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Evangelical Review of Theology

*Articles and book reviews reflecting
global evangelical theology for the purpose
of discerning the obedience of faith*



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Lausanne Theology Working Group Statement on the Prosperity Gospel

From The Africa Chapter of the Lausanne Theology Working Group
at its consultation in Akripong, Ghana, 8-9 October, 2008
and 1-4 September 2009

NOTE: This is a statement, offered as a discussion starter for further reflection (theological, ethical, pastoral and missiological, socio-political and economic) on the phenomenal rise of prosperity teaching around the world at large and Africa in particular. The points below are a digest of many points made in the course of the discussion of three papers at the Oct. 2008 and ten papers at the Sept 2009 consultations.

We define prosperity gospel as the teaching that believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the 'sowing of seeds' through the faithful payments of tithes and offerings. We recognize that prosperity teaching is a phenomenon that cuts across denominational barriers. Prosperity teaching can be found in varying degrees in mainstream Protestant, Pentecostal as well as Charismatic Churches. It is the phenomenon of prosperity teaching that is being addressed here, not any particular denomination or tradition.

We further recognize that there are some dimensions of prosperity teaching that have roots in the Bible, and we affirm such elements of truth below.

We do not wish to be exclusively negative, and we recognize the appalling social realities within which this teaching flourishes and the measure of hope it holds out to desperate people. However, while acknowledging such positive features, it is our overall view that the teachings of those who most vigorously promote the 'prosperity gospel' are false and gravely distorting of the Bible, that their practice is often unethical and unChristlike, and that the impact on many churches is pastorally damaging, spiritually unhealthy, and not only offers no lasting hope, but may even deflect people from the message and means of eternal salvation. In such dimensions, it can be soberly described as a false gospel.

We call for further reflection on these matters within the Christian Church, and request the Lausanne movement to be willing to make a very clear statement rejecting the excesses of prosperity teaching as incompatible with evangelical biblical Christianity.

1. We affirm the miraculous grace and power of God, and welcome the growth of churches and ministries that demonstrate them and that lead people to exercise expectant faith in the living God and his supernatural power. We believe in

the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, we reject as unbiblical the notion that God's miraculous power can be treated as automatic, or at the disposal of human techniques, or manipulated by human words, actions or rituals.

2. We affirm that there is a biblical vision of human prospering, and that the Bible includes material welfare (both health and wealth) within its teaching about the blessing of God. This needs further study and explanation across the whole Bible in both Testaments. We must not dichotomize the material and the spiritual in unbiblical dualism.

However, we reject the unbiblical notion that spiritual welfare can be measured in terms of material welfare, or that wealth is always a sign of God's blessing (since it can be obtained by oppression, deceit or corruption), or that poverty or illness or early death, is always a sign of God's curse, or lack of faith, or human curses (since the Bible explicitly denies that it is always so)

3. We affirm the biblical teaching on the importance of hard work, and the positive use of all the resources that God has given us—abilities, gifts, the earth, education, wisdom, skills, wealth, etc. And to the extent that some Prosperity teaching encourages these things, it can have a positive effect on people's lives. We do not believe in an unbiblical asceticism that rejects such things, or an unbiblical fatalism that sees poverty as a fate that cannot be fought against.

However, we reject as dangerously contradictory to the sovereign grace of God, the notion that success in life is entirely due to our own striving, wrestling, negotiation, or cleverness. We reject those elements of Prosperity Teaching that are virtually identical to 'positive thinking' and other kinds of 'self-help' techniques.

We are also grieved to observe that Prosperity Teaching has stressed individual wealth and success, without the need for community accountability, and has thus actually damaged a traditional feature of African society, which was commitment to care within the extended family and wider social community.

4. We recognize that Prosperity Teaching flourishes in contexts of terrible poverty, and that for many people, it presents their only hope, in the face of constant frustration, the failure of politicians and NGOs, etc., for a better future, or even for a more bearable present. We are angry that such poverty persists and we affirm the Bible's view that it also angers God and that it is not his will that people should live in abject poverty. We acknowledge and confess that in many situations the church has lost its prophetic voice in the public arena.

However, we do not believe that Prosperity Teaching provides a helpful or biblical response to the poverty of the people among whom it flourishes. And we observe that much of this teaching has come from North American sources where people are not materially poor in the same way.

