenstatus' der Heidenchristen. Sofern diese neubekehrt sind, ist für sie eine Orientierung an den neuen 'Werten' erforderlich, wobei es zur kontrastiven Perhorreszierung des alten, überwundenen Status kommt.[54]

On the question of the *Sitz im Leben* of early Christian paraenesis, Sellin notes:

> Eine hinreichend universale Funktionsbestimmung hat aber erst ein soziologischer Beitrag von Leo G. Perdue erbracht, der sich dem soziologischen Modell von Victor Turner anschließt: Die Paränese gehört in den Zusammenhang des Übergangs von einem gesellschaftlichen Status in einen anderen. Den Übergang begleiten die *rites de passage* ..., die drei raum-zeitliche Phasen enthalten: Separation (von einer Gruppe und dem entsprechenden Status) – die Schwellensituation – die Reintegration im neuen Status. In solche Übergangssituation gehört die Paränese, die den Übergang begleitet. ... Auf der 'Schwelle' kann Mahnrede im Rückblick auf den alten Zustand destruierend, im Vorblick auf den neuen konfirmierend wirken. Hierher gehört das 'Einst-Jetzt-Schema', das gerade im Epheserbrief eine große Rolle spielt.[55]

Although this severe criticism of the former state serves the present purposes of paraenesis well, it is still problematic to argue in this way.[56]

4.2 Building identity and ethics

Closely related to paraenesis is an observation of Best regarding the danger of apostasy or the continuance of former behaviour:

> Ephesians, then, evinces a great interest in the life of the community and little in that of the world outside, except to depict it in the darkest of colours. The more darkly the picture is painted, the less likely the members are to fall back into its ways.[57]

Karl-Gustav Sandelin observes that the societies in which the early Christian communities lived 'were characterised by religious activities manifested in temples, art, priestly hierarchies, rituals, banquets, processions and ways of life' and notes that 'For many early Christians that world formed a mission field'.[58] He further observes:

> Those who were converted to the new religion were mostly supposed to look at their former life critically as a life that was morally and religiously depraved (e.g. 1 Cor 12:1; 1 Petr 4:3f). The danger lay in a relapse into the religious behaviour which preceded conversion.[59]

If the converts are to learn 'to look at their former life critically', Ephesians goes a long way in assisting them to do so and to see it 'as a life that was morally and religiously depraved'.[60] In this way the portrayal of the readers' pre-conversion condition contributes to the construction of early Christian identity. We see in Ephesians a combination of deconstruction of their former state and conduct and a re-construction of the new identity and ensuing behaviour.

4.3 Respect for the Jewish believers

The portrayal of the readers' past also functions beyond implementing Christian ethics in view of the specific situation in which the readers are addressed. Schnelle observes regarding their situation:

> Die Situation der angeschriebenen Gemeinden wird offenbar durch Spannungen zwischen Juden- und Heidenchristen geprägt. ... ihr Verhältnis zu den Judenchristen ist der alleinige Inhalt der Unterweisung Epheser 2:11-22 und zugleich eines der dominierenden Briefthemen. Der Epheserbrief entwirft das Konzept einer Kirche aus Heiden- und Judenchristen, die miteinander den Leib Christi bilden.[61] Damit reagiert der Autor auf eine gegenläufige Entwicklung in den kleinasiatischen Gemeinden: Die Judenchristen stellen bereits eine Minderheit dar, und die Heidenchristen sehen in ihnen nicht mehr gleichberechtigte Partner.[62]

In order to address and alleviate such tensions between Gentile and Jewish Christians,[63] the author reminds the Gentile Christian readers of their dark past and their inferiority and deficiencies vis-à-vis Israel as God's chosen people. In this way the Gentile Christian readers are put in their proper place vis-à-vis their fellow Jewish believers: they are to appreciate what they are now because of Christ's undeserved intervention (chapter 2)

and to appreciate their Jewish fellow believers into whose heritage they have been included. Without this inclusion into Israel the Gentile readers would be 'nothing'. Therefore, although now a minority in the communities, the Jewish Christians are to be respected (cf. 1 Cor 8, Rom 14-15). Schnelle expresses this concern and the ensuing argumentation as follows:

> Die These des Eph ist klar und eindeutig: Israel ist Gottes Volk und hat seine Bundesverheißungen; die Heiden haben nichts. Das ist die Ausgangsposition. Da aber geschieht das unbegreifliche Wunder, dass Christus den Zaun zwischen Heiden und Juden, das Gesetz mit seinen Geboten, niederreißt und so den Heiden den Zugang zu Gott in der einen Kirche eröffnet (2:11ff).[64]

Paul Tachau argues similarly: 'Die Vergangenheit der Adressaten wird jetzt betont vom Standpunkt der Juden aus anvisiert ... „Einst seid ihr keine Juden gewesen"'.[65] This reminder to the Gentile readers of their former state and of the privileges of Israel is noteworthy in view of the prevalent and often open and violent anti-Judaism of the ancient world.[66] This aspect has not sufficiently been noted in the discussion of early Christian identity formation.

However, there is no room for contempt on the side of Jewish Christians either. They are reminded that despite their dark state, Gentiles are under God's claim: Israel's God is the 'Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name' (3:15). This privilege is not limited to Abraham and his descendants. All the readers have been saved not through their own merits but by grace. (Eph 2 contains several statements in the first person plural, 'we', including Christians of Jewish origin.) Tachau observes that Ephesians also relativises Jewish identity:

> Doch ist mit der Wendung 'die ihr die Unbeschnittenheit genannt werdet von der sogenannten Beschneidung die am Fleisch mit Händen vorgenommen wird' gleichzeitig eine relativierende Distanz den Juden gegenüber eingenommen.[67]

In this regard Ephesians is similar to the discussion in Romans 9-11 where Gentile Christians are called to respect the natural branches on the olive tree and are warned not to overestimate their own spiritual privileges and take them as granted and irrevocable; see particularly Romans 11:17-22:

> do not boast over the branches ... but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. ... God will not spare you. ... God's kindness towards you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off ... So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are ...

In Romans 14-15 the readers are encouraged to mutual tolerance and respect.[68]

4.4 Spiritual analysis

What is said about the readers' past implicitly applies to their present day neighbours and relatives and provides a spiritual analysis of the world in which the Christians continue to live. The environment that is characterised in this manner is likely to react with surprise and discrimination against Christians. However, this issue is not directly addressed by Ephesians. Says Best: 'Although in almost all the other NT writings Christians are seen as subject to outside pressure, if not persecution, this is not reflected in any counsel the author of Ephesians gives his readers'.[69]

In this regard there are remarkable analogies to 1 Peter, such as Peter's observation: 'They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme' (4:4). 1 Peter applies the honorific titles of Israel to the predominantly Gentile Christian readers and addresses such reactions and the Christian response to them in some detail, for example in 4:12: 'Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you'.[70] Related to this 'spiritual analysis' is an observation by Best:

> Another factor in the way the readers looked at their pre-Christian lives may have been the need to explain the failure of others to see the light as they themselves had done. Perhaps it resulted from the sinful and dark culture in which they were enmeshed as well as from their own sinful and dark lives.[71]

4.5 Evangelism

Finally – and likewise not directly addressed – this dark portrayal of their own previous life serves to motivate the readers to share their faith with others: 'The world outside is evil; men and women must be won into the community from it.'[72] A number of recent studies have argued that Paul expected all Christians to be involved in sharing

the Gospel;[73] that this is also in view in Ephesians has been argued by Best:

> ... it would be wrong to say that Ephesians is uninterested in winning outsiders, for 3:1-13 has set out the revelation that the gospel should be taken to the Gentiles. What we find in Ephesians is similar to what we see in sects: The outside world is evil; men and women must be won into the community from it.[74]

Despite this assessment of the outside world, Ephesians does not demand complete withdrawal. Sandelin has observed regarding other Pauline literature:

> Despite the condemnation of polytheism and idolatry, Philo and Paul still accept that their co-religionists have social contacts with unbelievers ... Paul does not object to an invitation to a meal given at an unbeliever's home.[75]

These functions of the portrayal of the readers' pre-conversion past go a long way in explaining its negative character, but the question of its legitimacy remains. In a time of tolerance and political correctness, few people would get away with such absolute estimates.

5. Legitimacy

We begin by summarising how Best has addressed the question of legitimacy. He first refers to similar statements in Pauline literature (Rom 1:18-32) and notes that the contrast of light and darkness (found in Eph 5:8) also appears in Romans 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 and Colossians 3:9-10 as well as in Old Testament (Isa 42:6-7; 49:9) and Jewish thought.[76] Hardness of heart also appears in the Old Testament with regard to Gentiles. Best concludes:

> ... there was much in the theological atmosphere in which the author of Ephesians was brought up to condition him into making absolute statements about the outside world, for it is highly probable that he was Jewish.[77]

While this indicates the origins of the ingredients of this portrayal and that the author does not stand alone with his assessment, it does not in itself render this argument legitimate. Several questions come to mind: What are the potential consequences of such arguments? Do these laudable ends justify the means employed? Is it legitimate to reach these goals 'at the expense' of the Gentiles? Is this what the author is really doing?

Best moves on to analyse the 'absolute' position in respect of Christian existence in Ephesians.[78] He notes that converts tend to 'see their pre-conversion life in the blackest of colours' and that 'Paul had a very grave view of his own pre-Christian past'.[79] The readers were in large parts converted Gentiles:

> When they looked back on their past lives, they saw them as full of sin. Before their conversion they had not thought very much about sin or realised its seriousness in God's eyes. Now with a wholly new vision, their past became darkened.[80]

While Best's observations are valid (and may be supported by modern analyses of the experiences and perspectives of converts), our question is different: if converts *themselves* have this perspective on their own pre-conversion life, it is *their own interpretation* of their lives, however one-sided it may be; but the author of Ephesians primarily speaks about *the past of others* (although the focus is on their new status and the privileges in which they now share).

The author's statements concerning others must be set in the context of his statements about his own status and that of the group to which he belongs. In Ephesians 3:8 he portrays himself as the very least of the saints. (However, note the rhetorical function of such statements.) In 1:3-12, the first plural references are likely to refer to Jewish Christians, in contrast to the Gentile Christian readers who are directly addressed in Ephesians 1:12-13: 'so that *we*, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.[81] In him *you* also, when *you* heard the word of truth ...'. In this context the author also speaks of the trespasses of this group (1:7). Whatever is said about the present status of Jewish Christians (which they had obtained before the Gentile Christians), is what they lacked previously (see above).

Other first person plural references are likely to be inclusive (Jewish and Gentile Christians; 1:14?; 1:19; 2:3-10, 14, 18; 3:12, 20; 4:7, 13–15, 25; 6:12, 24).[82] They contain a number of negative statements regarding the past which also apply to Jews, including the author: 'All of us once lived ... in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ... when we were dead through our trespasses ...' (2:3, 5).

In the remainder of his discussion Best refers to

the sectarian nature of Early Christianity (in the sociological sense of the term) and notes:

> Experience of small sects shows that they tend to take a very pessimistic view of what lies outside their group. Intent on drawing firm lines around themselves, they depict in the darkest of colours those who do not belong to them.[83]

He further notes:

> So not only the common beliefs of Christians but also pressure from outside would have driven them in on themselves and led them to judge the outside world harshly (5:16; 6.13).[84]

He then lists evidence in the letter for its inner-community focus which is to be seen in the body of Christ metaphor and in details of the paraenesis[85] and concludes:

> Ephesians, then, evinces a great interest in the life of the community and little in that of the world outside, except to depict it in the darkest of colours. The more darkly the picture is painted, the less likely the members are to fall back into its ways.[86]

While Best's observations go a long way in explaining the origin of this portrayal of the readers' past, he does not raise the issue of the legitimacy of this analysis.

What are we to make of this portrayal of non-Christians in post-modern times and in formally politically correct societies which promote – and cannot but promote – tolerance and respect for all their members? May we, must we repeat the portrayal and assessment of Ephesians without modification? The answer is 'yes' and 'no':

Yes, because for the community of faith this portrayal still has all the functions which it had for the original readers. In many cases these functions are sorely needed. Furthermore, this portrayal helps us to understand at least some of the world in which we live. Significant events of the history of the world, for example, the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust, indicate that something is fundamentally wrong with people which cannot be accounted for by humanistic anthropology.

No, a mere repetition of the portrayal in Ephesians would be problematic if it led to contempt of non-Christians. However, it does not necessarily lead to contempt. Ephesians also has salvation in view – and this is where the emphasis lies! The people portrayed so darkly are not beyond hope and salvation (see the exceptional statements above). The vision of Ephesians is that people come to faith, independent on race, age, social status, etcetera. The sombre assessment of pre-conversion life must not undermine the respect which all people deserve. One example of such undermining has to suffice. In her article 'Preparing the Church to Nurture First Generation Christians' [from a Hindu background], G. Mondol, herself an Indian convert from Hinduism, identifies a number of specific areas of failure on the part of the church in nurturing Hindu converts. In this context, Mondol speaks of 'a superiority complex by Christians'.[87] Among other factors, such a superiority complex – not limited to the Indian context and not limited to Hindus! – derives from the many positive statements in the New Testament on the new identity and privileged status which Christian believers enjoy and – perhaps also – from the negative statements about the spiritual state of people prior to coming to faith.[88]

If such statements should lead to a 'superiority complex', they have been thoroughly misunderstood. Christians need to remember that many of those whom they encounter are also chosen and predestined. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) illustrates that love is to extend to all people. In addition, one needs to remember that this portrayal appears in a letter that has its focus elsewhere. It says far more about the new status and privileges and conduct offered and required by the Gospel. Whether and to what extent these and other considerations require a drastic modification of the portrayal of Gentiles in Ephesians remains open to debate.[89]

6. Epilogue

A direct application might be simple in contexts where people convert in classical fashion from 'heathendom' to Christianity and need to be reminded of their former status and of the conduct that they are now called to abandon in their pursuit of their new privileges.[90] However, instances of this have become far and few between and most missionaries and pastors would – like Ephesians itself – rather focus on the new life than on the pre-conversion lives of the people to whom they minister.[91]

However, in today's missiological discussion and in the theological thinking (which is with few exceptions a new appreciation!) of people outside of Christianity in the past five decades,[92] people prior to faith are assessed much more positively than in Ephesians. To name but one example: the

portrayal in Ephesians is far from considering non-Christians to be anonymous Christians, as Karl Rahner did. Those trying to reach non-Christians look for and do find points of contact within their context. In this context, what are we to do with the one-sided portrayal of Ephesians? What is its positive contribution? Is it a necessary – even if politically incorrect – reminder of why people need salvation and an affirmation that they definitely need it? Does this portrayal help Christians (and others) to explain the world in which they live? While the portrayal of Ephesians may not be true for all non-Christians, it certainly applies to some and explains their behaviour by which not only they themselves but also many others are affected and under which they suffer.

In non-Western contexts the issue is also burning for other reasons. In many cases, the assessment by missionaries and by other Western Christians of the spiritual state of the 'natives' and of their conduct was (and perhaps continues to be) influenced – if not significantly shaped – by the biblical portrayals of 'Gentiles'.[93] Such assessments by Christians were not only 'spiritual exercises' and limited to winning 'lost souls'. They were also essential ingredients of power discourses and concerned not only matters of religion but led to or included from the beginning contempt for other aspects of 'native' cultures. Some of this was even reflected in the terminology used; for example, the Latin word *paganus* refers to the 'country dweller' or 'rustic' and as such to an 'uncivilised' or less civilised person. People characterised by these portrayals were (and are) often not taken seriously and were treated accordingly – in mild cases as inferiors to be guided and trained until they grow in knowledge and Christian conduct, in other cases as second-class people if not worse.[94]

As long as biblical texts on people prior to coming to faith are considered canonical and are used in the liturgy and the proclamation of the church – and have an important function in this context following their functions in the original context! – as well as in its popular and academic teaching of doctrine, we need to find ways of taking these texts seriously. At the same time we must find ways of learning from their reception-history and include an awareness of the actual and potential misuse which they have suffered and continue to suffer in some contexts.

Endnotes

1 At times with an anti-imperial edge: ‚Der kosmische Herrschaftsanspruch Jesu Christi steht hier bewusst im Gegensatz zum Kaiserkult', Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 6th edn, UTB 1830 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007) 356.

2 For surveys see Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 355-357; D.A. Carson and D. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) 492-494; and Clinton E. Arnold, 'Ephesians, Letter to the', in Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (eds), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995) 238-249. Older research is described in detail by Helmut Merkel, 'Der Epheserbrief in der neueren exegetischen Diskussion' in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.25.4 (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1987) 3156-3246.

3 See e.g. two recent major Scandinavian research projects documented in Bengt Holmberg (ed.), *Exploring Early Christian Identity*, WUNT 226 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) and Bengt Holmberg and M. Winninge (eds), *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, WUNT 227 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) and monographs on more defined aspects; a fine survey is Bengt Holmberg, 'Understanding the First Hundred Years of Christian Identity', in Holmberg, *Exploring*, 1-32.

4 One example is Paul Trebilco, *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

5 So far little attention has been paid to the trading communities of the ancient world; see now T. Terpstra, *Trading Communities in the Roman World: A Micro-Economic Institutional Perspective*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 37 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

6 Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 491.

7 Arnold, 'Ephesians', 246; see also Clinton E. Arnold, 'Introducing Ephesians: Establishing Believers in Christ', *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 39 (1996) 4–13.

8 Arnold, 'Ephesians', 247.

9 For a survey see Paul Tachau, *'Einst' und 'Jetzt' im Neuen Testament:Beobachtungen zu einem urchristlichen Predigtschema in der neutestamentlichen Briefliteratur und zu seiner Vorgeschichte*, FRLANT 105 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).

10 Ernest Best, 'Two Types of Existence' in Best, *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997) 139-155, 140.

11 Best, 'Types', 139.

12 Best, 'Types', 140-143.

13 Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark,

1998). At the beginning of his essay, Best places the descriptions mentioned above in the overall argument of the letter, Best, 'Types', 139-140. This is the context in which they have a particular function.

14 Best, *Ephesians*, 4; see also Best, 'Types', 139-140; Best, *Ephesians*, 1-6 and Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 347-348.

15 A helpful discussion of the author of Ephesians can be found in Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 480-486 and in Arnold, 'Ephesians', 240-242. They survey the debate and list several persuasive arguments for Pauline authorship. Following their arguments, I refer to the author as Paul. For an assessment as deutero-Pauline see Best, *Ephesians*, 6-40 and Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 344–346. Our quest is not dependent on issues of authorship. [Ed.: See also the article by Rüdiger Fuchs in the previous, the present and the next issues of this journal.]

16 First person plural references to Christians are 1:14, 19; 2:3-10, 14, 18; 3:12, 20; 4:7, 13-15, 25; 6:12, 24. On a number of occasions the author also writes in the first person singular. In 3:8 he refers to himself as the very least of all the saints. 6:22 seems to refer to Paul and his co-workers.

17 Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 491.

18 This outline follows an approach that has proven helpful in my *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, WUNT II.108 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

19 See Ernest Best, 'Dead in Trespasses and Sins (Eph 2:1)' in Best, *Studies*, 69-85. Tachau, *Einst*, 102 observes that the metaphorical use of the adjective 'dead' (Eph 2:1, 5) also appears in Hellenistic Judaism, 'womit dem Ausdruck auf Götzendienst hingewiesen wird'. Interestingly, Ephesians does not refer to the former idolatry of the readers (see observations below). On 'trespasses', Tachau, 104, notes: 'Doch gilt natürlich weiterhin, dass die konkreten 'Übertretungen' gewissermaßen als pars pro toto die vorchristliche Vergangenheit insgesamt kennzeichnen.'

20 Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 348 notes that this emphasis is due to the particular religious-cultural situation in Ephesus: 'Die auffällige Betonung der Macht Gottes bzw. Christi in Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21; 6:10-20 dürfte auf dem Hintergrund dieses religiösen Umfelds zu verstehen sein und weist auf eine religiöse Verunsicherung vieler neuer Gemeindemitglieder hin. Ihnen verkündigt der Eph: Gottes Macht steht über den teuflischen Gewalten und Mächten, den Herrschern der Finsternis und den Geistwesen der Bosheit in den himmlischen Bereichen (vgl. Eph 6:12).' This is reflected in the 'Erhöhungs- und Herrschaftschristologie' of the letter (353-354).

21 Tachau, *Einst*, 137: 'Die Vergangenheit der Adressaten wird jetzt betont vom Standpunkt der Juden aus anvisiert ... „Einst seid ihr keine Juden gewesen"'. On the role of this perspective, Tachau notes: 'Das Bemühen des Verfassers geht dahin, das Gegenüber von heidnischer Vergangenheit und christlicher Gegenwart auf dem Hintergrund jüdischer Terminologie zu verdeutlichen. Offensichtlich verfolgt er damit bestimmte Absichten: Die heidenchristliche Leserschaft muss davor gewarnt werden, sich gegenüber den Judenchristen bevorzugt zu dünken. Zu diesem Zweck wird auf ihre Vergangenheit im Unterschied zu den Heidenchristen verwiesen.'

22 Tachau, *Einst*, 99 notes: 'Auffallend selten ... werden die Heiden direkt im polemischen Sinn als solche (*ethnè*) angeredet'; on this term as a designation for outsiders see Paul Trebilco, 'Creativity at the Boundary. Features of the Linguistic and Conceptual Construction of Outsiders in the Pauline Corpus', *New Testament Studies* 60 (2014) 185-201, 194-200.

23 Tachau, *Einst*, 99 writes on the verb: 'In der LXX bezeichnet der Begriff häufig den Götzendienst (so etwa Hos 9:10; Jer 13:27; 19:4; Ez 14:5; vgl. auch Ps 57:4 und 3 Makk 1:3), doch ist beachtenswert, dass niemals die Heiden damit gemeint sind, sondern nur diejenigen, die vorher Jahwe verehrten. Im NT hat der Begriff eine Veränderung erfahren, wenn er sich jetzt auf die Heiden als Götzendiener beziehen kann'.

24 On the paraenesis of Ephesians see G. Sellin, 'Die Paränese des Epheserbriefs', in E. Brandt (ed.), *Gemeinschaft am Evangelium. FS Wiard Popkes* (Leipzig: EVA, 1996) 281-300. Tachau, *Einst*, 103 observes: 'Eine Charakterisierung der Vergangenheit durch Begriffe, die vom konkreten Handeln der Adressaten abgeleitet sind, findet sich lediglich in Kol und Eph.'

25 Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 355: 'An die ethische Grundlegung in Eph 4:1-16 schließt sich eine scharfe Kritik des Lebenswandels der Heiden an (Eph 4:17–5:20). *Er ist die Folge eines von Gott losgelösten Lebens*, die Heiden befinden sich vor Gott in der Situation der Entfremdung (Eph 4:18)' (italics CS); see also Trebilco, 'Creativity', 196-198.

26 See Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 495.

27 See Ernest Best, 'Ephesians 4:28: Thieves in the Church', in Best, *Studies*, 179-188.

28 Tachau, *Einst*, 99 observes on the catalogue of vices in Ephesians 5:3-4: 'Die aus der hellenistisch-jüdischen Propaganda und Apologetik gegen das Heidentum erwachsenen Lasterkataloge sind auch vom NT übernommen und in die Paränese eingebaut. Auch hier dienen sie der Kennzeichnung heidnischer Lebensweise. Aufgrund des Charakters dieser Kataloge wäre es verfehlt, jedes einzelne Laster auf einen konkret anvisierten Tatbestand zu beziehen. In der Summe der einzelnen Ausdrücke beschreiben die Kataloge vielmehr allgemein das Heidentum.'

29 See Hans Conzelmann in Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* VIII, 424-446 and H.C. Hahn, 'Licht/Finsternis' in Lothar Coenen & Klaus Haacker (eds), *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000) III (1300-1318) 1307-1310.

30 On the household code see Ernest Best, 'The *Haustafeln* in Ephesians (Eph 5:22–6:9)' in Best, *Studies*, 189-203.

31 Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 494; see also Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting*, SNTS.MS 63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Peter T. O'Brien, 'Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church' in D.A. Carson (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation and the Church* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984) 110-150.

32 This is in contrast to Romans 1:18-32.

33 Best, 'Types', 147. On page 143 Best observes that this is also the case in Jewish writings on Gentiles: 'Jewish authors were not consistent in employing dark colours. In so far as they recognized that God is the God of all peoples, who would in the end be gathered to God, their view of the Gentile world cannot have been entirely negative (Isa 45:22; 51:5; 56:7, Sir 1:9f, 1 En 10:21). Josephus, whose own associations in Judaism were with Pharisaism, compares Stoics and Pharisees with no intention of denigrating either (*Vita* 12), and so evaluates Stoicism positively.' Best, 146-147, also notes that Ephesians is inconsistent in how Christians are portrayed: 'If its author asserts that believers are now light and not darkness, much that he writes shows that he realized that darkness still existed among them. ... there would have been no point in the author's warning the readers so strongly against these sins if some believers had not been committing them. ... In fact, every instruction the author offers in respect of what he considers true conduct and every warning against sinful conduct is an admission, that there are those who have failed in the community.'

34 Best, 'Types', 147-148, concluding: 'This means that his image of pagan society and of the actual pre-Christian life of his readers cannot have been as dark as he says.' (148)

35 In Romans 9:4, 'sonship' is a particular privilege of Jews. Tachau, *Einst*, 139: 'Auch die Ausdrücke fern und nahe (2:13) dürften auf das Verhältnis von Juden und Heiden zu beziehen sein, obwohl sich im AT keine Belege finden lassen, die die Heiden als 'Entfernte' ansprechen. Erst in späterer Zeit wird diese Terminologie auf die Heiden bezogen.' Ephesians 2:12 notes that the readers were alien from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world. Once they were far off (2:13).

36 On the contrast between 'then' and 'now' in NT paraenesis see Tachau, *Einst*; on baptism as the marker and moment of the transition from then to now see T. Vegge, 'Baptismal Phrases in the Deuteropauline Epistles', in D. Hellholm, T. Vegge, O. Norderval, C.Hellholm (eds), *Ablution, Initiation and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, BZNW 176.1 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2011) 497-556.

37 See Christoph Stenschke, 'Issues of Power, Authority and Interdependence from a Biblical Perspective', *The South African Baptist Journal of Theology* 20 (2011) 233-261.

38 I summarise only the *direct* statements on Gentiles prior to their coming to faith. The portrait would become far more nuanced and complex if all *indirect* conclusions were included.

39 Tachau, *Einst*, 141: 'Dabei wird der vorchristliche Zustand z.T. von jüdischen Gesichtspunkten aus geschildert.'

40 This portrayal resembles that of Gentiles in Romans 1:18-32, see R. Dabelstein, *Die Beurteilung der 'Heiden' bei Paulus*, Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie (Frankfurt: Lang, 1981) and that of Luke-Acts; for a summary see Stenschke, *Portrait*, 379-382. According to Luke, Gentiles are characterised by ignorance, rejection of God's purpose and revelation in history, idolatry, materialism, moral-ethical sins, under the power of Satan and under divine judgement.

41 Best, 'Types', 145-146.

42 As e.g. in James 3:1-12; the NT follows the OT wisdom tradition in this regard; for the background see W.R. Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics in the Epistle of James*, WUNT II.68 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

43 Cf. Acts 18:10; see Stenschke, *Portrait*, 293-294.

44 These key statements on the soteriology of Ephesians are often read in an unreflected Protestant manner with *Jewish* readers in mind: these statements aim at excluding any form of righteousness through works of the law and boasting of such righteousness. (This reading will also be influenced by Galatians and Romans, where righteousness through the law is explicitly addressed!) The Jews were aware of the law and of righteousness through the law; they went a long way in achieving this righteousness and were therefore prone to boasting. These statements are all the more striking when it is kept in mind that they primarily address readers with a *Gentile* background. What they were not even aware of and could not present is not required for salvation as it is the gift of God.

45 E.g. Ephesians does not mention God-fearers or proselytes as exceptional Gentiles (see Best, *Ephesians*, 4). They constitute a significant aspect in the Lukan portrayal of Gentiles prior to their

coming to faith; see Stenschke, *Portrait*.

46 Best, 'Types', 149.

47 Best, 'Types', 149-150.

48 See, however, the recent criticism of this concept, e.g. in F.W. Horn and R. Zimmermann (eds), *Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ*, Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik / Context and Norms of New Testament Ethics I, WUNT 238 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

49 Best, 'Types', 149-150.

50 Best, 'Types', 150.

51 Arnold, 'Ephesians', 247 describes the ethical argument of Ephesians as follows: 'behavioural change is not only possible, it is part of their divine calling and God's purpose for them (Eph 1:4; 2:10; 4:1). They have access to God's power which will enable them to resist temptation (Eph 6:10-18). They are enabled by the risen Christ himself who has endowed the church with gifted people who depend on him for leadership and provision (Eph 4:11-16). Finally, they have an example in Christ himself who modelled self-sacrificial love and service (Eph 5:2)'.

52 *Tachau, Einst*, 140, 142, 143.

53 Appreciation of this particular function will help our following discussion of the legitimacy of this portrayal of Gentiles.

54 Sellin, 'Paränese', 299.

55 Sellin, 'Paränese', 287, with reference to L.G. Perdue, 'The Social Character of Paraenesis and Paraenetic Literature', *Semeia* 50 (1990) 5-39. Summarising Turner, Perdue, 10, refers to liminality as a state of 'inbetwixt and inbetween': 'Paraenesis in this first phase [of liminality] is subversive, designed to undercut the validity of the prior social world. ... During this phase of the liminal experience, 'ritual leaders' construct for the novices a new social reality and instruct the novices in the roles and responsibilities they are to assume once aggregation (reincorporation) occurs.' On pages 23-26 Perdue surveys the 'social function of paraenesis'.

56 The author does not necessarily imply that prior to their coming to faith the readers and other Gentiles always and only conformed to this portrayal which serves the argument and intention of the letter.

57 Best, 'Types', 155.

58 Karl-Gustav Sandelin, *Attraction and Danger of Alien Religion: Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity*, WUNT 290 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) xii.

59 Sandelin, *Attraction*, xii.

60 Sandelin continues: 'Warnings against idolatry are therefore most understandable (e.g. 1 Cor 10:14; 1 John 5:21).' In view of this observation it is surprising that Ephesians does not directly address the former idolatry of the readers or warn against it (see e.g. Rom 1:23; Gal 5:20; 1 Thess 1:9). In Ephesians 5:5 greed is identified as idolatry; see Brian S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origen and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). In comparing Paul and Philo on idolatry, Sandelin, *Attraction*, 134 concludes: 'When Paul and Philo take their stand against the danger of idolatry, they do so in contexts which differ from one another to a great extent: ... Philo warns people born as Jews against Gentile religion, and only indirectly mentions the problem of backsliding to their former religion among proselytes.'

61 The emphasis on the unity of the Church has often been noted; see, for example, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. &. T. Clark, 1991) 22–35. C. Leslie Mitton argues that the letter was written against 'the danger of the largely Gentile readership disowning their Jewish heritage' (according to Arnold, 'Ephesians', 245). Arnold, 246, notes in his survey of opinions on the life-setting and purpose of Ephesians: 'Gentile believers are strongly in view ... and there is a need for the readers to receive teaching and admonishment on unity and a distinctively Christian lifestyle.'

62 Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 347-348, with reference to K.M. Fischer, *Tendenz und Absicht des Epheserbriefs* (Berlin: EVA; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) 79-94, who writes 'Keine Frage behandelt der Eph. klarer und dringender als das Verhältnis von Heiden- und Judenchristen in der einen Kirche' (79). This case has also been argued by Ralph P. Martin (according to Arnold, 'Ephesians', 245). Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 490-491, are more cautious and merely note: 'Some point to a possible tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians and think Paul is trying to secure unity.' Later on they note: 'Apparently Paul thought his readers needed to be exhorted to pursue unity and a distinctively Christian ethic' (491). Cf. Arnold, 'Ephesians', 246.

63 Fischer, *Tendenz*, 79 rightly observes that Ephesians sees the danger of boasting in a one-sided manner with the Gentile Christians (as they are being addressed).

64 Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 356, with reference to Fischer, *Tendenz*, 80.

65 *Tachau, Einst*, 137.

66 For surveys see C. Stenschke and editors, 'Apologetik, Polemik und Mission: Der Umgang mit der Religiosität der "anderen"' in K. Erlemann, K.L. Nöthlichs, K. Scherberich and J. Zangenberg (eds), *Neues Testament und antike Kultur III: Weltauffassung, Kult, Ethos* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2005) 244-253, 245-246; and G. Bohak, 'Gentile Attitudes toward Jews and Judaism' in John J. Collins and D.C. Harlow (eds), *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 668-670.

67 *Tachau, Einst*, 140.

68 Best, 'Types', 150 notes the similarities between

Romans 1:18–32 and the portrayal of Gentiles in Ephesians. See also the paraenesis in Romans 12:3, 16: '… I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. … Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.'

69 Best, *Ephesians*, 3.

70 See Christoph Stenschke, '"… das auserwählte Geschlecht, die königliche Priesterschaft, das heilige Volk" (1 Petr 2.9): Funktion und Bedeutung der Ehrenbezeichnungen Israels im 1. Petrusbrief', in Berthold Schwarz und Helge Stadelmann (eds), *Christen, Juden und die Zukunft Israels: Beiträge zur Israellehre aus Geschichte und Theologie*, Edition Israelogie 1 (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin, Bern: Peter Lang, 2009) 97-116; and Christoph Stenschke and A. Graser, 'Coping with Discrimination in the First Epistle of Peter and in Modern Social Psychology', *International Journal of Religious Freedom* 5 (2012) 101-112.

71 Best, 'Types', 152. We do not know how the *readers* of Ephesians looked at their pre-Christian lives. Did they share the perspective of the author?

72 Best, 'Types', 154.

73 See Mark J. Keown, *Congregational Evangelism in Philippians: The Centrality of an Appeal for Gospel Proclamation to the Fabric of Philippians*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2008); Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007) and Christoph Stenschke, 'Paul and the Mission of the Church', *Missionalia* 39 (2011) 167-187.

74 Best, 'Types', 154; see also Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 11 (Downers Grove: IVP Apollos, 2001) 166-167. David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* 16th ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001) 134 writes on Paul's own motivation: 'He sees humanity outside Christ as utterly lost, *en route* to perdition … and in dire need of salvation (see also Eph 2:12). The idea of imminent judgment on those who "do not obey the truth" … is a recurring theme in Paul.' On page 137 Bosch also notes that in the context of witness, Paul can refer to non-Christians in fairly neutral terms: 'It is true … that Paul often portrays non-members of the community in rather negative terms. I have already referred to some of the expressions he uses in this regard. Other terms include "unrighteous", "nonbelievers", and "those who obey wickedness". And yet, it is not words like these, or others such as "adversaries" or "sinners", which become technical terms for non-Christians. There are … really only two such technical terms in Pauline letters: *hoi loipoi* ("the others") and *hoi exo* ("outsiders"). Both of these carry a milder connotation than some of the other more emotive expressions Paul sporadically uses … and are remarkably free from condemnation.' For a recent study see Trebilco, 'Creativity'. Further insights will be gained from interdisciplinary studies of the identity construction processes in sects and from studies on conversion.

75 Sandelin, *Attraction*, 159, who says on page 151: 'The Christians are not forbidden to associate with adherents of alien religion, but within the Christian community no idolaters are accepted.'

76 Best, 'Types', 150-151; see also G. Gilbert, 'Jewish Attitudes toward Gentiles' in Collins and Harlow, *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 670-673. On the significance of the Old Testament for Ephesians see Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians*, NT.S 85 (Leiden: Brill, 1996). Prior to this, Best, 'Types', 143, already noted: 'The author is not alone in the way he depicts contemporary culture. It is found in Jewish writers and in other parts of the NT (Matt 12:39; 16:4; cf. Mark 4:12; John 12:40; Rom 11:8, 2 Cor 3:14)' and raised the question: 'Was the ancient Gentile world – the author does not describe the Jewish world, for those to whom he is writing had not previously been Jews but Gentiles – really as bad as he paints it?' (143). After a brief survey of non-Jewish ethics in antiquity Best, 146, concludes: 'The pagan world then was much less deplorable than it appears to have been from Ephesians.'

77 Best, 'Types', 151; see also his discussion in *Ephesians*, 423-425.

78 Best, 'Types', 151-152.

79 Best, 'Types', 152; see e.g. Philippians 3:3–11; Romans 7:7–25; 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:8. Best, 152, notes that 'it is possible that even Jews could look back to their past lives lived in darkness and their conversion to Christianity as the time when they began to see and became "light"'. The author speaks of himself in Ephesians 3:8 as 'the very least of all the saints'. See Eve-Marie Becker, 'Polemik und Autobiographie: Ein Vorschlag zur Deutung von Phil 3:2–4a' in Oda Wischmeyer and Lorenze Scornaienchi, *Polemik in der frühchristlichen Literatur* (BZNW 170; Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2011) 233-254.

80 Best, 'Types', 152. Again we must note, against Best, that we do not know how the readers themselves thought of their pre-conversion past. What we have is the author's assessment.

81 For detailed discussion see Best, *Ephesians*.

82 In Ephesians 6:22, the plural likely refers to Paul

and his co-workers.

83 Best, 'Types', 152-153.

84 Best, 'Types', 153, although he notes elsewhere that such pressures are not addressed by the letter.

85 Best, 'Types', 153-154.

86 Best, 'Types', 155; on apostasy see Sandelin, *Attraction*.

87 In E. Alexander and R. Thomson (eds), *Walking the Way of the Cross with our Hindu Friends* (Grassroots Mission Publications, 2011). As I had no access to the volume itself I refer to the extensive review of it by C.B. James, 'Walking the Way of the Cross with Hindu Friends', *Dharma Deepika* 17 (2013) 70-83, 71-72.

88 Other factors which Mondol identifies are 'lack of loving acceptance and compassion for the new follower, derogatory and ignorant comments about those of the other faiths, ... behaviour that supports the theory that Christians are only interested in conversion, isolation versus embracing of a first generation Christian, divisions in the Church and converts having no real home being caught between two communities and cultures'. These factors may also be influenced by the negative portrayals of the readers' pre-Christian past in the New Testament.

89 Best, *Ephesians*, 414-425 (commentary on 4:17-19) raises crucial issues in interpretation.

90 Paul addresses first generation Christians who have come from paganism, not readers or converts in the context of a long-standing Christian tradition or nominal Christians who experience some kind of conversion or revival.

91 This has not always been the case, see e.g. Knut Schäferdiek, *Quellen zur Christianisierung der Sachsen*, Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 33 (Leipzig: EVA, 2010).

92 Early prominent examples were the Dogmatic Constitution Regarding the Church Lumen Gentium 16 and the Declaration Regarding the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions Nostra Aetate of the Second Vatican Council from the years 1964 and 1965. A remarkable Protestant document drafted by the Kammer für Theologie der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland in 2003 is *Christlicher Glaube und nichtchristliche Religionen: Theologische Leitlinien*, EKD Texte 77 (Hannover: Kirchenamt der EKD). For surveys of this new appreciation of non-Christians see H.A.G. Blocher and W.A. Dyrness, 'Anthropology, Theological' in William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (eds), *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church* (Grand Rapids, Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008) 42-45; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 474-489; D.G. Burnett, 'Anthropology' in John Corrie (ed.), *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (Nottingham, Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007) 20-22; and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Religions, Theology of', in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen, *Dictionary*, 745-753.