- a. *It vastly enriches those who preach it, but leaves multitudes no*

better off than before, with the added burden of disappointed hopes

- b. *While emphasizing various alleged spiritual or demonic causes of poverty, it gives little or no attention to those causes that are economic and political, including injustice, exploitation, unfair international trade practices, etc.*
 - c. *It thus tends to victimize the poor by making them feel that their poverty is their own fault (which the Bible does not do), while failing to address and denounce those whose greed inflicts poverty on others (which the Bible does repeatedly).*
 - d. *Some prosperity teaching is not really about helping the poor at all, and provides no sustainable answer to the real causes of poverty.*
5. We accept that some prosperity teachers sincerely seek to use the Bible in explaining and promoting their teachings.

However, we are distressed that much use of the Bible is seriously distorted, selective, and manipulative. We call for a more careful exegesis of texts, and a more holistic biblical hermeneutic, and we denounce the way that many texts are twisted out of context and used in ways that contradict some very plain Bible teaching.

And especially, we deplore the fact that in many churches where Prosperity Teaching is dominant, the Bible is rarely preached in any careful or explanatory way, and the way of salvation, including repentance from sin

and saving faith in Christ for forgiveness of sin, and the hope of eternal life, is misrepresented and substituted by material wellbeing.

6. We rejoice in the phenomenal growth of the numbers of professing Christians in many countries where churches that have adopted prosperity teachings and practice are very popular.

However, numerical growth or mega-statistics may not necessarily demonstrate the truth of the message that accompanies it, or the belief system behind it. Popularity is no proof of truth; and people can be deceived in great numbers.

7. We are pleased to observe that many churches and leaders are critical and in some cases overtly renounce and cut the links with specific aspects of African primal or traditional religion and its practices, where these can be seen to be in conflict with the biblical revelation and worldview.

Yet it seems clear that there are many aspects of Prosperity Teaching that have their roots in that soil. We therefore wonder if much popular Christianity is a syncretised super-structure on an underlying worldview that has not been radically transformed by the biblical gospel. We also wonder whether the popularity and attraction of Prosperity Teaching is an indication of the failure of contextualization of the gospel in Africa.

8. We observe that many people testify to the way Prosperity Teaching has in fact impacted their lives for the better—encouraging them to have greater faith, to seek to

improve their education, or working lives. We rejoice in this. There is great power in such testimony, and we thank God when any of his children enjoy his blessing.

However, we observe equally that many people have been duped by such teaching into false faith and false expectations, and when these are not satisfied, they 'give up on God', or lose their faith altogether and leave the church. This is tragic, and must be very grievous to God.

9. We accept that many prosperity teachers mostly have their roots in evangelical churches and traditions, or were brought up under the influence of evangelical parachurch ministries.

But we deplore the clear evidence that many of them have in practice moved away from key and fundamental tenets of evangelical faith, including the authority and priority of the Bible as the Word of God, and the centrality of the cross of Christ.

10. We know that God sometimes puts leaders in positions of significant public fame and influence.

However, there are aspects of the lifestyle and behaviour of many preachers of Prosperity Teaching that we find deplorable, unethical, and frankly idolatrous (to the god of Mammon), and in some of these respects we may be called upon to identify and reject such things as the marks of false prophets, according to the standards of the Bible. These include:

- a. *Flamboyant and excessive wealth and extravagant lifestyles*

- b. *Unethical and manipulative techniques*
- c. *Constant emphasis on money, as if it were a supreme good—which is mammon*
- d. *Replacing the traditional call to repentance and faith with a call to give money*
- e. *Covetousness which is idolatry*
- f. *Living and behaving in ways that are utterly inconsistent with either the example of Jesus or the pattern of discipleship that he taught.*
- g. *Ignoring or contradicting the strong New Testament teaching on the dangers of wealth and the idolatrous sin of greed*
- h. *Failure to preach the word of God in a way that feeds the flock of Christ*
- i. *Failure to preach the whole gospel message of sin, repentance, faith and eternal hope.*
- j. *Failure to preach the whole counsel of God, but replacing it with what people want to hear.*
- k. *Replacing time for evangelism with fund raising events and appeals*

First Draft by Rev. Dr. Chris Wright (Chair, Lausanne Theology Working Group)

Edited by Rev. Dr. John Azumah (Member, Lausanne Theology Working Group) In collaboration with Rev. Prof. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Chair of the Akropong consultations.

This is a collated digest of points made by many contributors, through the written papers and the following discussions.