93 To what extent this also applies to non-Western missionaries past and present is beyond my scope. Such portrayals should not be seen independently of their function in the identity formation and identity preservation. However, even a persuasive explanation of the function does not necessarily justify the way in which 'others' are portrayed and 'function' in inner-community discourse. There is some ambiguity in the following statement in the *Lausanne Covenant* of 1974: 'Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he has fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The Gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture' (quoted according to Burnett, 'Anthropology', 21).

94 See the efforts of Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566) in Latin America, who tried to convince his fellow Christian Spaniards that native Americans were indeed *humans* and must be treated accordingly; see Mariano Delgado, *Stein des Anstoßes: Bartolomé de las Casas als Anwalt der Indios* (St. Ottilien: Eos, 2011). See also Burnett, 'Anthropology'. More recent missiological thinking and practice, including many scholars from areas formerly evangelised by missionaries from the West, is characterised by a far more nuanced approach. Early expressions of inculturation were typified by 'indigenisation theology' (R. Musasiwa, 'Contextualization', in Corrie, *Dictionary* (66–71) 67): 'Its religious thrust sought to rehabilitate African religious traditions by attempting to demonstrate their compatibility with the Christian faith' (67). For example, John Mbiti, who developed this inculturation theology further, suggested that 'Christianity is already an African religion and therefore does not need to be indigenised as if it were a foreign religion in the first place. He sees African traditional religion as *praeparatio evangelica* and Christianity as fulfiller rather than destroyer of African traditions' (67).

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'Touching the Edge of His cloak.' Reflections on Repentance and Grace

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SUMMARY

Many people traditionally believe that repentance is the basis of all Christian faith, but this essay argues that repentance varies according to the character of each individual, according to our limited humanity. This thesis is illustrated with reference to different biblical and fictional characters. Secular literature often sheds light on biblical truths. I maintain that repentance grows as Christian experience develops and that the essential is the forgiving grace of God and the atonement wrought through the sacrifice of Christ. Repentance, if only imperfectly, is required of all humanity throughout all time, and the grace of forgiveness is granted despite our limited repentance and subsequent service, through the merits of Jesus' perfect sacrifice alone.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Viele Menschen glauben traditionell daran, dass Umkehr die Basis des gesamten christlichen Glaubens darstellt. Dagegen vertritt dieser Aufsatz das Argument, dass Buße je nach Charakter eines individuellen Menschen anders aussehen kann und in Relation zu unserem begrenzten Menschsein steht. Diese These wird durch unterschiedliche biblische und imaginäre Charaktere veranschaulicht. Säkulare Literatur wirft ja oft ein Licht auf biblische Wahrheiten. Der Autor vertritt die Meinung, dass Buße mit einer sich entwickelnden christlichen Lebenspraxis wächst. Er behauptet ferner, dass das Wesentliche in der vergebenden Gnade Gottes besteht und in der durch das Opfer von Christus gewirkten Erlösung. Umkehr, wenn auch nur unvollkommen, ist für alle Menschen zu allen Zeiten notwendig. Die Gnade der Vergebung wird gewährt trotz unserer begrenzten Umkehr und unseres entsprechenden Dienstes, und zwar allein durch den Verdienst des vollkommenen Opfers von Jesus.

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RÉSUMÉ

De nombreuses personnes pensent traditionnellement que la repentance est la base de la foi chrétienne, mais l'auteur de cet article soutient que la repentance prend des formes variables en fonction du caractère de chaque individu et de notre humanité limitée. Il illustre ce point par l'exemple de différents personnages bibliques ainsi que de personnages fictifs. La littérature profane apporte souvent un éclairage sur des vérités bibliques. L'auteur considère que la repentance mûrit au fil de l'expérience du chrétien et que la grâce du Dieu qui pardonne et l'expiation effectuée par le sacrifice de Christ sont des vérités essentielles. La repentance, au moins de manière imparfaite, est requise de toute l'humanité de tous les temps et la grâce du pardon est accordée en dépit du caractère limité de la repentance et du service de Dieu qui en découle, en vertu des seuls mérites du sacrifice parfait de Jésus.

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1. Introduction: repentance

In what is often considered the greatest of all parables, the parable of the Lost Son in Luke 15, the younger son, away from home and living off scraps, repents of his folly and decides to return home. In another parable of two sons, Jesus tells of one who agrees to go to work in his father's vineyard, but then chooses not to do so, and the other who at first refuses to go to the vineyard, but then decides to obey his father's wishes (Mt 21:28-31).[1] Their

father's reaction is not mentioned in either case.

The purpose of this study is to consider the relationship between repentance and grace, the extent to which repentance is necessary for the grace of forgiveness to be experienced and whether grace can simply be granted because of our human inability to experience true repentance.

The German theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg, stresses the vital importance of repentance at the root of Christian experience when he says:

> Like John the Baptist, Jesus proclaimed the imminent Kingdom of God. This message ... made turning back to God urgent business for them (his hearers) because the beginning of God's Lordship brings with it the decision for salvation or judgement.[2]

His assertion is such that repentance is made a pre-condition of all true Christian experience, but this underestimates the limitations of our human capacity to feel true repentance. Though it is true that John the Baptist came 'preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins' (Mk 1:4), the experience of conversion to a life in the Spirit can take a variety of forms and include a variety of different elements. The parable of the two sons in Matthew does not indicate any feeling of repentance, simply that the sons have changed their minds.

The parable is inserted in the scene in the temple when the Lord Jesus is confronting the leaders of the Jewish people with their failure to act according to their pretensions. They have asked him by whose authority he does what he does. After his succinct parable he contrasts his hearers with the 'tax collectors and prostitutes' who will 'enter the Kingdom of Heaven ahead of you'. He then says that, while the elders refused to believe John the Baptist, 'the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him' (Mt 21:32). The difference is again highlighted in the scene in Luke's Gospel when a Pharisee and a tax collector, in the temple, demonstrate contrasting attitudes: the former praises himself and his own virtues before God, the latter confesses his sinfulness and need of forgiveness (Lk 18:9-14).

In repentance, the fundamental need is for sincerity, which is difficult to assess. There is no guarantee that the tax collector in the temple is sincere in his confession. How are we to gauge sincerity when all we hear are the words and all we see are perhaps a depressed downward look and a beating of the breast? But the context allows us to presume that the man is genuinely repentant. A return to the parable of the Lost Son and the Forgiving Father leaves me unconvinced of the complete sincerity of the prodigal's repentance when he 'came to his senses' and decided to return home. Henri Nouwen suggests that his repentance is 'a self-serving repentance that offers the possibility of survival'.[3] The prodigal is recorded as saying:

> How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death. I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son: make me like one of your hired men' (Lk 15:17-19).

The impression the hearer gets is that he is acutely aware of what he has lost and what he sees others enjoying. According to Nouwen, the prodigal maintains that 'he remained his father's child'.[4] He compares his fate as the younger son deprived of his entitlements with the privileges enjoyed by his elder brother and even by his father's servants. And as Nouwen continues: 'he prepares a scenario'.[5] He is framing his change of heart accordingly. But, knowing that all our repentance bears the marks of our flawed humanity, at least he does sink his pride and turn back, and the point of the parable of course lies in the response of his father.[6]

The biblical literature and the literature of fiction span the centuries in their penetration of the truth of human experience. While the Scriptures are limited in their composition to their time, their significance is eternal, and the writers to whom I will refer also span the ages in their understanding of the limitations of humanity grappling with a realisation of sin and its consequences. While fiction may traditionally have been seen as far from biblical truth, our Lord himself in his ministry taught through stories demonstrating the deep truths of human experience and God's love. And even writers sceptical of faith may be used in God's purposes to convey the truths of the Scriptures unconsciously. For Christian readers of fiction, and those of other faiths or none, truths are only in the texts when we find them. It has been said that 'the truth is never simply and objectively resident in a text; rather it is found in the interaction between text and reader'.[7] The discovered truth has to be grasped and assimilated by each of us before it becomes our truth. Both types of literature may be considered in their context in tandem

as representing differing aspects of the relationship between repentance and grace.

2. Examples

2.1 Sophocles

It is indeed possible to convince oneself that one has made a full and complete act of repentance while withholding elements of the truth about one's experience. While the Greek tragedians constantly demonstrate the enormous guilt of their protagonists, true repentance or in some cases, any form of repentance is prevented by the fact that guilt is often ascribed to the force of an inscrutable fate guiding their hands. For instance, in Sophocles' *King Oedipus* Oedipus in his dialogue with Jocasta accepts his guilt for the murder of his father, Laius, in an outpouring of penitence for his crime:

> Is there any more wretched mortal than I, more hated
> By God and man?

And just two lines later he adds:

> On me is the curse that none but I have laid.

But he immediately transfers the blame onto the gods:

> Can it be any but some monstrous god
> Of evil that has sent this doom upon me?[8]

His acceptance of guilt and his genuine sorrow at his actions are tempered in his mind by the possibility that he was predestined by some power greater than himself to kill his father. However, in the third part of the trilogy, *Antigone*, Creon, bringing in the corpse of his son, Haemon, in the final scene, admits his full responsibility for the death of both his son and Antigone:

> Behold the slayer, the slain,
> The father, the son,
> O the curse of my stubborn will![9]

Creon has no time in the remaining moments of the play to make amends, and has to live on in his despair and loneliness. Yet his admission of responsibility is a confession of his guilt without any attempt to excuse or exonerate himself.

2.2 The Old Testament

In the Old Testament we find that King David also freely confesses his guilt:

> 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 51:2-4)

He makes no excuses, but it is guilt arising from a totally different source from Creon's. David is an obvious instance of a man who has yielded to his natural human impulses in his lust for Bathsheba, but he has sinned even further in contriving to have her husband, Uriah, sent out to die in the front line, so that he, David, can enjoy her. He has acted shamefully because of his initial lust. His abject repentance is expressed openly and primarily in this Psalm. And he goes on to confess that he was

> … sinful at birth,
> Sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (v.5)

His prayer is for a complete cleansing and a restoration of joy, as a consequence of which he will act to serve God and praise his name:

> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
> And sinners will turn back to you. (v.13)

David is an obvious example of repentance issuing in a full transformation of his life, although in his confession in Psalm 51 he omits any reference to the harm he has done to his fellow human beings, in particular Uriah, and one could therefore suggest that his repentance falls short in that respect.

Cain, however, notorious as the slayer of his brother, is a different case. In Genesis 4, we learn that God has given preference to his brother Abel, apparently as Cain, a tiller of the soil, has produced less obvious fruits of his labours than his brother who, tending his flocks, has 'brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock'. We see that 'The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour' (Gen 4:4-5). Whatever the Lord's preference, Cain's murder of his brother is clearly inexcusable. Like Adam and Eve, who deny their responsibility, with Adam blaming Eve and Eve blaming the serpent for their lapse into disobedience, Cain also rejects any responsibility for his brother's fate saying: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' (Gen 4:9) When the Lord spells out the punishment for his crime, the curse of the unfruitful soil that Cain will be working from now on and that he will wander the earth, he is smitten with remorse and his reaction is in contrast to what has gone before:

> Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.' (v.13-14)

His reaction is a mixture of self-pity for what he will have to endure as an outcast exposed to the possibility of being murdered himself and deep regret that he will no longer know the presence of God who will be hidden from him. Henri Blocher writes that Cain 'commiserates with himself and utters not a word of regret for the act he has committed'.[10] The Lord's response is to place a mark of protection on him so that 'if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over' (Gen 4:15). While Cain is still subject to the curse and remains an outcast, arguably so that he is constantly reminded of the consequences of his acts, he at least has the Lord's protection, as Gerhard von Rad says:

> Cain does not have the last word in this story, but rather God, who now places Cain's forfeited life under strict protection... Because of his murder he is cursed by separation from God and yet incomprehensibly guarded and supported by God's protection.[11]

It is a measure of God's acceptance that ultimately he cannot abandon Cain even though Cain has only expressed a limited form of repentance for his crime.

Moses presents a totally different case. He had killed the Egyptian overseer and fled into the wilderness. When he is confronted by God's call from the burning bush, he is terrified and admits his total unsuitability for the Lord's work in the words:

> Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt? (Ex 3:11).

Moses queries the purpose and wisdom of the Lord's commands and asks to be spared the onerous duties now placed upon him. But there is no record that he actually repents of any past deed. He is simply told that God, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will equip him for the task that is required of him. On the other hand Isaiah, called to the service of God, is filled with an overwhelming sense of wonder at the vision he sees in the temple (Isa 6). Like Moses, he is full of the sense of his own unworthiness and unsuitability for the commission that the Lord has entrusted to him. The difference is that Isaiah experiences the lifting of his guilt and the atonement of his sin, and his acceptance of the commission is swifter than Moses' who questions God more before accepting his new role.

2.3 The New Testament

This brings us to the moment of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. This event demonstrates that the transformation of life is not always immediately prefaced by a direct realisation of sin. We know relatively little of Paul before the event. At the end of Acts 7, we read that he is present at the death of Stephen, and the implication is that he is subconsciously impressed by the saintliness that Stephen shows in his death. Like Christ, Stephen forgives those who are stoning him to death (Acts 7:60). Chapter 8 contains the account of Saul's persecution of the Christians. Then his dramatic conversion takes place. Blinded by an overwhelmingly dazzling light, he hears the voice of God asking why he is persecuting him, the Lord. Saul is not directly constrained to repent, but is so dazzled by the transcendent glory of the divine presence and so totally dependent on the Lord restoring his sight to him that a realisation of his need and total dependence on God take place. Sometimes God convicts by the sheer dazzling brilliance and wonder of his glory and shakes us by the total contrast between that and our human limitations. Saul's dependence on God is demonstrated by his immediate response to Jesus as 'Lord', even though he must have been mystified by what had happened. But he knows that as the Lord Jesus challenges him to say why he is persecuting *him*, it is the Lord who is speaking. The conversion and repentance are total, and confirmed by three things: his baptism, his reconciliation with the other disciples and his immediate preaching of the Gospel which results in his missionary zeal and total commitment. When he later refers several times to his initial encounter with Christ in the words 'Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' (1 Cor 9:1), it is not to dwell on the dramatic details of his conversion as an isolated event (1 Cor 15:8), but to say that the gospel came 'by revelation from Jesus Christ' (Gal 1:12), that 'God was pleased ... to reveal his Son in me' (Gal 1:16) and that he sees the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ' (2 Cor 4:6). However, as his experience of the grace and love of God grows, Paul confesses his own constant need to repent of his inability to do what his good intentions direct him to and his constant failure to resist the evil that he knows he

should resist (Rom 7:15-19). He continues: 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!' (Rom 7:24-25). He who has received such life-changing grace is aware of the human nature from which he has been saved and of his constant tendency to fall into sin. This has become his concern, relegating references to his previous experience before conversion to two passages (Gal 1:13-15 and Phil 3:5-9) primarily as a matter of comparison.

What is clear from the words and experience of Paul is that an initial act of repentance and turning to God needs to be supplemented by a daily awareness of our inadequacy in living up to the call of the Spirit within us and our failure to follow the commands and standards that Christ Jesus has set us.

In the scene in the upper room in John 13, Simon Peter makes the mistake of assuming that if he has to be cleansed he has to have not only his feet, but his hands and his head washed by Jesus as well. The Lord says, however: 'A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean' (Jn 13:10). We have already experienced what we may call 'primary washing' as the result of an act of repentance, but we do need the 'secondary washing', forgiveness for our daily failings in worship, love and service, just as the early disciples had to wash the dust from their bare feet after a day on the road. A little later Jesus says to his disciples: 'You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you' (Jn 15:3), but as branches of himself, the Vine, they have to be pruned. Many Christians do themselves a spiritual disservice by their constant feeling that their life is a fundamental and everlasting state of penitence which can deprive them of joy in their salvation.

It has emerged therefore that the moment of turning to respond to God is not always accompanied by an act of repentance, but by some other reaction, either the sense of being overwhelmed by the glory of God or by a moment of realisation of our human limitations.

2.4 Thomas Hardy

As we have seen, realisation of our need does not automatically lead to confession and the acceptance of forgiveness. At this point we turn to consider the work of the English novelist Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), and in particular the experience of one of his characters, the Mayor of Casterbridge, who knows his catastrophic failings and repents of them, but does not experience grace or peace.

The mayor, Michael Henchard, is fatally impulsive and bitterly regrets the acts in his past towards his family, which eclipse the goodness he has shown towards the community he has served: 'Why should I still be subject to these visitations of the devil, when I try so hard to keep him away?'[12] In true Hardy fashion, Henchard sees himself as the victim of powerful forces of fate embodied in his personal devil who dogs his steps throughout his life. When he dies, a piece of paper is found on his body stating his will. Among other things, he wants simply to be forgotten and for nobody to grieve over him.[13] His words 'Who is such a reprobate as I! And yet it seems that even I be in Somebody's hand!'[14] indicate his awareness of a guiding supernatural power in his life. Despite his feeling of total worthlessness, he has recently helped the mother of a local man, Abel Whittle, who in return has followed him to tend him in his final illness. He is so unaware of the extent of the goodness he has shown in his life that, as he is dying, he asks Whittle: '...can ye be really such a poor fond fool as to care for such a wretch as I?'[15]

Hardy's bleak sense that humanity is dogged by an inscrutable fate means that his character achieves a miserable self-awareness and regret, which still leaves him in a quagmire of futile self-reproach with no ability to forgive himself and to move on into a state of joy. Circumstances do not seem to allow Henchard the regeneration he desires and needs. Yet the Christian reader would glimpse possibilities that Henchard is only half aware of. He has an undeveloped, half understood sense of a divine presence in his life, if only when it is too late for him to enjoy it. His position is an extreme form of the everlasting penitence that some feel who are aware of their frailty and mentally repent of it constantly, but are incapable of finding freedom from its power. Like many others, Henchard would be unable to share the thoughts of John O'Donohue in his wonderful book *Eternal Echoes* who says:

> When personal guilt in relation to a past event becomes a continuous cloud over your life, then you are locked in a mental prison... While you should not erase your responsibility for the past, when you make the past your jailer, you destroy your future. It is such a great moment of liberation when you learn to forgive yourself, let the burden go and walk out into a new path of promise and possibility.[16]

A realisation of personal sin without freedom from self-loathing leaves sensitive individuals in a worse emotional state than if they had no self-awareness at all. And Judas Iscariot, who has known the presence of Christ in his life, knows repentance and self-disgust without seeking the forgiveness of the one he has betrayed and without ever feeling that he would be justified in being forgiven.

Thus, both realisation of sin and repentance exist in differing forms and to a different extent. An awareness of personal guilt is often present without repentance, and there may be conversion and transformation without an obvious act of penitence, purely through the force of the dazzling light of God's glory that shines on the unreformed life and makes us aware of past errors and new possibilities. Self-knowledge is necessary in the total Christian experience, even if it first happens during the development of a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ as Saviour. Paul certainly knows the things of which he has to repent once he has seen God's glory. There is surely no required sequence in the Christian's developing experience. But we now need to consider in greater detail the gift of forgiveness which eludes so many who experience incomplete self-knowledge and repentance.

3. Grace and forgiveness

During the ministry of Jesus, a woman who had been 'subject to bleeding for twelve years' but who was unable to attract Jesus' attention, tells herself: 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed' (Mt 9:20-21). This recurs later when, after Jesus has landed at Gennesaret, he is recognised by the people and they bring their sick to him, begging him 'to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed' (Mt 14:36). It is their last desperate act of faith that Jesus will be able to accomplish the virtually impossible, the conviction that in our powerlessness all we can do is throw ourselves on his healing grace and trust that he can do what we are incapable of achieving for ourselves. While these instances are not directly moments of repentance, it is also clear that Jesus sees physical disease as symptomatic of unforgiven sin. An example of this is the occasion when, after the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus sees him later and tells him: 'Stop sinning, or worse may happen to you' (Jn 5:14). And a classic instance of disease as symptom of sin is the paralytic man who is lowered down through the open roof into the presence of Jesus by friends who, like the woman who touches the edge of his cloak, are unable to reach Jesus because of the crowds of people wanting to see him. The first words which Jesus speaks to him are: 'Son, your sins are forgiven' (Mt 2:5). Pannenberg writes:

> Like the promise of forgiveness and the assurance of salvation, so too Jesus' healing ministry was closely bound up with his message of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The healing he performed demonstrated concretely that where the message of God's nearness is grasped completely and in full trust, salvation itself is already effective.[17]

It is highly unlikely that any of these three persons had any awareness of the need to repent or of unconfessed and unforgiven sin. The emphasis has shifted from the personal consciousness of inward and spiritual need to the actions of the one who acts to help us despite our limitations, our ignorance and our moral blindness. In the parable of the Lost Son, it is the spontaneous forgiveness of the Father that matters, rather than the reactions of the prodigal son. We are in the realm of grace.

When Jesus pronounces his forgiveness from the cross, who is he forgiving? While he says 'Forgive *them*' (Lk 23:34, my italics), is he only forgiving those who are his immediate executioners? He is surely including Judas among them, as well as the disciples who flee from him at the moment of his arrest. And surely he is looking at Simon Peter who had betrayed him, but who unlike Judas had the immense benefit of Jesus' forgiveness and recommissioning. Simon Peter repents bitterly and weeps, but do the authorities, Pontius Pilate and the High Priest, also feel any repentance for their actions? From the cross Jesus allows for the fact that 'they do not know what they are doing' (Lk 23:34). This would mean that, while they know the immediate consequences of their acts, they are unaware of their deeper significance – that they have followed God's plan that Jesus should suffer and bring redemption to the world, past, present and future without any repentance or understanding of the consequences.

Even those who died in faith in God before Christ was born are justified by their belief. Paul sees this in his reference to Abraham when he reiterates the reference to God's covenant with him (Gen 15:6) and reaffirms in the original words from Genesis 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness' (Rom 4:3). The promise of grace is given to Abraham and his

descendants on the basis of their faith alone. This is also promised to David who certainly knows repentance and craves forgiveness when, in the same passage, Paul repeats the words of Psalm 32:1-2:

> Blessed are they
> whose transgressions are forgiven,
> whose sins are covered.
> Blessed is the man
> Whose sin the Lord will never count against him. (Rom 4:7-8)

At this moment in his life, Abraham does not yet have the towering faith and obedience recorded in his readiness to sacrifice Isaac. Faith can be as 'small as a grain of mustard seed' (Mt 17:20 and Lk 17:6). Who is to assess the size and extent of the faith required? It can indeed be the faith of the woman who simply wants to touch 'the edge of his cloak' (Mt 9:20).

And just as in the mind of the immortal God, creator of time, who spans the ages and sees the lives of humanity as one moment, the faith of past generations is accepted, the promise is also to us, the present-day disciples who, like Peter and the others, have time and again fled from Jesus and denied him. When Pontius Pilate washes his hands and says: 'I am innocent of this man's blood' and the crowd responds with the words: 'Let his blood be on us and on our children!' (Mt 27:24-25), it is not only the Jewish crowd who will bear responsibility, but all those present and future whose actions, neglect and failure have added or will add to the death of Jesus. 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God', writes Paul (Rom 3:23), and all still do fall short, as Paul has just written: 'This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference' (Rom 3:22). All stand under the same judgement and have access to the same promise of justification and acceptance in God's sight. And lest we place too much emphasis on our own virtue in the faith we have, Tom Wright reminds us where the true virtue lies:

> When God's covenant faithfulness/justice is unveiled, this is done *on the basis of the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah,* on the one hand, and *for the benefit of those who believe* on the other.[18]

We are justified by God's grace for our faith. The grace of God covers the sins and failures of all humanity and all ages because God knows the frail humanity of those he has created. He knows that his grace and strength are made perfect even if our realisation of our weakness and our repentance fall so far short.

It is emerging from our reflections that, while our concentration so far has been on individual cases and on the repentance of the individual, the offer of forgiveness on the basis of faith alone is a collective offer to all. It is important at this point to consider that, while the entire human race is included in the grace that is extended to us, the whole of humanity is called to repentance.

4. Collective repentance

When John the Baptist comes 'preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins' (Mk 1:4), he comes not only to challenge individuals, but the entire nation of Israel. In the parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-13) Jesus pronounces judgement on the Pharisees and the religious authorities by telling of the privileged guests' rejection of the invitation to the banquet and the consequent invitation to the outsiders to take their place at the feast. This is a reference to the Lord's opening up his mission to peoples other than the nation of Israel. But the disease of rejection of Christ and the failure to repent spreads throughout the rest of humanity and history into our own day, such that history falls under the same judgement of having failed to follow and obey the commands of God or even to accept the moral precepts of the Ten Commandments. Surely, while many may reject the authority of God as Lord of the universe and see no relevance in the first of Jesus' two great commandments, there is no reason why human beings should reject the second commandment: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mk 12:30-31). Acceptance of the relevance of the second commandment is surely not conditional on acceptance of God's authority over our lives: it is the creed of all who seek to live in harmony with their fellow beings and to further the good of the human race. It is therefore important to accept that the entire human race is in need of repentance for its neglect of the interests of our fellow beings, our planet, our environment and the resources of the world that are being abused and wasted. It has often been the case that confessing Christians have been less aware of their failings than non-believers observing them. Many professing belief and goodwill suffer from a form of wilful blindness, by which it is easy to convince oneself that what is happening is not happening at all.[19] When Jesus on the cross forgives the world, it is not only for our actions in

crucifying him, but also for our crucifying our disadvantaged fellow human beings who are crying out for our help and love. An important aspect of our imperfect repentance is that we as Christians, throughout history, have collectively failed to speak out and act firmly enough to reverse the harm that is happening, while at the same time we are perhaps acting as individuals within our human limits to alleviate suffering and need on a small scale. While we come regularly in worship to have our feet washed, do we also repent for the collective failure of our race to further a world that the Creator found to be 'very good'? (Gen 1:31). Are we even sufficiently aware of the failures in ourselves from which we need to repent?

5. Atonement

It has been clearly established that realisation of our failure and repentance only go some way in our journey of faith and that the grace of God's forgiveness is necessary for our salvation and peace. The forgiveness of Christ, contained in his prayer from the cross, is the entrée to an even greater grace, the grace of atonement, which must now be considered particularly.

On the road to Emmaus the two disciples who are returning home in their disillusionment following the crucifixion, refer to Jesus merely as a 'prophet powerful in word and deed before God' (Lk 24:19). Jesus himself suffers the flogging and the nails, the taunts of the crowd and the soldiers, the fear and the betrayal of his followers, yet he knows that, as Son of God, he is the very essence of God himself. In his reflections on the prodigal son, Henri Nouwen sees Jesus as the Father becoming, in the person of the younger son, the prodigal son for our sake. He writes:

> Jesus left the house of his heavenly Father, came to a foreign country, gave away all that he had, and returned through his cross to his Father's home.[20]

Though himself sinless, he is at one with his rebellious, half-penitent child. This is his atonement for the sins of the world, bearing the sufferings of the whole of humanity. Only God who sees the full extent of human sin can forgive sufficiently to cover our sin and failure. According to D.M. Baillie,

> God in Christ's suffering and death is infinite Love confronted with human sin. And it is an *expiatory* sacrifice, because sin is a dreadfully real thing which love cannot tolerate or lightly pass over, and it is only out of the suffering of such inexorable love that true forgiveness, as distinct from an indulgent amnesty, could ever come.[21]

While, contrary to Baillie's assertion, some individuals manage to achieve feats of apparently superhuman forgiveness that cannot justifiably be relegated to the description 'indulgent amnesty', the atonement wrought by God in Christ is unique and beyond human means and understanding, in bearing the sins of humanity of all time in one act of grace that encompasses and absorbs our sin and our imperfect penitence, provided it is grasped in faith, no matter how imperfectly.

But one further question is posed by Christ's unique act of expiation. Is this an act that demonstrates the supreme power of God, but has no ultimate effect on humanity because it is so supreme and renders humanity incapable of response? Jürgen Moltmann, in his stark portrayal of the significance of the sacrifice of Christ, demonstrates the way open for our response when he describes the challenge to us. Christ's sacrifice is

> ... the unconditioned and therefore boundless love which proceeds from the grief of the Father and the dying of the Son and reaches forsaken men in order to create in them the possibility and the force of new life.[22]

Christ's death is not an isolated event in a wilderness of human failure and sin, but it is a transforming act that infuses the human spirit with the power to forgive, even when our repentance is limited by our humanity. Those who are 'forsaken' because of their denial of Christ and their failure in love and service, are enabled to respond to the love of Christ, to be received again and to live renewed lives in the power of the resurrection. While repentance may be subject to our human limitations, his grace meets our imperfect response and creates new life, issuing in responses that may well be beyond what we believed to be our capability.

6. Repentance and fruit

Both Matthew and Luke record that John the Baptist addressed the Jewish leaders, warning them of judgement to come with the words: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance' (Mt 3:7-8, Lk 3:7-8). Our repentance, to be genuine, has to be matched with a response

to the inward call to bear fruit. We see this clearly in the case of Jonah who when he hears the voice within him telling him to go to Nineveh, at first runs away to Tarshish, but then when called once again, obeys and indeed goes to Nineveh.

We are driven back to the two brothers in the parable, in their differing responses to their father's request mentioned at the beginning of the article. Then there is Simon Peter whose threefold denial of Christ is cancelled out by the threefold command of the Saviour to love and serve, sealed by his further injunction to Peter: 'Follow me' (Jn 21:15-19), which marks the renewal of his discipleship. Peter of course matches his repentance with his actions in his new, dedicated life. And Luke quotes Paul's confession to Agrippa in the words: 'So, then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven... I preached that they should return to God and prove their repentance by their deeds' (Acts 26:19).

One parable illustrates that fruit and good actions do not necessarily occur at once. In the parable of the fig-tree that a man plants in his vineyard, no fruit is visible. When the owner wants to cut it down after three years of fruitless waiting, the steward pleads for the tree to be given another chance, after which it would be cut down (Lk 13:6-9). What strikes us in this story is the second chance offered to the unfruitful fig-tree, perhaps an antidote of grace in contrast to the severe judgement meted out to it in Matthew's and Mark's accounts of the cursing of the fig-tree. I am sure that Luke's fig-tree would have been given even a further chance to prove itself.

The final note, in fact, is one of forgiveness and grace. One is left with the awareness that God loves everything he has made and it is in his nature to offer redemptive grace to his creation. The experience of regeneration is a total experience of self-knowledge, repentance, forgiveness and call to action. G.W.H. Lampe writes about Zacchaeus that he was 'not called upon to make restitution before Christ entered his home; he repented and made amends because Christ had already accepted him as a sinner' (Lk 19:5-6).[23] Self-knowledge and repentance are manifest in varying ways, not always directly visible, sometimes subsumed in one of the other elements, and also, as Lampe suggests, subsumed in forgiveness and acceptance. All individuals coming to God have their own experience of transformation, which is often incomprehensible to themselves.

From the dramatic, transforming revelation on the Damascus Road, Paul moves on to a new mission which is characterised by constant repentance in the light of his self-knowledge and of God's endless grace. Unless the grace and forgiveness issue in response, even simply the response of 'touching the edge of his cloak', the forgiveness has been only half grasped and we remain in a limbo of semi-commitment. However, from the scene of transformation, they and we constantly return to the foot of the Cross where salvation is wrought and where our resurrection to new life begins. Even Michael Henchard, aware that he is in 'Somebody's hand', is surely received into the grace and the loving hands of God whom he has sensed as a presence in his life.[24]

In the final analysis, the parable of the Lost Son and the Forgiving Father is perhaps the greatest of all parables for what it says about our flawed humanity and God's loving grace. After all, on his return to the Father the Prodigal Son has nothing to offer. His only response and action is to return to the Father who is the one who lavishes forgiveness and grace on him. God is a God of grace and new life and we live not by certainty, but by faith that, however weak our experience and our commitment may be, we are accepted and empowered by the one whose power surpasses our own.

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Endnotes

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Small, Struggling Churches in Europe: Do They Have a Future?

T. J. Marinello

SUMMARY

What is the future for small, struggling churches in Europe whose setting is post-modern, post-Christian and post-Christendom? Is there a place for such gatherings in a time when many believe that bigger is better? The answer is 'yes' if the local church displays effectively the four items to which the first local church was devoted in Acts 2:42; has functioning, local leadership; and struggles due to the local setting rather than to her character. Specifically, the local church should be characterised by the study of the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the celebration of the Lord's Supper and prayer. She should have recognised, local leadership in accordance with the characteristics found in the New Testament. If struggling to grow, her struggles should be related to persecution and not due to a character which parallels a clubhouse or a chameleon. She should also be characterised by the historical four marks of the Church: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wie sieht die Zukunft kleiner Gemeinden im Überlebenskampf in einem post-modernen, nach-christlichen Umfeld und Zeitalter in Europa aus? Gibt es Raum für derartige Versammlungen in einer Zeit, in der viele der Auffassung sind, dass größer auch besser bedeutet? Die Antwort ist ein Ja, falls die örtliche Gemeinde auf wirksame Weise die vier Dinge bezeugt, denen sich auch die erste örtliche Gemeinde verschrieben hatte, wie in Apostelgeschichte 2:42 erzählt; zweitens, falls sie eine funktionierende Leiterschaft vor Ort hat; und drittens, wenn ihre Schwierigkeiten eher auf die örtlichen Umstände als auf ihr Wesen zurückzuführen sind. Gerade die Ortsgemeinde sollte ohne Schwierigkeiten zeigen können, dass in ihr Apostellehre, Gemeinschaft, Abendmahl und Gebet beheimatet sind. Sie sollte ferner eine anerkannte örtliche Leiterschaft vorweisen in Übereinstimmung mit den Prinzipien des Neuen Testamentes. Wenn sie mit Wachstumsproblemen kämpft, dann sollten ihre Schwierigkeiten auf Verfolgung zurückzuführen sein und nicht auf einen Charakter, der einem Vereinshaus ähnelt oder wechselhaft ist wie die Farben eines Chamäleons. Schliesslich sollte sie sich durch die historischen vier Wesensmerkmals der Kirche auszeichnen: einig, heilig, katholisch und apostolisch.

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RÉSUMÉ

Quel avenir est possible pour de petites Églises qui mènent leur combat en Europe, dans un contexte post-moderne, post-chrétien et post-chrétienté ? De telles communautés ont-elles une place à une époque où beaucoup considèrent que plus on est nombreux, mieux cela vaut. La réponse est positive si l'Église locale pratique les quatre activités auxquelles s'adonnait la première Église locale selon Actes 2.42 ; si la direction d'Église est assurée localement ; et si elle doit mener des combats à cause de sa situation locale dans la société qui l'environne, et non pas à cause de son caractère. Concrètement, l'Église devrait s'appliquer à l'étude de l'enseignement apostolique, à la communion fraternelle, à la célébration de la cène et à la prière. Elle devrait s'être dotée d'une structure locale reconnue pour assurer sa direction, en accord avec les caractéristiques indiquées dans le Nouveau Testament. Si elle doit lutter pour grandir, son combat devrait résulter de la persécution plutôt que de sa ressemblance à un club ou d'une stratégie de caméléon. Elle devrait aussi être caractérisée par les quatre attributs historiques de l'Église : l'unité, la sainteté, la catholicité et l'apostolicité.

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1. Introduction: the context

The context for churches in Europe is one in which native Europeans are post-modern, post-Christian and post-Christendom.[1] Post-modern Europeans to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is brought have as their guiding force feelings rather than reason; they base their knowledge on personal experience rather than on scientific investigation; their truth is personal rather than provable; their ultimate goal is societal acceptance; and their most respected authority is the celebrity, whether that celebrity is from the arts, the academy or the sports arena. The post-Christian context is one in which the basic knowledge of the record and teachings of the Christian Bible is unknown and in which there is often hostility to its moral precepts. As cultural critic John O'Sullivan astutely observed in a recent lecture,

> A post-Christian society is not merely a society in which agnosticism or atheism is the prevailing fundamental belief. It is a society rooted in the history, culture, and practices of Christianity but in which the religious beliefs of Christianity have been either rejected or, worse, forgotten.[2]

Kenneth Minogue has put it even more colourfully:

> In the vast rambling mansion of our civilization, the cobwebbed gothic wing containing our religious imagination is less frequented than previously, but it certainly remains a haunting presence.[3]

Even persons with a veneer of Christian influence have little understanding of their religion.[4] In the Roman Catholic countries of Western Europe, for example, those under sixty have little to do with the Roman Catholic Church other than at the key moments of baptism, wedding and funeral – and even for these numbers are decreasing.[5] In historically Roman Catholic areas like Flanders, for example, even the practice of these significant ritual markers is in steep decline.[6] The context of post-Christendom means that the governmental support for Christian morals and standards, which was a European mainstay since the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century AD, has ended.[7] The overt secularisation of Europe can perhaps best be seen in the decision on 18 June 2004 to adopt a constitution for the European Union which avoids any mention of a link between Christianity and Europe.[8] In fact an overt, virulent hostility was expressed to Pope John Paul II's suggestion that Europe's Christian roots be mentioned in the constitution.[9] Some even stated that the Pope's request 'betray[ed] a failure to understand the logic of the European construction', a thoroughgoing secular construction.[10]

This is the cultural setting of the small churches I want to discuss. Two main questions will be considered first: What size is 'small' and why is a particular local church struggling? Afterwards an answer to the question of the future of small, struggling churches will be offered.

2. What size is 'small'?

The Christian churches in Europe find themselves in an era where bigger is thought to be better; accordingly, the small local church often is stigmatised in modern Western culture. British pastor and author John Benton insightfully writes,

> We live in a society that worships at the shrine of size. We buy our food at 'supermarkets' and 'hyper-markets'. 'Monster' music events are promoted for the young. 'Mega' sales are advertised in department stores. 'Blockbuster' movies appear at our cinemas. In the world's eyes, if something is not big, it does not deserve attention. It is not easy to be upbeat about a church with just a few in the congregation when we live alongside such a cultural bias.[11]

Additionally, among North America's religious exports to Europe have been attitudes associated with the mega church, that is, Protestant churches with over two thousand attendees.[12] While other nations contain churches of thousands of members such as the world's largest, Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, the US mega church displays 'a host of characteristics that create a distinctive worship style and congregational dynamic'.[13] As a prominent European church planting group with churches in thirty cities states,

> our leadership team left Geneva and returned to the United States to gain further insights from churches in America that had been experiencing explosive growth. During that period, our thinking about the church developed, ultimately becoming what we referred to as the high-impact church.'[14]

While the various mega church influences come from both Pentecostal/Charismatic and non-Pentecostal/Charismatic gatherings, all of these church plants have a common style of gathering

which is labour-intensive as well as visually and aurally dynamic. Accordingly, the goal is to grow in size so that this model can be implemented. This and other goals related to size are clearly advocated by the proponents of the mega church and even of the general larger church model.[15]

While sociologists may applaud the 'relevance' of such mega gatherings, is it the goal of the local church according to the New Testament to grow in order to fit such a model? Is the goal of the local church to increase in number in order to function according to a particularly designed but changing cultural pattern? The New Testament seems to answer the question of size neither sociologically nor programmatically. I would rather argue that a church that is true to the New Testament needs to display effectively the four things to which the first local church was devoted in Act 2:42, and that it needs to have functioning, local leadership.