Outgrowing Combative Boundary-Setting: Billy Graham, Evangelism and Fundamentalism

Ian M. Randall

KEYWORDS: *Credibility, spirituality, inter-denominationalism, co-operation, ecumenical, catholicity, inclusivity*

AT AN EARLY STAGE in his All Scotland Crusade of 1955, Billy Graham announced, 'I am neither a fundamentalist nor a modernist, but a constructionist.'¹ Graham's statement was, at the time, a way of avoiding theological controversy, but it also provides a helpful introduction to the topic of this study. Few people have thought of Billy Graham as a theological modernist or liberal. There is little doubt that he was a constructionist, in that he played a critical part in the shaping of transatlantic evangelicalism in the period after the Second World War. Adrian Hastings, looking at English Christian-

ity in the period of the Second World War, states that, 'it was the impact of Billy Graham that was really formative for the Evangelicalism of the subsequent decades'.² However, was Graham correct in denying that he was a fundamentalist or was this simply a ploy to avoid an unwelcome label?³ I want to look at Billy Graham's background and to explore what thinking he brought to Britain during his first vis-

² A. Hastings, *A History of English Christianity, 1920-2000* (London: SCM, 2001), 454.

³ David Bebbington and George Marsden have looked at British-American contrasts. The best introductions are G. M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); G.M. Marsden, 'Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicalism', *Church History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1977), 215-32; D.W. Bebbington, 'Martyrs for the Truth: Fundamentalists in Britain', in D. Wood, ed., *Studies in Church History*, Vol. 30 (Oxford, 1993).

¹ Quoted in F.P. Butler, 'Billy Graham and the end of Evangelical Unity', University of Florida PhD (1976), 86.

Ian M. Randall, MA, MPhil, PhD, FRHistS is Director of Research, Spurgeon's College, London, and Senior Research Fellow, International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague. He has published many articles and a number of books, of which the most significant recent books are *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century* (2005), *What a Friend we have in Jesus: The Evangelical Tradition* (2005), *Spiritual Revolution: The Story of OM* (2008) and *Communities of Conviction: Baptist Beginnings in Europe* (2009). He is a Baptist minister and serves as a part-time chaplain at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, UK.

its to this country in the second half of the 1940s and the early to mid 1950s. I will seek to show the ways in which Billy Graham's outlook was in transition in this period and I will attempt to analyse the kind of evangelicalism that he helped to promote in the British context. Through this lens I want to explore aspects of the relationship between fundamentalism and evangelicalism. An understanding of Graham's impact in the 1940s and 50s is, I would argue, vital in any study of the changing face of post-war evangelical Christianity.⁴

I Graham and Fundamentalism

There is no doubt that Billy Graham's roots were in American Fundamentalism. After graduating from high school in 1936, the young Billy Graham enrolled in Bob Jones College, Cleveland, Tennessee. William Martin in his fine biography of Graham notes that at that time '(t)he unaccredited school had no standing in professional educational circles, but it was gaining a reputation as a place where Fundamentalist young people could insulate themselves from the chilling winds of doubt that blew across secular campuses'.⁵ Bob Jones saw himself as American Fundamentalism's most influential

leader, and his educational goal was for students to master his own views, with independent thinking being suppressed.⁶ The term 'Fundamentalist' had been coined after the First World War and one of the movement's prominent leaders, William Bell Riley, spoke of how Baptists had entered the Fundamentalist controversy 'knowing that it was not a battle, but a war...and that they will never surrender'.⁷ Following the 1925 'Scopes Trial' in Dayton, Tennessee, American Fundamentalists found themselves held up to public caricature and derision. However, far from Fundamentalism disappearing, it focused its attention instead on building up conservative local church life and Bible schools. In the period 1925-1930 church growth in Mississippi and Tennessee was twice as rapid as population growth.⁸ This was the fundamentalist atmosphere that Billy Graham absorbed.

Billy Graham found Bob Jones College irksome, and within a year he had transferred to Florida Bible Institute (FBI), Tampa, but the Fundamentalist environment was similar at both institutions. FBI had been set up by W.T. Watson, a Bible school product, and Watson was well-connected enough to secure high profile Fundamentalist leaders as visiting teachers. Billy Gra-

4 Some of this material, but not the argument, is in 'Conservative Constructionist: The Early Influence of Billy Graham in Britain', *The Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (1995).

5 William Martin, *The Billy Graham Story: A Prophet with Honour* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), 66.

6 Ibid, 69.

7 M. Marty, *Modern American Religion: The Noise of Conflict, 1919-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 170.