Acts 2:42 records four things to which the local church was devoted as it gathered: the study of the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the celebration of the Lord's Supper and prayer.[16] As Johannes Munck notes, 'This verse describes the special characteristics of the church. The apostles, witnesses to the resurrection, demonstrate what separates them from the other Jews.'[17] And, 'Luke employs *proskarterein*, "hold fast to", to stress the continuous and persistent tenacity of the disciples', thus setting the example for those who would be part of this new entity – the Church – in its local manifestation.[18]

Clearly the newly formed community was 'constituted on the basis of apostolic teaching'.[19] This teaching was neither to be altered nor discarded (1 Tim 1:3; 6:3); it was and is a deposit to be guarded (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14).

> The teaching is the basis of Christian doctrine, built on the words and deeds of Jesus himself, on his instruction of the apostles and those followers who would become his authenticated witnesses.[20]

This doctrine is not an end in itself, however, but 'a means of preserving and fostering the relationship between the assembled congregation and Jesus Christ'. A gathering which is not constituted on Jesus Christ as attested to by the apostles is no church at all.[21] The result of proper devotion to the apostles' teaching becomes evident in the life of the believers, namely, a 'love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith'. (1 Tim 1:5 ESV)[22] Further, being devoted to the apostles' teaching gives the gathered believers the ability to 'contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints'. (Jude 3-4 ESV)

Second, the believers were committed to the fellowship (koinōnia). This means that they were committed to this distinctly identifiable group which began on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2.[23] No commitment to the fellowship meant and means no visible community. No commitment to the fellowship also means no continual source of both necessary challenge and mutual encouragement (Heb 10:24-25):[24]

> The mutual care the writer of Hebrews commends to his readers simply cannot be sustained unless the believers of the local Christian community are committed to the fellowship, the place of exhortation and encouragement.[25]

Third, the community of believers was committed to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Luke's choice of wording, 'the breaking of bread', parallels the expression used by Paul when he gave instructions to the local church in Corinth (1 Cor 10:16).[26] As former pastor and church-planter John H. Armstrong writes,

> [Believers] have been redeemed through the precious blood of our Messiah, Jesus, yet we are prone to forget his great act of sacrifice. But our Lord understands perfectly well our weakness and thus made provision for us to come again and again to this table so that we do not forget... Almost every Christian, regardless of how they understand the Supper, agrees with this much – Christ instituted it, and the New Testament commands his followers to celebrate it.[27]

Finally, the newly formed community of believers was devoted to prayer. Some draw attention to the definite article in the text ('the prayers' – tais proseuchais) and conclude that these were 'definite prayers uttered in worship', something which was part of the public activity of the local church when it gathered.[28] Perhaps the believers repeatedly prayed the psalms as they gathered because of their 'firm belief that the repetition of the psalms nurtured dispositions that foster prayer'.[29]

This list of four does not limit what the local church *can* do when it gathers, but it lays out four things which it *must* do. The place of gathering, the style of meetings, and even the frequency of some of these practices vary throughout Acts, so this article is not an argument for a particular tradition. I do, however, understand the Bible to say

that a functioning local church must be able to support these four at a minimum in line with the example of the believers after Pentecost. The way in which these four are accomplished should avoid the extremes of rigid traditionalism (whether an ancient or a newly formed one) and of wholesale accommodation to culture. Accordingly, if these four items from Acts 2:42 are evident, a particular local church is not too small.

When the first missionaries were sent out (Acts 13), their purpose was to preach the message of Jesus Christ and then to form local gatherings from those who had responded to the message. A final step in the forming of these local churches was the appointment of recognised leadership (Acts 14:23). So important was the recognition of local church leadership that the apostle Paul specifically left Titus behind on Crete to appoint such leaders. Paul writes that the task of church planting is not complete until this has been accomplished (Tit 1:5)[30] and it is the first command he gives Titus in his letter.[31] The New Testament records both the responsibilities (Acts 20:17, 28-31; 1 Pet 5:1-4) and the necessary godly characteristics of these local leaders (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9).[32] In fact, some scholars posit this need for godly leadership as a reason behind the memorable command to have the mind of Christ in Philippians 2, a letter which begins by making a distinction between the recognised, local leadership and the other believers in the local body.[33]

The process by which leadership is to be recognised after the time of the apostles is not clearly stated in the New Testament, but the *fact* of recognised leadership, their task and their character qualities are timeless and therefore applicable wherever a local body of believers is formed. Again, as with the question of size, this essay's presentation of the biblical mandate for recognised, local leadership is not advocating a particular type of leadership structure. That said, I posit that the answer to the best type of polity is found in the New Testament.[34]

How small is too small? If a local body of believers cannot adequately support the four practices of Acts 2:42, it is too small, whether it is newly planted or has shrunk in size. Additionally, a local church is too small if it cannot be led by recognised, local leadership due to lack of qualified people.

3. Why does a local church struggle?

To discover the reason why a local church is struggling, we can ask three questions: What is the character of the local church? What is her setting? And what is her shape?

A local church may be characterised primarily by one of three pictures: the clubhouse, the chameleon or the petrol station (fuelling point). The clubhouse type is a local church with an inward-looking perspective. The gathering exists solely to serve the needs of the present attendees. Adaptation of her practices or outreach to the surrounding community or even the primary language of the attendees is not considered important. I once heard the leader of a local church state that although the music in the church was off-putting to visitors, he was committed to 'serving the saints already in attendance' and not changing 'even if it means we dwindle to two or three people'; and, indeed, this church has sharply dwindled as its attendees got older.[35] In another instance, a family who brought visitors from a lower economic class and a different culture was told to not bring them along any more since these were not 'our kind of people'. Also, failure to adapt to the language of the culture into which a migrant church is planted, over time creates a barrier to those from the host country. It also disadvantages the children of the original migrants who were born in the host country.[36] In its most extreme form, the clubhouse type of local church believes that a pattern of meeting from another land and/or another century is equivalent to the biblical mandate and thus suitable for all times and in all places.

The second type of local church is like a chameleon. As the name suggests, this community does all it can to blend in with its historical and cultural milieu. The latest trends and their jargon are always adopted so that the average attendee and even the specialist at times have trouble keeping up with the pace of change. In many cases, the continual repackaging of the gospel message and the forms of local church gathering create an inherent instability. In the worst case, the message and methods of a local church are so similar to the surrounding world that little difference can be seen; instead, the church changes colour and blends in.[37] One of the most lauded models of local church at the turn of the twenty-first century was the seeker sensitive approach used and propagated by Willow Creek Church in Chicago. This model was studied and copied by local church leaders and their churches

around the world. After thirty years, however, the leadership of Willow Creek Church asked for a study, and the outcomes of this research clearly show the shortcomings of its model. The founding pastor, Bill Hybels, notes that he has helped to create and propagate a model of local church which is not sustainable because it does not lead to maturity of faith among the attendees.[38] Less charitable critics of this seeker sensitive movement were not surprised at the admission or of its inherent instability given the chameleon-like nature of the gathering.

The third type of local church resembles a petrol station. The believers gather with a commitment to the four practices listed in Acts 2:42, with the result that they are equipped to go out into the marketplace to make disciples in obedience to the Lord's command (Mat 28:18-20). This type of local church has as its primary target audience followers of Jesus Christ. In this context, the believers are built up in the faith because 'teaching them to observe all I have commanded you' is at work. The believers study the apostles' doctrine for understanding and obedience; they are identified with a local body of believers and encouraged by the body with which they identify; they witness to the body and blood of Christ given for them; and they offer corporate, public prayer. Knowing what God has revealed and understanding their responsibility to that revelation, habitually and publicly gathering as a local manifestation of the universal body of Christ, again contemplating the person and work of Christ, and gathering to ask God's blessing on efforts to live as faithful followers as well as praising him for his person and work form the fuel that is needed for believers to go out as his witnesses.

Of these three models of local church, only the last one reflects the example of the New Testament local church and avoids the extremes of looking inward and simply blending in with our surroundings. While the last model does not guarantee an easy existence, the first two guarantee a significant struggle due to their faulty assumptions and goals.

The character of a local church alone is not all that should be considered; her immediate situation also is important. Three different situations should be noted, the first of which is a time of revival. Revival is defined here not as 'the employment of unusual or special means but rather the extraordinary degree of blessing attending the normal means of grace'.[39] It is what revival scholars label 'the outpouring of God's grace' so that unusual growth occurs although no special methods have been followed.

For example, Flanders experienced a time of revival at the end of the twentieth century; all evangelical church groups in Flanders had sudden, unexpected growth. While the specific form of gathering and the evangelistic techniques varied, all of these Flemish groups experienced an unexplained and dramatic increase in the number of evangelical converts and then subsequent local church plantings during a period of about fifteen years. Just as suddenly and dramatically, the unexplained growth came to a halt.[40] Local churches in such contexts of revival should be experiencing growth, both numerically and in faith. The common struggle during the Flemish time of revival was to keep up with the opportunities to share the evangelical message and then to shepherd those who had come to faith![41] If a local church is not growing during a time of revival, something is wrong.

The second situation is persecution. Despite the fact that Europe prides itself in a post-modern tolerance, some local churches or individual believers experience persecution because of changes in governmental policies, the local religious setting, or because of changing neighbourhood demographics which bring hostile people near to the place of gathering.[42] To accept and practise an evangelical faith may come at the cost of job loss, loss of relationships with family and friends, and even loss of life. For example, evangelical churches in Serbia face financial, social and governmental opposition from the Serbian Orthodox Church.[43] British and German Muslims who convert to Christianity can expect ostracism, beatings or worse.[44] Governmental permission to gather or to repair or use a purpose-built facility may be denied, for example in predominately Muslim Bosnia and Herzegovina.[45] Even twenty-first century Spanish evangelicals have lost their place of meeting as the result of overt governmental hostility.[46] Sometimes the hostility to Christianity is violent and public such as at a recent Christian youth festival in Germany.[47] More common in Western Europe, however, is the closing of professions to those holding to an evangelical faith who decline to follow governmental mandates which support abortion or same-sex marriage.[48]

In such a climate of persecution local churches either flourish or fade. Those that continue and stay numerically small may do so due to lack of a large enough meeting place, due to the desire

not to attract hostile attention, or because of a failure of nerve in the face of pressure. Nonetheless, those who continue to gather, those who continue to have a public local witness as followers of Jesus Christ should not be faulted for having a gathering which is 'too small'. As time progresses, European Christians may find that they need to reflect on the lessons of church history and of the underground house churches in China as they consider whether a gathering is too small.[49]

The third type of situation is 'normal times'. While the message of the Gospel will always be at odds with that of the world, in historical perspective most Western nations allow believers a fairly significant level of freedom. This has not always been the case since the formation of the Church in Acts 2, and even now it is not the norm in many parts of the world. The West provides a measure of freedom that other local churches can only dream of. In this normal context, if a local church struggles and remains small, but not by design, one should study the 'shape' of this local church.

4. The 'shape' of the local church

Many thoughtful studies offer a variety of sociological and functional markers to evaluate local churches,[50] but the purpose of this essay is a more fundamental and indeed theological or biblical evaluation. How can a biblical-theological foundation be laid upon which such functional studies can build? One way to evaluate a local church from biblical perspective is to use the four historical marks of the Church: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Because definitions of these four marks have differed widely throughout the ages – a challenge noted by theologians such as G.C. Berkouwer – I will give a succinct set of definitions which are in line with what many free church groupings would understand.[51] Before defining these terms, however, one must understand that these four historical marks of the Church should be reflected in her local manifestations because 'both the universal Church (Eph. 1:23) and the local church (1 Cor. 12:27) are described as the body of Christ'.[52] 'A congregation *is* the body of Christ in the particular locale in which it gathers together.'[53]

One refers to the unity of the Church, as seen in the role of the Holy Spirit who has made the many one (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 2:21-22, 4:4). 1 Corinthians 3:16 uses the plural 'you' indicating that the Holy Spirit dwells in the gathered body of believers.[54] A commentator on Ephesians 2:22 notes, 'God chooses to be present in the communion of the saints.'[55] Oneness that is based upon the work of the Holy Spirit does not require sameness (1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 4:11-15). To require sameness would be to hold a less-than-biblical basis for unity.

Holy is based upon the positional or declared holiness of the believers, as evidenced by their title 'saints' in Ephesians 1:1, as well as a practical outworking of this status in Ephesians 4:1.[56] A holy church is one which recognises the positional holiness of the believers and does not add a legalistic framework of human expectations. Conversely, a holy church would not simply accept positional holiness and ignore the practice which should follow position. Positional holiness is not an excuse for unrighteous living because believers should not tolerate sin.[57]

Catholic refers to the universality of all who are in Christ in line with Ephesians 2:12-19. This depicts the Church of Christ as neither broader nor narrower than those who are part of the body through the crosswork of Christ. Accordingly, catholicity has been associated with correct faith since its earliest usage in the post-Apostolic age.[58] The Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck writes, 'Christianity knows no boundaries beyond those which God himself has in his good pleasure established; no boundaries of race or age, class, or status, nationality, or language.'[59] Rather, the Church is composed of 'the countless multitudes who have been purchased by the blood of Christ from every nation and people and age.'[60] He also notes, 'The local church can, however, legitimately call itself catholic because it attaches itself to the universal church.'[61] Referring to the beliefs of the early Church and in particular the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, Vitaly Borovoy writes, 'To be Christ's disciple, his follower and his confessor meant at the same time to be "catholic", that is, to be a member of one "catholic" universal church.' He goes on to say more generally, 'This inseparability of faith in Jesus Christ and membership of his catholic Church is so obvious that the terms "Christian" and "Catholic" in the minds of the first Christians belonged to each other as a first name belongs to a surname.'[62]

Apostolic is to practise and promulgate the doctrine of the apostles. The body of Christ, his Church, is built on the foundation of the New Testament apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).[63] A local church must follow the teachings of the apostles since the Church which the Lord promised he

would build and which the apostles established is 'one unified church' with 'one eternal rule of faith'.[64] As Tertullian noted:

> We are not permitted to cherish any doctrine after our own will, nor yet to make choice of that which another has introduced of his private fancy. In the Lord's apostles we possess our authority; for even they did not of themselves choose to introduce anything, but faithfully delivered to the nations the doctrine which they received from Christ...[65]

Given the sharp, public correction of the apostle Peter by the apostle Paul when Peter veered towards a Judaistic legalism (Gal 2:11-14), the reader understands that it is not the positions but the teaching of the apostles upon which the universal Church and, in turn, the local church are built. 'The persons mentioned in [Eph.] 2:20a stand in this case for the functions which they fulfill ... The proclamation, witness, and confession for which they stand – this is the foundation of the Church.'[66]

Why are this biblical standard and model important when evaluating a local church? Because to violate this biblical standard is to guarantee that a local church will struggle significantly. Unity which is based upon sociological markers, for example, is unity which fades as the culture or the fashion changes. Further, the gathered people will find it difficult to seek the mind of the Lord in various matters if they have not been unified into one body by the baptism of the Holy Spirit which happens at the time of one's justification (1 Cor 12:13).[67] 'The baptism in the Spirit which the risen Lord then effects incorporates [believers] into one body.'[68]

Legalism which masquerades as holiness builds a local body which is a pale imitation of the biblical model and the freedom that believers have once they are in Christ. Believers are neither under the Law nor under an extra-biblical set of strictures (Rom 10:5; Gal 3:1-3; Col 2:20-23).[69] While holiness is not legalism, neither is it unbridled license (Eph 5:1-21). Persons who are in Christ should act according to their new family relationship. Since the local church is primarily a gathering of those in Christ, the family resemblance should be evident. The necessity of this family resemblance becomes apparent in churches whose numbers are dwindling as they imitate the morals and values of the surrounding culture rather than those of the Bible, or have become a legalistic caricature of the New Testament Church; they lack the family resemblance.[70]

The catholicity of a local church which refuses fellowship with other believers due to differences of opinion over practice, tradition or culture makes a mockery of the price paid for a person's salvation. Conversely, to link arms with all the generally religious or those who preach a different gospel also makes a mockery of the crosswork of Christ. The New Testament is particularly pointed in its rejection of any 'gospel' which does not centre on the crosswork of Christ (Gal 1:6-9); the completed crosswork is of 'first importance' (1 Cor 15:3-8). The Lord's charge to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 was to make disciples. Disciples are believers who manifest identity and conformity: identity through the public act of baptism which marks the believer as a follower of the Triune God, and conformity in observing 'all I have commanded you'.

To ignore the Scripture's teaching on the nature of the local church as evidenced in the marks of one, holy, catholic and apostolic is to guarantee that a local church will struggle. These timeless, biblical marks provide the parameters of unity, standing, conduct, universality and teaching.

5. Conclusion

So does the small, struggling local church in Europe have a future? If it is large enough to observe effectively the four things to which the first local church was devoted in Acts 2:42; if it has recognised, local leadership; if it accurately manifests the four marks of the Church, then a local church is large enough. If during 'normal' times or a time of revival, a local church struggles due to its inward-focused or chameleon-like nature, or if it struggles because it does not display the four biblical marks of the Church, then this small church needs radical, biblical change.

What should be the attitude of those who are committed to and minister in small churches which are faithful to Acts 2:42 and the four biblical marks of the Church? In a time when the culture says that only the large will do, one needs to remember that the Lord who said 'I will build my Church' is the same God who used little Israel to display his glory before mighty Egypt, and who used but one hundred twenty frightened believers to set the world alight with his Gospel. 'God is the God who derives most glory from situations that other people have written off. The depth of the

darkness makes the starlight even more wonderful. The impossibility of a set of circumstances can be used by God to show his splendour.'[71]

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The Formative Power of Liturgy. The Church as a Liturgical Community in a Post-Christendom Society

Jeppe Bach Nikolajsen

SUMMARY

In recent decades, an increasing number of theologians have discussed the consequences of the Western world's transition from the era of Christendom to an era of post-Christendom. This transition implies that in Western society the Christian Church now appears as a distinct people with a distinct way of life and worldview. This article demonstrates the significance of liturgy for the life of the Church in a post-Christendom society by focusing on four central aspects of Christian liturgy, namely gathering, sermon, sacrament and sending. It thus contributes to a theological understanding of the Church's liturgical life in the modern world.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In den letzten Jahrzehnten haben immer mehr Theologen die Folgen des Übergangs der westlichen Welt von einer christlichen in eine nachchristliche Ära diskutiert. Dieser Wandel bringt mit sich, dass die christliche Kirche in der westlichen Gesellschaft mittlerweile als eine ganz bestimmte Gemeinschaft von Menschen mit einer ganz bestimmten Lebensweise und Weltanschauung angesehen wird. Der vorliegende Artikel zeigt die Bedeutung der Liturgie für das Leben der Kirche in einer nachchristlichen Gesellschaft auf. Er konzentriert sich dabei auf vier zentrale Aspekte der christlichen Liturgie, nämlich Zusammenkunft, Predigt, Sakrament und Sendung. Auf diese Weise trägt er zu einem theologischen Verständnis des liturgischen Lebens der Kirche in der modernen Welt bei.

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RÉSUMÉ

Ces dernières décennies, un nombre croissant de théologiens se sont penchés sur les conséquences du passage du monde occidental de l'ère de la chrétienté à une ère post-chrétienne. Cette évolution a pour conséquence que l'Église chrétienne apparaît désormais comme un peuple à part, avec son style de vie différent et sa vision du monde différente, au sein de la société occidentale. L'auteur montre ici l'importance de la liturgie pour la vie de l'Église dans une société déchristianisée en insistant sur quatre aspects centraux de la liturgie chrétienne : les réunions, la prédication, les sacrements et l'envoi. Il apporte ainsi un regard théologique sur la vie liturgique de l'Église dans le monde contemporain.

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1. Introduction: The Christian Church in a post-Christendom society

Today an increasing number of theologians are discussing the consequences of the fact that Western societies are no longer so-called Christian societies, but can instead be seen as multi-religious societies.[1] These theologians refer to this shift as a transition from the era of Christendom to an era of post-Christendom.

The era of Christendom began with the legalisation of Christianity in the Roman Empire in the fourth century. Previously, the Christian Church had been persecuted, but over time it obtained a powerful position in the Roman Empire. A

number of theologians state that Church and society over time merged into a cultural, political and religious unity, which is sometimes called *corpus Christianum*.[2] Thus, during the Middle Ages, there existed a close link between the Church and the emperors, kings and princes of the European empires. In the era of Christendom, the Church and the population were considered complimentary entities, and the European empires were considered Christian.

A growing number of theologians now state that the Western world is in transition from the era of Christendom to an era of post-Christendom. Defining post-Christendom, Stuart Murray states,

> [It] is the culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within a society that has been definitively shaped by the Christian story and as the institutions that have been developed to express Christian convictions decline in influence.[3]

Today we find numerous examples of how Western Christendom has been disestablished and the Western world has entered an era of post-Christendom. A number of important political, cultural and educational institutions have become secularised and can no longer be regarded as Christian. Thus, Christianity is no longer the foundation of Western society. We may sum up the discussion like this:

> Church history contains two major shifts: the first shift encompasses the church's movement from being marginalised to having an influential position in society; the second shift embodies how the church is now losing its influential position and therefore becoming increasingly marginalised.[4]

In recent years, I have presented a theological critique of the fusion of Church and society known as *corpus Christianum*. I have also argued that the Church, *Corpus Christi*, is a distinct community, which in various ways differs from the society of which it is a part. My contention has been to state that it is quite unusual to regard a nation as Christian. Rather, the normal situation of God's people in the world is to be a community living among other communities, a people living among other peoples. There are rich and diverse sources that can be employed when the Christian Church seeks to understand its existence in a post-Christendom society. For example, the Church can recall Abraham, who promised that he would live a life different from the people among whom he would lead his nomadic pilgrim life (Num 23:9).[5] This leads John Howard Yoder to state:

> The whole point of Hebrew identity since Abraham is a call to be doing something else amidst the world's power arenas. It is only by doing something different that Jewry in fact has survived; it is only in order to be something morally different that Jewry is called to survive.[6]

Furthermore, Yoder states that the Old Testament expresses the expectation that God's people have a minority status.[7] Thus, in the Old Testament we read how God's people existed in foreign, often hostile environments:

> Assyria in the age of Isaiah, Babylon in that of Jeremiah, Nineveh in that of Jonah, and then Rome in that of the New Testament Apocalypse, are in one sense all the same thing: the great world city, oppressive, drunk on power, worshipping idols, claiming to be the centre of the world, persecuting the saints, and doomed to destruction.[8]

This article is a continuation of my previous work on understanding the role of the Church in a post-Christendom society. Here I present a liturgical perspective on this important topic.[9] Doing this, I particularly draw attention to the writings of the American Mennonite theologian Yoder.[10] Even though few regard him as a liturgical theologian, it is appropriate to draw on his work, since it contains theological perspectives that can help us to understand how liturgy shapes the life of the Church. It is not unusual among liturgical theologians to operate with four pillars in Christian liturgy, namely gathering, sermon, sacrament and sending.[11] In this article, I will – based on these four aspects of Christian liturgy – demonstrate the significance of liturgy for the life of the Church in a post-Christendom society.[12]

2. The formative power of liturgy

2.1 Gathering

Sunday is a holy day for Christians but in a post-Christendom society, this is not the case for everyone.[13] This means, among other things, that *Christians* gather for worship on this day. Christians may also gather on other days on other occasions. These gatherings may also be formative but here the focus is on the Sunday gathering for worship. This gathering gives them a sense of unity.

The New Testament indicates that when a person accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord, this person becomes *incorporated in Christ* and thus becomes a part of the body of Christ, a distinct community in this world.[14] This community belongs to Christ and this fact must not be suspended by anything in the world. Commenting on this, Yoder states, 'No political nation, no geographical homeland to which one belongs by birth, can take precedence over the heavenly citizenship of a Christian in one's new birth.'[15] As expressed in the New Testament, the Church possesses a citizenship which is not of this world, and, as it is said elsewhere in the New Testament, Christians must obey God rather than humans (Phil 3:20; Acts 5:29).[16] The Christian community gathers to examine what it means to belong to Christ, to follow Christ and to maintain its identity in Christ. Again, Yoder explains this well:

> The church is not just a certain number of persons nor a specific gathering of persons assembled for a particular religious rite. The church is God's people gathered as a unit, as a people, gathered to do business in His name, to find what it means here and now to put into practice this different quality of life which is God's promise to them.[17]

Thus, when a person accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord, this person becomes a part of a new social reality in the world. Lesslie Newbigin believes that God's people are the new temple in which God dwells today: 'The dwelling place of God upon earth did not end with the crucifixion. Out of that defeat He fashioned a new temple, the Body of Christ.'[18] God is present in the Church and in the lives in his people by his Spirit.[19] When Christians gather for worship, when hymns are sung, when prayers are prayed, when the faith is confessed, when sermons are preached, these practices shape the life of the Church, its social life and its way of viewing the world. The liturgical life of the Church is an initiation into the Christian life. Thus, Christians are not initiated into the Christian faith by simply reading about the Christian faith, but also through social interaction. Therefore, Miroslav Volf states, 'A person cannot be fully initiated into the Christian faith without being socialised into a Christian church.'[20]

The New Testament also states that the Christian Church is an eschatological community.[21] It is a foretaste and a sign of the kingdom of God, which has broken into the world. In the Church, Jews and Gentiles are united and thus this community serves as an eschatological sign of the gathering of people from all nations that will take place when the kingdom of God shall one day be fully established. Thus, the Christian Church is made up of various people, poor as well as rich, young as well as old. It is a people who are determined by an identity definition that runs deeper than any other given or chosen identity.[22] In other words, the Church is a social reality in which all social and cultural barriers are transcended. Thus, when the Church gathers for worship, this points towards the day when God will gather all who accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. Not only the Christian Church, but also Christian liturgy is eschatological by nature.

When the Church gathers to pray, worship and celebrate communion, it performs liturgical practices, and the participation in these liturgical practices shapes the life of the Church. In the Church's liturgical life, Christians are participating in the Christian tradition. Thus, Christians are part of a community which is part of an unbroken tradition which goes back to the early Christian congregations. Hence, the gospel is not communicated as a disembodied gospel, but is represented by a community that lives by it and invites others to live by it. This leads us to take a brief look at the importance of the sermon in the life of the Church.

2.2 Sermon

Yoder can help us to understand how liturgy shapes the life of the Church by drawing our attention to the significance of Holy Scriptures for the Jews. He notes that since a new temple in Babylon could not replace the temple in Jerusalem, the Jews began to gather in synagogues for prayers and the reading of their holy Scriptures.[23] Furthermore, he mentions that the earliest version of the Talmud was collected in Babylon and this collection of Scriptures was for the Jews what the canonical collection of apostolic writings is for Christians. The Talmud provided for the Jews a fulcrum – morally and philosophically outside and politically and geographically within the Hellenistic system – whereby they could determine what might be considered as acceptable compromises and unacceptable betrayals of their faith in the Babylonian exile.[24] The Old Testament was also collected in Babylon and these writings also helped them to understand their lives in Babylon.[25] According to Yoder, here the Jews discovered this:

> There was within their tradition more of what it takes to survive than they had been aware of while they had been focusing their hopes on an imminent return to Jerusalem. There was, for instance, the set of hero stories stretching from Joseph through Ester to Daniel and his three friends. These Israelites in pagan courts had all stood up victoriously for the one true God, disobeying non-violently, amidst a hostile pagan culture.[26]

Understanding sermons as reflections of the message of the biblical scriptures, one could argue that when the local Christian community gathers for worship, sermons help it to understand its existence in light of a Christian understanding of the world. Therefore, the intention with Christian sermons is not a return to the same doctrinal statements over and over again purely with the intention of doctrinal preservation. Rather, Christian sermons should be dynamic interpretations of the Christian life in this world.[27] Not only sermons but also hymns and prayers interpret the Christian life. In fact, liturgical practices express a communication of the Christian *kerygma* which helps and trains Christians to live faithfully in this world.[28] The Christian Church can be regarded as a social tradition that is embedded in history. Thus, Christian sermons can be regarded as an expression of an understanding of the situation of the local congregation in the light of the Christian Scriptures, the Christian tradition and their local context. Thus, for Christians, the Bible is not a book like any other. It has a normative status for the Church, which reads the biblical Scriptures within and as part of the Christian tradition.[29] Thus, when Christians gather to worship, they listen to sermons which shape their social practices and understanding of the world. These sermons inform Christians on how to raise children, live in marriage, deal with sickness and death, deal with money, etc.

2.3 Sacrament

In this article, I am not occupied with the development of a theological exposition of how we should understand communion, but I am investigating how sacramental practices impact the life of Christians.[30] Thus, my interest is: What does it mean that the sacrament plays such a central role in the life of the Church (notwithstanding that the sacrament actually plays a different role in different church traditions)? Much could be highlighted, but here I will present two aspects of communion.

Firstly, it is worth noting that communion is a distinctive social practice that characterised the early church. In the early church, communion was a proper meal, and thus an economic act. In this way, it was normal for the first Christians to share their goods with each other. They lived together like families and communion was an expression of community, of caring and responsibility for others.[31] Communion was also an expression of economic sharing and community in the early church; there was a social and economic dimension.[32] When communion is practised today as it was in the early church, the Christian Church express economic sharing and community. Thus, communion is a central practice of the Church which helps to determine how Christians should act towards one another. This sacramental practice is clearly social.

Secondly, the central role of communion in Christian liturgy expresses how Christians acknowledge the reality of sin and their need for forgiveness. In fact, communion is a key indication of the fact that the congregation knows about its own brokenness and need for forgiveness. Thus, communion is a bulwark against the Church becoming triumphalistic. Although Christians claim that God is present in their midst and even though the Christian Church claims that it partially reveals the kingdom of God, the Church at the same time acknowledges that it hides the kingdom of God and contradicts the love of God which it is called to embody. Hence, the Christian Church has concepts that can cope and deal with guilt and forgiveness.[33] This sacramental practice is social but also personal.

2.4 Sending

At the end of the service, the congregation is sent out into the world – to which we now turn. Robert Martin-Achard claims,

> The evangelization of the world is not primarily a matter of words and deeds; it is a matter of presence – the presence of the People of God in the midst of mankind and the presence of God in the midst of His People.[34]

Christians are sent into the world to serve others and to proclaim the good news to all of creation and to invite others to become part of the Christian Church.[35]

The liturgy is a celebration of God, but the life after the liturgy is also intended to be a celebration

of God. Christian life as a whole is intended to honour and praise God (Rom 12:1-2). The liturgy ends, therefore, with Christians being sent out into the world to practise an everyday life liturgy, so to say. The Christian liturgy helps Christians to live in the world, helps to practise a liturgy after the liturgy, as Orthodox theologians like to put it. Thus, Christians are sent to the world as *Christians*, as humans who have been transformed by the Christian liturgy. Thus, Christians are sent to the world as people who belong to a distinct community, who acknowledge their own brokenness and need for salvation and who understand themselves in light of the Christian *kerygma*.[36]

Again, it is possible to learn from the Jews exiled in Babylon. Here the Jewish people existed to promote the peace and welfare of the places where God had sent them (cf. Jer 29:4-7). The Jews were, not only in Babylon but wherever they were called to live, called to live for the nations. This leads Yoder to posit that Christians, like the Jews, are scattered to exist for the world. Yoder also notes that diversity of culture and language is considered as positive in Paul's missionary sermons (cf. Acts 14:16-17; 17:26-27).[37] Alain Epp Weaver writes, 'The continuity of this exilic vision with Yoder's ecclesiology should be clear: The church is the community called to go out into the world, into diaspora.'[38] The Christian liturgy informs Christians about how to act when the liturgy has ended.[39] Thus, at the end of the church service the congregation is sent out in the world to serve others.

The mission of the Church should also be understood against the background of the mediation of salvation in the communion and sermons, and also against the background of the blessing of the Church. I expand on this insight below.

3. Conclusion: the significance of liturgy for the life of the Church

With the disestablishment of the old Christendom, the distinctiveness of the Church has become more evident. Today, the Church in the Western world increasingly emerges as a distinct people (ecclesiology) embodying a distinct way of life (social ethics) and a distinct understanding of the world (epistemology). This article has provided four perspectives on how Christian liturgy shapes the life of the Church in the world. First, in the past, the Western world followed the Christian liturgical calendar but this is often no longer the case. Thus, Christian liturgy promotes a distinct way of life and also promotes a sense of unity among Christians when assembled (cf. section 2.1 above). Second, the Christian Church has its own narratives, as other communities may also have their own defining narratives. Once the biblical narratives were important stories for the Western world but this is no longer the case, or at least not to the same extent. When the Christian Church gathers, it understands itself in the light of its holy Scriptures, and thus the life of the Church is interpreted in a distinct way (cf. section 2.2 above). Third, communion is an expression of how Christians should act towards one another, and thus it promotes a distinct way of life. However, if we only state that the Church is a distinct community with a distinct way of life and a distinct way of viewing the world, we miss out on something important: it is crucial to grasp that the Church exists because of God's intervention alone and that it is totally dependent on the grace of God (cf. section 2.3 above).[40] Fourth, as we have seen, Christian liturgy also impacts the lives of Christians after the worship service has ended. At the end of the service the congregation is sent out into the world to serve others (cf. section 2.4 above).

There are numerous ways in which liturgy shapes the Christian life. In this article, I have just mentioned a few examples. Also, this article has not suggested how liturgy should be designed or conducted in order to be formative. Rather, the article proposes that all liturgies – formal or informal – are in one way or another formative. I have selected a useful fourfold categorisation of Christian worship under the headings *gathering*, *sermon*, *sacrament* and *sending* to demonstrate how liturgy may impact the life of the Church in a situation of post-Christendom.

In the theological discussion of the consequences of the shift from Christendom to post-Christendom in the West, the distinctiveness of the Church is a recurring theme. As I have stated earlier:

> With the collapse of the old Christendom, the need for theological inquiry into the distinctive identity of the church and its role in modern society has become more and more urgent. While much of traditional ecclesiology has been developed in a context where ecclesial hegemony was presupposed, and where society was characterised by strong social coherence, a number of ecclesiological contributions have

been recently developed that no longer take this for granted.[41]

Here I would like to add: Previously, we have seen substantial theoretical-theological expositions of an understanding of the Church's distinctiveness.[42] However, we also need to see, as I have done in this paper, more practical-theological analyses of how we should understand the Church's distinctiveness. Thus, in this paper I have proposed that liturgy should play a more important role in ecclesiological contributions which no longer take the old Christendom for granted.

Finally, I would like to point to an avenue for further studies on liturgy in line with the thoughts developed in this article. Ludwig Wittgenstein has been crucial for the inauguration of postliberal theology, even though it was George A. Lindbeck who really introduced postliberal theology with his book *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (1984).[43] As I have stated elsewhere:

> The late Wittgenstein demonstrated that language is always embedded in a social context, that language and social practice cannot be detached from each other. Lindbeck argued that the Christian faith is embedded in a social tradition, which is called the church. Stanley Hauerwas has done for ethics, what Wittgenstein did for our understanding of language and Lindbeck for our understanding of dogma: He has argued that the Christian ethics is embedded in a social context, and that Christian ethics and the Christian church can not and should not be separated.[44]

Hauerwas has criticised the restless attempts of liberal theologians to make the Christian Church and Christian theology relevant to the modern world. Instead, he believes that theology should be conducted first and foremost for the sake of the Church. Thus, a postliberal understanding of liturgy will state that the intention of Christian liturgy is not primarily to be relevant to the world, but first and foremost to interpret and shape the lives of Christians; in doing so, the life of the Church will be relevant and a witness to the world. Wittgenstein's cultural-linguistic understanding of language, Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic understanding of dogma and Hauerwas' cultural-linguistic understanding of ethics all have implications for our understanding of liturgy, because the language of the Christian faith, the doctrine of the Christian faith and the Christian way of life cannot be separated from Christian liturgy, which is essential for the Christian Church. Thus, postliberal theology points toward a cultural-linguistic understanding of liturgy which has not yet been fully explored.

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Endnotes

1 I have presented a number of contributions to the discussion of the role of the Church in a post-Christendom society in recent years; this introduction is based on some of these contributions, including 'Beyond Christendom: Lesslie Newbigin as a Post-Christendom Theologian', *Exchange: A Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 41.4 (2012) 364-380; 'Beyond Sectarianism: The Missional Church in a Post-Christendom Society', *Missiology: An International Review* 41.4 (2013) 462-475; and 'Missional Folk Church? A Discussion of Hans Raun Iversen's Understanding of the Danish Folk Church as a Missional Church', *Swedish Missiological Themes* 100.1 (2012) 23-36.

2 Barry A. Harvey, *Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999) 80-81.

3 Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) 19.

4 Nikolajsen, 'Beyond Christendom', 366.

5 John H. Yoder, 'The Original Revolution' in *The Original Revolution* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1971) 27; cf. Num 23:9.

6 John H. Yoder, 'Jesus the Jewish Pacifist' in Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs (eds), *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 2008) 85.

7 John H. Yoder, 'Let the Church Be the Church' in *The Original Revolution* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1971) 116.

8 John H. Yoder, 'See How They Go with Their Face to the Sun' in *For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 77.

9 According to Alexander Schmemann, 'The task of liturgical theology consists in giving a theological basis to the explanation of worship and the whole liturgical tradition of the Church.' See Alexander Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, translated by Asheleigh E. Moorehouse (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003) 17. Hence, this article contributes to a theological understanding of the liturgical life of the Church in the world.

10 I could also have considered Stanley Hauerwas'

work on liturgy. Because others have done that, I have chosen to focus on Yoder's writings.

11 For example, see Mark Galli, *Beyond Smells and Bells: The Wonder and Power of Christian Liturgy* (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2008). Galli states, however, that some only operate with two centres in liturgy, namely *sermon* and *sacrament*. See Galli, *Beyond Smells and Bells*, 16.

12 The word liturgy comes from the Greek word *leitourgia*, which means *the work of the people*. In this article, the term *liturgy* does not refer to a specific denominational liturgy such as the Lutheran or the Roman Catholic liturgy. Similarly, the term *Church* does not refer to a particular denomination. However, in section 2.3 below, one might sense that a Protestant understanding of communion is expressed. In my opinion, the Christian Church cannot give up certain element in its liturgy (e.g. the sacraments and sermons). Therefore some elements of the Christian worship service should not change but in many ways, contextual liturgies can be developed.

13 Therefore, in my home country, Denmark, in recent years we have seen examples of Christians refusing to work on Sundays and therefore being fired. We have also seen Christians making sure that when they are hired for a new position a clause is included in their contract so that they do not have to work on Sundays.

14 Here and throughout this article, I often refer to the Church as distinct. It is important to make clear what I mean by this. In this article, 'distinctive' is used almost synonymously with the term 'identity'. Inspired by Paul Ricoeur, distinctiveness can be understood in two different, yet compatible, ways: first, the distinctiveness of the Church can be captured or qualified as something intrinsic – from the inside, rooted in the very being of the Church (the Church's *ipse-identity*). Second, the distinctiveness of the Church may also be qualified in relation to something which is not the Church, and in this way elucidate the distinction between the Church and the world. Since the Church is not just distinct, but distinct in relation to something else, identity may be understood not in an isolated manner, but as a concept of relationality (the *idem-identity* of the Church). These two aspects of the distinctiveness of the Church cannot be disassociated. Rather, there is an interdependence and dialectic between *ipse*-identity and *idem*-identity. Therefore, when I refer to 'the distinctiveness of the Church', it is hard not to use such phrases without some ambiguity. The inspiration from Paul Ricoeur stems from his book *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

15 Yoder, 'Original Revolution', 22.

16 John H. Yoder, 'The Peace Testimony and Conscientious Objection', *Gospel Herald* (1958) 58.

17 Yoder, 'Original Revolution', 30.

18 See J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, 'Will God Dwell on the Earth?', *National Christian Council Review* 79 (1959) 100.

19 Newbigin also believes that this chosen people where God has taken up residence in the world is destined to cause the falling and rising of many: 'This church, then, the one new family created by God in Christ out of all tribes and nations and peoples, is set by God in the midst of the world as the sign of that to which all creation, and all world history moves. It is the body of Christ, the new man, the second Adam, the new human race, growing up into its full stature and drawing into itself men of every kind. It is here that the world is given the opportunity to see and accept its true destiny; accept or reject it, for both possibilities remain open.' See J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *Is There Still a Missionary Job Today?* (Glasgow: The Iona Community Publications Department, 1963) 16-17.

20 Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 173.

21 Paul believes, for example, that Christ gave himself to tear Christians out of this present evil world (Gal 1:4), that Christ has redeemed those who slaved under the law and the principles of the world (Gal 4:1-11), and that Christ has freed Christians from the power of darkness (Col 1:13).

22 John H. Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1992) 28.

23 Yoder, 'Jesus the Jewish Pacifist', 78.

24 Yoder, 'Jesus the Jewish Pacifist', 80.

25 Yoder, 'See How They Go with Their Face to the Sun', 56-57.

26 Yoder, 'Jesus the Jewish Pacifist', 78.

27 Craig R. Hovey, *Speak Thus: Christian Language in Church and World* (Eugene: Cascade, 2008) 26.

28 C.H. Dodd sums up the *kerygma* in Peter's speeches in Acts in this way: 'First, the age of fulfilment has dawned', 'Second, this has taken place through the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ', 'Third, by virtue of the resurrection Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God as Messianic head of the new Israel', 'Fourth, the Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ's present power and glory', 'Fifth, the Messianic Age will reach its consummation in the return of Christ', 'Six, an appeal is made for repentance with the offer of forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, and salvation'. See C.H. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963) 21-24. Dodd also identifies a Pauline *kerygma* on pages 24-26.

29 The reflections above are expanded in Jeppe Bach

Nikolajsen and Kristian Kappel, 'Menighedens liv med Bibelen – Kevin J. Vanhoozers bidrag til udviklingen af en ekklesiologisk hermeneutik', *Dansk Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke* 40.2 (2013) 121-134; some of the present formulations rely on this article.

30 Cf. James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009) 166. See also footnote 13 above.

31 See Karl Olav Sandnes, *A New Family: Conversion and Ecclesiology in the Early Church with Cross-Cultural Comparison* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1994).

32 Yoder, *Body Politics*, 14-27.

33 This second perspective on communion is surprisingly not expressed in the writings of Yoder. See also footnote 40.

34 Robert Martin-Achard, *A Light to the Nations* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962) 31.

35 This must be seen against the background of the blessing of the Church and God's empowerment of the Church to participate in his mission in the world.

36 See footnote 28.

37 Yoder, 'See How They Go with Their Face to the Sun', 63.

38 Alain Epp Weaver, 'On Exile: Yoder, Said, and a Theology of Land and Return' in Peter Dula and Chris K. Huebner (eds), *The New Yoder* (Eugene: Cascade, 2010) 146.

39 Cf. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 167.

40 This, to my mind, crucial insight is only weakly expressed in the writings of Yoder.

41 Nikolajsen, 'Beyond Sectarianism', 462-463.

42 For example, see Jeppe Bach Nikolajsen, *Redefining the Identity of the Church: A Constructive Study of the Post-Christendom Theologies of Lesslie Newbigin and John Howard* Yoder (Oslo: MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2010).

43 George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1984). I presuppose some familiarity with postliberal theology. For a good introduction to postliberal theology see William C. Placher, 'Postliberal Theology' in David F. Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2001) 343-354. Today, many theologians acknowledge that they are inspired by postliberal theology and many have tried to draw postliberal theology in various directions.

44 Nikolajsen and Kappel, 'Menighedens liv med Bibelen', 133 (my translation).

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Dutch Evangelical Trends and their Significance: A Critical Review Article

Patrick Nullens and Ronald T. Michener

C. van der Kooi, E. van Staalduine-Sulman and A.W. Zwiep (eds),
Evangelical Theology in Transition (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2012) and
G. van den Brink and C. van der Kooi,
Christelijke dogmatiek (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012).

SUMMARY

There has long been a distinction between *Reformed* and *evangelical* theology in the Netherlands, but in our global intellectual culture, English-language evangelical trends are influencing the shape of the Dutch speaking evangelical world. Two recent books published in the Netherlands highlight this shift. The collection *Evangelical Theology in Transition*, edited by Cornelis van der Kooi, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman and Arie W. Zwiep, points the way forward for Dutch Evangelicalism with application to the Evangelical church and theology internationally. The new textbook of systematic theology by Gijsbert van den Brink and Cornelis van der Kooi, *Christelijke dogmatiek*, is an ecumenically minded, classical trinitarian, Reformed dogmatic theology. Both books represent a progressive, broadly focused, evangelical and Reformed theology in Dutch speaking Europe. This critical review article investigates highlights of these works for the continuing strength and growth of evangelicalism in the Low Countries, and its implications for the global evangelical movement.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Über eine lange Zeit hinweg hat es in den Niederlanden eine Unterscheidung zwischen reformierter und evangelikaler Theologie gegeben. Jedoch sind in unserer globalen, intellektuellen Kultur englischsprachige, evangelikale Trends dabei, das Profil der Holländisch sprechenden evangelikalen Welt zu beeinflussen. Zwei Bücher, die kürzlich in den Niederlanden veröffentlicht wurden, verdeutlichen diese Veränderung. Die Anthologie *Evangelical Theology in Transition* [Evangelikale Theologie im Wandel], herausgegeben von Cornelis van der Kooi, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman und Arie W. Zwiep, weist der holländischen evangelikalen Welt den Weg im Hinblick auf evangelikale Gemeinden und Theologie auf internationaler Ebene. Das neue Handbuch für systematische Theologie von Gijsbert van den Brink und Cornelis van der Kooi, *Christelijke dogmatiek* [Christliche Dogmatik], ist eine ökumenisch ausgerichtete, klassisch trinitarische, reformierte dogmatische Theologie. Beide Bücher repräsentieren eine moderne, breit angelegte, evangelikale und reformierte Theologie im Holländisch sprechenden Europa. Diese kritische Studie untersucht die wichtigsten Punkte beider Werke, was die anhaltende Stärke und das Wachstum der evangelikalen Bewegung in den Benelux-Ländern betrifft sowie ihre Auswirkung auf die globale evangelikale Welt.

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RÉSUMÉ

Aux Pays-Bas, on a longtemps distingué la théologie réformée et la théologie évangélique, mais, dans notre culture intellectuelle globalisée, les tendances du monde évangélique anglophone influent sur les formes d'expression des évangéliques néerlandophones. Deux ouvrages récents sont la manifestation de ce changement. La série intitulée *Evangelical Theology in Transition* et éditée par Cornelis van der Kooi, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman et Arie W. Zwiep ouvre la voie pour le monde évangélique hollandais en visant une application pour l'Église évangélique et la théologie évangélique au plan internationnal. Puis, le nouveau manuel de théologie systématique de Gijsbert van den Brink et Cornelis van der Kooi, intitulé *Christelijke dogmatiek*, est un ouvrage de

dogmatique réformée, qui maintient les positions trinitaires classiques, dans un esprit œcuménique. Ces deux ouvrages aux larges centres d'intérêts représentent une ligne progressiste au sein de la théologie évangélique et réformée, dans l'Europe néerlandophone. La présente recension critique examine leurs points forts pour favoriser le maintien de la force et de la croissance du monde évangélique aux Pays-Bas, et en tire des implications pour le mouvement évangélique à l'échelle du monde.

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1. Introduction

The impact of the Netherlands on the formation of Protestant evangelical theology is often overlooked in the English-speaking world. The ongoing debates between what is often called 'five-point' Calvinism and Arminianism among those who broadly consider themselves *evangelical* originally stem from Dutch soil.[1] Several Dutch theologians can be considered household names among Anglophone evangelical theologians and their works are readily available in English, such as Hendrikus Berkhof's *Christian Faith* and the various works of G.C. Berkouwer and Abraham Kuyper; in recent years, Herman Bavinck's classic four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* was also translated into English.

In the Netherlands there has long been a sharp distinction between *Reformed* (or *Calvinist*) and *evangelical* theology. But just as evangelicalism has broadened its borders in the English-speaking world and is having an impact on and within the larger Protestant world, we also see this trend in the Low Countries, specifically with respect to Dutch Protestantism. In our global intellectual culture, thanks to air travel and electronic communication, theological influences spread rapidly across the world, and Anglo-Saxon evangelical trends are influencing the shape of the Dutch speaking evangelical world.[2]

Two recent books published in the Netherlands not only point to this broader vision of evangelicalism, but also demonstrate it in practice. The first book to be discussed, *Evangelical Theology in Transition*, edited by Cornelis van der Kooi, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman and Arie Zwiep (2012), points the way forward for Dutch evangelicalism in particular, with application to the evangelical church and theology internationally. This is evidenced immediately by the fact that its title and articles are written in English. The authors address the nature of evangelicalism in the Dutch context through various 'transitions and fusions' of thought both of and within evangelicalism. The book also considers the meaning of 'evangelical' through the lens of its theological and ecclesiological contexts and practices.

The second major book is a monumental, 722 page, up-to-date, textbook of systematic theology by the Dutch theology professors Gijsbert van den Brink and Cornelis van der Kooi: *Christelijke dogmatiek* (2012). (Van der Kooi is also one of the editors of the first mentioned book.) This is a contemporary, ecumenically minded, yet classical trinitarian, Reformed dogmatic theology. Although the text is written in Dutch, the authors draw upon many historical, contemporary, international and multi-lingual sources.

Both books represent a robust, broadly focused evangelical and Reformed theology. In this critical review article, it is our desire to investigate some specific highlights of these works for the ongoing strength and growth of evangelicalism in the Low Countries, and also to draw out helpful implications for the global evangelical movement. We will specifically focus on key points of 'transition' emphasised or developed by the authors. We will first consider the multi-authored *Evangelical Theology in Transition*; our evaluation will consider four of the areas which are addressed by the book's authors: 1) Evangelicalism in a Dutch context: its meaning and identity; 2) Origins of evangelical trends in the Low Countries; 3) Evangelical church practices; and 4) Arminian and Wesleyan theological engagements.

2.1 Evangelicalism in a Dutch context: its meaning and identity

In the introduction the editors begin by considering the meaning of Evangelicalism[3] broadly, then specifically in the Dutch context. As the introductory paragraph clearly indicates, they perceive the Evangelical movement as a blended pattern of transition and fusions that nonetheless has had considerable influence both socially and ecclesiastically. Of course, in a Dutch-speaking context, there must be an intentional effort to distinguish and compare Evangelicalism with Reformed Protestantism (1). The editors argue that there is in the Netherlands a broad, ecumenically minded Evangelical spirit that

has been called 'ecumenism of the heart' by a leading Dutch pastor.[4] They frankly state that they see the Evangelical as a 'counter-movement' alongside the 'church at large' that includes Reformed churches, parachurch organisations and other historical Christian expressions with similar concerns. In this sense Evangelicalism is a 'critical minority', which is nonetheless influential due to the increasingly multi-cultural context and a decrease in the authority of religious institutions (3-5).

The editors further suggest that the Evangelical movement is in transition towards a critically reflective and cooperative theological engagement, and moving away from earlier tendencies of anti-intellectualism. Optimistically, they argue that some areas of 'Evangelical Spirituality' from a postmodern perspective connect well with the 'dominant culture'. This would include areas such as a 'strong individualism', a 'high esteem' of empirical research and an expressed distinction between the Bible itself and our interpretation of it (6). Certainly this last observation is key to the postmodern criticism of modernist epistemological optimism: Our interpretations are always situational and contextual; our statements *about* the Bible are never equivalent to the Bible itself.

However, the former two points do not appear, at least at first glance, to reflect postmodern sensibilities. A general feature of postmodernism is a move away from the radical individualism of modernity towards a more community-centred paradigm. But the context to which the editors refer is perhaps the change in the Dutch Christian culture from an institutional and cultural view of the church's influence to a subjective, individualistic view of religion as personal choice.[5] In addition, the postmodern critique includes a radical questioning of the value of empiricism as a launch pad for our truth and / or knowledge claims. It is not that empiricism has lost its credentials entirely, but it has certainly lost its footing to set the terms for our faith and theological dialogue. Nonetheless, this renewed interest in empirical research stems from what the editors see as a transition from a primary, if not at times exclusive, concentration on beliefs to a concentration on the practices that shape evangelicalism and the role of the church. Consequently, to properly reflect on church practice requires empirical research.

Following the Introduction, Baptist theologian Henk Bakker begins the first chapter by considering the phenomenological aspects of the Evangelical movement. Bakker sees Evangelicalism as originally a prophetic and eschatological call to keep the kingdom of God separate from the world (4, 10, 17). However, in the Netherlands the movement has become so trans-denominational that its prophetic fervour has waned; it is now less a protest movement than it is a pragmatic movement which seeks to unite 'culture, Gospel and people' (21-23, 26, 29). Bakker notes that Dutch Evangelicals, unfortunately, are seldom involved with science and academic research, although their work as care providers has had a significant impact in the past three decades. In spite of its anti-intellectual reputation, Dutch Evangelicalism has been able to adapt to its culture for gospel-centred purposes (31, 37).

Bakker is careful to distinguish Evangelicalism in the Netherlands from that of the UK, Germany, France and North America, by claiming that in the Netherlands the word 'Evangelical' does not have a 'denominational and theological meaning' (33 with note 56). Certainly, geographical and sociological distinctions such as these are worth noting, but the contrast he sees with North American Evangelicalism may be overstated. The latter is heavily politically driven, with an extremely diverse denominational and even theological background.[6]

The above diversity is also made evident in the Netherlands, especially by Reformed theologian Ad de Bruijne, who states in chapter four:

> Evangelicals are to be found in the Netherlands among such groups as the Pentecostals, Baptists, Plymouth Brethren, and a series of free, sometimes charismatic churches that do not operate within organized denominations (86-87).

With this observation, De Bruijne also signals cooperation between Reformed and Evangelical Christians. He highlights various political and religious differences and commonalities across this diverse Evangelical landscape and emphasizes a move away, among some Evangelicals, from more Anabaptist and separatist tendencies to 'the long-established Reformed tradition of Christian politics' (86). In the past, Evangelicals were reticent to embrace political participation either due to Evangelicalism's prophetic, eschatological origins that separate God's Kingdom from that of the world or due to dispensationalist eschatological views, accompanied by an individualistic application of Christian spirituality (88-89).[7] Today, 'politically awakened' Evangelicals in the Netherlands embrace more of the Kuyperian tra-

dition, emphasizing the goodness of creation and its structures; by doing so, they find opportunities for Christian witness to society.[8]

In the United States, De Bruijne observes, there was a culture clash between Christians who embraced modernity and those who remained steadfast in the traditional faith. As Modernism gained the upper hand, Evangelical conservatives withdrew from the public arena; this included those of the Reformed tradition. In the Netherlands, however, due to Abraham Kuyper's influence upon Dutch culture and society, Reformed Christianity became more influential. De Bruijne notes that Evangelicals with an Anabaptist background also joined the Reformed Christians in the common struggle against secularism, drawing upon the historical Christian character of Dutch society (95-96, 106-109).

De Bruijne's research displays the vast richness of Evangelicalism, ranging from Puritanism, Methodism, Neo-Calvinism to dispensationalist views – all of which contribute to a prophetical-political challenge to pervasive secularism. The way forward, De Bruijne wisely argues, is not simply a return to a full-fledged Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism, even though it does provide the broader context for political engagement. Kuyper himself understood the historical-contextual limits of his project; moreover, the times have changed. Although the church is not equivalent to society, neither can it be detached from it while seeking the Kingdom of God. The church is embedded within society and it must learn to accept its condition, realising that its composition of diverse identities has helped to form that society itself (114-115, 118, 127-130; also see editors' comments, 10-11).

With a variety of denominational adherents, biblicism has been a general inclination of the Evangelical movement in the United States. The origin of this mindset, however, stems from the same Enlightenment roots as Dutch Evangelicalism. In chapter two, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman provides five characteristics that represent this Enlightenment influence: 1) individualism and equality; 2) the separation of church and state; 3) an emphasis of spirit over body (with a notable 'reactionary trend'; 4) viewing God as separate from creation; and 5) 'the disappearance of Neo-Platonism from theology and hermeneutics' (45-48). Along with the emphatic optimism about the individual's ability to access the truth of God comes an emphasis on personal experience in both the reading and the application of the Bible, apart from one's tradition or ecclesiological context. Staalduine-Sulman argues that Evangelicalism has 'positioned itself as a counter-movement' to Enlightenment thinking. Yet, her research points out that in its opposition it in fact affirms the same philosophical underpinnings of foundationalism which stem from Enlightenment-born modernity. Rather than rationalism and historicism setting the agenda, Evangelical fundamentalism *suggests* that the Bible alone, as the ultimate authority, must set the agenda (54-55). Yet the methods by which one interprets the Bible within this paradigm are either existential, or ironically, rational-scientific (as in the case of many classical Evangelical apologetic efforts).

Yet Staalduine-Sulman is not all negative in her assessment of Evangelicalism. She affirms that it is a movement in transition which is responding to and integrating with current times and cultures, while at the same time refusing to accept mainstream liberal theology. Evangelicalism has also refused to remain a theology for the academy; the ordinary Christian believer is an implicit concern of the movement. With an increasing number of Evangelical students of theology in the Netherlands, she wisely submits that the self-critical, modest approaches which stem from the postmodern critique of Enlightenment modernism will help pave the way for both those steeped in modernism and (especially) those immersed in fundamentalist expressions of Evangelicalism. She is undoubtedly correct, as they have more in common than either perspective is ready to see or admit.

2.2 Origins of evangelical trends in the Low Countries

As the editors point out, two of the articles (chapters three and seven) propose that the aforementioned Evangelical tendencies in the Netherlands find their background in American and/or British Evangelicalism (11). In chapter three, Maarten J. Aalders suggests that the Oxford Group Movement of the pastor-evangelist Frank N.D. Buchman, as well as the Reformed Churches in Restored Union [*Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (in Hersteld Verband)*], were an outcome of Welsh revivalism. Buchman's networking and influence in the Netherlands (from 1923 onwards) fuelled Evangelical tendencies (68-71). Aalders points out the positive reaction from within the Restored Union Churches to the Oxford Group Movement which can be seen in the first published article

regarding this movement by Rev. G.W. van Deth in 1933 (71). Van Deth described a house meeting that consisted of Bible readings and group discussions, confession of sins, and the sharing of personal religious experiences. Although Aalders mentions that Van Deth had some reservations about the group's 'economic, social and political naivety' he fully recognised the Oxford Group Movement as a movement of the Holy Spirit and as a sign of revival (72).

This optimism about the Oxford Group Movement and its influence on the Restored Union Churches, however, does not take away from the fact that it also met with criticism. Yet this criticism did not lead to a full scale rejection of the Oxford Group Movement until the moment it changed its name to 'Moral Re-Armament' and began moving in a different, broadly focused, even political direction. There was then more emphasis on 'revolution' than on 'revival', and Moral Re-Armament moved away from 'local variations' while discontinuing their house meetings (81, cf. 84). Aalders submits that the tendencies within the Oxford Group Movement that incorporated too much American optimism, along with too little connection with the Biblical witness, ultimately led to its failure to truly impact the Dutch churches (85).

In another vein, in chapter seven, Bernhard Reitsma focuses on a particular recent trend in Evangelicalism in Europe, Africa and Asia which is popularly known as the 'health and wealth' gospel. Reitsma notes that Evangelicals 'are less sympathetic to health and prosperity theology', adding that 'key-figures have denounced it as unbiblical' (164). A bit ironically, Reitsma contends that these health and wealth teachings seem recently to have gained ground among ordinary Evangelical Christians in Europe. In view of this, he calls for 'a renewed Evangelical reflection' (165) in order to address the primary claims of this trend vis-à-vis the present day suffering of Christians. He contends that this reflection must take place in view of eschatological redemption and future glory (164-181). In Romans 8:17, Paul relates present suffering to future glorification (167-171) indicative of the 'crossroads of the old age of Adam and the new age of Christ' (173). Suffering must not be reduced to persecution, because it includes the entire impact of the groaning of creation under the curse of death, while it goes through the birth pangs of the new life brought through Christ's redemptive work (175-178). He concludes that Evangelicals are not 'detached from a broken world' (179); hence they are not exempt from the impact of its suffering. Our current salvation, however, is a pointer to the fullness of redemption to come.

Reitsma clearly maintains the eschatological emphasis that is characteristic of Evangelicalism, as we have noted above, while at the same re-orienting the current Evangelical position clearly within the embodied concreteness of the world. His response represents a significant transition from the lure of the dualism of modernity[9] (whether in the secular or religious sphere) to an embodied faith in the context of creation – whether for good or ill at the present time.

2.3 Evangelical church practice

Stefan Paas discusses three ecclesiological shifts in a late-Modern, post-Christian society in the Netherlands in chapter five. His considerations stem from both his academic research and his personal experience working with a church plant in Amsterdam called Via Nova which ministers among 'young, secular, career focused people' (132). His observations include the shift from monopoly to marketing, from congregation to network, and from confessionalism to mission and values. Paas submits that these transitions must be seriously considered and applied for church planters in today's world. He strongly argues for the appropriation of a marketing metaphor for reaching young urban professionals in the multi-ethnic context of Amsterdam. He acknowledges that marketing and Church mission are not the same but argues that it is nonetheless useful to consider marketing perspectives to reveal otherwise hidden dimensions of mission (136). For example, the importance of reaching a 'target group' may be related to the incarnation and the weakness of the cross may be related to the needs of the weak among us (138).

Paas describes how from the time of the Reformation to the Reveil movement of the nineteenth century, missionary movements in the Netherlands have worked in a context of support 'from the ruling powers' (140) in a nominal Christian context. In the current culture, this connection has been lost. Consequently, he argues that the free church, while having less structure and less formal denominational ties (140, 142), maintains a commitment to 'peace, dialogue and reconciliation' (146) that will help pave the way forward.

Paas is to be commended for his astute insights into Dutch religious culture and his suggestions for reaching post-Christian people in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, we would express two concerns with his marketing metaphor. Firstly, in general, we are wondering if the marketing paradigm itself reverts to a modernist mentality that allows modern culture to set the terms for communication. Paas wisely submits that we must indeed be attentive and aware of our culture. This can be applauded as long as modern culture does not have the final say on our church practices or alienates us from the history and tradition of the church where the Holy Spirit has been working through the ages. Secondly, Paas suggests that the marketing metaphor of reaching a target group is akin to Jesus' incarnation: he came as a Jewish man in a Jewish context. The particularity of Jesus' incarnation is certainly significant. But Jesus was notably counter-cultural in his entire approach to reaching people in his day. He did not attempt to 'fit in' with the existing culture but showed a radical hospitality that was completely foreign to the political and religious mindset. Creativity and innovation were not his objectives (cf. 138) but rather radical love and compassion apart from the religious or cultural expectations.

René Erwich (chapter six) discusses the significant influence of Pete Ward's book *Liquid Church*[10] through the lens of the practical theology of Richard R. Osmer (148). Erwich summarises Ward's notion of 'liquid church' (in contrast to 'solid church' with traditional leanings) as 'a flow of religious communication through smaller and larger networks' (151, 153). Like Paas, Erwich suggests that 'liquid discourse believers' (especially noticed among Baptists in the Netherlands) are those who have taken on a consumerist mentality, looking for 'meaning and spirituality' without membership or commitment to a formal church structure. He points out that the newer forms of 'liquid' church are challenging more traditionally minded Baptist churches to 'reconsider their ecclesiology' (155).

After providing some brief examples of 'liquid church' in the Dutch context, Erwich submits that Evangelicalism in general 'lacks a well grounded ecclesiology' (156). In fact, the formation of the Evangelical movement itself stems from a confessional, experiential and anti-institutional sentiment with regard to the church (156). At this juncture it would have been helpful for Erwich to provide some nuances to Evangelicalism in general and those Evangelical churches (for which he provided examples) that have intentionally incorporated forms of 'liquid church'. Would Erwich suggest that Evangelicals in general are more or less 'liquid' as opposed to 'solid'? If so, how do Dutch Reformed churches identifying themselves as 'Evangelical' fit into his analysis? On this particular question, Erwich seems unclear. Nevertheless, he wisely points out that a deeper dialogue is needed on how churches perceive themselves on this 'continuum between "solid" and "liquid"' (159). He challenges us to be open to learn from Emerging Church expressions as we strengthen our understanding of both culture and church practice through 'long term empirical research' and 'study groups' (159-160). To do this effectively, he counsels churches to move away from being 'solo-players' (162), to build networks for dialogue and cooperation, and also to bring together church practitioners and theologians.

2.4 Arminian and Wesleyan theological engagements

The transition towards more theological dialogue is also reflected in the 'updating' of Reformed theology regarding the subject of free will. Rather than simply pitting Arminian and Reformed theology against each other, or simply lumping Arminian and Wesleyan theology together, connections are revealed that were overlooked or ignored in the past. Issues such as open theism, freedom and necessity, and the Wesleyan quadrilateral in dialogue with contemporary systematic theology and hermeneutics, are explored in the last three chapters of the book.

In chapter eight, Cornelis van der Kooi examines open theism and its relevance with regard to an 'Evangelical-Reformed theology' (182). He perceives the late Canadian theologian Clark Pinnock to be a prime example in this regard – not because Pinnock was necessarily saying anything new but because he pushed us to think carefully about classical theism in view of an Evangelical theology of Scripture (182-184).

Van der Kooi argues that in addition to moving towards a broader understanding of Evangelicalism, Evangelicals are transitioning from debates about the Bible towards a greater emphasis on community. Pinnock's work, he notes, points towards this communitarian emphasis of viewing doctrine embedded within the community (185-186). Open theism emphasizes the relationality of God rather than his absolute independence from

the world. The decisions that humans make are real decisions within time; they are not simply the result of some unilateral decree of a timeless God (189). God is love, and in his love he allows us to make decisions. However, Van der Kooi presents five dilemmas we face when confronted with open theism. We will not mention all of these dilemmas here but we will highlight some concerns that, in our view, are most pertinent for this discussion.

With open theism (i.e. Pinnock's 'creative love theism') God's convincing yet gracious offer of salvation will not supersede our human freedom; we have a choice, and that choice is not determined by God (193). But Van der Kooi deftly asks this key question: 'Should we allow ourselves to be forced into the dilemma that open theism offers, i.e. the choice between determinism and freedom?' (190). He astutely suggests that contemporary theology has perhaps unwittingly incorporated a view of equality that stems more from our social-historical-religious context than it does from the Bible. For example, the importance of the equality of people before God is evident in the American Declaration of Independence and also strongly manifested in Europe in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With Barth, this is spelled out as the 'yes' of God to all human beings. This perspective is also evident, Van der Kooi argues, in Pinnock's creative love theism (192). So the question is: Has our overarching view of fairness obscured our view of God's work in salvation?

Van der Kooi submits that open theism has disregarded the omniscience of God (194), where 'openness has become a gap' and 'God is powerless if a person refuses to allow God to take control' (194). Open theists may regard this judgment as a bit hasty, as it is not that open theists deny God's omniscience, but they rather re-frame the nature of omniscience by virtue of that which they submit constitutes 'knowledge'. Knowledge is that which is known or has been known based on the present or past state of affairs. In other words, for open theists, the word 'knowledge' does not refer to future states of affairs.[11] In this sense, they are able to maintain belief in God's omniscience, while still denying that all future events are 'foreknown'.

Nonetheless, Van der Kooi's analysis stimulates us to think through how our context influences our views of omniscience, foreknowledge and human freedom. He effectively challenges us to return to the narrative of Scripture to see again how God has interacted with and revealed himself to his people. Rather than simply positioning our freedom within our own choices, he asks us to 'place it in the depth of God's own being', as witnesses of God's *oikonomia* – his work through creation and his people throughout history through the Holy Spirit (201).

In another attempt to build a bridge to strengthen Reformed-Evangelical theology, Antonie Vos provides a bold declaration toward the theological reconciliation of Wesleyanism and classical Reformed theology, both of which strongly influence (and have strongly influenced) Evangelicalism. We must not confuse Arminianism and Wesleyanism, Vos argues, because Arminius argued for a 'neutral divine will' where God's will is bracketed in order to allow humankind to make a decision (209, 217, 219). In fact, the 'classic Reformed tradition before 1800 is neither necessitarian nor deterministic' (219). For Wesley, however, the will is always important for God and humans; it is not simply bracketed by God for humans to make a choice (209). But for Wesley, this will 'presupposes freedom or liberty' rather than denying it (211). Regardless of whether one ultimately agrees with Vos's conclusions, his scholarship is incisive, challenging us to reconsider our often-presumed polarities in the so-called Reformed-Wesleyan divide.

In the final chapter, Arie Zwiep also borrows insights from Wesleyanism, specifically from the Wesleyan quadrilateral. He interacts with contemporary hermeneutics in Evangelicalism, using Gadamer as his primary interlocutor, as a guide and corrective to prevent a misappropriation of Wesley (223, 236-237). Zwiep insightfully points out that the notion of a quadrilateral in theology does not find its origins in Wesley, even though the idea is obviously present in his theology. Zwiep notes that an analogy to the quadrilateral may be the medieval fourfold sense of Scripture. Although the fourfold sense of Scripture does not use the same 'motif', Zwiep submits, the use of multiple perspectives in the interpretation of Scripture is still remarkably similar (228-229).

Zwiep comments on each of the four elements of the quadrilateral. The primacy of Scripture must not be equated with Scripture as the exclusive authority. *Sola Scriptura* was always understood by the Reformers in the context of the community of faith. Tradition then is the voice of that community in contrast to the radical subjectivism that is often characteristic of modernity. The acceptance of tradition is not a blind appropriation but a continual call to dialogue in the context of the broader

community of faith (230, 234-237). The pillar of reason is not abandoned – although it is certainly placed under dispute in the postmodern critique – but it must be used with care (237). Zwiep points out that Wesley expressed a confidence in reason and method that Gadamer would question. Our faith simply cannot be equated with our understanding of the natural world. Additionally, experience is significant, but not merely experience as individualistic and subjective, but the experience of the community of faith through the ages (238-244).

All in all, Zwiep submits that the Wesleyan quadrilateral provides us with insights on how various Christian perspectives across contemporary and historical traditions may help us when doing hermeneutics and theology. These various sources for theological reflection not only provide enrichment to our understanding of faith, but reveal the inadequacies of harbouring one exclusive approach.

We heartily affirm Zwiep's recommendation of the Wesleyan quadrilateral to help us address changes in the theological hermeneutical landscape of today. However, we are wondering why he concludes his article suggesting his position 'presupposes firm belief in rationality and the rational character of reality, yet at the same time it requires us to recognise the boundaries of what reason can achieve'. With this statement, Zwiep appears to lose ground. How is a 'firm' belief in rationality different from simply suggesting that rationality has its place? Although Zwiep consistently argued for the limits of reason, his presupposition of the 'rational character of reality' seems at least partially contrary to his overriding emphasis. Reality is not rational in character, but multidimensional: it is experiential, affective, social and cognitive – all at the same time. We suspect Zwiep may in theory agree with this but we suggest it is nevertheless a critical distinction to emphasize if we are to move forward with Zwiep's overarching constructive proposal.

3. Christian Reformed Dogmatics

As mentioned in the introduction, the second major book we will consider is the contemporary systematic theology textbook by two well-known Dutch theology professors, Gijsbert van den Brink, and Cornelis van der Kooi: *Christelijke Dogmatiek*.

It is already clear that *Christelijke Dogmatiek* (hereafter *CD*) is having a large impact in the Low Countries. The market for academic theological books in Dutch is small but this book is already in its fourth printing. It is being introduced at several theological seminaries and universities as the new, updated textbook in Christian doctrine in the Dutch language.[12] Many see it as the successor of the one-volume dogmatic theology, *Christian Faith*, by Hendrikus Berkhof (1914-1995).[13] Like this textbook, it will soon have an English translation. *CD* certainly has an ecumenical spirit and an appreciation for evangelical traditions, but at the same time it is clearly a traditional Reformed book written by two theologians from the VU University of Amsterdam (formerly known in English as the Free University of Amsterdam). Cornelis van der Kooi is known for his research on the relation between Calvin and Barth[14] whereas Gijsbert van den Brink belongs to the Utrecht School that stresses classical academic theological reflection.[15] In the Dutch context, both authors are reluctant to call themselves 'evangelical' since they position themselves within the historic Reformed tradition[16] but from a global evangelical perspective they may safely be considered 'Reformed-evangelical'.

Evangelicalism as a separate movement is not often mentioned in *CD*, and when it is, it is referred to in the third person, especially when dealing with charismatic, Arminian or dispensational views – in short, those perspectives which are not considered Reformed. At the same time, there are limited references to evangelical theologians such as Stanley Grenz, Kevin Vanhoozer, Miroslav Volf, Alister McGrath and there is a frequent dialogue with the Dutch evangelical systematic theologian, Willem J. Ouweneel.[17] Most Reformed Dutch theological texts were more limited to their own traditions (Herman Bavinck, Hendrikus Berkhof, Gerrit C. Berkouwer, Abraham Kuyper, Oepke Noordmans, Abraham van de Beek and others), along with key figures in German theology (Karl Barth, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann, Eberhard Jüngel). In this regard, Van den Brink and Van der Kooi's wide engagement with different authors and traditions makes the book an interesting and refreshing read within the Reformed tradition.

The general methodological approach of *CD* is one of *fides quaerens intellectum*. Placing faith as a key player in theological reflection is in itself still a bold position on the European academic scene. Moreover, this jubilant tune of renewed faith comes from the same university where a generation ago the Reformed theologian Harry M. Kuitert (1924-) played his requiem over confessional theology. Kuitert's style of demolishing

classical theology and replacing it with the more scientific discipline of 'religious studies' unfortunately remains a sad reality in the Netherlands today.[18] In this context, a confessional dogmatic theology like *CD* is a beacon in the current storm of Enlightenment scientism.[19]

But starting from a position of faith certainly does not exclude careful thinking. Theology does not merely fall from heaven, but connects to our thinking, experience and our broad religious consciousness. In the prolegomena, the authors find room for modest apologetic reasoning in defence of theism (52-64). They see a theologian as a reader of a detective story who tries to see the coherence between God, humanity and world. Based on faith and an engagement with the sources, the theological reader is one who is constantly challenged to make sense of reality (27).

The authors take a broad approach to the subject of Christian revelation. God reveals himself in a diversity of forms such as cognitive propositions, verbal communications, personal presence, historical events, religious experiences, human conscience, theological traditions and faith praxis (164-173). Theology connects these different models of revelation and puts the Christ event at its centre, as its constitutive and normative principle. Indeed, *CD* adheres to the Reformed formal principle of *sola Scriptura*. Interestingly, however, the doctrine of Scripture is discussed *after* the doctrines of the Trinity, Christology, soteriology and pneumatology. For the authors, thinking about Scripture is in line with thinking about the work of the Holy Spirit since the Bible is a gift from the Holy Spirit, and Scripture is the means by which the Spirit connects us to the kerygma of salvation (498-499). This approach resembles Stanley J. Grenz's approach in his *Theology for the Community of God*.[20]

CD does not begin with a general teaching about the essence of God, but with the Trinity. The revelation of Christ is the central event from which theological reflection must begin. We cannot think about God independently from Christ as the climax of salvation history. The God of Scripture can only be understood from the perspective of the Trinity (83-87). The authors make clear that the doctrine of the Trinity is distinctively Christian, supported in Scripture in contradistinction with Islamic monotheism (107-109). In a European context with a large population of Islamic immigrants, this dialogue is essential. The central position in which they place the doctrine of the Trinity is a distinct, welcome difference from Berkhof's belittling of this doctrine. In this way, the authors are more in line with the overall reappreciation of the Trinity in mainstream evangelical theology today.

CD is a post-critical text, as it addresses the limitations of Enlightenment and the historical critical method. The authors point out that the results of the historical critical method have been diverse and conflicting (488-493). The Bible was reduced to a human religious artefact, rather than seen as a life-giving message about God and our relationship with him. In their day, scholars such as Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield developed the theological concept of organic inspiration. *CD* develops a theological bibliology that is more based on the work of the Spirit in the Church, but it is critical about any approach resulting in individualistic relativism.[21] We are indeed situated within a history, culture, language and tradition from which our interpretations rise and fall (495). Although we cannot escape from our own subjectivity, this realisation must not lead to the loss of the authoritative role of Scripture. The authors show appreciation for the contemporary, broadly evangelical trend towards theological interpretation of Scripture. As we study Scripture, we study it theologically. This means first of all that the reader asks the ultimate question: Who is God? We desire to hear 'the voice of God' in our Bible reading (502). Furthermore, the Bible is the book of the Church. We read the text within the community of faith, which is already a product of the word of God (*creatura verbi*). Hence, this ecclesial reading of Scripture must be done within the catholicity of the Church worldwide (501-507).

The chapter on creation as it relates to faith and science (chapter six) will stir great interest. *CD* takes a stand for the importance of creation while affirming that the scientific evidence of evolution is overwhelmingly clear. At the same time, the authors strongly denounce evolutionism as a philosophical ideology. In line with Benjamin Warfield, a clear distinction is made between a bold theological concept of creation (*ex nihilo*) and the secondary process of evolution that follows creation (211). The authors do stress, however, the importance of a historical fall. In this sense they are clearly more orthodox than Berkhof, for whom being human and being a sinner are one and the same thing, both aspects standing in a dialectical relationship. But the problem remains: How do

we incorporate the fall of humanity into the scientific evolutionary narrative? This is one of the most challenging questions for integrating evolutionary biology with biblical orthodoxy. In traditional terms, it is the question as to the original '*status integritatis*'. In an excursus, *CD* contests the traditional monogenism of humanity's common descent from one human couple, Adam and Eve. Instead, the authors submit that human origins included several thousand individuals (polygenism) who shared one common biotope and destiny. This small population rebelled from God, thus changing their destiny (277-278). This fall of humankind was later expressed in the biblical metaphors of Genesis 3.