8 J. Rogers, 'John Scopes and the Debate over Evolution', in R.C. White, *et al*, *American Christianity: A Case Approach* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1986), pp. 143-8; Marty, *The Noise of Conflict*, 32.

ham was fascinated as he listened to legends in their time such as A.B. Winchester (who had a catch-phrase, 'My Bible says'), Homer Rodeheaver, who had been Billy Sunday's song-leader, and William Bell Riley. As Billy Graham drew from these speakers, he did so with the hope that, like them, he would (as Watson put it) 'do something big'.⁹ At the end of his three years at FBI, Billy Graham moved up the academic ladder. He enrolled at Wheaton College, Illinois, which although it was a Fundamentalist institution was an academically respected liberal arts college. The Chicago area was to offer Billy Graham, now in his early twenties, many new opportunities. Under the leadership of Torrey Johnson, the successful pastor of the Fundamentalist Midwest Bible Church in the Chicago area, 'Chicagoland' Youth for Christ rallies commenced in spring 1944, attracting up to 30,000 young people from the metropolis. Johnson invited Graham, who by the early 1940s had begun to gain a reputation as a highly effective evangelist, to speak at the inaugural rally.¹⁰ Billy Graham was a rising Fundamentalist star.

In the following year—in July—over six hundred North American youth leaders gathered at a conference venue at Winona Lake, Indiana (a cen-

tre well known in Fundamentalist circles), to form Youth for Christ (YFC) International, an organisation which, with its vision, verve and contemporary approach formed a key element in the growing strength of post-war American conservative Christianity. The roots of this renewed evangelicalism were in Fundamentalism, but a generation was emerging which had not experienced the battles of the 1920s.¹¹ The new, younger leadership, epitomised in the arena of front-line evangelism by Johnson and subsequently Graham, was supremely confident that what was often termed the 'old-time religion', far from being outmoded, was utterly relevant and overwhelmingly convincing.¹² From 1945 Graham was YFC's first field representative, with Torrey Johnson as YFC president. Quickly exhibiting the enormous capacity for travel and work which was to characterise his career, Graham visited forty-seven American states in that year—in the process being designated by United Airlines as their top civilian passenger—determined, as he had done in Chicago, to use 'every modern means to catch the ear of the unconverted' who were then 'punched...straight between the eyes with the gospel'.¹³ The militant lan-

⁹ Marshall Frady, *Billy Graham: Parable of American Righteousness* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 130; Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 70-1.

¹⁰ See J.A. Carpenter, ed., *The Youth for Christ Movement and its Pioneers* (New York: Francis Taylor, 1988). Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 85-6, 90.

¹¹ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 176-195.

¹² M. Silk, 'The Rise of the "New Evangelicalism": Shock and Adjustment', in W. R. Hutchison, ed., *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment, 1900-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 280.

¹³ Billy Graham, quoted by W.G. McLoughlin, *Billy Graham: Revivalist in a Secular Age* (New York: Ronald Press, 1960), 38.

guage had strong Fundamentalist overtones.

The style of the youth rallies was fast-moving and image-laden, modelled on the latest media techniques. William Martin has described them as 'a sort of Evangelical vaudeville', and highlights one act in which a horse named MacArthur would kneel at the cross, tap his foot twelve times when asked the number of the apostles, and tap three times when asked how many persons there were in the Trinity. Chairmen at the rallies, steeped as they were in Fundamentalist anti-modernist polemic, commented that 'MacArthur knows more than the Modernists'.¹⁴ Success bred success and during 1946-7 Youth for Christ became an increasingly significant force, not only in North America but in a number of other countries. An enthusiastic YFC report in 1947 reported how '(n)ews of the great youth meetings in America and elsewhere in the world reached the ears of English leaders who asked for the inspiration and blessing of God from their American friends.'¹⁵ Three YFC preachers—Johnson, Graham and Charles (Chuck) Templeton, a former newspaper cartoonist—together with Wes Hartzell, a reporter from William Randolph Hearst's *Chicago Herald-American*, arrived in Britain in March 1946. Through Tom Rees, a British evangelist, a range of evangelistic events was scheduled, and these were widely reported in America.¹⁶ George Wilson,

who was later to manage the Graham organisation, accorded British Christianity this typically overdrawn Fundamentalist assessment in the American *Youth for Christ Magazine* in 1947: 'The moral pulse of Britain was low, her churches empty and her youth indifferent.'¹⁷