Van der Kooi and Van den Brink follow the tradition of Berkhof and of recent Dutch theology in general by giving plenty of attention to the role of Israel. In the light of recent history, the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, fresh theological reflection is required. For the authors, reflecting on Israel and the Old Testament creates a structural duality in Christian theology (323). The church does not replace Israel, but is rather a new community that can share in the expectations of Israel (313). As we approach the biblical story from a Christological perspective, we must be fully aware that Jesus was a Jew who obeyed the Old Testament to the fullest degree on one hand, and on the other, was rejected by the people of God. Jesus experienced both deep identification with and estrangement from his people.

Generally, *CD* addresses new developments in theology in a balanced manner. A good example is how it interacts with the New Perspective on Paul (E.P. Sanders, N.T. Wright, J.D.G. Dunn) as it relates to the traditional themes of justice and justification by faith. The authors appreciate the corrective to an individualistically focused theory of justification. There is a social and ecclesial dimension of salvation that was greatly neglected in traditional Reformation theology. Our understanding of early Judaism has been too limited and even biased by the Reformation debate. In the end, the New Perspective on Paul is not considered to be a refutation of the traditional Reformed soteriology but rather an important complementary enrichment to it (606-609).

Perhaps one of the weaker portions of *CD* for engagement with evangelical theology is the chapter on ecclesiology (chapter 14).[22] This becomes especially clear in comparison with the ecclesiology of its predecessor, Berkhof's *Christian Faith*. *CD* engages the Catholic doctrine of the church (for instance *Lumen Gentium*) but it misses the opportunity to provide more interaction with evangelical/charismatic views on the church. *CD* takes a stand for the traditional Presbyterian model as a *via media* and depicts Episcopalism and Congregationalism as opposite ends of an extreme (527). According to the authors, the free church emphasis on individual choice and the demand for baptism following personal confession makes the church a phenomenon of history rather than an institution which finds its origin in Gods initiative (527). Unfortunately the free church model is too briefly addressed by and rejected by the authors, especially considering the success of free church ecclesiology among European evangelicals and in the majority world. This is especially the case for emerging free churches with strong missionary initiatives in a postmodern/ post-Christian context. Respect for differences in practice and organisational structures is extremely important for the ongoing process of building unity among diverse Christian expressions and denominations. A deeper engagement with Miroslav Volf's *After Our Likeness* (which is cited), for example, would have been an improvement in this regard.[23]

Overall, we see an interesting and encouraging transition in the Low Countries. Classical theological reflection is still very much alive and appreciated by a wider Christian public. At the same time, classical theology in the universities is often replaced by the more descriptive label (with a presupposed neutrality?) 'religious studies', as has been customarily done in major universities in the United States. It is encouraging to see that secularisation has not yet extinguished the flames of academic reflection on Christian doctrine. The positive effect of European post-Christian culture is that theologians from different denominations are becoming more aware of their interdependence and common call. Indeed, healthy, rich reflection on and application of Christian doctrine must be done in view of the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church. This new type of Evangelical and Reformed orthodoxy is more loyal to the richness of varying Christian traditions and seeks engagement in open dialogue. The catholicity of the Church and the role of tradition have become increasingly important. Many challenges remain as the church continues to engage with scientism, the New Atheism, post-Christian moral relativism and Islam, along with the cultural and intellectual

superficiality that mark many churches. These two significant books demonstrate that theological schools and scholars must unify their resources to respond to these challenges – whether in Europe or elsewhere. All in all, the multi-linguistic setting and the classical training typical of the Low Countries provide an interesting and ongoing inspiring source for theological reflection today.

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Endnotes

1 This is noticed in recent literature including Michael S. Horton, *For Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Roger E. Olson, *Against Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, *Why I Am Not an Arminian* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), and Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I am not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004).

2 We are of course referring to both the Netherlands and Dutch-speaking (Flemish) Belgium. A couple of examples at the popular level include the influence of the Alpha course, Willow Creek's Leadership Network and Emerging Church communities. See C. van der Kooi, E. van Staalduine-Sulman and A.W. Zwiep, 'Introduction', in the same, *Evangelical Theology in Transition* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2012) 2, 5, 9.

3 We will capitalise 'Evangelical' and 'Evangelicalism' when specifically referring to the work of the authors in this book since they capitalise these terms. In most cases in English the terms would remain uncapitalised since 'Evangelicalism' is not a distinct movement or denomination, as for example, would be the case with the designation 'Reformed'.

4 The editors correctly credit this label to Rev Arie van der Veer, a well-known Dutch broadcaster; see Van der Kooi, Van Staalduine-Sulman and Zwiep, 'Introduction', 3.

5 We would argue, however, that this betrays a latent modernism rather than postmodernism. Ultimately, even if an over-arching structure of ecclesiology is challenged, the voices that challenge that structure are already embedded within another community.

6 There is undoubtedly a biblicist hermeneutical strain in fundamentalist oriented Evangelicals in the United States, but this would also be characteristic of fundamentalist Evangelicals in the Netherlands.

7 Ad de Bruijne draws upon the research in a collection of essays in J.J. Frinsel sr. *et al.* (eds), *Vreemdelingschap en politieke verantwoordelijkheid* (Nunspeet: Marnix van St. Aldegondestichting, 1994). See A.Th. de Bruijne, '"A banner that flies across this land": An interpretation and evaluation of Dutch Evangelical political awareness since the end of the twentieth century' in Van der Kooi, Van Staalduine-Sulman and Zwiep, *Evangelical Theology*, 88-89.

8 De Bruijne links this to the Evangelical participation in the political party *Reformatorische Politieke Federatie* in the 1980s and 90s, a forerunner of the present-day *Christen Unie*; see De Bruijne, 'Banner', 88.

9 Modernist appropriations of Cartesian rationalism tend to separate head from heart, and mind from body. The mind or (applied religiously) the 'spirit' is often seen as where true godliness lays, not the body. If your heart and mind is set on Christ, then it may be assumed that blessings will ensue for the body. Granted, this is a distortion and misapplication of an evangelical tendency, but one that has certainly been manifested in recent years, as Reitsma points out.

10 Pete Ward, *Liquid Church: A Bold Vision of How to Be God's People in Worship and Mission* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002).

11 See Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker and David Basinger, 'Systematic Theology' in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994) 121-125.

12 For instance, *CD* is now used at the Theologische Universiteit, Apeldoorn, the Theologische Universiteit Kampen, the Protestantse Theologische Universiteit in Amsterdam and Groningen, and at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven.

13 *Christelijk geloof* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1973) had its latest reprint in 2003. English version Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An introduction to the study of the faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999). Interestingly, *CD* follows a similar format by using a small font for more profound excurses and references to literature.

14 Cornelis (Kees) van der Kooi is professor of Christian Dogmatics at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU Amsterdam) and director of its Centre of Evangelical and Reformation Theology. See e.g. C. van der Kooi, *As in a Mirror: John Calvin and Karl Barth on Knowing God* (Studies in the History of Reformed thought; Leiden: Brill, 2005). Gijsbert van den Brink taught at the University of Leiden (2001-2007) and is currently also a professor at the Free University.

15 Van den Brink belongs to the Gereformeerde Bond (established 1909), a conservative movement within the larger Dutch Reformed Church.

The Utrecht school stresses the importance of logical and coherent reasoning in theology. It could be typified as Reformed scholasticism, but this is a reduction. There is also a deep appreciation for medieval theologians such as John Duns Scotus. Notable figures of this school in the Low Countries would include its 'founder' Vincent Brümmer, and then Antonie Vos, Marcel Sarot (Roman Catholic) and Andreas Beck. See for instance Gijsbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot (eds), *Understanding the Attributes of God* (Contributions to Philosophical Theology Vol.1; Frankfurt: Lang, 1999) [Original Dutch 1995]; and Gijsbert van den Brink (ed.), *Philosophy of Science for Theologians: An Introduction* (Contributions to Philosophical Theology, vol.12; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009).

16 We already noted that Van der Kooi is one of the editors and contributors of the first book considered, *Evangelical Theology in Transition*. He notes: 'The English term "evangelical"... has a wider scope than the term *evangelicaal* in the Netherlands.' (Van der Kooi, Van Staalduine-Sulman and Zwiep, *Evangelical Theology in Transition*, 185).

17 Willem J. Ouweneel is a scientist, philosopher and theologian. He is a prolific writer with more than 120 books. Belonging to the Open Brethren, he is charismatic in his theology. He has written a series on Christian doctrine in Dutch, *Evangelisch-dogmatische Reeks*.

18 For instance, after the closure of the department of theology at the University of Leiden, the department of theology at the University of Utrecht (where Gisbertus Voetius held a post) has also been closed. Some traditional theologians such as Antonie Vos are now at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit in Leuven/Louvain (Belgium).

19 *CD* is also highly appreciated for its 'loyal orthodoxy' by the American Catholic theologian, Eduardo Echeverria, see *Calvin Theological Journal* 48 (2013) 143-149.

20 Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994).

21 *CD* positions itself between theology as an apologetic discipline (Pannenberg) and as a form of Christian self-description (Barth and Hans Frei); see *CD*, 43, 44.

22 The brevity of the treatment of the ecclesiology in this volume is compensated by a recent publication by another VU Amsterdam (emeritus) professor of Systematic Theology, Abraham (Bram) van de Beek: *Lichaam en Geest van Christus, De theologie van de kerk en de Heilige Geest* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2012; 556 pages).

23 Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness. The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

Book Reviews – Recensions – Buchbesprechungen

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James Through the Centuries

Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries

David B. Gowler

Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014; xx + 340 pp, hb £65.00 / €75,49; e-book £52.99 / €60.99, ISBN 978-1-4051-5114-6

SUMMARY

Written from the point of view of reception history, David Gowler's commentary collects many examples of interpretations of the Epistle of James from the early periods of church history to the present day. This commentary fulfils the aim of the whole series well: to present various interpretations of the Bible as well as the influence of the Bible on literature, art, music, and – on occasion – even on film, and thus to invite present day readers to see themselves in the line of a long history of 'responses' to this biblical book.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce commentaire, David Gowler s'intéresse à l'histoire de la réception de l'épître de Jacques et recueille de nombreux exemples d'interprétation de cette lettre, depuis la période de l'Église ancienne jusqu'à nos jours. Il atteint bien l'objectif fixé pour cette série : présenter diverses interprétations de la Bible et considérer son influence sur la littérature, la peinture, la musique et, occasionnellement, le cinéma. C'est une façon d'inviter les lecteurs d'aujourd'hui à se considérer comme appartenant à une longue histoire des réponses à cet écrit biblique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

David Gowlers Kommentar, der von der Perspektive der Rezeptionsgeschichte aus geschrieben wurde, trägt viele Beispiele für die Auslegung des Jakobusbriefes von der frühen Phase der Kirchengeschichte bis heute zusammen. Dieser Kommentar erfüllt auf lohnende Weise die Zielsetzung der gesamten Reihe, nämlich verschiedene Bibelauslegungen zu präsentieren sowie den Einfluss der Bibel auf Literatur, Kunst, Musik und – gelegentlich – sogar auf die Filmwelt nachzuweisen. So werden die Leser von heute dazu aufgefordert, sich selbst in die lange Geschichte von ‚Antworten' auf dieses biblische Buch einzureihen.

* * * *

The series of Wiley Blackwell Commentaries intends to cover both Testaments from the point of view of reception history. About 13 volumes are already in print, which discuss each pericope of the biblical books in the order of the book although the comments do not cover each sentence in the text. David Gowler, who holds the Chair of Religion at Oxford College, Emory University, USA, provides an impressive summary of the history of reception of the Epistle of James, gathering a wide range of interpretations of this epistle 'through the centuries', from ancient times to our own days.

The present volume fulfils the aim of the series: to present the influence of the Bible on literature, art, music and – on occasion – even on film, while also presenting patristic, rabbinic, medieval and modern interpretations. It includes forty-four black and white plates, mainly on how James is portrayed on frescos, icons and paintings.

In a detailed Introduction the aims of the commentary are set out and the key interpreters, whose ideas are frequently reported, are introduced in historical order. These include from earlier times: John Chrysostom, Augustine, Bede the Venerable, Luther and Calvin, and from the more recent centuries: Kierkegaard, Frederick Douglass, Charles F. Deems, Joseph B. Mayor and Elsa Tamez. In the course of commenting on the individual pericopes, many more authors are referred to. In the introduction, Gowler argues (following the views of Mikhail Bakhtin) that 'our own interpretations are incomplete without a dialogic response to the responses of those interpreters who have preceded us' (4-5). The interpretations of the past are like 'polyphony' in music, and polyphony 'can be seen as any environment devoted to the idea that all voices – often contesting voices representing a variety of ideological positions – receive a fair and equal hearing' (4). Gowler also discusses the main views on the identity of James, the author of the epistle, briefly presenting the sources about him in the New Testament, Josephus, Eusebius, the Nag Hammadi writings and the New Testament Apocrypha.

The 'Biographies' section at the end of the book lists 93 authors whose ideas are referred to or quoted in the commentary. These short biographical notes include scholars, preachers and artists from different centuries in alphabetical order, e.g. Thomas Aquinas, Ferdinand Christian Baur, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Bunyan, Geoffrey Chaucer, Meister Eckhart, Jerome, C. S. Lewis, Origen and Charles Spurgeon.

The commentary has a very clear structure. It quotes and discusses its sources under the same headings in each pericope: 'Ancient literary context' and 'The interpretations'. The latter is subdivided in two sections: 'Ancient and medieval' and 'Early modern and modern'. The ancient literary context includes the structure of the pericope, its main themes, its key Greek words (in transliteration) and its relation to the neighbouring pericopes and to the whole of the epistle. In this section, some modern commentators are referred to, although in the whole of the commentary modern commentators do not play a major role.

In discussing the interpretations, Gowler often presents the sources in detail in order to enable readers to make up their own minds; he does not attempt to

favour a particular author. The views collected from the long reception history are not evaluated, only presented in a fair, descriptive way. Gowler often summarises the sources, with short quotations within his own sentences, but he also often quotes the sources at length. He aims to show how the various authors understood the text of James or how they used sentences from the epistle as arguments to support a view they were promoting, or even as arguments in their disputes with others.

The commentary has nine sections with titles, and in each section Gowler discusses several pericopes (without further titles). Thus the first major section of the epistles is 1:1-11, entitled 'Trials, Endurance, Wisdom, and the Exalted Poor' and the pericopes in this section are 1:1-4; 1:5-8; 1:9-11. In the first pericope (1:1-4) he points to the fact that the letter's opening words indirectly assume authority (63). The author of the letter does not feel a need to clarify which 'James' he is (64). In this section Gowler emphasises a thesis which is demonstrated throughout the commentary, namely, that although Jesus' name is only mentioned in James 1:1 and 2:1, 'echoes of Jesus' words and teachings permeate the letter' (64). Gowler also points to the presence of the idea of 'joy' in a verb form and a noun form – 'one of many such word-linkages in James' (64).

Gowler mentions many views about the person of James from the 'ancient and medieval' interpreters, as well as the way the book became part of the canon in different regions; he refers, e.g., to Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome. He also gives examples – by means of long quotations and their discussion – of how the Venerable Bede and later Jan Hus applied the first verses of James to trials and persecutions of Christians in their own days.

Gowler presents the views of Luther with the help of extensive quotations, showing how Luther did not regard it 'as the writing of an apostle' (69). He then quotes Calvin's different opinion: 'I am fully content to accept this epistle, when I find it contains nothing unworthy of an apostle of Christ' (72). According to Calvin, the author of the epistle was either James, the brother of Christ (the majority view in ancient times), or James the son of Alphaeus (72). Gowler also shows how in the works of Elsa Tamez – a proponent of Latin American liberation theology, born in 1950 – 'patience' in James is not used 'in a passive or submissive way' (78). Tamez uses the term 'militant patience' to show that in James patience 'arises from the roots of oppression; it is an active, working patience' (79).

The commentary concludes with bibliographical data and indexes of names and subjects. This is a valuable collection of sources to show how the Epistle of James was understood and used in various times and situations. Its many quotations may be used, for example, in Bible study groups and as illustrations in sermons. This commentary complements the 'usual' verse-by-verse commentaries, which evaluate views in the light of the author's own exegesis. The present book helps readers to see themselves in the line of tradition, yet they have to decide for themselves what the epistle means to them and what way of life is called for by James.

Peter Balla, Budapest

Bewährung in Anfechtung: Der Jakobusbrief und der Erste Petrusbrief als christliche Diaspora-Briefe

Thorsten Klein

Tübingen, Basel: A. Francke, 2011; x + 496 pp, pb, € 78, ISBN 978-3-7720-8405-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Doktorarbeit von Thorsten Klein untersucht den Jakobusbrief und 1. Petrusbrief als Briefe, die an die Leser in der Diaspora geschrieben wurden. Klein führt das Konzept der Diaspora ein und stellt dann auch einige der jüdischen Briefe an eine Leserschaft in der Diaspora vor. Er ist der Meinung, dass der Jakobus- und Petrusbrief diesen Briefen in vielerlei Hinsicht ähneln. Die Studie richtet das Augenmerk auf die Versuchungen, welchen die Leser ausgesetzt sind, und konzentriert sich darauf, wie die Autoren den Lesern helfen, mit ihren schwierigen Situationen zurechtzukommen. Klein zeigt dabei auf, wie diese Strategien auch heute noch relevant sind.

SUMMARY

Thorsten Klein's doctoral dissertation investigates the epistles of James and 1 Peter as letters written to readers in the Diaspora. Klein introduces the concept of Diaspora and then some of the Jewish letters to readers in the Diaspora. He finds that James and Peter resemble these letters in many respects. The study pays attention to the temptation faced by the readers and focuses on how the authors help them to cope with their difficult situations; Klein also shows how these strategies are still relevant today.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette thèse de doctorat, Thorsten Klein étudie l'épître de Jacques et la première de Pierre en tant que lettres adressées à des lecteurs dans la diaspora. Il définit la notion de diaspora et considère quelques lettres juives adressées à des lecteurs de la diaspora. Il trouve de nombreuses ressemblances entre celles-ci et les épîtres de Jacques et de Pierre. Il s'intéresse aux tentations rencontrées par les lecteurs et à la façon dont les auteurs les aident à vivre dans ces situations difficiles. Il montre aussi que ces stratégies sont encore pertinentes à l'époque actuelle.

* * * *

Die Adressierung der Empfänger als in der „Diaspora" in Jakobus 1:1 und 1 Petrus 1 eröffnet einen Komplex an Problemstellungen, denen sich die vorliegende Studie widmet. Sie geht zurück auf eine Doktoraldissertation von 2009 an der Universität Leipzig (Betreuung J. Herzer). Einführend bemerkt Klein:

> In der gegenwärtigen Diskussion wird das erste gattungskritische Textsignal der beiden Schreiben – das briefliche Präskript – wieder zunehmend ernst genommen und die beiden Schriften folglich im Rahmen der antiken Epistolographie betrachtet. Nicht zuletzt die Adressierung an Leser in der ‚Diaspora' führte in jüngerer Zeit verschiedentlich zu dem Versuch einer weiteren Spezifizierung: Aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit existieren zahlreiche jüdische Schreiben, die sich – teils fiktiv, teils real – vom judäischen Mutterland aus an die Volks- und Glaubensgenossen in der Ferne richten, um diese zu trösten oder zu ermahnen. Die Zerstreuung des Volkes Israel über die nahezu gesamte damals bekannte Welt zwang zu verstärkter Kommunikation, wollte man die Einheit bewahren. Das missionarisch erfolgreiche Christentum wurde durch seine rasche Ausbreitung vor ganz ähnliche Herausforderungen gestellt und so ist durchaus denkbar, dass sich die Verfasser des Jak und des 1Petr mit ihren Briefen an die bereits im Judentum geübte Praxis gemeindeleitender Schreiben an die Diaspora anlehnten. ... die vorliegende Studie , den Nachweis zu erbringen, dass die beiden ntl. Briefe die Form des „Diasporabriefs" wählen, weil sie angesichts der dem Diasporajudentum vergleichbaren Herausforderungen mit ähnlichen Mitteln ähnliche Ziele verfolgen.

Nach knappem Forschungsüberblick, Beschreibung des Problems und der Vorgehensweise („Erfassen der Funktionen und Intentionen angesichts der durch das Präskript naheliegenden Gattung ‚Diasporabrief', 14), skizziert Klein zunächst die Interpretationsvoraussetzung: den Begriff Diaspora in paganen, frühjüdischen, in nachneutestamentlicher Zeit und im NT selbst (Apg 8:1, 4; 11:19; Joh 7:35). Der Begriff geht maßgeblich auf die LXX zurück, die mit dem Neologismus die Existenz Israels in der Fremde theologisch interpretierte. Auf diese Gerichtsdimension des Begriffs wird unterschiedlich rekurriert oder der Begriff wird ganz vermieden. Die negative Konnotation fehlt bei den neutestamentlichen Vorkommen.

Dem folgt ein ausführlicher, hervorragender Überblick über Existenz und Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora (64-115; handelt es sich um ein Diasporajudentum oder genauer um Diasporajudentümer?, religiöses und kulturelles Selbstbewusstsein, die Bedeutung der Tora als normierende Grundlage). Unter der Frage „Heimat oder Fremde?" geht es um das Verhältnis zum jeweiligen paganen Umfeld im Spannungsfeld von Separation, Akkulturation und Assimilation (die gesellschaftliche Stellung der Diasporajuden, unter anderen die Synagoge als Primärgruppe und die Bindung an das „Heilige Land").

Dann bietet Klein Untersuchungen zu den bekannten jüdischen Diasporabriefen, nämlich der Brief Jeremias in Jer 29 (LXX 36); die *Epistula Jeremiae*, die Einleitungsbriefe zum 2. Makkabäerbuch (2 Makk 1:1–9; 1:10–2:18) der Brief Baruchs, die Briefe in den Paralipomena Jeremiae (der Brief Baruchs an Jeremia, 6:17–23, und der Brief Jeremias an Baruch, 7:23–29) und 4QApokryphon Jeremia. Sein Ziel ist es dabei, etwaige inhaltliche und intentionale Konstanten zu ermitteln. Dabei werden nur Briefe berücksichtigt, die sich mit der Disaporasituation der Adressaten auseinandersetzen. Die Zusammenfassung (164-174) vereint Kommunikationsstruktur und -situation, formale Aspekte, Themen und Motive der unterschiedlichen Schriften. Hier gibt es auch knappe Überlegungen zum Aposteldekret in Apg 15:23–29 (174–181), das durchweg stärkere Berücksichtigung verdient hätte.

Der dritte und größte Teil der Untersuchung gilt der „Diaspora" als Leitbegriff im Jakobusbrief und Ersten Petrusbrief (182-437). Ziel ist es zu eruieren, ob sich in diesen Briefen die jüdischen Vorstellungen bezüglich Selbstverständnis und Existenz in der Fremde feststellen lassen. Zuerst beschreibt Klein die Kommunikationsbedingungen beider Briefe (der Jak und 1Petr als Briefe, Autorfiktion und Lokalisierung, die Adressaten). Gerade beim 1. Petrusbrief wäre noch stärker zu berücksichtigen, dass er an mehrheitlich Heidenchristen gerichtet ist, die so in die Diasporaexistenz des Volkes Gottes mit hineingenommen werden und denen auch anderweitig im Brief die Ehrenbezeichnungen Israels zugesprochen werden. Nach Klein entsprechen beide Briefe den typischen Merkmalen von Diasporabriefen, der Jakobusbrief fügt sich deutlich besser in das Schema ein.

Kennzeichen der Diasporaexistenz ist „Anfechtung" (274-367): zum Jakobusbrief untersucht Klein Vorkommen und Bedeutung von πειράζω / πειρασμός, den Bezugsrahmen der Anfechtungen, sowie das Verhältnis von Gott, Welt und Teufel. Im 1. Petrusbrief geht es um die Anfechtungen in 1 Petr 1:6-7 und 4:12-13, um den Charakter der Leiden im Brief und um die Urheber der Anfechtungen. Beide Briefe greifen dabei auf eine frühjüdisch vorgeprägte, im Urchristentum offenbar geläufige Tradition zur positiven Bewältigung von Anfechtungen. Angesichts der beschriebenen Härten lag es nahe, die Existenz der Adressaten als „Diaspora" zu bezeichnen.

Abschließend zeigt Klein die in beiden Briefen dargebotenen Strategien zur Bewältigung der Anfechtungen auf. In beiden Briefen sind dies Heilsvergewisserung (Erwählung), eine entsprechende Ethik (die eschatologische Perspektive wird zum zentralen Beweggrund der ethischen Motivation) sowie eschatologische Ausblicke (vgl. P. A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective*, WUNT 244 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009]). Hierin liegen deutliche Parallelen zu den frühjüdischen Diasporabriefen.

Klein bietet eine überzeugende Studie zu Form und Inhalt der Briefe, die in Zukunft zu berücksichtigen ist. Die Arbeit erinnert daran, dass die in der Forschung zur neutestamentlichen Briefliteratur oft herangezogene hellenistisch-römische Epistolographie die (hellenistisch) jüdischen Briefe nicht verdrängen darf. Kleins Beobachtungen erinnern an die Ähnlichkeiten zwi-

schen frühjüdischem und urchristlichem Selbstverständnis und Existenzweise und – bei allen christologisch bedingten Unterschieden – an gemeinsame Grundlagen und Bewältigungsstrategien der ähnlich empfundenen eigenen Situation. Hierin liegt auch ein Potential für das jüdisch-christliche Gespräch. Die Überlegungen zur Eschatologie dieser Schreiben und ihrer ethischen Funktion sollten in der Diskussion neutestamentlicher Theologie Berücksichtigung finden. Ferner leistet Klein einen Beitrag zum Verständnis der frühjüdischen Diaspora. Auch bietet die Studie viele Hinweise, wie diese Briefe den in vielen Teilen der Erde bis heute bedrängten oder wieder bedrängten Christen helfen können, ihre angefochtene Existenz zu bewältigen.

Christoph Stenschke, Bergneustadt / Pretoria

Eschatologie – Eschatology: The Sixth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium: Eschatology in the Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Tübingen, September, 2009)

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 272

Hans-Joachim Eckstein, Christof Landmesser und Hermann Lichtenberger (Herausgeber)

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011; lx + 412 pp, € 129, hb, ISBN 978-3-16-150791-4

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Sammelband geht auf eine gemeinsame Tagung der Neutestamentler in Durham und Tübingen zurück und beleuchtet verschiedene Aspekte alttestamentlicher, frühjüdischer und neutestamentlicher Eschatologie, die dabei sehr breit gefasst wird. Neben Beobachtungen zu einzelnen biblischen Schriften und eschatologischen Themen kommen abschließend auch systematische und historische Themen in den Blick. Ein anregender Band zu einem wichtigen, aber vernachlässigten Thema biblischer Theologie und heutigen theologischen und praktischen Reflexion.

SUMMARY

This collection of papers is based on a joint conference of New Testament specialists from Durham and Tübingen and it highlights various aspects of Old Testament, early Jewish and New Testament eschatology in a broad sense. Beside observations concerning individual biblical passages and eschatological themes, towards the end systematic and historical themes are also taken into consideration. This is a stimulating volume which deals with an important but often neglected subject of biblical theology as well as contemporary theological and practical reflections.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage collectif est le fruit d'une conférence commune de spécialistes du Nouveau Testament de Durham et de Tübingue, consacrée à divers aspects de l'eschatologie de l'Ancien Testament, du judaïsme ancien et du Nouveau Testament. Les auteurs s'y penchent sur des textes bibliques particuliers, puis sur des thèmes eschatologiques de la Bible, pour ensuite aborder des thèmes systématiques et des questions historiques. Cet ouvrage est stimulant et aborde un sujet important, quoique souvent négligé, de la théologie biblique, de la théologie contemporaine et de la réflexion pratique.

* * * *

Der vorliegende Berichtsband gilt unterschiedlichen Aspekten biblischer und frühjüdischer Eschatologie. Im Vorwort der Herausgeber heißt es zu seiner thematisch weit gefassten Ausrichtung:

> In weiten Teilen des Neuen Testaments wird davon gehandelt, wie das Verhältnis des Menschen zu Gott und der Menschen untereinander in einem letzten Sinn zu bestimmen ist. Die urchristlichen Texte nehmen dabei Fragestellungen und Motive auf, die im apokalyptisch-frühjüdischen wie im hellenistischen Raum außerhalb des jüdisch-christlichen Traditionskreises ebenfalls intensiv erörtert werden. Darin zeigt sich, dass die Frage nach der Existenz des Menschen vor Gott in finaler Perspektive offensichtlich eine anthropologische Grundfrage darstellt. Die Untersuchungen dieses Bandes widmen sich der historischen, der exegetischen sowie der hermeneutischen Aufgabe, mit dem Metabegriff „Eschatologie" die neutestamentlichen Aussagen über das Endgültige gegenüber allem Vorläufigen aufzuzeigen und zu interpretieren. Eine Verhältnisbestimmung zur alttestamentlichen Eschatologie und zur frühjüdischen Apokalyptik ist dazu ebenso erforderlich wie der Aufweis von Aufnahmen und Abgrenzungen von philosophischen Vorstellungen jener Zeit (v).

Die unterschiedlichen eschatologischen Vorstellungen innerhalb des Neuen Testaments werden dabei als Ausdruck theologischer Grundentscheidungen der Autoren verstanden. Das Verhältnis eschatologischer Vorstellungen zum Christusgeschehen ist dabei entscheidend.

> Weitere damit verbundene Themen sind das Verständnis der Zeit und der Geschichte mit Blick auf ihr Ende, das Verhältnis von Urzeit und Endzeit, die Frage nach der Auferstehung und nach dem Gericht sowie der endgültigen Versöhnung. In all diesen und in anderen Hinsichten steht die christliche Existenz in einer Spannung, die von dem im Glauben zugänglichen Heil in Christus, der gegenwärtigen Vergänglichkeit und der Hoffnung auf die unverbrüchliche Gottesgemeinschaft bestimmt ist (v).

Die individuellen, die kollektiven bzw. universalen sowie die kosmischen Dimensionen der so verstandenen Eschatologie sollen vor ihrem traditions- und religionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund entfaltet werden. Die Herausgeber schließen:

> Die Frage nach der Eschatologie ist somit eine historische, aber auch eine explizit hermeneutische Aufgabe, die im Anschluss an die neutestamentlichen

Texte den dort beschriebenen Zusammenhang des innerzeitlichen Handelns Gottes und des Endes der Zeit verstehbar machen kann (vi).

Teil eins gilt der Eschatologie der alttestamentlich-frühjüdischen Schriften und beinhaltet: B. Janowski, „Der Wolf und das Lamm: Zum eschatologischen Tierfrieden in Jes 11,6–9" (Die Utopie hofft auf die endgültige Überwindung des Bösen. „Frieden realisiert sich hier nicht in der Tilgung des Widrigen, sondern in seiner Konversion zu Nicht-mehr-Widrigem. Schließlich bleibt der Wolf ein Wolf und wird nicht zu einem Lamm, aber sein Verhalten ändert sich, weil er seine natürliche Feindschaft überwindet. Dass diese Konversion die Form einer *aktiven Entfeindung* hat, bei der der Stärkere den ersten Schritt machen muss (V. 6a!) – das ist die gute Botschaft," 18); L. Doering, „*Urzeit–Endzeit* Correlation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pseudepigrapha" (Flut-Bilder in der eschatologischen Erwartung, Eden und der eschatologische Tempel, die Herrlichkeit Adams und „Eden" als Gemeinschaftserfahrung, urzeitliche Aspekte in der messianischen Herrschaft und Transformation der Menschheit und des Kosmos) und A. M. Schwemer, „Das Land Abrahams in der frühjüdischen eschatologischen Erwartung und die urchristliche Mission in Syrien" (Die Bedeutung der Abrahamsverheißung für die Vorstellung vom eschatologischen Umfang des Landes und für das Verhältnis zwischen Juden und den dort wohnenden Völkern, u.a. die Beobachtung, dass die urchristliche Mission rund zwanzig Jahre fast nur in diesem Gebiet gewirkt hat und dass dies durch Vorstellungen vom eschatologischen Umfang des Landes bedingt sein könnte).

Die Evangelien kommen im *zweiten Teil* in den Fokus: J. Adam, „‚Der Anfang vom Ende' oder ‚das Ende des Anfangs'? Perspektiven der markinischen Eschatologie anhand der Leidensankündigungen Jesu" (Adam schließt, dass „der in den Leidensankündigungen unübersehbar formulierte ‚Anfang vom Ende' des irdischen Jesus somit in spezifischer Art und Weise zugleich als ‚das Ende des Anfangs' zu begreifen ist: Die auf die Passion und Auferstehung vorausblickenden Leidensankündigungen stellen in ihrer Weise unüberbietbar klar, dass im Auftreten, im Wirken, in der Person Jesu Christi und im Glauben an seine Person und sein Wirken das Ende des präsentisch noch so leidvollen, weil von Gottesferne gezeichneten menschlichen Daseins seinen definitiven Anfang genommen hat, und sie verdeutlichen darüber hinaus, dass dieser Anfang an sein gottgewolltes: also heilvolles Ende gelangen wird", 122); M. Bauspiess, „Die Gegenwart des Heils und das Ende der Zeit: Überlegungen zur lukanischen Eschatologie im Anschluss an Lk 22,66–71 und Apg 7,54–60" und H.-J. Eckstein, „Die Gegenwart des Kommenden und die Zukunft des Gegenwärtigen: Zur Eschatologie im Johannesevangelium" (Eckstein geht der Frage nach, was in Joh 14:19 und 16:22 mit dem Wiederkommen Jesu und mit der kleinen Zeitspanne des Nichtsehens Jesu und dem darauf folgenden Wiederstehen gemeint ist; dabei hat sich die Verheißung des eschatologischen Wiedersehens mit ihrem Herrn für das JhEv bereits präsentisch erfüllt, 20:25).

Zu den paulinischen Schriften enthält der *dritte Teil* vier Beiträge: C. Landmesser, „Die Entwicklung der paulinischen Theologie und die Frage nach der Eschatologie" (Landmesser schließt: „Die eschatologischen Vorstellungen des Paulus lassen in ihrer anthropologisch oder existentiell relevanten Substanz eine hohe Stabilität erkennen. Als guter Theologe entwickelt dieser seine Überlegungen freilich weiter im Kontext der Situation, mit der er aktuell konfrontiert ist. Diese Ausdifferenzierung bedeutet aber keine wesentliche Veränderung der entscheidenden Inhalte der eschatologischen Aussagen des Paulus. Damit setzt Paulus Maßstäbe für eine theologische Theoriebildung überhaupt", 194; spannend wäre der Vergleich zwischen 1. und 2. Thess gewesen); J.M.G. Barclay, „Believers and the ‚Last Judgement' in Paul: Rethinking Grace and Recompense" (Barclay notiert: „Paul presumes that for those who have remained ‚in Christ' there will be some fit, as the Spirit will bear some fruit in such lives: no-one can be in Christ and not walk in the Spirit at all. Some such work will create some such fit to the gift, and thus the gift will [to varying degrees] accord with the believer's works; but it will do so as fitting gift, not on some principle of works, recompense or pay which is intrinsically opposed to gift", 208); F. Portenhauser, „Eschatologische Existenz: Zum Verständnis der Glaubenden in der paulinischen Theologie anhand von 2 Kor 5,17" (Die Neuschöpfungsaussage weist auf die Neuheit des Seins hin, auf Diskontinuität im Leben der Glaubenden, Kontinuität durch die Relationalität christlicher Existenz und christliche Existenz als paradoxe Identität) und C. Landmesser, „Eschatologie im Galaterbrief und im Römerbrief" (vor allem Überlegungen zur Bedeutung des Endgerichts in der paulinischen Theologie).

Teil vier bietet drei Beiträge zu anderen frühchristlichen Schriften: B.G. Wold, „Revelation 16 and the Eschatological Use of Exodus Plagues"; H. Lichtenberger, „‚Was in Kürze geschehen muss ... (Apk 1,1)': Überlegungen zur Eschatologie der Johannesoffenbarung" und S. Gathercole, „‚The Heavens and the Earth will be Rolled up': The Eschatology of the Gospel of Thomas".

Der abschließende Teil gilt historischen und systematischen Ansätzen in der Eschatologie: S.C. Barton, „The Resurrection and Practical Theology with Particular Reference to Death and Dying in Christ"; F. Watson, „Eschatology and the Twentieth Century: On the Reception of Schweitzer in English" und P. G. Ziegler, „Eschatological Dogmatics – To What End?". Dem folgen Autorenverzeichnis und verschiedene Register.

Der Sammelband bietet wichtige und weiterführende Beiträge zu einem zu unrecht vernachlässigten Thema neutestamentlicher und christlicher Theologie überhaupt. Zum Thema sehe auch Jan van der Watt (ed.), *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some*

Related Documents, WUNT II.315 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

Christoph Stenschke, Bergneustadt / Pretoria

Qui a décidé du canon du Nouveau Testament ?
Sylvain Romerowski

Charols: Excelsis / Nogent-sur-Marne: Institut Biblique, 2013; 158 pp, € 14,00, pb, ISBN 978-2-7550-0181-5

RÉSUMÉ

Voilà une défense bien argumentée du point de vue traditionnel sur l'origine du canon du Nouveau Testament. Sylvain Romerowski plaide que tous les livres du Nouveau Testament ont été rédigés par des apôtres ou produit et mis en circulation avec leur consentement. Les chrétiens des générations suivantes n'ont pas rassemblé des écrits qui convenaient à leur vision des choses mais ont simplement accepté ceux qui leur avaient été transmis depuis l'origine. Le livre est plus synthétique qu'innovant, mais il atteint néanmoins son but.

SUMMARY

This book is a well-argued apology for the traditional view of the origin of the New Testament canon. Romerowski argues that all books of the NT were written by apostles or produced and circulated with their consent. Christians of later generations did not collect writings that suited their views but simple accepted what had been handed down from the beginning. The book is more synthetic than innovative, but it still achieves its goal.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch ist eine wohl durchdachte Apologie zugunsten einer traditionellen Sicht der Ursprünge des Neuen Testamentes. Romerowski vertritt die Meinung, dass alle Bücher des Neuen Testamentes von Aposteln geschrieben bzw. mit ihrer Zustimmung abgefasst und in Umlauf gebracht wurden. Die Christen späterer Generationen haben nicht Schriften gesammelt, die ihren Ansichten entsprachen, sondern schlicht und einfach angenommen, was ihnen von Anfang an überliefert worden war. Das Buch stellt eher eine Zusammenfassung als eine Neuerung dar, doch seinen Zweck erfüllt es allemal.

* * * *

Sylvain Romerowski addresses a version of the problem of the chicken and the egg: the Church and the New Testament canon. The Church accepts the NT canon as its criterion for belief and behaviour, but if the canon is a product of the Church itself, she becomes her own norm. Romerowski's response is clear: Not the Church, but the apostles wrote the New Testament books. And when these books were collected to become the New Testament canon, the churches and church leaders who were involved in the process did nothing but obediently accept what was handed down to them. Aptly summarized, 'In the second century, it would have been equally incongruous to ask Christians how they chose the books of the New Testament as to ask an individual how he chose his grandparents!' (128)

The author shows how this concept of a canon that is backed up by the apostles was not created by second- or third-century Christian leaders, but already clearly expressed in the NT documents themselves, mainly in the Gospel and the first Epistle of John, the apostle who is said to have outlived the others. The other Gospels were written by an apostle (Matthew) or approved by one (Marc by Peter and Luke by Paul). Early Christian writers show that most of the other NT books were widely read and accepted because of their supposed apostolic origin. In fact apostolicity was the central criterion. Books in the margin of the canon, like the Shepherd of Hermas, were finally discarded because they had been written after the apostolic times. Others, like the Gospel of Thomas, were rejected because they were not orthodox, i.e. incompatible with apostolic doctrine.

Romerowski's self-confessed traditional position and argumentation do not make sense if several of these 'apostolic' books were in fact produced pseudonymously, that is, by others than the implied authors. That is why he includes an extensive discussion of authenticity and pseudonymity. One strong argument against the presence of pseudonymity in the NT is the rarity of pseudonymity of letters in antiquity. Openness for writings under another name is poorly attested, and not at all in early Christianity.

For his short historical overview of the reception of the NT writings (chapter 4) the author gives due credit to Metzger's *The Canon of the New Testament*. His overview of the early attestation of the NT books (Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp, Aristides, Barnabas, Basilides, 2 Clement , Irenaeus, Gnostic writings) is indeed heavily dependent on data collected by Metzger and others, with hardly any fresh analysis of the primary sources themselves. But the synthesis is well done and the argument is persuasive. At a very early stage, four gospels – and only these – were recognised and formed an established collection. The Pauline corpus was almost as generally recognised and the other books followed suit. The early witnesses of this process of recognition (Irenaeus, Serapion of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Canon Muratori) nowhere give the impression that they were actually collecting the canon; they just passed on what they had received from tradition. In the third century (Tertullian, Hyppolytus, Origen, Eusebius) the consensus tightened and by the end of the fourth century Christianity was all but unanimous as to the extent of NT Scripture.

On the whole this book offers an intelligent and credible apology for the traditional position on the origin of the canon, which is definitely worth the time and the money. It has just a few drawbacks. The book feels like a superficially updated version of a course (an excellent one, by the way) that was taught in the eight-

ies. For example, in his discussion on pseudepigraphy Romerowski fails to refer to some outstanding works that have argued along similar lines, like Armin Baum's *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum* (2001) and Terry Wilder's *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception* (2004). Some recent arguments from the opposite camp should also have been addressed. One looks in vain for the claim of Bart Ehrman c.s. that the fathers represent only one particular strand which pushed aside alternatives, and that their view was synthesized by influential church leaders in the fourth century (esp. Eusebius). It is a pity that over 70 percent of the literature in the bibliography is from the previous century.

Some readers (including myself) will have difficulties with the author's distinction between a canonical bloc on the one hand and an apocryphal bloc on the other. For Romerowski the 'apocrypha' include the Shepherd of Hermas as well as the Gospel of Truth and the Gospel of Judas! This is very different from the three categories of Athanasius and others: Canonical books, secondly other useful writings and lastly these dreadful apocrypha.

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Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur Band 1: A – Cl

Dan Diner (Herausgeber)

Stuttgart, Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2011; 517 pp, € 230, cloth, ISBN 978-3-476- 02501-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der vorliegende Band ist der erste einer auf sechs Bände (und Registerband) angelegten Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur in der Moderne (von der Aufklärung bis nach dem Holocaust). Ihre Stärke liegt in der hohen methodischen Reflexion und dem Bestreben, unter anderem durch größere Überblicksartikel, einzelne Informationen in einen Gesamtkontext zu stellen. Die Enzyklopädie erschließt in beeindruckender Weise die Binnenperspektive jüdischen Selbstverständnisses und bietet Christen präzise Informationen, um Judentum heute zu verstehen und den unabdingbaren Dialog informiert führen zu können.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici le premier volume, pour un projet qui en comporte six (suivis d'un index), d'une encyclopédie de l'histoire et de la culture juive à l'époque moderne (depuis le siècle des lumières jusqu'aux années postérieures à la shoah). Il brille par la grande qualité de sa réflexion méthodologique et sa démarche consistant à situer les informations particulières dans un contexte plus large à l'aide d'articles généraux plus complets. De façon remarquable, cette encyclopédie fait apparaître, de l'intérieur, comment les Juifs se comprennent eux-mêmes et fournit aux chrétiens des informations précises qui permettront à ceux-ci de mieux comprendre le judaïsme contemporain et d'entrer bien informés en un dialogue indispensable avec ses représentants.

SUMMARY

The present volume is the first of six planned volumes (plus index volume) of an encyclopaedia of Jewish history and culture in the modern era (from the Enlightenment until after the Holocaust). Its strength can be found in the high level of methodological reflection and the attempt to place particular information into a larger context through comprehensive survey articles. The encyclopaedia opens up in an impressive way the interior perspective of Jewish self-understanding and offers Christians precise information which will enable them to understand Judaism today and to enter well-informed into the indispensable dialogue.

* * * *

In der enorm komplex formulierten Einführung des vorliegenden ersten Bandes dieses neuen deutschsprachigen Lexikons zu neueren jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur wird die besondere Situation beschrieben, in der es entsteht:

> Die *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur* reflektiert eine Konstellation des Wissens an einem komplexen Übergang. Seit dem großen Einschnitt der gleichsam alle jüdischen Zeiten in ihren Orbit ziehenden Katastrophe des Holocaust ist mehr als ein Menschenalter vergangen. In Anerkennung der mit diesem Ereignis verbundenen Krise des historischen Verstehens wird in der *EJGK* dennoch versucht, eine der Wucht des Ereignisses angemessene historisierende Perspektive einzunehmen. Die jüdische Geschichte, genauer: die Geschichten und Kulturen der Juden finden sich angesichts einer einschneidenden Zerstörung und zugleich in Abstand zu ihr auf neuer Grundlage zusammen (vii).

Dabei sind die folgenden drei ineinander verschränkten Perspektiven leitend:

> ... der Innensicht der jüdischen Selbstverständigung; der Außensicht mittels wissenschaftlicher Disziplinen auf das jüdische Thema; und schließlich einer über Juden und Judentum im engeren Sinn hinausweisenden Perspektive einer universellen Bedeutung jüdischer Existenzerfahrung (vii).

Ferner beschreibt die Einführung die Periodisierung jüdischer Zeiten. Schwerpunkte des Lexikons sind die beiden Jahrhunderte zwischen 1750 und 1950; dabei handelt sich um „symbolische Eckdaten einer die jüdische Existenzerfahrung in der Neuzeit umschließenden Epoche zwischen der beginnenden Emanzipation und den Ausläufern der Katastrophe" (ix). Der geografische Rahmen geht von Europa über Amerika bis zum Vorderen Orient, Nordafrika und zu anderen außereuropäischen jüdischen Siedlungsräumen. Vom Beirat des Herausgebers und den Autoren her ist die Ausrichtung durchweg international: die Mehrzahl kommt aus Deutschland, Israel und den Vereinigten

Staaten. Der Band enthält viele Karten und Illustrationen. Es wird spannend zu sehen, ob und wie diese Enzyklopädie bei den „von außen an die Juden herangetragenen Projektionen vornehmlich antisemitisierenden bis weltanschaulich antisemitischen Charakters, mithin der Judenfeindschaft" auch auf Philosemitismus in unterschiedlichen Formen eingeht, den es auch in verschiedenen dezidiert christlichen Varianten gegeben hat und gab; vgl. J. Karp & A. Sutcliffe (eds.). *Philosemitism in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Um Umfang und Ausrichtung vorzustellen, werden sämtliche Lemmata zwischen *Aschkenas* und *Bildung* aufgeführt:

> Aschkenas (J. Heil, Heidelberg), Aschkenasim (M. Silber, Haifa), Assimilation (A. Morris-Reich, Haifa), Atempause (M. Consonni, Jerusalem), Aufbau (C. Otto, Leipzig, T. Szymanski, New York), Auferstehung (C. Floros, Hamburg), Aufklärung (H. Mitchell, Vancouver), Auschwitz (N. Benninga, Jerusalem), Auschwitz-Prozess (D. Knellessen, Berlin), Ausgleich (E. Somogyi, Budapest), Autoemancipation (S. Ury, Tel Aviv), Autonomie (I. Bartal, Jerusalem), Avodath Hakodesh (D.M. Schiller, Athens, USA), Babel-Bibel (Y. Shavit, Tel Aviv), Babi Jar (O. Terpitz, Leipzig), Badkhn (J.E. Rubin, Charlottesville), Bagdad (S. Manasseh, London), Bais Yaakov (A. Oleszak, London), Balegule (C. Aust, Jerusalem), Balfour-Deklaration (M. Kirchhoff, Leipzig), Bankiers (D.L. Augustine, New York), Bann (A. Gotzmann, Erfurt), Bar Kochba (D. Wildmann, London), Bar/Bat Mizwa (D. Marx, Jerusalem), Baseball (M. Zimmermann, N. Benninga, Jerusalem), Basel (P. Kury, Bern, E. Petry, Basel), Beerdigungsstreit (D. Krochmalnik), Berliner Antisemitismusstreit (M. Zimmermann, Jerusalem, N. Berg, Leipzig), Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (J.V. Schwarz, Berlin), Berliner Kongress (M. Kirchhoff, Leipzig), Bernheim-Petition (P. Graf, Leipzig), Beschneidung (C. E. Fonrobert, Palo Alto), Bet din (A. Gotzmann, Frankfurt), Beta Israel (J.A. Quirin, Nashville), Bezalel (O.Z. Soltes, Washington), Bibelkritik (C. Wiese, Frankfurt, mit den Unterabschnitten: Herausforderung der protestantischen Bibelkritik, Rezeption durch die Wissenschaft des Judentums, die „biblische Revolution" im europäischen Judentum, die Wellhausen-Schule in der jüdischen Kritik, Rezeption durch das Reformjudentum, jüdische Orthodoxie und Bibelkritik, Bibelkritik und Antisemitismus, Entwicklungen seit 1945; Bibel unter Tanach), Bibelübersetzung (L. Greenspoon, Omaha), Bibliographie (R. Heuberger, Frankfurt), Bibliotheca Bodleiana (R. Heuberger, Frankfurt), Bibliotheken (M. Kirchhoff, Leizpig), Biedermeier (O.Z. Soltes, Washington), Bikkure ha-Ittim (M. Pelli, Orlando), Bilderverbot (M. Brumlik, Frankfurt), Bildung (U. Jensen, Berlin).

Das Lexikon ist auf ca. 800 Artikel angelegt, die in sechs Bänden (und einem Registerband mit Personen, Orten, Sachen) erscheinen. Es entsteht im Auftrag der *Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Leipzig* und wird vom *Simon-Dubnow-Institut für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur an der Universität Leipzig* herausgegeben (www.dubnow.de). Inzwischen sind alle Bände erschienen zwischen Januar 2012 und Juli 2014.

Dies ist ein wichtiges Lexikon zum modernen Judentum auf dem Stand der internationalen Forschung und ein vielschichtiges Porträt jüdischer Lebenswelten. Zu Recht heißt es auf der Homepage des Verlags: „Die Enzyklopädie stellt Wissen in einen Gesamtkontext und bietet Wissenschaftlern und Interessierten neue Einblicke in die jüdische Geschichte und Kultur. Ein herausragender Beitrag zum Verständnis des Judentums und der Moderne." Die umfassende Ausrichtung des Lexikons bietet interessante Perspektiven für den jüdisch-christlichen Dialog. Es hilft dabei zu verstehen, aus welchem Kontext – mit welchen Erfahrungen und welchem Ballast – das Gespräch jüdischerseits gesucht und geführt wird. Es ist nützlich für christliche Gruppen, die aus unterschiedlichen Motiven, mit unterschiedlichen Argumenten und Vorgehensweisen und oft mit Händen zu greifender Ignoranz und Naivität die Nähe zum Judentum und Israel proklamieren, suchen und ihre Anliegen gelegentlich vehement vertreten.

Christoph Stenschke
Bergneustadt / Pretoria

Europe and the Gospel: Past Influences, Current Developments, Mission Challenges

Evert van de Poll

London: DeGruyter/Versita, 2013; 319 pp, Hardcover € 99,95, ISBN 978-83-7656-038-0
eBook (free PDF): http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/209760?rskey=v7o8Wl&onlyResultQuery=van%20de%20poll ?

SUMMARY

In *Europe and the Gospel* Evert van de Poll offers a complete overview of the origins and nature of Europe. He reflects on contemporary European developments, relating them to the formative influence of Christianity. In an accomplished way the author discusses historical, sociological, political, religious and cultural aspects of the European continent. This makes clear that whoever wishes to understand Europe needs to come to terms with the paradox that on the one hand this continent has been largely formed by Christianity, but on the other hand it has been affected by the abandonment of the Christian message and the rejection of Christian institutions. In spite of some critical issues the book recommends itself as an informative and accurate introduction into a large domain; subjects touched on include missiological and practical-theological implications

of immense importance with regard to a carefully contextualised Christian practice in contemporary Europe.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage intitulé « L'Europe et l'Évangile », Evert van de Poll livre un exposé complet sur l'origine de l'Europe et ce qu'elle est. Il s'intéresse aux évolutions actuelles en mettant en lumière l'influence que le christianisme a exercé en Europe. Il aborde de manière magistrale des aspects historiques, sociologiques, politiques, religieux et culturels divers. Il fait apparaître que, pour comprendre l'Europe, il est nécessaire de considérer le paradoxe suivant : d'une part, le christianisme a joué un rôle important dans la formation de l'Europe, mais de l'autre, elle s'est refaçonnée en abandonnant le message chrétien et en rejetant les institutions chrétiennes. En dépit de certains points contestables, ce livre se recommande comme une introduction apportant une information riche et exacte en parcourant un vaste champ thématique. Ses implications pour la missiologie et la théologie pratique sont d'une importance considérable pour contribuer à une pratique chrétienne bien contextualisée dans l'Europe contemporaine.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Mit *Europe and the Gospel* bietet Evert van de Poll einen Gesamtüberblick über die Entstehung und das Wesen Europas, reflektiert gegenwärtige europäische Entwicklungen und setzt diese mit dem prägenden Einfluss des Christentums in Beziehung. Gekonnt werden dabei historische, soziologische, politische, religiöse und kulturelle Aspekte des europäischen Kontinents behandelt. So wird deutlich: Wer Europa verstehen will, muss sich mit dem Paradox auseinandersetzen, dass dieser Kontinent einerseits in starkem Maße vom Christentum geformt wurde, andererseits aber sowohl durch die Preisgabe der christlichen Botschaft als auch durch die Ablehnung christlicher Institutionen geprägt ist. Trotz vorhandener Kritikpunkte empfiehlt sich das Buch als informative und umsichtige Einführung in ein weites Themenfeld mit überaus wichtigen missionswissenschaftlichen und praktisch-theologischen Implikationen im Blick auf eine weise kontextualisierte christliche Praxis im heutigen Europa.

* * * *

Evert van de Poll möchte mit *Europe and the Gospel* einen Überblick bieten über den Einfluss des Christentums auf die europäische Gesellschaft in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart: „I am particularly interested in the influence of Christianity on the shaping of Europe, and its role in current developments such as the process of economic and political integration that has resulted in the European union." (13) Der Autor schreibt dabei als wahrer Europäer – geboren und aufgewachsen in den Niederlanden, hat Van de Poll in Großbritannien studiert, lebt derzeit im Süden Frankreichs und ist beruflich als Religionswissenschaftler und Missiologe an der Evangelisch Theologischen Fakultät im belgischen Leuven tätig. Die Kernthese seiner Ausführungen lautet: Wer Europa verstehen will, muss sich mit dem Paradox auseinandersetzen, dass dieser Kontinent einerseits in starkem Maße vom Christentum geformt wurde, andererseits aber sowohl durch die Preisgabe der christlichen Botschaft als auch durch die Ablehnung christlicher Institutionen geprägt ist.

In 17 Kapiteln (Essays) führt Van de Poll den Leser durch eine Vielzahl von Themenfeldern, die alle mit dem Wesen Europas und dessen Verhältnis zum christlichen Evangelium zu tun haben. Nach einem ersten Blick auf die Bewohner, die Ausdehnung und den gegenwärtigen Einfluss Europas (Kapitel 1), zeigt Van de Poll auf, dass dem christlichen Glauben nicht nur bei der Entstehung der kulturellen Einheit Europas eine Schlüsselrolle zukam, sondern auch bei der Ausbildung der sozialen, politischen und kulturellen Diversität unseres Kontinents (Kapitel 2). In den beiden folgenden Kapiteln zeichnet der Autor die Entstehung der europäischen Idee und deren gegenwärtige Ausprägungen nach, bevor er sich der eigentlichen „Konstruktion Europas" vor allem in den Jahren nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg bis heute widmet (Kapitel 5). Eine erste Zäsur bildet die anschließende Reflexion verschiedener möglicher Sichtweisen auf die Realität(en) Europas, vor allem aus evangelikaler Perspektive (Kapitel 6).

Weitere Essays beschäftigen sich mit dem Vorhandensein unterschiedlicher nationaler und europäischer Identitäten, sowie dem damit zusammenhängenden Phänomen der Migration und der sich daraus ergebenden missionarischen Möglichkeiten zur Evangeliumsverkündigung „vor der eigenen Haustür". Es knüpfen Kapitel zur Multikulturalität und Integrationsproblematik an, wobei auch Fakten und Befürchtungen angesichts einer zunehmenden Zahl von Mitbürgern muslimischer Herkunft ins Blickfeld rücken (Kapitel 9-10). Auch in diesem Zusammenhang fokussiert Van de Poll in aller Kürze biblische Prinzipien für den Umgang mit den Herausforderungen, vor die sich christliche Gemeinschaften in ihrem multikulturellen Umfeld gestellt sehen.

Anschließend stellt der Autor die Frage nach der Seele und den Wurzeln Europas (Kapitel 11-12), wobei er vor allem die hellenistische Philosophie, das römische Denken und vor allem den monotheistischen, christlichen Glauben als Quellen europäischer Kultur bestimmt. Angesichts aktueller Diskussionen stellt er den Einfluss des Judentums und des Islams auf die europäische Kultur zwar nicht in Abrede, klassifiziert diesen allerdings als indirekt und damit als deutlich weniger prägend als das christentümliche Erbe, das in der Folge prägnant umrissen wird (Kapitel 13). Dabei wird nicht geleugnet, dass das Vermächtnis des Christentums auch weniger ruhmreiche Facetten enthält. Vielmehr stellt der Autor realistisch fest, dass die Kritik gegenüber dem christlichen Glauben aufgrund eines als negativ wahrgenommenen „track record" wohl nirgends auf der Welt so ausgeprägt ist wie in Europa (Kapitel 14).

In den verbleibenden Essays nimmt Van de Poll

schließlich aus missiologischer Perspektive den gegenwärtigen religiösen Zustand des europäischen Kontinents in den Blick (Kapitel 15-17). Hier gewinnt nun das als Kernthese formulierte Paradox Konturen, wonach die europäische Gesellschaft ebenso sehr vom christlichen Glauben geprägt ist wie von der Aufgabe und Ablehnung desselben. Van de Poll stellt grundlegend fest: „Failing to take into account the two sides of the coin leads to misrepresentations. Either we draw a picture that is too optimistic with respect to the influence of the church, or we depict an image that is too much the opposite." (251) Lässt sich Europa daran anknüpfend nun also als post-christlich, post-christentümlich, post-religiös (säkularisiert), post-modern, post-evangelisiert oder gar post-säkular charakterisieren? Und welche spezifischen Hindernisse und Herausforderungen, aber auch Hoffnungen, ergeben sich für die Kommunikation des Evangeliums innerhalb dieses ambivalenten Kontextes? Solche und ähnliche Fragen werden abschließend in knapper Form reflektiert.

Wer sich durch den umfassenden Titel und Untertitel des Buches (und die enthaltenen „endorsements") zu der Hoffnung verleiten lässt, einen einschneidenden und richtungsweisenden Beitrag für das kirchlich-missionarische Handlungsfeld im post-modernen Europa zu erhalten, der wird enttäuscht. Denn „bahnbrechend" (*„ground-breaking"*; im Sinne von innovativ, neue Wege aufzeigend), wie ein früher Rezensent auf einer der ersten Seiten hervorhebt, ist Van de Polls Text nicht. Doch er will es auch nicht sein! Und die Fairness gebietet es, die vorliegende Studie an den eigenen Ansprüchen zu messen. Dazu bemerkt der Autor im Vorwort, er wolle lediglich eine „Vogelperspektive" auf Europa als Ganzes bieten und sei sich durchaus bewusst, als Generalist keinen Anspruch auf hochgradige Spezialisierung oder Originalität erheben zu können. Und gerade in diesem generalisierten Ansatz liegen die Stärken des Buches. Der Verfasser profiliert sich als profunder Kenner der historischen, soziologischen, politischen, religiösen und kulturellen Aspekte des europäischen Kontinents. Er führt den Leser prägnant, verlässlich, informativ und durchaus gedankenanregend durch die Vielfalt der aufgezählten Themengebiete. Dabei zeigt er wiederholt ein sehr waches Auge für die Implikationen, die sich aus dem Gesagten für eine kontextualisierte christliche Praxis ergeben (könnten). Doch gerade weil sich die Weisheit und Weitsicht eines erfahrenen Missiologen und (Gemeinde-)Praktikers immer wieder klar andeutet, hätte man (vor allem in den abschließenden Kapiteln) gerne detaillierter erfahren, inwieweit Van de Poll die aktuelle missionstheologische Diskussion durch weiterführende Konzepte und eigenständige Antworten auf die gegenwärtigen Herausforderungen zu bereichern vermag.

Abschließend sei noch folgendes kritisch angemerkt: Selbst für eine synthetisch angelegte Studie halte ich die vorhandene Bibliografie für zu „dünn". Ein Buch das sich mit dem christlichen Erbe Europas befasst, kommt meines Erachtens nicht um einen Verweis auf Standardwerke wie Lutz von Padbergs *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter* herum, um nur ein Beispiel zu nennen. Und gerade weil sich *Europe and the Gospel* hervorragend als grundlegende Einführung in ein aktuelles und wichtiges Themenfeld eignet (beispielsweise für nicht-europäische Missionare oder in missionswissenschaftlichen beziehungsweise praktisch-theologischen Überblicksvorlesungen mit Schwerpunkt Europa), wären weiterführende Literaturhinweise zur Vertiefung überaus sinnvoll gewesen. Und warum ein Buch, das nicht als akademische Spezialstudie konzipiert ist, als derart teure Hardcoverausgabe erscheint, ist nicht leicht nachzuvollziehen. Da wünschte man sich eine günstigere Taschenbuchausgabe, damit dieses instruktive Überblickswerk über Bibliotheken hinaus die Verbreitung findet, die es verdient hat.

Philipp Bartholomä
Giessen, Germany

Documenta ecclesiastica christianae perfectionis studium spectantia: Dokumente des Lehramtes zum geistlichen Leben Lateinisch-Deutsch

Joseph de Guibert, S. Haering und W. Wollbold (Herausgeber)

Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2012; xxxii + 702 pp, € 50, cloth, ISBN 978-3-451-33110-7

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese mehrsprachige Textsammlung setzt das Werk von Joseph de Guibert aus dem Jahr 1931 fort und bringt es auf den aktuellen Stand. Es enthält eine Auswahl aller offiziellen römisch-katholischen Verlautbarungen zur Fragen geistlichen Lebens. Der Band ist eine Fundgrube für die Geschichte christlicher Spiritualität in der Westkirche, enthält manche geistliche anregenden Texte aber nur begrenzte Perspektiven für eine evangelikale oder gar ökumenisch tragfähige Spiritualität für das 21. Jahrhundert.

SUMMARY

This multilingual collection of texts continues the work of Joseph de Guibert from the year 1931 and brings it fully up-to-date. The collection contains a selection of all the official Roman-Catholic publications concerning issues of spiritual life. The present volume represents a treasure trove of the history of Christian spirituality in the western church. It holds some spiritually stimulating texts, but only limited prospects for an evangelical or even ecumenically sustainable spirituality for the 21st century.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage polyglotte met à jour l'œuvre accomplie par Joseph de Guibert datant de 1931. Il contient une sélection de toutes les publications catholiques romaines sur les questions de vie spirituelle. Il constitue un trésor de l'histoire de la spiritualité chrétienne de l'Église occidentale.

On y trouve des textes stimulants, mais il n'offre que des perspectives limitées pour une spiritualité évangélique, voire pour une spiritualité œcuménique adaptée au XXIe siècle.

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Die vorliegende Textsammlung bietet in einer zweisprachigen Ausgabe alle römisch-katholischen lehramtlichen Dokumente zu Fragen des geistlichen Lebens. Ihr Gegenstand ist die „geistliche Theologie", die „sich mit allen Fragen der Gestaltung des Verhältnisses zu Gott aus der Gnade und der dabei gemachten Erfahrungen" (xxii) befasst. Der zeitliche Bogen ist weit gespannt: von Irenäus von Lyon bis zu einem apostolischen Schreiben Benedikts XVI. aus dem Jahr 2011. Dabei wurde das ältere Werk Guiberts aus dem Jahr 1931 mit dem gleichen Titel bis in die unmittelbare Gegenwart aktualisiert. Nach einer knappen Einleitung wird den lateinischen (gelegentlich auch andere Sprachen) Dokumenten eine flüssige deutsche Übersetzung beigefügt; Fundort des lateinischen Textes und bestehende deutsche Übersetzungen werden jeweils verzeichnet. Ausführliche Personen- und Sachregister ermöglichen den thematisch/systematischen Zugang.

Zu den Dokumenten aus der Alten Kirche gehören Schriften zum Enkratismus, Montanismus, den Manichäern, frühe Synodalakten zum Zölibat der Kleriker, Beschlüsse des Konzils von Gangra gegen die falsche Askese der Eustathianer, Dokumente gegen Jovinian, Akten gegen die Priscillianisten und gegen den Pelagianismus, die Regel des Heiligen Augustinus, Akten gegen die Messaliner bzw. Euchiten und die Benediktsregel. Dem folgen Dokumente aus dem Mittelalter (79-238) und aus der Neuzeit (239–430), wie die vortridentinischen Beschlüsse gegen Luther, die Approbation der Regularkleriker, Dekrete des Konzils von Trient, die Verurteilung des Michael Bajus, Beschlüsse gegen die Illuminaten, Beschlüsse zu geistlichen Übungen, Äußerungen über die Häufigkeit der Kommunion, Beschlüsse über den Quietismus und den Semiquietismus, verurteilte Sätze der Jansenisten, Beschlüsse über das eremitische Leben und die Kommunion innerhalb der Messe. Der vierte Teil bietet Dokumente aus der Moderne (431–578) und der letzte Teil Dokumente ab 1931, unter anderen aus dem zweiten vatikanischen Konzil, dem *Codex Iuris Canonici* und aus dem Codex *Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*. Zur Auswahl sehe die Erklärung auf Seite 579: etwa nur Texte von gesamtkirchlichen Autoritäten, bekannte und leicht zugängliche Texte sind nicht berücksichtigt.

Beim protestantischen (Quer-)Leser bleibt ein gemischter Eindruck. Einerseits zeigt die Sammlung eine große Bandbreite an Themen und Praktiken innerhalb der römisch-katholischen Kirche (im *sic et non*) und die Versuche, geistliches Leben (hier sehr weit gefasst verstanden) zu fördern, aber auch zu reglementieren („Der Charakter von Lehrentscheidungen bringt es mit sich, dass darin häufig Irrwege geistlichen Lebens zurückgewiesen werden", xxiii). Die immer wieder spürbare internationale, gesamtkirchliche Perspektive ist erfrischend. Der letzte Teil enthält spannende Texte zur Auseinandersetzung christlichen Glaubens mit den geistlichen Herausforderungen der Gegenwart, etwa auch zur Mission und Evangelisation. An manchen Stellen ist eine gewisse Hilflosigkeit bzw. Weltferne kaum zu übersehen. Anderseits wird deutlich, dass sich auch innerhalb dieser Kirche geistliche Aufbrüche selten an lehramtlichen Äußerungen orientiert haben oder sich wesentlich daran orientieren konnten. Aber damit würde man wahrscheinlich auch zu viel von lehramtlichen Texten erwarten. Trotz der weit verbreiteten evangelischen Begeisterung für katholische Spiritualität (man denke nur an den fast kanonisch geltenden Anselm Grün!) zeigen diese Dokumente, dass sich mit diesem Erbe kaum eine gesamtkirchliche Spiritualität für das 21. Jahrhundert entwickeln lassen dürfte. Eine deutliche Ernüchterung setzt ein, wenn man aus dem 20. Jahrhundert Erklärungen über die Verehrung des Heiligen Hauptes Jesu, zum Ablass bei Stoßgebeten, über das Rosenkranzgebet im Rundfunk, Kommunionsempfang bei Alkoholismus (es geht um die Zelebranten), usw. zur Kenntnis nimmt. Von daher ist der Band eher von akademischem Interesse, was Geschichte und Entwicklung der Spiritualität sowie die Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte betrifft und bietet nur begrenzt spirituelle Anregung.

Christoph Stenschke
Bergneustadt und Pretoria

Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology

Matthew Myer Boulton

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011; x + 244 pp, pb, $28.00, ISBN 978-0-8028-6564-9

SUMMARY

In this book, Matthew Myer Boulton aims to restore the formative component of doctrine as function of the life of the Church in Reformed theology. He does this by inviting the reader to consider John Calvin's contribution to this goal, and in doing so focuses on Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The book has two central foci: 1) Calvin's understanding of formation as *paideia* (formative education) and 2) the seven key themes in the *Institutes* regarding this formation. This book does much to recommend this aspect of Calvin's work for contemporary constructive theology.

RÉSUMÉ

Matthew Boulton vise à rétablir le rôle formateur de la doctrine comme une fonction de la vie de l'Église selon la théologie réformée. Il invite donc le lecteur à considérer la contribution de Calvin sur ce point à partir de *L'institution de la religion chrétienne*. Il s'attache à deux centres d'intérêts : 1) la conception de la *païdeïa* comme éducation for-

matrice chez Calvin et 2) les sept thèmes clé à propos de cette formation dans *L'institution chrétienne*. Il démontre l'importance de cet aspect de l'œuvre de Calvin pour l'élaboration de la théologie aujourd'hui.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Mit seinem Buch zielt Matthew Myer Boulton darauf ab, die prägende Funktion von Lehre im Leben der Kirche in der reformierten Theologie wiederherzustellen. Er tut dies, indem er seine Leser dazu einlädt, Johannes Calvins Beitrag im Blick auf dieses Ziel zu betrachten. Dabei konzentriert er sich auf Calvins *Unterweisung in der christlichen Religion*. Das Buch hat zwei zentrale Themen: 1. Calvins Verständnis von Bildung als *paideia* (erziehende Ausbildung) und 2. die sieben Schlüsselthemen in den *Institutiones* im Hinblick auf diese Ausbildung. Das Werk trägt sehr dazu bei, diesen Aspekt von Calvins Werk der gegenwärtigen konstruktiven Theologie zu empfehlen.

* * * *

At what do we aim in the teaching of Christian doctrine? A clearer understanding of the mysteries of the faith, perhaps? Greater knowledge, better understanding, course outcomes of the form 'at the end of this module, students will have a better comprehension of x'? In Reformed theology the formative component of doctrine as a function of the life of the Church is sometimes under-represented. Matthew Myer Boulton aims to put this formative aspect back at the heart of the Reformed contribution to the wider Christian community. He does this by inviting his readers to consider the contribution made to this goal by John Calvin. In one respect, the heart of this book is a reading of key themes in Calvin's classic text, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, but it is more than that. It is a recommendation of Calvin's approach to theological formation.

The first part of the book analyses Calvin's understanding of formation as *paideia* or 'formative education'. Instead of a world divided into the professional religious and the rest of us, Calvin democratised religion, bringing the rigour of the cloister and religious specialists into everyday Christian experience. No longer was the monastery the proper place in which the real work of prayer and ritual was done. Now, the whole city was to be a fulcrum of Christian education and piety. To this end, the reforms instituted in the city of Geneva were an attempt to make education for formation the centre of the life of the church. Boulton offers a sympathetic and balanced account of Calvin's work in its early modern context, with helpful comparisons to late medieval religion. In a second section, he turns to consider seven key themes in the 1559 *Institutes* as case studies in the sort of formation he has in mind. These comprise theological knowledge; creation, providence and sin; Scripture; Christology; predestination; prayer; and the Lord's Supper. A final section offers ways in which contemporary theologians might retrieve aspects of Calvin's thought about formation for dogmatics today.

This book is, as the author puts it, 'a critical, constructive retrieval of Calvin's reforming project' written with a view to 'how that project may be inherited and developed by Christian communities today' (7). It is a welcome contribution to the Calvinian fructification of systematic theology today. Too often the French Reformer is identified with a 'central dogma' (predestination) or a particular polity (presbyterianism) or even with the less attractive aspects of his reforming programme, such as his relations with Michael Servetus or the Anabaptists. As Boulton makes abundantly clear, those who actually take the time to read and engage with Calvin's thought find there a very different mind at work. Not the Enforcer of Geneva, but a pastor who desires to see the Church purified and Christians formed to be like Christ with whom they are united by the secret work of the Spirit. This book does much to recommend this aspect of Calvin's work for contemporary constructive theology.

Oliver D. Crisp
Pasadena, California

Antinomianism: Reformed Theology's Unwelcome Guest?

Mark Jones

Philipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013; xix + 145 pp, $17.99, pb, ISBN 978-1-59638-815-4

SUMMARY

Mark Jones uses the seventeenth-century English antinomian controversy to warn about the dangers of its modern-day presence in the church. His book is rich in historical detail and theological application. Jones analyses six theological topics that were at the heart of the earlier controversy: the imitation of Christ, the law, the law and the gospel, good works and rewards, God's love, and assurance. He situates the debates in their historical and theological context and then provides analysis and application for today. Jones' answer to antinomianism is a radically Christ-centred theology of the imitation of Christ.

RÉSUMÉ

Mark Jones décrit la controverse sur l'antinomisme au XVII[e] siècle en Angleterre et en tire un avertissement contre les dangers que représente la présence de conceptions semblables dans l'Église d'aujourd'hui. Son livre est riche de détails historiques et d'applications théologiques. Il aborde six thèmes théologiques qui constituaient le cœur de la controverse du XVII[e] siècle : l'imitation de Christ, la Loi, le rapport entre la Loi et l'Évangile, les bonnes œuvres et les récompenses, l'amour de Dieu et l'assurance du salut. Il situe les débats dans leur contexte historique et théologique, en offre une analyse et propose des applications pour aujourd'hui. Son antidote à l'antinomisme est une théologie radicalement christocentrique de l'imitation de Christ.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Mark Jones gebraucht den Antinomistischen Streit des 17. Jahrhunderts in England, um vor den Gefahren dessen moderner Variante in der Kirche heute zu warnen. Sein Buch ist reich an historischen Details und theologischer Anwendung. Jones analysiert sechs theologische Themen, die dem früheren Streit zugrunde liegen: die Nachfolge Christi, das Gesetz, Gesetz und Evangelium, gute Werke und Belohnung, Gottes Liebe sowie Heilsgewissheit. Er bettet die Debatten ein in ihren historischen und theologischen Zusammenhang und liefert anschließend Analyse und Anwendung für heute. Jones' Antwort auf den Antinomismus ist eine radikal auf Christus zentrierte Theologie der Nachfolge Christi.

* * * *

Mark Jones' new book is small but rich in historical detail and theological application. He combines historical and systematic theology by using the seventeenth-century English antinomian controversy to warn against the dangers of modern-day antinomianism. His goal is not to 'name names' of modern-day antinomian preachers but merely to provide a basic outline of antinomianism so that pastors can recognise it on their own. Jones argues that historically, antinomianism was a 'wholesale departure from Reformed orthodoxy on several points of doctrine' (xiv) and he claims that the same un-orthodox antinomianism is present in the church today.

Jones begins by arguing that antinomianism encompasses much more than the denial that God's moral law binds Christians: it relates to six key doctrinal issues: the imitation of Christ, the law, the law and the gospel, good works and rewards, God's love, and assurance. The author situates debates on these topics in their historical context and then provides his own analysis and caution about how one could misunderstand them. Ultimately for Jones, the problem with seventeenth-century antinomianism was its 'lack of a robust Christology' (85), so he uses his book to propound a strongly Reformed Christology.

Jones' first chapter provides a historical overview of antinomianism beginning with Martin Luther, extending through England and New England in the early part of the seventeenth century and Scotland and non-conforming England in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He then moves to the realm of systematic theology with the goal to critique antinomianism in order to provide readers with a theological framework from which to interpret Scripture's teaching on key Christological points. Jones follows earlier theologians in arguing that believers ought to pattern their lives after Christ's holiness, in contrast to antinomians who tend to obliterate human responsibility in the process of holiness. He warns against denying the responsibility all believers have to strive after holiness. Chapter three contrasts opinions on the continual abiding power of the law held by antinomians and Reformed theologians in Puritan England. The chapter cautions preachers not to ignore the remnant of sin in believers and to call their people to remember God's moral requirements.

In chapter four Jones argues that the gospel must always include the indicative and the imperative – he cautions preachers to include both in their sermons. In chapter five he argues that good works cannot simply be the believer's gracious response to what Christ has done, as antinomians claim, but that they are also a necessary obligation for Christians. Jones' next chapter addresses a key antinomian question: does God love believers more because of their obedience or less because of their disobedience? Jones centres his answer in Christ: believers relate to God in and through Christ and Christ's work. He then moves to counteract antinomian confusion on assurance by claiming that to the degree that a person fixes his or her eye upon Christ, he or she will burst forth with gospel obedience. Jones ends his book with helpful chapters on how to navigate the rhetoric and polemics of theological debate.

Jones' analysis may have two weaknesses. The first is his use of the term 'Reformed orthodoxy'. He argues that some theologians fall outside the bounds of 'orthodoxy' while others do not, but he never establishes the basis for this distinction. Some attempt to wrestle with this question would have been helpful at the start of the book.

Jones' presentation of seventeenth-century English antinomianism is a more significant problem. He argues that the fundamental mistake of seventeenth-century antinomianism was its 'lack of a robust Christology' (85). However, a careful reading of the dozens of complex theological works exchanged between antinomians and their Reformed opponents reveals that at the heart of their disagreement was an entirely different fulcrum – the antinomians' bifurcation of the Old and New Testaments. The antinomians had a robust Christology but simply believed that Christ's obedience to the law while on earth was part of the Old Testament 'law' dispensation and thus not an example for believers today. It was this point that caused the Reformed community to condemn the antinomians. Jones appears to use seventeenth-century antinomianism merely as a front to criticise modern-day antinomianism and in the process draws conclusions that miss the heart of the seventeenth-century debate. Critiquing contemporary theological movements by comparison and contrast with earlier positions is always helpful but also extremely difficult. The author must define terms with precision and present the complexities and nuances of the previous theologians in their own time, before applying that analysis to the present day. In this case, a 130 page book might not be an adequate tool to do so. Overall, however, Jones' book is insightful, thought-provoking, and rich in pastoral application.