The year 1947 saw a development that could have given Billy Graham a life-long career firmly within the American fundamentalist setting. The YFC evangelists spoke at rallies organised by George Wilson at the First Baptist Church in Minneapolis and met William Bell Riley, who had been the pastor and who was now well past eighty years of age and was looking for successors. Riley became very keen on Graham becoming president of his Northwestern Schools, which were made up of a Bible school, a seminary and a liberal arts college. Graham was extremely reluctant, but eventually yielded to the pressure and became, at twenty-nine, the youngest college president in America. Bob Jones College soon awarded Graham an honorary doctorate and in turn Bob Jones was asked by Graham to speak at Northwestern. Graham continued in this presidential role until 1952, but it was never a position with which he felt comfortable. His associates observed that he 'was called to be an evangelist, not an educator', a view that Graham himself fully endorsed.¹⁸ It was to be his commitment to evangelism that would, to a large extent, cause him to question the Fundamentalism in which he had been nurtured.

14 Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 93.

15 *YFC Magazine*, April 1947, 4.

16 See Billy Graham Center, CN 224, Box 1, Folder 17, BG Archives, for these reports.

17 *Youth for Christ Magazine*, April 1947, 4.

18 Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 101-3.

II Questioning Fundamentalism

Several developments in the later 1940s and early 1950s caused Billy Graham to question the Fundamentalism which initially he had taken to be, quite simply, true Christianity. The first was Graham's encounters with evangelicals who differed from him. His extended time in England in 1946-47—six action-packed months—made him realise that bridges needed to be built to those who were suspicious of the approach he brought. Whereas the reaction of most Fundamentalists to those who differed from them was angry denunciation, Graham was instinctively inclusive and irenic. An example of this was his interaction with Stanley Baker, the minister of Bordesley Green Baptist Church in Birmingham. In the 1930s Baker had been involved in an effective evangelistic team operating mainly among Baptist churches, named the 'Essex Five'.¹⁹ But while he was fervently evangelistic, Baker was wary of the Fundamentalist spirit. In 1943, discussing the Baptist Revival Fellowship—which affirmed the Bible as 'a unified revelation of the mind of God through men, inerrant and infallible'²⁰—Baker warned about 'heresy-hunting', picturing this in omi-

nous terms as 'sectarian goose-stepping'. Baker's call was for united evangelism.²¹ By March 1946 Baker, then in Birmingham, was arguing for an Order of evangelists and community chaplains. He was dismissive of Graham—a 'hand-counting huckster whose perorations drip with emotion'.²² Graham took the trouble to persuade him otherwise, and Baker subsequently urged support for Graham's Birmingham youth meetings. Numbers attending these meetings rose rapidly to 2,500.²³ YFC reports saw Birmingham as 'in the grip of a revival'.²⁴ Graham's inclusivism paid dividends.

Another phenomenon that Graham encountered in Britain to a greater extent than he had in the USA was the presence of evangelical leaders within denominations that were theologically mixed. One of these evangelicals was an Anglican clergyman, Tom Livermore, who asked Graham to run a parish mission in St John's, Deptford, London, in 1947. Graham duly donned a clerical robe, although with a bright red bow tie visible. Livermore recalled that Graham preached for fifty-seven minutes—'an All-England record at the time'.²⁵ Although there was some cultural mis-match, 234 people professed conversion.²⁶ In the English context, Anglican connections were par-

19 See REKEBAS [S.A. Baker], *An Adventure for God* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1934); Doris Wittard, *Bibles in Barrels: A History of Essex Baptists* (Southend-on-Sea: Essex Baptist Association, 1962), chapter 22.

20 *Opening of the Door to Mid-Century Revival* (London: Baptist Revival Fellowship, n.d.). The archive is held in Spurgeon's College, London.

21 *Baptist Times*, 18 November 1943, 4.

22 *Baptist Times*, 7 March 1946, 8.

23 Report by Billy Graham: Billy Graham Center Archives, CN 318, Box 54, Folder 13.

24 *YFC Magazine*, February 1947, 51.

25 Canon Thomas Livermore, oral history, 1971, Billy Graham Archives, CN 141, Box 10, Folder 9.

26 *The Christian*, 20 March 1947, 11.

ticularly important to Graham. He was happy to accept an invitation from Ernest Barnes, the Bishop of Birmingham, who was associated with Anglicanism's liberal evangelical movement but who was viewed by some as an 'extreme liberal', to talk to a Diocesan gathering on evangelism.²⁷ In 1949, at a conference which members of Billy Graham's team—including Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea—attended, there was Anglican support from Bryan Green, Rector of Birmingham. In Scotland, the Church of Scotland was crucial for any national evangelistic impact. On a visit to Aberdeen, in 1946, Graham preached at Gilcomston South Church of Scotland (which was, it was remarked appreciatively in one report, well heated) where he noted the potential of the energetic and innovative minister, William Still, and invited him to America. In turn, Still was impressed by Graham's direct style, a contrast with what Still called the lurid preaching of another member of the team, Charles Templeton.²⁸ Graham was able to adapt to situations very different from his Bible Church background.