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The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust

Studies in Reformed Theology vol. 17

Henk van den Belt

Leiden: Brill, 2008; xiv + 386 pp, € 103 / $137, ISBN 978-90-0416307-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Henk van den Belts Buch stellt eine historische Studie des Begriffs *autopistos* und dessen theologischen Derivates *autopistia* dar, wie er im Hinblick auf die Bibel in der reformierten Theologie gebraucht wird. Seine Studie erstreckt sich von Calvin bis zur reformierten Orthodoxie, B.B. Warfield und Herman Bavinck, und schließt mit Anwendungen von *autopistia* im postmodernen Kontext. Die Vorzüge dieses Buches, zahlreich wie sie sind, liegen eher im Bereich historischer Wirklichkeit als Imperative für die Gegenwart. Für den Großteil des Werkes bleibt Van den Belt der historischen Entwicklung des Begriffs *autopistia* verpflichtet; dazu gehört eine gründliche und sorgfältige Erforschung der Geschichte des Begriffs und der entsprechenden Lehre.

SUMMARY

Henk van den Belt's book is a historical study of the word *autopistos* and its theological derivative *autopistia* as used about the Bible in Reformed Theology. His study extends from Calvin to the Reformed orthodoxy, B.B. Warfield and Herman Bavinck, and he concludes with applications of *autopistia* to the postmodern context. The merits of the book, of which there are immense amounts, are in the historical indicatives rather than in the contemporary imperatives. In the majority of the work, Van den Belt remains devoted to the historical development of *autopistia* with thorough and careful research of the history of the term and its accompanying doctrine.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage est une étude historique consacrée au mot *autopistos* et à son dérivé *autopistia* tels qu'ils ont été utilisés à propos de la Bible dans la théologie réformée. L'étude couvre de Calvin à l'orthodoxie réformée, avec Warfield et Bavinck et l'auteur conclut par des applications de la notion d'*autopistia* dans le contexte post-moderne. Les mérites de cet ouvrage, qui sont considérables, résident dans les indicatifs historiques plutôt que dans les impératifs contemporains. Dans sa majeure partie, l'auteur se consacre à l'aspect historique et livre le fruit d'un travail de recherche approfondi et rigoureux sur l'histoire de l'usage du mot *autopistia* et de la doctrine correspondante.

* * * *

Henk van den Belt's *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust* is a historical study of the word *autopistos* and its theological derivative *autopistia* in Reformed theology. Van den Belt's study arose from his personal struggles growing up in the churches of the Dutch secession. He held a 'fascination for the relationship between truth and certainty' which led him to study the relationship between *autopistia* and the *testimonium* of the Spirit about the Scriptures. His study extends from Calvin to the Reformed orthodoxy, B.B. Warfield and Herman Bavinck, and he concludes with applications of *autopistia* to the postmodern context.

Although *autopistos* is most commonly translated as 'self-evident', van den Belt prefers 'self-convincing', which better captures the sense of the truth of Scripture and the trust which it commands. In chapter two, he explores Calvin's use of the concept *autopistia* as the *fons* of its use in theology, tracing Calvin's thought through the *Institutes* and through his polemical writings. The culmination of Calvin's doctrine is the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* where he uses the word *autopistos*. Van den Belt concludes that, according to Calvin, for those taught by the Spirit Scripture is absolutely trustworthy 'in and of itself'.

In chapter three, the author traces the source of *autopistos* and Calvin's initial interaction with the term. He concludes that Calvin may have introduced it to the theological discussion but that he was not innovative: the concept was present in Luther, Zwingli, Bucer and Melanchthon. Chapter four examines the usage of *autopistia* in Reformed orthodoxy with central attention to Whitaker, Junius, the Arminian controversy, Turretin and Voetius. In the age of Reformed orthodoxy *autopistia* became a major polemic tool. A central development in the period was the institutionalisation of Scripture as the *principia* of theology.

In chapter five, Van den Belt reviews Benjamin B. Warfield's response to the historical-critical approach and to modern science. In Warfield's inaugural address in 1879, he affirmed the historical-critical method as long as it remained free from naturalistic presuppositions. Unlike Calvin, for Warfield self-authentication 'meant that Scripture proves itself by the *indicia*'. Chapter six reaches the historical climax with Herman Bavinck. According to Van den Belt, in the midst of modernity, the relationship between objective truth and subjective certainty was foundational in Bavinck. He developed a two-fold *principium*: objectively, the revelation of God in Scripture is the *principium externum*; subjectively, accepting Scripture by faith is the *principium internum*. Bavinck's use of *principium* contributes to an organic view of revelation. Van den Belt concludes with Bavinck that trustworthy knowledge is gained when objective revelation is completed by the internal work of the Spirit in bringing forth faith. The final chapter sets forth Van den Belt's view on the use of *autopistia* in a postmodern context. For him the *autopistia* of Scripture corrects the postmodern idea of autonomy, gives meaning to Scripture in the face of postmodern hermeneutics and gives the Church its proper place as a witness.

Van den Belt's work, originally a Leiden University PhD thesis of 2006, is a valuable and unique contribution to historical-theological studies on a subject. He

hardly references any current discussions on the historical concept of *autopistia* because, as he rightly states, 'no specific study has been made of the background and meaning of the term'. One of the most helpful contributions is Van den Belt's resolution of the problem of the relationship between truth and certainty. Using *autopistia* as a metaphor, he resolves this tension: 'The *testimonium* of the Spirit is like an oral confirmation of a witness in court to the written report of the facts ... we either reject a witness or believe him but we cannot reject a witness from the facts.'

Van den Belt's careful historical analysis will remain highly valued by Reformed theologians in the years to come. However, his methodology contains some minor weaknesses. His attempt to limit the study to the term *autopistos* results in a lack of attention to the magisterial Reformers in the third chapter. Confusingly, Van den Belt seems to abandon this limitation in his treatment of Warfield. Like some Reformers, Warfield used the term only once, in a quote from Heinrich Heppe. Further distinction would also have been helpful between Reformed and Lutheran conceptions of self-authentication. For example, the Lutheran theologian Echternach offered a similar historical-theological development of *autopistia* in his 1952 essay. Because Van den Belt decided not to treat the twentieth century, he passes over Barth and others, but his treatment of Bavinck's works does not fit this limitation. Barth use of Bavinck's language of *Deus dixit* in the *Church Dogmatics* provided a possible bridge by which to treat Barth.

Lastly, while the historical analysis in this work is exemplary, some of the applications to postmodernism do not necessarily follow. Even if the reader agrees with the author on defending Scripture in a postmodern context, his treatment of postmodernism does not fit in the frame of the study. The work suddenly moves from what 'was' to what 'we ought'. For instance, in the conclusion of chapter two, after analysing Calvin's *consensus ecclesiae*, Van den Belt concludes that 'the evidences for Scripture are no longer convincing, due to the historical-critical approach to Scripture. ... If we want to look for convincing arguments ... we will have to be children of our own time'. These conclusions are given without detail and do not necessarily follow from the chapter. Additionally, in the final chapter, Van den Belt argues that 'the *autopistia* of Scripture is in danger of evaporating in a postmodern context' but he does not provide the 'who' of his concerns resulting in a generalisation of the problem. Thus the merit of this book, of which there is an immense amount, is in the historical indicatives rather than in the contemporary imperatives. Overall, the reader will receive the gift of patient, accurate historical research that can aid the student in any number of Reformed studies.

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Eine baltisch-adlige Missionarin bewegt Europa. Barbara Juliane v. Krüdener, geb. v. Vietinghoff gen. Scheel (1764–1824)

Debora Sommer

Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013; 726 pp, hb, 22 Abbildungen, € 90, ISBN 978-3-8471-0149-9

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die umfangreiche Dissertation der Schweizer Kirchengeschichtlerin Debora Sommer führt das Leben und missionarische Wirken der Freifrau Juliane von Krüdener (1764–1824) eindrucksvoll vor Augen. Die baltischstämmige Adelige erreichte nach ihrer Bekehrung als radikalpietistische missionarische Einzelgängerin nicht nur einfache und bürgerliche Stände. Sie wirkte auch auf einflussreiche Adelige in Ländern Europas, besonders auf Zar Alexander I. Daher wird ihr Name zurecht immer wieder im Zusammenhang der Heiligen Allianz zur Bekämpfung Napoleons genannt. Breiten Einfluss hatte Juliane durch die religiösen Salongesellschaften und Versammlungen außerhalb von Kirchen, die sie an vielen Orten Europas durchführte oder an denen sie teilnahm. Ein umfangreicher handschriftlicher Nachlass macht weitere Forschungen möglich – und nötig.

SUMMARY

The comprehensive dissertation of the Swiss church historian Debora Sommer pictures in an inspiring way the life and mission of Baroness Juliane von Krüdener (1764-1824). After her conversion, the noble lady of Baltic origin reached as a radical pietistic missionary and loner not only the simple people and the middle classes, but she also impacted the influential nobility in European countries, in particular Tsar Alexander I. Therefore, her name is rightly mentioned times and again in connection with the Holy Alliance against Napoleon. Juliane had a wide influence through religious parlour meetings and assemblies outside the church which she organised all over Europe or in which she participated. The presence of many manuscripts will enable further research – and also necessitates it.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de l'historienne de l'Église Debora Sommer livre un tableau suggestif de la vie et de l'œuvre missionnaire de la baronne Juliane von Krüdener (1764-1824). Après sa conversion, cette noble originaire des Pays Baltes ayant adopté un piétisme radical a non seulement accompli une œuvre missionnaire auprès des gens du peuple et des classes moyennes, mais a eu une certaine influence sur la noblesse de divers pays d'Europe, et en particulier sur le tsar Alexandre Ier. C'est pourquoi son nom est assez souvent mentionné, et à juste titre, en rapport avec la Sainte Alliance dirigée contre Napoléon Ier. Elle a exercé une large influence par sa participation à des rencontres de salon religieuses, ou en prenant la parole devant des assemblées en dehors des Églises, dans toute l'Europe. De nombreux documents manuscrits permettraient, et même appellent, la poursuite de travaux de recherche à son sujet.

* * * *

Sollte irgendwo geschrieben stehen, bei einer Dissertationen sei eine Seitengrenze einzuhalten? Anscheinend ist die Antwort auf diese Frage eine Wanderlegende aus alter Zeit. Die Schweizerin Debora Sommer hat es geschafft, dass dieses Beinahe-Lexikon (725 S.!) zu Madame Krüdener im Herbst 2012 an der Universität von Südafrika in Pretoria angenommen wurde. Doch wer die Forschungslage kennt, kann die umfangreiche Studie nur begrüßen – im deutschsprachigen Raum füllt die Arbeit von Sommer eine bisher vorhandene Lücke.

In der Einleitung (23-56) gibt die Verfasserin einen Überblick über Zielsetzung und Stand der Forschung. Im zweiten Teil (57-141) geht sie der Frage von Identität und Kontext in Krüdeners Biographie nach. Der dritte Teil (143-228) vertieft die Frage nach ihrer Identität als Christin. Das christliche Zeugnis in der Salongesellschaft als Evangelisationsstrategie steht im Mittelpunkt des vierten Teils (229-298). Ihr diakonisches und missionarisches Wirken unter Armen, Reichen und Politikern (299-403), ihre Mission und ihre Rolle als Missionarin im Kontext zeitgenössischer Frömmigkeit (405-496) sowie der erweckliche Einfluss auf den Missionsreisen (497-613) bilden weitere drei Teile der Untersuchung. Im Schlussteil (614-655) präsentiert Sommer die Ergebnisse ihrer Forschungen und daraus folgende Interpretationen. Anhang, Bibliografie und Register vervollständigen den Band.

Wer sich in das voluminöse Werk vertieft, wird durch die Fülle interessanter und oft unbekannter Details überrascht und für den manchmal ausführlichen Anmarschweg auf der langen Lesereise belohnt. Der Schmerz über den hohen, aber angemessenen Preis weicht zunehmender Dankbarkeit über den Erkenntnisgewinn. Dass die biographische Darstellung der missiologischen Fragestellung untergeordnet ist (vgl. 42), mag zwar die Intention der Autorin sein – so richtig erreicht hat sie dieses Ziel aber nicht immer. Wer sich mit der Geschichte europäischer Adelsfamilien wie der väterlichen Vietinghoff und der mütterlichen Münnich (105-106) beschäftigt, wird reichlich entlohnt. Man liest mit Staunen, dass Juliane zur Hochzeit 1782 von ihrem begüterten Vater das Landgut Kosse mit über 1000 Leibeigenen geschenkt bekam, damit sie von den erwirtschafteten Gewinnen standesgemäß leben konnte (116, siehe auch 589-592). So ist auch die Beobachtung nicht unwichtig, dass sie nicht durch ihr Äußeres, sondern als reiche Erbin allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit erregte (130). Im Vorfeld ihrer Bekehrung spielten – wie in der späteren Erweckungsbewegung – Herrnhuter Kreise eine wichtige Rolle (196). Mystische Impulse führten dazu, dass man sie etwa ab 1815/16 den Schwärmern zuordnete (215, 220-221). Ihr religiöser „Wandersalon" war weithin berühmt, weil sie dadurch besonders Zar Alexander, aber auch andere Vertreter höchster europäischer Adelshäuser wie den preußischen König evangelistisch erreichte (293-294, 327). Besonders wichtig wurde sie wegen ihres Einflusses auf den Zaren durch ihren Einsatz für die Heilige Allianz (353-390). So wirkte sie auch bei der Auswanderung der chiliastisch orientierten Christen nach Russland bzw. auf die Krim und in den Kaukasus mit (391-403). Durch Flucht und Vertreibung nach dem 2. Weltkrieg oder Auswanderung seit 1989 sind diese Kreise auch im (ehemals west-)deutschen Kulturkreis wieder präsent.

Die missionarische Wirksamkeit der Frau von Krüdener (405-496) zeigt, dass man sie am besten der radikalpietistischen Richtung zuweist (483-486, zur Spiritualität 412-413). Der Leser hätte gerne mehr erfahren, welchen Frauen und Männern mit ähnlichen Persönlichkeits- und theologischen Merkmalen man in dieser Gruppe begegnet, wem sie am meisten gleicht, wer Vorbild oder vielleicht Nachahmer war? An dieser Stelle wäre eine inhaltliche Vertiefung nötig gewesen. In manchem erinnert Juliane an Zinzendorf, der ebenfalls aus hohem europäischem Adel stammte. Sicher konnte keiner ihrer Nachfolger ihren hohen gesellschaftlichen Stand aufweisen. Vielleicht musste man gerade so exzentrisch sein wie sie (und in vielem auch der „Graf ohne Grenzen" aus Herrnhut), um aus diesen Kreisen als im Herzen von der radikalen Botschaft des Christus bewegter Christ überhaupt ausbrechen und die Standesschranken überwinden zu können (vgl. 639-640)? Julianes missionarisches Wirken wurde in bisherigen Untersuchungen ihres Lebenswerkes meist eher knapp behandelt (531-532). Sie finanzierte ihre Mission nicht nur aus ihrem Privatvermögen, sondern wurde auch von wohlhabenden Freunden unterstützt (538-539). Sie missioniert in Wirtshäusern, im Freien, sie findet Zustimmung oder wird – meist von Pfarrern – abgelehnt (540-554). Von der Schweiz reist sie evangelisierend quer durch Deutschland nach Russland (527-609). Sie verstarb an einer fortschreitenden Krebserkrankung am 1. Weihnachtsfeiertag des Jahres 1824 in der damaligen deutschen Kolonie Karasubasar (heute: Bilohirsk) im Süden der Krim (612, vgl. 389). Spuren ihres Wirkens und der Krüdener-Verehrung finden sich noch heute (620-624). Die Nachhaltigkeit ihrer evangelistischen Auftritte bleibt umstritten (624-628). Ziemlich unbekannt dürfte ihr Einfluss auf den wichtigen Missionsförderer Christian Gottlob Barth sein (627-628). Man könnte das Wirken der Madame von Krüdener mit dem von Evangelisten vergleichen, die bei uns erst im 20. Jahrhundert in größeren Zahlen auftraten: Auch ihre Arbeit zeitigte andere Ergebnisse als die von parochial arbeitenden Seelsorgern.

Manches in den Schilderungen von Debora Sommer wirkt ausufernd. Es werden teilweise Themen einführend erklärt, die der Fachmann / die Fachfrau schon kennt. Das hat die Dissertation stellenweise unnötig aufgebläht. Dennoch fragt sich der Leser, wie man ein derart breites und umfangreich dokumentiertes Wirken wie das der baltischen Predigerin kürzer abhandeln und ihm gleichzeitig gerecht werden kann. Dennoch existieren noch zahlreiche Krüdener-Handschriften in europäischen Adelsarchiven, in bürgerlichen und öffentlichen

Nachlässen, die Material für weitere Untersuchungen bieten (vgl. 654).

Jochen Eber
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James Craig (1818–1899) Judenmissionar – Evangelist – Gemeindegründer

Schriften des Vereins für Schleswig-Holsteinische Kirchengeschichte 58

Nicholas M. Railton

Husum: Matthiesen Verlag, 2013; 320 pp, €20,–, pb,
ISBN 978-3-7868-5503-3

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die europäische Kirchengeschichte ist (noch mehr als heute) schon im 19. Jahrhundert geprägt von einzelnen Missionaren, die – meist von England – auf den Kontinent kommen. Sie wollen dort das Christentum wiederbeleben, Zielgruppen missionieren, und manche wollen auch freie Gemeinden gründen. Freikirchen haben ihre eigene Geschichtsschreibung aber die Wirksamkeit von Einzelmissionaren in ihrem christlichen Umfeld vor Ort ist wesentlich schwerer zu erforschen und darzustellen. Nicholas Railton ist es zu danken, dass er in dieser Monographie das Leben des irisch-presbyterianischen Judenmissionars James Craig in Hamburg und darüber hinaus darstellt. Railton erläutert in sechs Kapiteln, wie Craig Juden mit dem Evangelium zu erreichen suchte und für die Schriftenmission, für die lokale Gemeinschaftsbewegung und die deutsche Erweckungsbewegung von Bedeutung war.

RÉSUMÉ

Dès le XIX[e] siècle, et bien davantage que de nos jours, des missionnaires individuels venus pour la plupart d'Angleterre pour œuvrer sur le continent ont joué un rôle important dans l'histoire de l'Église en Europe. Ils avaient pour but de revivifier le christianisme, d'évangéliser des groupes spécifiques ciblés, et certains d'entre eux voulaient aussi établir de nouvelles Églises en dehors de toute dénomination. Les Églises indépendantes ont leur propre historiographie, mais il est bien plus difficile de faire des recherches pour décrire l'activité de missionnaires individuels dans leur environnement local chrétien. Dans cette monographie, Nicholas Railton nous présente la vie de James Craig qui fut un missionnaire presbytérien irlandais parmi les Juifs, à Hambourg et au-delà. Il explique en six chapitres comment ce missionnaire a cherché à faire connaître l'Évangile aux Juifs et quelle influence il a exercé sur la mission des traités, sur le mouvement local des assemblées et sur le mouvement de réveil allemand.

SUMMARY

Already in the nineteenth century, even more than today, European church history was shaped by individual missionaries who had come from England to the continent. It was their intention to revive Christianity and to evangelise specific target groups; some of them also wanted to start non-denominational churches. Free churches have their own historiography but it is far more difficult to research and portray the activity of individual missionaries in their local Christian environment. Thanks to Nicholas Railton, the present monograph depicts the life of the Irish-Presbyterian missionary to the Jews, James Craig, at Hamburg and beyond. In six chapters Railton explains how Craig tried to reach Jews with the Gospel and how he impacted the tract mission, the local *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* [assembly movement] and the German revivalist movement.

* * * *

Im 19. Jahrhundert bahnt sich die transnationale Situation an, die wir seit der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts für selbstverständlich halten: Freikirchengründer, Volksmissionare, Vortragsreisende und Evangelisten aus England und Irland arbeiten zielgruppenspezifisch in den verschiedenen deutschen Ländern bzw. später Regionen Deutschlands. Durch diese vom englischen Christentum ausgehenden Impulse werden wiederum deutsche und schweizerische Christen animiert, zum Beispiel mit der Pilgermission St. Chrischona als „pilgernde" Berufsmissionare oder als Basler Missionare in die evangelische Diaspora Osteuropas, in den Kaukasus und in die Ukraine zu reisen, um dort missionarisch und seelsorgerlich unter deutschen Kolonisten und weiteren Volksgruppen zu arbeiten.

Missionarische Einzelgänger aus dem Ausland sind in deutschen Archiven quellenmäßig oft nicht leicht fassbar, außer sie hätten – wie Oncken im Fall der Baptisten – die Gründung eines größeren Gemeindebundes angestoßen. Nicholas M. Railton hat schon im Fall des Göttinger Theologen Friedrich Bialloblotzky gezeigt, dass es möglich ist, aus den in englischen Archiven vorhandenen Informationen ein informatives Bild von dessen Lebenswerk zu skizzieren; sehe Nicholas M. Railton, *Transnational Evangelicalism. The Case of Friedrich Bialloblotzky (1799-1869)* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus 41; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

James Craig (1818-1899) war ein irischer Presbyterianer, der hauptsächlich in judenmissionarischer Absicht nach Deutschland kam. Hamburg war Durchgangsstation von jüdischen Einzelpersonen und Familien, die emigrieren wollten. Railton hat mit der vorliegenden Studie keine Biographie des Missionars geschrieben. Er stellt vielmehr Craigs Lebenswerk dar, indem er dessen Tätigkeit in verschiedenen Bereichen gliedert: 1. Seine Beziehungen zu Amtsträgern und Christen im lutherischen Hamburg; 2. Judenmissionarische Arbeit; 3. Gemeindegründung in Hamburg; 4. Förderung der Schriftenmission; 5. Beitrag zur entstehenden Gemeinschaftsbewegung in Schleswig-Holstein und zusammenfassend 6. Craigs Stellung in der Erweckungsbewegung.

Craigs Arbeit in Hamburg erfuhr in der überwiegend „geistlich toten" Landeskirche (damals etwa 3% Gottesdienstbesuch, vgl. 199) Widerspruch von rationalistischen Pfarrern, aber auch von patriotisch gesinnten,

auf innerkirchliche Erneuerung drängende Kreisen wie der von J. H. Wichern vertretenen Inneren Mission. Zustimmung gab es nur dort, wo man offen war für die „Allianz"-Gesinnung (bevor es die Institution gab) des missionarisch motivierten „Ausländers". 1861 begann der Bau einer eigenen Kirche in der damaligen Königstraße, der heutigen Poststraße (116). In Altona wurde eine Filialgemeinde gegründet (117). Die *philosemitische Einstellung englisch-irischer Kreise* war die Grundlage für Craigs Arbeit. Man erwartete, dass durch bekehrte Juden eines Tages die Welt bekehrt würde (54). Die judenmissionarische Arbeit war auch eine Wurzel der Forderung, Juden in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft gleichzustellen (84). Craigs Arbeit war lange kein Erfolg beschert. Man verdächtigte ihn der Christenmission, wenn sich Nicht-Juden zu seiner Gemeinde hielten (82). Im Anliegen verbunden war Craig mit so unterschiedlichen erweckten Christen wie J. G. Oncken und Theodor Harms (64, 81).

In der Hafen- und Handelsstadt Hamburg gab es traditionell einige Korrespondenten englischer christlicher Gesellschaften und eine englisch-reformierte Gemeinde (89-90). Die Unzufriedenheit mit der Staatskirche beförderte neue, demokratisch organisierte Freikirchen (93). Aus fleißiger Gemeinde- und Missionsarbeit wuchs eine Gemeinde heran, deren Gründung zwar erlaubt, aber von den städtischen Behörden nicht gefördert wurde (113). Sie wurde im Lauf der Zeit selber zur sendenden Gemeinde mit Kontakten zu Gossners Mission, zur Basler Mission, nach (Buda-)Pest und Breslau (118-134). Ab 1873 arbeitete Craig als Europa-Sekretär der Religious Tract Society; wohl ab Ende 1875 wohnt er in London und war von dort aus für die Society tätig (136, 140, 203).

Als Craig in Hamburg seine Arbeit begann, gab es schon mehrere Bibel- und Traktatgesellschaften in Norddeutschland. Als Vorstandsmitglied der niedersächsischen Traktatgesellschaft verkaufte er jährlich mehrere tausend Bibeln und ließ Millionen von Traktaten drucken, die durch Kolporteure verteilt wurden (145). So arbeiteten 1872 zwölf Kolporteure unter Auswanderern in Bremen und Hamburg (152; zur Kolportagearbeit in Nassau vgl. 161). Kontakte, die die Traktatsache beförderten, bestanden auch zu William Marriott in Basel, zu Julius von Gemmingen in Baden, zu Graf F. A. von Bismarck-Bohlen in Berlin (166-168) und anderen. Craigs Wirksamkeit weitete sich auf ganz Europa aus, ja sogar bis zum vorderen Orient (168-170). Ab 1845 verteilte er auch Traktate in Schleswig-Holstein (175) und wirkte am Beginn der örtlichen Gemeinschaftsbewegung in verschiedenen Vereinen für Innere Mission mit (191).

Railtons Studie zeigt, dass die weitreichende Arbeit von James Craig (ebenso wie die der zeitlich vorausgegangenen Robert Pinkerton, Robert Haldane und anderer, vgl. 202) bisher zu Unrecht in Deutschland kaum bekannt war. Der Anhang, zahlreiche Fußnoten, Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis sowie Register (205-320) zeigen, dass besonders in englischen Archiven wertvolle Informationen, die die deutsche Erweckung im 19. Jahrhundert betreffen, ausgewertet werden konnten und auf weitere Auswertung warten. Ein allzu nationales Verständnis der Vorgeschichte der deutschen Gemeinschaftsbewegung hat bisher verhindert, dass deren britischen (und amerikanischen!) Wurzeln gebührend wahrgenommen worden sind (202). Der Leser legt das Buch aus der Hand mit dem Wunsch, dass weitere Untersuchungen folgen mögen.

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Eclipse of Grace: Divine and Human Action in Hegel

Nicholas Adams

Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013; 240 pp, hb, £60,
ISBN 978-1-11846-5882

SUMMARY

Nicholas Adams has produced a ground-breaking book that charts a clear course through the philosophical morass of Hegel's main works and discovers in Hegel's system of logic – more so than in his explicitly 'theological' writings – much that is of value for contemporary theology. While recognising that some of Hegel's writings are formidably difficult, especially for those without prior acquaintance with Spinoza, Kant or Fichte, Adams offers a helpful guide for surmounting these obstacles and makes a compelling case about why Hegel merits the serious attention of theologians.

RÉSUMÉ

Nicholas Adams a produit un livre novateur qui permet de s'y retrouver dans le marais philosophique des œuvres principales de Hegel. Il y découvre – bien davantage que dans les écrits spécifiquement théologiques du philosophe – un système de logique pertinent pour la théologie contemporaine. Tout en reconnaissant que certains des écrits de Hegel sont particulièrement difficiles, notamment pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas Spinoza, Kant ou Fichte, N. Adams livre ici un guide utile pour surmonter ces obstacles et soutient de manière convaincante que Hegel mérite l'attention des théologiens.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Nicholas Adams hat ein bahnbrechendes Buch geschaffen, das einen klaren Kurs durch den philosophischen Dschungel von Hegels Hauptwerken steuert. Das Werk entdeckt in Hegels System der Logik – und eher dort als in seinen erklärten ‚theologischen' Schriften – viel, was für die gegenwärtige Theologie von Wert ist. Adams gibt zu, dass einige der Werke Hegels ausgesprochen schwer zu verstehen sind, insbesondere für jene, die keine Vorkenntnisse über Spinoza, Kant oder Fichte besitzen; er bietet daher einen nützlichen Führer an, der hilft, diese Hindernisse zu

überwinden und führt mit zwingender Logik aus, weshalb Hegel die ernsthafte Aufmerksamkeit der theologischen Gilde verdient.

* * * *

Hegel is a colossal figure in the history of Western philosophy. His first major publication, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*), first published in 1807, was the first full philosophical exposition of the evolution of consciousness from the immediacy of sense perception to a culmination point of Absolute Knowing. The concepts and categories introduced by Hegel in this great work have generated a powerful stream in Western philosophy from which several theological giants of the twentieth century, such as Barth, Moltmann and Pannenberg, have derived considerable inspiration. Notwithstanding the extraordinary breath and originality of his thinking, theologians continue to be unsure about Hegel's contribution to their studies – or whether it is even worth taking him seriously as a source of legitimate theological insight.

Thankfully, Nicholas Adams has produced a groundbreaking book that charts a clear course through the philosophical morass of Hegel's main works and discovers in Hegel's system of logic – more so than in his explicitly 'theological' writings – much that is of value for contemporary theology. While recognising that some of Hegel's writings are 'formidably difficult' (119), especially for those without prior acquaintance with Spinoza, Kant or Fichte, Adams offers a helpful guide for surmounting these obstacles and makes a compelling case about why Hegel merits the serious scholarly attention of theologians.

Adams sets out to test five main theses concerning Hegel's dialectical logic, which are listed in the following order: '1) it is a product of reflecting on Christian doctrine; 2) it is concerned with pairs of terms; 3) it stands independently of his heterodox doctrinal experiments; 4) its generativity for theology can be seen more clearly if one ignores those doctrinal experiments; 5) such doctrinal experiments are in any case fewer than sometimes supposed' (5). Chapters 2 and 3 test the first two theses through a close reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, 1812-1816). Chapter 4, entitled 'God Existing as a Community', focuses on Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion and argues that this apparently explicitly theological text is less important for understanding Hegel's significance for theology than the *Phenomenology* or *Science of Logic*. As Adams states at the outset: 'I am convinced that Hegel's importance for theology lies in his philosophical arguments rather than in his treatment of theological or religious topics' (xix).

Although Hegel is often regarded as a purveyor of intricate theoretical abstractions about 'Spirit', 'Being' and 'Truth', Adams makes the bold and counterintuitive claim that of all the major philosophers of the Western tradition, Hegel is most concerned with 'everyday life'. Adams avers that, 'Any theologian who is pestered by students asking what relevance doctrine has for everyday life has a friend in Hegel.' Referring to a quip by Theodore Adorno, Adams notes ironically that, 'people ask what meaning Hegel has for the present but the real question is what meaning the present has in light of Hegel'. Insisting on Hegel's relevance to the 'real life' of the Christian community, Adams asserts that, 'The community's attempt to confess sin, be forgiven, and share the peace are obstructed when they are guided by logics that remain mired in false oppositions, above all the false opposition of divine and human action' (199). In one sense, the aim of Adams' book is to elucidate how Hegel's dialectical logic is directed towards the dissolution of these 'false oppositions' and to demonstrate the significance of this for contemporary theological study.

Given this emphasis on the way that Hegel connects divine and human action, the lack of any reference to the notion of *theosis* – a concept associated particularly with the Greek Patristic and Eastern Orthodox Churches – seems a curious omission from Adams' book. Hegelian philosophy, as John O'Donohue has demonstrated in his monograph *Person als Vermittlung* (1993), offers a fecund point of departure for reflecting on the 'objective and personal unity of man and God'. Although rooted in historicity, Hegel's conception of the dialectical movement of the Spirit through history nevertheless transcends human finitude and is concerned not primarily with Being and Truth in their perfective aspects as finished, static or complete, but as emerging, dynamic realities. As theology becomes less bound by static categories of being and actuality and becomes more attuned to dynamic conceptions of process and becoming, Hegel might indeed become 'for modern theology what Augustine became for patristic theology', as Adams contends (7).

If Hegel does attain this kind of influence in Western theology, it may be possible to arrive at further agreement on several points that have hitherto divided Eastern and Western theology. One area of common interest, on which Hegelian philosophy might open up new areas of agreement, is the decisive issue of *theosis*. Given that the issue is not explored at any length in the book under review, this theme will need to await the emergence of new scholarship that will build on the significant gains admirably achieved by Adams in this pioneering work.

Apart from the main thesis concerning the way that Hegel's dialectical logic exposes the false dichotomies that enervate contemporary theological studies, Adams offers several other noteworthy insights, such as the way that Johannine themes (i.e. love, truth, life and reconciliation) continually reassert themselves throughout the *Phenomenology* (19, 142). Adams also points out that Hegel makes very prescient comments (205) on how the Scripture ought to be comprehended *mit dem Geiste* (with the spirit).

Underlying this book is the conviction that contemporary theology is often beset by an errant logic which

posits false antinomies that enervate theological inquiry and vitiate theological passion for truth. The false logic manifests in the stale dichotomies that often characterise theological study today (i.e. nature vs. grace; myth vs. history; fact vs. value; divine providence vs. human freedom; academy vs. church; lay vs. ordained; conservative vs. liberal; faith vs. evidence). Moreover, many social evils, such as racism, sexism, ageism and religious discrimination, also result from errant logics of opposition (23). Adams has proven himself to be a reliable guide to the interpretation of Hegel, but like all good commentators, he makes us want to turn to the primary sources and to discover Hegel for ourselves. If Hegel does indeed show us a path that will lead out of false oppositions that impoverish theological inquiry, as Adams convincingly demonstrates, then perhaps it is time for us as theologians to brush the dust off Hegel's weighty tomes and to immerse ourselves in the thought world of a major philosopher.

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London

Schleiermacher: A Guide for the Perplexed
Theodore Vial

London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2014; ix + 150 pp, £13.49, pb, ISBN 978-0-567-41598-1

SUMMARY

This book, part of the excellent *A Guide for the Perplexed* series by T&T Clark, offers readers an introduction to the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher. It sets out to do so in a way that presupposes no prior knowledge of Schleiermacher, does not over-simplify its subject, and that portrays Schleiermacher as a broad-ranging intellectual (rather than simply as a theologian). It does well in this task.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans la série des « guides pour les gens perplexes » éditée par T. & T. Clark, cet ouvrage constitue une introduction à la pensée de Friedrich Schleiermacher pour des lecteurs qui n'en ont aucune connaissance préalable, sans toutefois en faire une présentation trop simplifiée. Il le dépeint comme un penseur aux centres d'intérêts très larges (et pas seulement comme un théologien). Il atteint bien son but.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch, das ein Bestandteil der ausgezeichneten Serie *A Guide for the Perplexed* [*Ein Leitfaden für die Verblüfften*] von T & T Clark ist, bietet seiner Leserschaft eine Einführung in das Denken Friedrich Schleiermachers. Dabei setzt es kein Vorwissen von Schleiermacher voraus. Es verzichtet auch auf eine übermäßige Vereinfachung des Themas und zeichnet Schleiermacher als einen umfassend gebildeten Intellektuellen (statt nur als Theologen). Und diese Aufgabe erfüllt es hervorragend.

* * * *

At the outset of his work *Schleiermacher: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Theodore Vial asserts the need for a new work on Friedrich Schleiermacher for two reasons: many introductory works on Schleiermacher are overly simplistic, and the more nuanced books fail to convey the sense in which Schleiermacher was a broad-ranging intellectual (rather than simply a theologian). As such, Vial sets out to write a book suitable as an introductory text on Schleiermacher, that introduces the student to the key contours of his theologian thought, and that also links this to Schleiermacher's role in intellectual life outside of theology.

In Chapter One Vial provides a summary of Schleiermacher's life. Written in an engaging style, the author manages to handle Schleiermacher's biography sympathetically but without falling into hagiography or uncritical praise (see Vial's comment on the prose of Schleiermacher's *Christmas Eve Dialogue*, page 12). He helpfully sets out Schleiermacher's family and religious background, and accounts for the appearance of Schleiermacher's key works (*On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, *The Christian Faith* etc.) in historical context. Chapter Two, 'Schleiermacher's Worldview', sets out his core intellectual commitments. Vial locates this against the backdrop of Kant and Hume, and proceeds to cover dialectic and ethics.

In Chapter Three we are led through Schleiermacher's approach to hermeneutics. Vial highlights that for Schleiermacher, 'humans are fundamentally, not contingently, linguistic beings' (47). Building on this, he explores the centrality of language in Schleiermacher's view of how humans experience, think and know their world. I appreciated Vial's willingness to highlight significant critiques of Schleiermacher on language/hermeneutics, and his explicit desire to provide a more accurate understanding of his subject (rather than simply to defend Schleiermacher): 'I have no stake in raising [these critiques] in order to show that Schleiermacher, in the end, is correct about everything. Rather, working through these criticisms will lead to a more nuanced understanding of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics.' (50)

Chapter Four portrays Schleiermacher as a theorist of religion. Here, the introductory chapter, which has already laid the foundations for Vial's understanding of Schleiermacher as redefining, and not simply as rejecting, religion, is particularly helpful. In this chapter, Vial develops this into a fuller argument that the standard reading of Schleiermacher on religion is inaccurate. His survey of the field in this regard is helpful (61-65). Part of why Vial does well in relation to his task is that by Chapter Four, he has given the reader an overview of Schleiermacher's life, a nuanced introduction to his worldview and key hermeneutical concerns, and on that basis, he now invites the reader into a significant debate on the interpretation of Schleiermacher (in this case, whether his theory of religion 'promotes and protects, rather than explains religion'). The reader is thus presented with the challenge of entering this debate – an inherently interactive task.

It is interesting that only in Chapter Five does Vial handle Schleiermacher as a theologian. This chapter is useful in accounting for the particular Christological, hamartiological and soteriological emphases found in *The Christian Faith*. Although Vial wants to do so in a nuanced way, he is not uncritical: he provides a helpful summary of Barth's critique of Schleiermacher's theology and follows this with the critiques of Strauss and Wyman (100). Following this, Chapter Six details Schleiermacher's political thought and role as a political activist.

This is a helpful book, one that is well written and accessible. It does well in striving towards its goal: that of introducing the reader to a significant and broad-ranging intellectual, and of locating his theology within that particular context.

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Scholarship: Two Convocation Addresses on University Life

Abraham Kuyper

Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2014; xi + 51 pp, $4.95, pb, ISBN 978-1-938948-85-5.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage reprend deux discours prononcés par Abraham Kuyper à l'université libre d'Amsterdam. Ils visaient à encourager les étudiants chrétiens et les spécialistes à la poursuite de leurs travaux académiques en présentant l'étude académique comme une recherche du Logos qui est au centre de toute autre vérité. Les discours sont bien traduits et agrémentés de notes de bas de page utiles. On y trouve, dans un contexte européen, des critiques pertinentes de nombreuses conceptions courantes, émanant du capitalisme récent, de ce que devrait être l'université.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das vorliegende Buch enthält zwei Ansprachen von Abraham Kuyper an der Freien Universität von Amsterdam. Sie wollen christlichen Studenten und Wissenschaftlern, die sich der Forschung widmen, Mut machen, und zwar, indem sie das akademische Unterfangen als eine Suche nach dem Logos im Zentrum aller übrigen Wahrheit darstellen. Die Übersetzung ist wohl gelungen, die Fußnoten sind sachdienlich, und in einem europäischen Kontext bietet es eine hilfreiche Kritik vieler gängiger spätkapitalistischer Sichtweisen des Bereiches der Universität.