Graham was also increasingly aware in the later 1940s and early 1950s of the role that could be played by prominent public figures or well-known personalities. He knew that

Tom Rees had been able to organise large-scale meetings in London after the war, in the Westminster Central Hall and then in the Royal Albert Hall, and had used nationally-known figures like C. S. Lewis and Viscount Hailsham. Graham employed similar methods. In 1947 the Lord Mayor of York was quoted as claiming that the Graham meeting he had attended was not only 'one of the finest exhibitions of religious programming' but was an approach which could 'lead Britain back to God'.²⁹ In America it was Graham's Los Angeles Crusade of 1949, when such celebrities as Stuart Hamblen, a popular cowboy singer, Louis Zamperini, an Olympic track star, and Jim Vaus, a wire-tapper with underworld connections, were converted, which guaranteed Graham's position as America's foremost evangelist. Vaus arranged a meeting between Graham and Mickey Cohen, the notorious mobster. Film stars began to seek Graham out.³⁰ Graham also became fascinated by political figures. After a 1952 crusade in Washington DC's National Guard Armory, Graham reported with glee, 'As near as I can tell, we averaged between twenty-five and forty Congressmen and about five senators a night.'³¹ Graham was moving beyond the normal boundaries set by Fundamentalism.

At a deeper level, Graham was seeking for authentic experience, something that Fundamentalism, with its

²⁷ J. Pollock, *Billy Graham* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), p. 64. For Barnes and Liberal Evangelicalism see I.M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism, 1918-1939* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), chapter 3.

²⁸ *History of Gilcomston South Church, Aberdeen, 1868-1968* (Aberdeen, 1968), 42.

²⁹ *YFC Magazine*, April 1947, 4.

³⁰ Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 112-20.

³¹ M. Frady, *Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979), 250-1.

stress on correct doctrine, did not necessarily emphasise. In October 1946, while at Hildenborough Hall in Kent, Graham heard Stephen Olford, a British evangelist who was to become pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York. Olford preach a powerful message: 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit'. Graham later recalled, 'I was seeking for more of God in my life, and I felt that here was a man who could help me. He had a dynamic, a thrill, an exhilaration about him I wanted to capture.'³² They arranged to meet for two days in Wales, when Graham was preaching in Pontypridd, near the home of Olford's parents. Their first day was spent, according to Olford, 'on the Word...on what it really means to expose oneself to the Word in one's "quiet time"'. This was a new emphasis for Graham. The next day Olford concentrated on the Holy Spirit. He told Graham how 'God completely turned my life inside out—an experience of the Holy Spirit in his fullness and anointing'. Graham, deeply moved, said, 'Stephen, I see it. That's what I want.' He expressed 'a prayer of total dedication to the Lord' and finally exclaimed, 'My heart is so flooded with the Holy Spirit!' Graham talked about this as 'the turning point of my life'.³³ His Pontypridd meetings apparently evoked memories of the Welsh Revival of 1904-05.³⁴ This is not to say that Graham became self-satisfied about his spirituality. Later he could speak about how he fell short of living the

Christian experience outlined in the New Testament.³⁵ What was significant was his spiritual openness, which was at odds with doctrinaire Fundamentalism.

Yet there was also within Graham a desire for intellectual credibility. This was stimulated by the questioning that his friend Chuck Templeton was undertaking. Templeton decided that he needed disciplined theological study and—despite his lack of entrance qualifications—he was accepted by Princeton Theological Seminary. He resigned from the church of which he had been pastor to begin studies in 1948. After graduating from Princeton, Templeton accepted a position with the National Council of Churches, conducting major preaching missions. Several conversations took place between Templeton and Billy Graham about the new approaches to the Bible which Templeton had come to appreciate at Princeton. This caused Graham to grapple with tough questions about the faith he preached—not least whether the Bible was 'completely true'.³⁶ Eventually Graham's response to his friend was, 'I have found that if I say, "The Bible says" and "God says", I get results.' Templeton, appalled, warned him against dying intellectually. Ultimately Graham resolved this dilemma by an experiential commitment 'by faith' to the Bible as the Word of God.³⁷ Graham

32 Pollock, *Billy Graham*, 62.

33 Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 98-9.

34 *YFC Magazine*, April 1947, 5, 24, 25.

35 Stanley High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, his Message and his Mission* (Kingswood: The World's Work Ltd., 1956), 42.

36 Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 138.

37 Martin, *The Billy Graham Story*, 110-12.

listened to others,³⁸ but he was not simply a follower of the views he heard propounded by others. It is significant that his deepest convictions came not from an attempt to find a watertight Fundamentalist doctrinal system, but from decisive spiritual experiences.

III Evangelical activism

Billy Graham was a typical evangelical activist and goal-setter. After his sustained work in Britain in the later 1940s, he commented to George Beverly Shea, who was emerging as the leading gospel singer in America, 'There is a feeling among some of us that we should go back again some day and hold a campaign not directed primarily to youth.'³⁹ The attraction eventually became too strong to resist.⁴⁰ At a British Evangelical Alliance meeting held in November 1951 and attended by a number of evangelical leaders—Hugh Gough (Anglican), Chalmers Lyon (Presbyterian), Ernest Kevan (Baptist), Gilbert Kirby (Congregational), and Roy Cattell, the entrepreneurial EA Secretary—it was reported that Graham had signalled his willingness to address British church leaders on evangelism.⁴¹ Subsequent negotiations about a visit and possible campaign were far from straightforward.

Evangelical Alliance leaders met with Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, who indicated that the Church of England would not officially support a campaign conducted by Graham alone, although it would not oppose such a venture. A meeting was subsequently held with Francis House and Bryan Green as representatives of the British Council of Churches (BCC), the British ecumenical body that had been set up in 1942.⁴² Graham's aim was to seek partners who would ensure that the proposed campaign was viable. Their theological hue was not the main concern.

To facilitate the transatlantic discussions, Roy Cattell went to the USA and spoke to the Graham team. One idea being put forward as a result of the BCC discussions was for a pilot crusade, but Graham rejected such a scheme. His goal was to mount 'the greatest evangelistic effort, humanly speaking, that the Church had ever committed itself to', in order to make religion a national talking point in Britain and to encourage the church about mass evangelism.⁴³ The Evangelical Alliance then decided to take responsibility for arranging what became Graham's Greater London Crusade—at the Harringay Arena, London—from March-May 1954. An intriguing statement was published: the crusade was best sponsored by 'a body of responsible enthusiasts outside ecclesiastical organisation'.⁴⁴ An

38 D. Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham* (London, 1971), 27-8.

39 G. B. Shea, *Then Sings my Soul* (Old Tappan, NJ, 1968), 95.

40 F. Colquhoun, *Harringay Story* (London, 1955), 17-18.

41 Minutes of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Alliance, 22 November 1951; F Colquhoun, *Harringay Story* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1955), 17-18.

42 Minutes of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Alliance, 22 May 1952; 24 July 1952.

43 Billy Graham to Bryan Green, 5 July 1952, Collection SC 9, BG Archives.

44 Colquhoun, *Harringay*, 27.

outstanding example of an activist who gave great energy to fostering cross-ecclesiastical links was Gilbert Kirby. He was then the pastor of a Congregational Church, and was involved in teaching at London Bible College (where he was later Principal), in the Evangelical Alliance, in Hildenborough Hall (with Tom Rees), and in the fellowship for ministers organised by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, minister of Westminster Chapel, London.⁴⁵ The fact that enthusiastic activists could be drawn together in Britain to support Graham was due in no small measure to the activities of inter-denominational evangelical bodies such as the Evangelical Alliance and to leaders such as Kirby.

The next step was to bring Graham to London for preparatory meetings. In March 1952 he spoke to about 700 British church leaders at a reception in Church House, Westminster. His speech was carefully calculated to play down any idea that America had the answers to the problems of Britain. A very different message would probably have been given to an American audience. Graham stated, in an address that was widely circulated in Britain, that as he looked around 'and particularly as I think of America', he was desperately afraid. He went on to argue that both America and Britain faced perils from within, the threat of communism from outside and the imminent possibility of God's judgment. He saw

the period 1920-40 as one of spiritual drought in America, characterised by a church which was 'prayerless and powerless', and by 'super-sensational, hyper-emotional' evangelism. Mass evangelism, he stated, was only one form of outreach and was largely ineffective unless conducted in full conjunction with churches in any given district.⁴⁶ The references were designed to assure British church leaders. Graham adapted his tone to suit his audience. The strategy worked.