SUMMARY

This book contains two addresses given by Abraham Kuyper at the Free University of Amsterdam. They are intended to encourage Christian students and scholars in their pursuit of scholarship and do so by portraying the academic endeavour as a search for the Logos at the centre of all other truth. The book is well translated and helpfully footnoted, and in a European context offers helpful critiques of many common late-capitalist visions of the university.

* * * *

This short book contains the English translations of two convocation addresses given by the Dutch neo-Calvinist theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper in his role as rector of the *Vrije Unviversiteit* (Free University) in Amsterdam in 1889 and 1890. Translated by Harry van Dyke, at the behest of the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society, it is a highly readable rendering of Kuyper's own inimitable style.

Kuyper's primary purpose in these speeches was to encourage Christian students (the Free University having been founded on Reformed principles some ten years before) in their pursuit of scholarship. Beyond this, the speeches make plain that his university was not well regarded by the mainstream academic community in the Netherlands at that time. Kuyper refers to it as an 'Opposition School' (25). Evidently, speech two in particular (*Scholastica II*) functions as an apology for the notion of a Reformed university and a defence of the Free University's particular academic credentials. Van Dyke's helpful introductory note (ix-x) also serves to clarify this.

Perhaps the key idea in Kuyper's approach to Christian scholarship is the idea that, 'God created, in addition to the world of nature with all its elements and forces and materials, a *world of thoughts*; for all creation contains Λογος [Logos]' (7). Kuyper uses John 1 to apply a Logos principle generally to the practice of scholarship: Christ, the true Logos, is to be found everywhere in this 'world of ideas' and as such, all pursuit of knowledge is, ultimately, the pursuit of knowledge of Christ. On that basis, he characterises the life of both student and professor as a distinctive and privileged vocation: they are called to explore the world of ideas and in so doing, may search it in order to uncover the Logos present in all truth.

On this basis, Kuyper proceeds to offer various points of guidance to his student body: students should manage their money with care, and should not neglect the life of the body whilst prizing the life of the mind (17). His comments on the methodology of study are particularly helpful in the context of contemporary higher education, where the practice of cramming for exams seems commonplace. Such an approach 'yields knowledge that evaporates quickly' (19). Kuyper's critique of the student who crams in order to absorb information retained only long enough to pass an exam, is that he gains a *qualification*, but not an *education*. The concept of the university as an institution to provide an education (or in Kuyper's own choice of term, a *formation*) that stands as quite distinct from a token qualification is challenging to much higher education in the contemporary Western world, where universities are under pressure to adopt their graduates' employability, rather than formation, as a somewhat crude goal.

Kuyper's attempt to argue that a Reformed univer-

sity contributes 'well formed' citizens to participate in Dutch culture, of course, should be viewed against the backdrop of the significant legislative reform of Dutch higher education in the late nineteenth century. Inspired by the notion of *Bildung*, the scholarly universities were distinguished from lesser forms of higher education (called high schools) in that universities were expected to provide cultural formation in order to produce a certain class of social actor: a civilised, educated elite. One did not go to a nineteenth century Dutch university to learn business or catering; these disciplines were taught at the high schools. Kuyper's speeches, perhaps more than this book conveys, were intended to reassure his students that they were being formed and that theirs was a legitimate university experience, albeit at an 'Opposition School'.

This book contains various helpful points for young Christian scholars, particularly the reminder that no-one can know everything. Those who believe they know a great deal, Kuyper claims, actually know very little: their general ignorance prevents them for realising the limited nature of their own study. 'Genius of genuine gold, as Fichte put it so beautifully, does not know its own beauty... The true scientific spirit possesses its ornament with blushing naiveté.' (11) There is a small number of true geniuses, he claims, but the work of scholarship requires an army of rank and file researchers and scholars committed to the incremental increase of human knowledge. The reminder that no single scholar can know everything is helpful, perhaps particularly for PhD students.

One of Kuyper's most challenging calls, in this book, is for a greater sense of social responsibility in higher education, and that for both teacher and student. He characterises them as participants in the same task: the search for the Logos in all knowledge. This search affords them a rare position of privilege in society, and with this, a particular responsibility to enrich their particular societies. A university education is not simply a means to build one's own empire, either as a professional academic or as a student; rather, it is a means to contribute for the good of society more generally. This book challenges many notions and structures in the current late-capitalist university context.

Scholarship will prove popular and readily usable in contexts that resemble Kuyper's own: (mostly North American) Christian colleges and universities. In Europe, it is harder to think of university contexts in which all staff and students are joined in their search for the Logos in all knowledge. I suspect that the book's primary use in European contexts is in its challenge to the late-capitalist understanding of the university as a business that sells increased employability to future workers, rather than an instrument of civilisation and personal formation.

Kuyper's original published addresses contained only one footnote. The editor, however, has added numerous footnotes to clarify them for the Anglophone reader: key Dutch words, particularly those that are difficult to render in English (*wetenschap*, for example) are defined; and valuable historical notes are added (on the admission of female students at the Free University, and the historical figures to whom Kuyper refers). This careful editing makes the book all the more accessible

Those responsible for this book deserve credit for producing a short but significant work that adds to the growing body of Kuyper's English translations.

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The Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality. A Study of Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937)

Gregory L. Nichols

Eugene: Pickwick, 2011; xiii + 381 pp, pb, £28.00,
ISBN 978-1-61097-160-7

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das vorliegende Buch untersucht das Leben von Ivan V. Kargel und legt auf überzeugende Weise dar, dass er eine der wichtigsten Persönlichkeiten in der Entwicklung des russischen Evangelikalismus und dessen geistlichem Leben war. Es überzeugt jedoch weniger in seiner Annahme, dass diese Theologie und Spiritualität (bei Kargel und in einer breiteren Bewegung) im Großen und Ganzen eher das Ergebnis westlicher Einflüsse als einheimischer Entwicklungen war, eine Antwort auf die russische Orthodoxie und der Auseinandersetzung mit ihr eingeschlossen.

SUMMARY

This book examines the life of Ivan V. Kargel and effectively demonstrates that he was one of the most important personalities in the development of Russian evangelicalism and its spirituality. It is less convincing in its assumption that this theology and spirituality (in Kargel and the wider movement) was largely the result of Western influences rather than the result of indigenous developments, including response to and interaction with Russian Orthodoxy.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce livre, l'auteur présente la vie de Ivan V. Kargel et montre qu'il a été l'une des personnalités les plus importantes du mouvement évangélique russe et qu'il a exercé une influence considérable sur sa spiritualité. Il est moins convaincant quand il allègue que cette théologie et cette spiritualité (celles de Kargel et du mouvement évangélique) résultent en grande partie de l'influence occidentale plutôt que de développements locaux propres, et en particulier de l'interaction avec l'orthodoxie russe.

* * * *

This important book claims to examine (by the use of primary sources and in a more detailed way than previously) the evangelical spirituality that emerged in Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the title is something of a misnomer and the

sub-title more accurately describes its nature: fundamentally the book is a biography of Ivan Kargel. However, Nichols, as the title indicates, considers that Kargel was the determinative figure in shaping Russian evangelical spirituality. Equally central to Nichols' argument is that Kargel's spirituality is rooted in the pietistic and evangelical movements of eighteenth-century Europe and America and the perfectionism and premillenialism reflected in the teachings of the Keswick Convention. This position is explicitly articulated as 'over-against' those who claim that Russian evangelicalism was shaped by its being a breakaway movement from Orthodoxy and those studies that trace a threefold emergence of Baptists (in the Caucasus, Ukraine and St. Petersburg). While acknowledging that such analyses are helpful, Nichols believes they fail to 'provide an adequate portrayal of spiritual continuity within the European context' (6).

While Nichols may be right to make this point he minimises (and explicitly fails to analyse) the relationship of so-called Russian evangelicalism with the Christian religious culture in which it emerged; he shows little interest in exploring local cultural factors and thus presents a very one-dimensional analysis. Frustratingly, only in his conclusions does he suggest that Kargel's theology has some parallels to the Orthodox understanding of deification (306).

Consequently, acknowledging that Kargel was baptised in Tiflis (modern Tbilisi) among a group that included those who had left Orthodoxy, Nichols emphasises what he claims as the German origin of the church there. Later he suggests (without offering justification) that this group was inward-looking and lacked a missiological vision that required Kargel's contact with Johann Oncken to awaken. Yet Oncken, after visiting the area, believed that it was ripe for evangelical harvest and such a situation usually presupposes prior sowing. Much later he discovered a robust evangelical spirituality among those imprisoned for their faith in Tiflis (164).

However, the recent doctoral studies of Malkhaz Songulashvili and Tatyana Kopalesihvili, both of whom used primary Georgian sources, suggest that the Caucasian movement was indeed significantly embedded in its local context and in earlier renewal movements that emerged out of Orthodoxy; consequently, it developed (and has developed) a distinctive spirituality. Perhaps it was there, too, Kargel developed his vision for reaching the indigenous peoples of the empire?

What is undeniable, as Nichols demonstrates, is that Kargel became acquainted with Johann Oncken and Johann Wieler when he later moved to Hamburg; this, inevitably, means that Western evangelical influences contributed to his spirituality. Thereafter, after several short pastorates, Kargel moved to St. Petersburg in 1875. Here he demonstrated a conversionist theology, emphasised ethnic diversity, evangelical ecumenicity and baptistic ecclesiology. Tantalisingly, Nichols notes the possible Orthodox inspiration for some of his terminology and the appeal of Lord Radstock's expository ministry to those from an Orthodox background without exploring the possible implications. Further, he stresses the influence of Colonel Pashkov, who sought to lead a movement for renewal within Orthodoxy and whose circle included Anna Semenova whom Kargel married. Pashkov, effectively, started brethren-style meetings. However, again, Nichols emphasises this last influence on Kargel's convictions and praxis while minimising the preceding and prevailing context in which the Pashkovites developed their convictions.

The following discussion follows a similar line. Kargel's removal to Bulgaria in 1880, Nichols argues, brought a release from spiritual narrowness. More accurately, this was a period in which Kargel appears to have despaired of church politics and in-fighting within the groups with which he was associated. Whether the evidence at this point adequately supports the claim that he had more contact with non-baptists from this point is moot. Equally, it is unclear whether his wife Anna was a factor in his becoming more 'open'. What is undeniable is that he practised a rounded ministry in which denominational barriers were ignored and he worked both cross-culturally and promoted humanitarian work. Equally, it appears clear that the couple had a profound spiritual experience in 1883 that was shaped and/or articulated in terms drawn from Holiness spirituality.

Nichols notes that the Kargels returned to St. Petersburg in 1884 and remained there until 1887. Under the influence of Pashkov, Kargel was instrumental in promoting both evangelical unity and the formation of the Russian Baptist Union. He appears to have been increasingly influenced by Keswick spirituality through shared ministry with Friedrich Baedeker. Thereafter (1887-1898), the family relocated to Finland to avoid harassment by the authorities. From there Kargel developed an empire-wide work through his itinerant preaching and continued to work among the marginalised. His labours damaged his health and both his wife and his oldest daughter died during this period.

At length Kargel returned to St. Petersburg when the persecution ended (1898-1909): during this period, Nichols argues, his links with German Baptists became attenuated and he became viewed as the leading theologian among Russian evangelicals. He wrote and lectured, demonstrating a wide knowledge of authors such as Luther, Godet, Soltau, Spurgeon and Moody as well as, predictably, Andrew Murray and Evan Hopkins. He continued to work, without ultimate success, for evangelical unity. Nichols is able to demonstrate convincingly that the best fit for Kargel's theology in its final form is Keswick-inspired, though he notes German Baptist influences.

Kargel's final years, to his death, aged 88, in 1937, saw him become an elder statesman and spiritual guide within Russian evangelicalism. At the end, he and three daughters were arrested. He died shortly after his release; one daughter was shot and the other two exiled

to Siberia where they remained for the rest of their lives. After his death his influence remained through his writings.

For all its one-sidedness, this is an important book which offers a valuable perspective into Russian Baptist and evangelical spirituality. It is essential for those interested in the history of Russian evangelicalism.

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Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundation

David Rudolph and Joel Willitts (eds)

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013; 335 pp, $27, pb,
ISBN 978-0-310-33063-9

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage livre une bonne présentation du judaïsme messianique, de ses pratiques, de ses aspects prometteurs et des problèmes qui se posent à lui, principalement dans le contexte nord américain. La première partie traite de divers aspects de la vie de la communauté juive messianique, comme son culte, le rôle des femmes, la manière dont il aborde le dialogue entre Juifs et chrétiens. La deuxième partie contient diverses contributions sur des questions bibliques et théologiques qui sont centrales pour la définition de l'identité du judaïsme messianique et l'évaluation de sa légitimité. On y rencontre une tendance à l'élaboration d'approches du Nouveau Testament qui se démarquent de l'idée selon laquelle l'observance de la Torah serait dépassée pour les chrétiens d'origine juive. Un résumé détaillé des contributions vient clôturer le livre.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band bietet einen ausgezeichneten Überblick über die Praktiken, Verheißungen und Herausforderungen des messianischen Judentums, und zwar vorwiegend aus nordamerikanischer Perspektive. Der erste Teil bezieht sich auf unterschiedliche Aspekte der messianisch-jüdischen Gemeinden, wie Lobpreis, die Rolle der Frau sowie die Bedeutung und der Stand dieser Gemeinschaft im jüdisch-christlichen Dialog. Der zweite Teil enthält Aufsätze zu biblischen und theologischen Themen, die im Zentrum der Identität und Legitimität des messianischen Judentums stehen und untersucht post-supersessionistische Umgangsweisen mit dem Neuen Testament. Der Band schließt mit einer detaillierten Zusammenfassung der Aufsätze.

SUMMARY

This volume offers a fine survey of the practices, promises and challenges of Messianic Judaism, primarily from a North American perspective. The first part addresses various aspects of the Messianic Jewish community, such as its worship, the role of women and its significance and stance in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. The second part contains essays on biblical and theological issues central to the identity and legitimacy of Messianic Judaism and probes post-supercessionist approaches to the New Testament. The volume closes with a detailed summary of the essays.

* * * *

For many centuries, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity has been strained. The few converts on both sides were usually forced to assimilate fully. Jews who converted became part of a predominantly 'Gentile' Christian church and often lost their Jewish identity. It is therefore welcome to see the development of Messianic Judaism or a distinctly Jewish Christianity. This also testifies to the fact that in recent decades Jews all over the world have come to realise Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah while endeavouring to keep their distinctly Jewish identity.

The present volume offers a fine survey of the tenets, practices, promises and challenges of Messianic Judaism, which is understood as 'a movement of Jewish congregations and congregation-like groupings committed to Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah that embrace the covenantal responsibility of Jewish life and identity rooted in the Torah, expressed in tradition, renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant' (11, following the definition of the *Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations*, UMJC).

In the 'Introduction', D. Rudolph notes that for Jewish Christians, 'The realisation that Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel, the one foretold by the prophets of Israel, is often followed by a second life-transforming realisation: that the God of Israel calls Jews who follow the Jewish Messiah to remain Jews and become better Jews in keeping with his eternal purposes' (11). Rudolph argues that Messianic Judaism is the bridge between the Jewish people and the Church; as such it helps the Church to understand its origin and identity better (14). In addition, there is an ecclesiological reason why the Church should concern itself with Messianic Judaism: the Church is intended to be a body of Jews and Gentiles. He also outlines how Gentile Christians should come alongside the Messianic Jewish community and assist them. Rudolph also rightly emphasises the Jewishness of Jesus compared to the widespread tendency to think that the Son of God left behind his humanity: 'To love Jesus is to love him in the fullness of his divinity and humanity, and being a Jew is fundamental to his humanity. As Paul said, 'Remember Yeshua the Messiah, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel' (2 Tim 2:8)' (16-17).

Part one is devoted to the Messianic Jewish community and contains the following essays written by recognised leaders in the Messianic Jewish community: D. Rudolph, 'Messianic Judaism in Antiquity and in the Modern Era'; D. Rudolph, E. Klayman, 'Messianic Jewish Synagogues'; S.N. Klayman, 'Messianic Jewish Worship and Prayer'; C. Kinbar, 'Messianic Jews and Scripture' (this essay could have described Messianic Jewish hermeneutics in more detail, in particular how they deal with the use of the OT in the NT and the

Christian interpretation of the OT); C. Kinbar, 'Messianic Jews and Jewish Tradition'; R. Resnik, 'Messianic Jewish Ethics'; S. Dauermann, 'Messianic Jewish Outreach' (this essay could have been longer and more nuanced in view of the various proposals of a soteriological *Sonderweg* for Jews and the strong stances taken by some churches against mission to Jews and its highly problematic history); R. Wolf, 'Messianic Judaism and Women'; A. Cohen, 'Messianic Jews in the Land of Israel'; M. Glaser, 'Messianic Jewish National Organizations'; M.S. Kinzer, 'Messianic Jews and the Jewish World'; D.C. Juster, 'Messianic Jews and the Gentile Christian World'; J.M. Rosner, 'Messianic Jews and Jewish-Christian Dialogue'.

The *second part*, 'The Church and Messianic Judaism', offers essays 'on biblical and theological issues central to the identity and legitimacy of Messianic Judaism' (11): D.J. Harrington, 'Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community'; D. Bock, 'The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts'; R. Bauckham, 'James and the Jerusalem Council Decision'; C. Keener, 'Interdependence and Mutual Blessing in the Church' (a study of Romans); W.S. Campbell, 'The Relationship between Israel and the Church' (addressing mainly Romans 11); S.J. Hafemann, 'The Redemption of Israel for the Sake of the Gentiles'; A. Runesson, 'Paul's Rule in All the *Ekklesiai*'; J.K. Hardin, 'Equality in the Church' (Galatians 3:28 and Ephesians 2:14-18; '... these passages demonstrate full equality between both groups, yet without destroying the ethnic distinctions between them', 233); T.A. Wilson, 'The Supersession and Superfluity of the Law? Another Look at Galatians' ('Paul emphasises in Galatians not so much the supersession or superfluity of the law with the coming of Christ and the advent of the Spirit, but the suspension of the law's curse', 242); J. Willitts, 'The Bride of Messiah and the Israel-ness of the New Heavens and New Earth' (a study of Revelation and Isaiah; 'John does not supersede Israel's historical role when he describes the coming of the new heavens and new earth. ... in the eternal state, Israel remains at the very centre of God's work within the history of the world. Eternal life is not ethnicity-less or Israel-less', 253); J. Dickson, 'Mission-Commitment in Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament' (a summary of his substantial monograph *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]; see my review in *EJT* 15 [2006] 125-134); M. Bockmuehl, 'The Son of David and the Gospel' (concludes: 'The Son of God was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary as the Son of David – and it is none other than this elect, crucified, and exalted Son of David according to the flesh who is the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead', 271); D. Harink, 'Jewish Priority, Election, and the Gospel' and R.K. Soulen, 'The Standard Canonical Narrative and the Problem of Supersessionism'. The essays of part two indicate an emerging post-supercessionist approach to the New Testament (317) which is characterised by at least four assumptions: 'God's covenant relationship with the Jewish people (Israel) is present and future. Israel has a distinctive role and priority in God's redemptive activity through Messiah Jesus. By God's design and calling, there is a continuing distinction between Jew and Gentile in the Church today. For Jews, distinction takes shape fundamentally through Torah observance as an expression of covenant faithfulness to the God of Israel and the Messiah Jesus' (317).

The instructive volume closes with a summary of the chapters and a conclusion by Willitts. Each chapter closes with suggestions for further reading. The volume offers a wealth of easily accessible information, provides in its first part a fine introduction to Messianic Judaism and indicates how the New Testament can and should be interpreted with a fresh post-supersessionist perspective.

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Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy
Adrian Pabst

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012; xxxv + 521 pp, $55.00, pb, ISBN 978-0-8028-6451-2

RÉSUMÉ

Dans sa *Métaphysique*, Adrian Pabst s'attaque à l'éternel problème de l'un et du multiple et entreprend une apologie d'une métaphysique néo-platonicienne chrétienne. Il retrace l'histoire de la pensée des pré-socratiques jusqu'à nos jours et tente de montrer que, bien que supplantée par les structures de pensée et la pratique dès la première période de la modernité sécularisée, la métaphysique néo-platonnicienne chrétienne n'a jamais été réfutée. L'auteur fonde cette histoire de la pensée sur l'examen d'abondantes sources de première main, en apportant des critiques nuancées de leur compréhension par les spécialistes. Son étude permet d'approfondir une question qui se profile derrière de nombreux débats philosophiques, théologiques et politiques contemporains.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Adrian Pabsts Werk *Metaphysics* erforscht das fortwährende Problem des Einen und der Vielen und legt eine Apologie für eine christliche, neo-platonistische Metaphysik vor. Der Autor verfolgt die Geschichte dieser Gedankenrichtung von den Vorsokratikern bis in die Gegenwart hinein. Er vertritt die Auffassung, dass die christliche neo-platonistische Metaphysik nie widerlegt worden ist, obwohl sie von frühmodernen proto-säkularen Gedankengebäuden und Praxisstrukturen überholt wurde. Diese Genealogie der Ideen bietet eine umfangreiche und eindrückliche Auseinandersetzung mit primären Quellen und eine nuancierte Kritik sekundärer Quellen. Sie fordert zu

einer gründlicheren Untersuchung eines Problems auf, das im Schatten der gegenwärtigen philosophischen, theologischen und politischen Diskussion lauert.

SUMMARY

Adrian Pabst's *Metaphysics* explores the perennial problem of the one and the many and in so doing presents an apologia for a Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysic. Pabst traces the history of ideas from the Pre-Socratics to the present and argues that although superseded by early modern proto-secular structures of thought and practice, the Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysic has never been refuted. This genealogy of ideas offers an extensive and impressive engagement with primary sources and nuanced critiques of secondary authorities, provoking deeper consideration of a problem that lurks in the shadows of much contemporary philosophical, theological and political discussion.

* * * *

Books on metaphysics do not rank high on the 'to-read' lists of pastors or theologians. Indeed, the discipline is viewed with a certain suspicion, yet it remains that many of our deepest theological differences are in fact metaphysical in character. This is why Adrian Pabst's recent book warrants the attention of pastors and theologians alike.

Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy traces the intellectual history of the problem of individuation from the pre-Socratics to the present. Pabst mounts the case that Christianised Neo-Platonism, having rejected the unwarranted assumption that substance is prior to relation, did not treat the one and the many as contrary principles and therefore avoided many of the regrettable outcomes of the intellectual heritage of the West, such as the separation of philosophy and theology or the elevation of self-identity over commonality of being. Although it was superseded by early modern proto-secular structures of thought and practice, Pabst claims that the Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysic has never been refuted.

Pabst presents a grand narrative of ideological conflict stretching back to Aristotle's dismissal of the idea that all goods participate in a single good as a Platonic myth (12-13). This deficit, made good by Augustine, was lost again in the wake of the radical Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages. Although Duns Scotus is portrayed as something of an arch-villain, Pabst traces the decline from the framework of Augustine and Boethius to Gilbert of Porreta. By attributing individuation to an immanent rather than transcendent cause, Gilbert paved the way for the subsequent elevation of essence over existence and substance over relation. The chapter devoted to Avicenna and Islamic Aristotelianism exposes the heart of this problem:

> The implication is that the actuality of particular beings discloses nothing other than the dependence of their essence on a higher cause. Since their existence is extrinsic to their essence, knowledge of what actually existent things are does not require or involve knowledge of why *that* thing exists or what it is that brought *that* thing into actuality (164-165).

In the discussion of Suárez we are shown the problematic consequence of this move. The identification of God's creative action with efficient causality alone results in an 'exclusion of actuality from metaphysics and the shift towards immanent self-individuation' (330). What this does is effectually eliminate the relation between the actualisation of things and their *telos*. Positing an efficient cause without an end cause thus becomes merely arbitrary. Pabst continues to trace the repercussions of the elevation of essence over existence in modern thought, arguing that both Spinoza's *conatus* and Leibniz's monads fail to offer a coherent account of *why* and *how* the finite many are caused by the infinite one.

The jewel of the book is the exposition of Thomas Aquinas who epitomises the position for which Pabst argues. The genealogy of ideas within which this exposition is couched offers extensive and impressive engagement with primary sources and nuanced critiques of secondary authorities. This great strength, however, also constitutes the book's weakness, as the depth of argumentation simply cannot be sustained over its breadth. Certain thinkers receive comparatively superficial treatment; Pabst's meta-narrative slumps at these points and one becomes a little suspicious of some of his claims.

Another weakness of the book as a whole is the way a certain relationship between the order of being and the order of knowing is assumed, but ultimately left unexplained. Pabst demonstrates *that* the Divine infinite is intelligible to the finite human within a Christianised Neo-Platonist metaphysic, yet he says little concerning the *degree* to which the divine infinite may be known or precisely *how* the divine infinite may be known by finite individuals.

The censure of Ockham's restriction of 'human knowledge of divine self-revelation in the world to uncertain intuition and experience' (291), the condemnation of Avicenna's restriction of knowledge of the divine to 'the holy intellect of the Prophet Mohammed' (64), and the threefold acclamation of the 'grandeur of reason' (58, 155, 303) all reveal considerable optimism as to the degree to which the Divine infinite may be known by finite minds. This optimism is, however, left unexplained. In this regard the Reformed theologians who do not feature in Pabst's narrative yet who espoused precisely the Thomist metaphysic he promotes (Vermigli, Zanchius, Polanus, Alsted, Voetius etc.) will be of interest to evangelical readers who wish to investigate Pabst's apologia for Christianised Neo-Platonism further. These men were less optimistic concerning the *degree* to which the divine infinite may be known by finite individuals and offer a clearer explanation of *how* this occurs.

Similarly, it will feel odd for evangelical readers that one must wait until page 439 to hear Pabst affirm that 'we know the Creator God because he made himself

known to us, as the living God of Israel and the incarnate God in Jesus of Nazareth'. There is much about knowing God through our participation in the *scala naturae* before we get to this fundamentally important datum, yet the overall metaphysical framework Pabst commends is by no means opposed to evangelical convictions or alien to their tradition.

These criticisms aside, Adrian Pabst's *Metaphysics* is a tour de force. The argument is clearly articulated, the conclusions well defended, and the book as a whole provokes deeper consideration of a problem that lurks in the shadows of much contemporary philosophical, theological and political discussion.

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Science, Religion, and the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence

David Wilkinson

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; 227 pp, hb, £25, ISBN 978-0-1-99680-207

RÉSUMÉ

Voilà un excellent ouvrage qui permet d'appréhender une question intrigante se situant à la jonction entre la science et la religion et qui montre de façon exemplaire que la rencontre entre la théorie scientifique et la réflexion théologique peut fournir des résultats fascinants. Cependant, sa plus évidente faiblesse potentielle provient de l'hypothèse de départ selon laquelle on finira un jour par découvrir des formes de vie extra-terrestre. Selon la perspective que l'on adopte, une autre faiblesse vient du fait que l'auteur semble bien davantage à l'aise avec la matière scientifique qu'avec la réflexion philosophique ou théologique.

SUMMARY

This is an excellent book which sheds light on a question on the boundaries between science and theology. It shows in an exemplary way how the meeting of scientific theory and theological reflexion can yield fascinating results. Its most obvious weakness is that it is based on the hypothesis that the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence will one day indeed reveal such forms of life. Another issue, connected to the author's perspective, is that he seems to be more at home in the world of science than in that of philosophy and theology.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ein herausragendes Buch, das einen spannenden Berührungspunkt zwischen Wissenschaft und Religion beleuchtet und beispielhaft demonstriert, wie wissenschaftliche Theorie und theologische Betrachtung auf eine Weise zusammenspielen, die faszinierende Einblicke vermittelt. Dennoch besteht die offensichtlichste potentielle Schwäche des Buches darin, dass es auf der Hypothese fußt, die Suche nach außerirdischer Intelligenz (SETI) werde eines schönen Tages außerirdische Formen von Leben ans Licht bringen. Ein weiteres Versäumnis – und dies hängt von der Perspektive des Betrachters ab – liegt darin, dass der Autor mehr in der wissenschaftlichen Welt daheim zu sein scheint als in der philosophischen oder theologischen Materie.

* * * *

This is a superb book that elucidates an intriguing point of interface between science and religion and offers an exemplary demonstration of how scientific theory and theological reflection can interact in a way that yields fascinating insights. Given the apparent anthropocentric nature of Christianity, it is sometimes assumed that any discovery of extraterrestrial intelligence would gravely compromise or perhaps even invalidate the credibility of Christian faith. With sensitivity to the nuances of science and theology, Wilkinson follows Wolfhart Pannenberg in asserting that, 'It is hard to see … why the discovery of non-terrestrial intelligent beings should be shattering to Christian teaching' (169). Moreover, he argues that such a discovery may actually be fruitful for religious belief and present new opportunities for Christian theology to develop a richer understanding of the meaning and significance of crucial doctrines, such as creation and redemption.

David Wilkinson already has a proven track record of producing quality books that combine careful scientific research with thoughtful theological insights. As a former leading astrophysicist and an academic who holds a PhD in Systematic Theology, there are few people as well qualified as Professor Wilkinson to address the profound theological questions raised by the possibility of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI).

There can be little doubt that the discovery of ETI would be one of the most important events in the history of humankind, but what would be the impact on the way we as theologians think about the ultimate issues concerning what it means to be human, the nature and destiny of life and our place in the cosmos? If ETI is discovered, is Christ's atonement effective only for the inhabitants of planet earth or does it also apply to denizens of other worlds? If life were to be discovered on other planets and Christ's incarnation, as we understand it, applies only to human beings made in God's image, would that mean that God would need to incarnate himself into the image and likeness of other non-human intelligent life forms in order to render salvation effective for them? In light of these considerations, Wilkinson argues that, 'theologians need to take seriously SETI and to examine some central doctrines of religious belief in the light of the possibility of extraterrestrial life' (3-4).

Acknowledging the difficulties of establishing contact with potential extraterrestrial civilisations, Wilkinson uses humour to emphasise the immense distances that separate us from even our 'closest' galactic neighbours: 'any civilisation in our close neighbour galaxy in Andromeda which beamed a radio message towards

the Milky Way saying, "Hello, is anyone there", would have to wait a couple of million years for the message to be received, and then a couple of million years for a response of "Yes, we are here, how are you?" to make its way back. That does not present the prospect of an exciting conversation' (43).

One of the most intriguing parts of the book is section 8.2, entitled, 'God is an Alien'. Here the author discusses the various theories that have sought to interpret familiar biblical events as instances of extraterrestrial activity. In this section we learn about attempts that have been made to interpret the virgin birth as an instance of artificial insemination by an extraterrestrial being. Moreover, biblical accounts of angels in 'shining garments' are interpreted as aliens in spacesuits and Jesus' ability to walk on water can allegedly be explained by the effect of an antigravity beam. Most humorously, the resurrection was apparently achieved by the advanced medical science of an alien civilisation and Christ's ascension was interpreted as a sanctified version of 'Beam me up, Scotty!' (122). Although Wilkinson rejects such far-fetched theories, the very fact that they have been postulated demonstrates how reflection on extra-terrestrial life can stimulate the ingenuity and creativity of the human imagination. The book is also full of intriguing and humorous statistics, such as the observation that the gas cloud around a newly formed star, known as G34.3, which lies 10,000 light-years from earth, contains enough alcohol in it to make '300,000 pints of beer for every person alive on Earth every day for the next 1,000 million years!' (63).

The most obvious potential weakness of the book is the fact that it is based on the hypothesis that the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) will one day discover alien life forms. Given the nature of the subject, much of the book is devoted to speculative hypotheses, rather than observable phenomena. However, the speculations that Wilkinson makes are always well grounded and clearly extrapolated from the evidence that he skilfully sets out. Furthermore, it could also be argued that these exploratory conjectures have genuine theological value, even if SETI ultimately fails to achieve its objective, because even the speculative hypothesis that ETI *could* exist forces us to address familiar doctrines, such as creation and salvation, from a novel perspective.

Depending on one's perspective, another possible shortcoming is that the author seems to be more at home in the scientific material than in the philosophical or theological material. The book seems to be weighted quite heavily in favour of scientific analysis over theological reflection, as demonstrated, for instance, by the lack of sustained engagement with the thought of leading theologians who have reflected on the nature and significance of those doctrines that supervene on the questions that SETI is seeking to answer.

Nevertheless, this is still an exceptional book that explores with depth, clarity and erudition such complex issues as the divine imagination, the diversity and unfathomable dimensions of God's good creation, the nature and purposes of God and the role of religious belief and scientific inquiry in the quest to discover what it means to be human. As such, it deserves to be read and discussed widely, not just by Star Trek fans and sci-fi geeks, nor even just by theologians and astronomers, but by anyone in search of fresh perspectives on some of the most decisive questions concerning the nature and destiny of the universe.

Joshua T. Searle
London

Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power
Andy Crouch

Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2013; 288 pp, $25.00,
ISBN 978-0-8308-3765-6

RÉSUMÉ

Andy Crouch examine la nature du pouvoir. Son but principal est de montrer que le pouvoir est un don appréciable pour l'épanouissement humain et le développement de la culture ; il s'oppose ainsi au courant de pensée qui prévaut dans les cercles sociologiques selon lesquels le pouvoir n'est qu'un facteur de corruption. Il analyse la culture populaire et critique les théories sociologiques de Friedrich Nietzsche et C. Wright Mills. Il montre en quoi le pouvoir est un bienfait, comment on en a abusé, quelle est la nature des institutions et quelles disciplines spirituelles conduisent à l'exercice approprié du pouvoir. Sa christologie est excellente, mais son ecclésiologie reste trop peu élaborée. C'est là une approche éclairée de la notion de pouvoir vue sous les angles de la sociologie, de la Bible et de la théologie.

SUMMARY

Andy Crouch explores what power is. His fundamental goal is to demonstrate that power is a good gift for human flourishing and the development of culture *contra* the prevailing sentiment in sociological circles that power only corrupts. Crouch analyses popular culture and critiques social theorists Friedrich Nietzsche and C. Wright Mills. He describes 1) how power is a gift, 2) how that gift has been misused, 3) the nature of institutions and 4) the spiritual disciplines that lead to the proper use of power. His Christology is excellent but his ecclesiology remains underdeveloped. This is a well-guided conversation into the sociological, biblical and theological concept of power.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Andy Crouch erforscht, worin Macht besteht. Sein grundlegendes Ziel ist zu belegen, dass Macht eine gute Gabe darstellt, die der Entfaltung des Menschen und der Entwicklung von Kulturen dient, gegenüber der in soziologischen Kreisen vorherrschenden Meinung, dass Macht nur korrumpiert. Crouch analysiert gängige Traditionen und kritisiert die Sozialtheoretiker Friedrich Nietzsche und

C. Wright Mills. Er erläutert, dass Macht eine Gabe ist, wie diese Gabe missbraucht worden ist, was das Wesen von Institutionen ist. Er erläutert auch die geistlichen Disziplinen, welche zu einem rechten Gebrauch von Macht führen. Seine Christologie ist ausgezeichnet, doch seine Ekklesiologie bleibt unterentwickelt. Das Buch ist eine wohl geführte Diskussion über soziologische, biblische und theologische Konzepte von Macht.

* * * *

Andy Crouch's book is an exploration on the nature of power. The fundamental goal of the project is to demonstrate that power is a good gift for human flourishing and the development of culture contra the prevailing sentiment in sociological circles that power only corrupts. As a journalist at Christianity Today, Crouch analyses popular culture, and critiques social theorists Friedrich Nietzsche and C. Wright Mills. In four basic movements, he describes 1) how power is a gift, 2) how that gift has been misused, 3) the nature of institutions and 4) the spiritual disciplines that lead to the proper use of power.

There are many facets of power. Fundamentally, the fact that we have power issues from God who creates in his own image. To bear his image is a calling to express power and dominion as vice regents and trustees of the earth. The gift of power is for humans to take the good creation and to cultivate it, thus making it very good. While grapes are good, wine is very good. When we as image bearers take up the responsibility to care and discipline our energies toward the common good, power can be a gift that brings life to all.

The reality, however, is that power corrupts. Injustice and idolatry stem from mishandling power. There is a great lure to play god in the lives of others that inevitably robs people of dignity and dehumanises what might be truly glorious. Here Crouch outlines the cynicism of Friedrich Nietzsche's idea that everybody seeks to extend their own will to power in space and time to the detriment or exclusion of others. In brutal competition and battle, this vision of power takes the good creation and drives it to dust, even to death. How might we engage with power as it should be? How can power be used in a way that gives life, in sustainable ways? First, Crouch locates our hope in the true image and icon of God, Jesus Christ, who did not grasp after power but in his death and resurrection enables humans to bear his image. Surprisingly, the answer also depends on institutions.

One of the great insights of the book is a call to engage institutions. Institutions are vehicles that give context to the rules, artefacts and roles that individual autonomous agents play in culture. Thus, any desire to transmit faith or values to successive generations must in some way be institutionalised lest they vanish into history. Crouch is steeped in American religion and politics, and thus speaks to the ways in which virtually an entire generation has viewed any institution or corporation with deep suspicion. He sees that institutions are central to culture and actually form the primary ways in which culture is propagated. Thus, the true exercise of power is on the level of institution. Human actors, in fidelity to Jesus Christ, can seek to reform and even create new institutions that mend social ills. He recommends courageous steps toward institutional change that lasts beyond our lifetime.

The book is winsome and prophetic. Crouch's words are suggestive and invitational to take up spiritual disciplines that shape our identity and transfigure the way in which we use power. In a consumer-driven culture, Crouch issues an invitation to austerity through solitude, silence and fasting, in hope that the disciplines will connect us to the one who gifts us with power. It is at this point that I anticipated a more robust ecclesiology. To his credit, however, Crouch states clearly that the Church is the context in which we find true power in light of God's greater story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration. However, after nearly 300 pages, only one paragraph is devoted to understanding the sacraments as creative power. And while the book offers a brilliant study on the person of Christ as true image bearer, further exploration is needed with respect to ecclesiology and pneumatology. Crouch's call is a missiological one, and without further exploration of the work of the Spirit in the Church we remain hindered individuals. He is clear: Church matters; institutions matter; but what matters most is the individual. Paul's word to the church in Corinth brings light to the conversation: 'Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple, that God's spirit lives in you?' As image bearers, individuals matter, but for Paul the unity and holiness of the *ekklesia* was meant to be the dominant symbol of God's faithfulness and dominion over creation. In Scripture we have both the valuation of the individual and the primacy of the Church. It would be lovely to see Andy Crouch's next book tackle the institution of the Church in all its problems and potential glory.

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Instructions to Authors of Articles

The following are brief instructions but intending authors are encouraged to write to the Editor Rev. Dr Pieter Lalleman, Spurgeon's College, South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6DJ, UK, email: p.lalleman@spurgeons.ac.uk. All such material will be subject to peer-review before acceptance. Referees may recommend alterations (full details from the Publishers and Editors upon application).

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