Most of those drawn together to organise the 1954 Graham campaign were typical evangelical activists. Working with a wider group from the Evangelical Alliance, the core committee which planned the meetings in the Harringay Arena, London, included Lindsay Glegg, a businessman who had interests in many evangelical groups (and had been described rather extravagantly in an American YFC report as one who 'probably has more influence on British Christian life than any other man'),⁴⁷ Joe Blinco, who utilised Graham within Methodism and who would later join the Graham team, and Alfred Owen, the Chairman of the large engineering firm Rubery, Owen & Co.⁴⁸

45 For the role of London Bible College in this period see I. M. Randall, *Educating Evangelicalism: The Origins, Development and Impact of London Bible College* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), chapter 4.

46 Billy Graham, *The Work of an Evangelist* (London: World's Evangelical Alliance, 1953), pp. 7-12; *Evangelical Christendom*, May 1952, 40.

47 BG Center Archives, CN 224, Box 1, Folder 17.

48 D. J. Jeremy, 'Businessmen in Interdenominational Activity: Birmingham Youth for Christ, 1940s-1950s', *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No 7 (1990), 336-43; D.J. Jeremy, *Capitalists and Christians: Business Leaders and the Churches in Britain, 1900-1960* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 397-410.

Maurice Rowlandson, who met Graham at a London YFC presentation in 1948, became Graham's representative in Britain.⁴⁹ Along with these lay people were a number of clergy, such as Hugh Gough, then Bishop of Barking and later Archbishop of Sydney, and John Stott, who became Rector of All Souls, Langham Place, London, in 1950 at the age of twenty-nine, and who by 1954 was accepted by most Anglican evangelical clergy as the outstanding leader of the future.⁵⁰ Stott and other evangelical ministers would help to inject theological acumen into the evangelical bloodstream, but it is reasonable to say that to a large extent activism ruled.

IV Co-operation for a purpose

The scale of the London meetings, with an aggregate attendance of over two million, including 120,000 at Wembley Stadium on the closing day—the largest religious meeting in British history to that date—gave Graham the leading evangelistic place on the world stage. The sponsorship of Harringay by the Evangelical Alliance could have substantially narrowed his support but in the event relatively few church leaders from the wider Christian constituency in Britain openly opposed the conservative complexion of the Crusade. Graham announced that he was

receiving the sympathy and support of 80% of all ministers and churches and that opposition came from only a few extreme modernists on the one hand and a small group of exclusive fundamentalists on the other.⁵¹ The message seemed to be that Graham's confidence in what 'the Bible says'—indicative of the biblicism which is one of the hallmarks of evangelicalism—was part of mainstream Christianity. The approval of Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury,⁵² and Leslie Weatherhead, minister of the City Temple, neither associated with conservative evangelicalism, was highly significant.⁵³ Weatherhead was widely quoted for his statement: 'And what does fundamentalist theology matter compared with gathering in the people we have all missed and getting them to the point of decision.'⁵⁴ Fundamentalist controversies seemed irrelevant. The call was for co-operative evangelism.

However, there were reservations. Perhaps Graham's most famous theological critic was the formidable Methodist minister Donald Soper, who in 1955 as President of the Methodist Conference, spoke of Graham's 'totalitarian methods'.⁵⁵ *The Bulletin* of the

51 C.T. Cook, *The Billy Graham Story* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954), 50.

52 *Canterbury Diocesan Notes*, June 1954.

53 W. De Sousa, 'Billy Graham: The Controversy over Cooperative Evangelism', Trinity Evangelical Divinity School MA thesis (1979), 173.

54 Martin, *Billy Graham Story*, 181.

55 *The Times*, 24 April 1955, p. 7; cf. S.J.D. Green, 'Was there an English Religious Revival in the 1950s?', *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, Vol. 7, No. 9 (2006), 527-8.

49 M. Rowlandson, *Life with Billy* (London: Hodder, 1992), 11.

50 M. Saward, *The Anglican Church Today: Evangelicals on the Move* (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1987), 31; D.J. Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals?* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 50.

liberal evangelical Fellowship of the Kingdom movement in Methodism was worried that if Methodists became 'Harringay-minded' it could produce a resurgence of bigoted narrow-mindedness, but it took comfort from the fact that if new people were attracted to church they could be brought to 'sunder' (ie non-conservative) views of the Bible.⁵⁶ Evangelical reservations also come from some in the Calvinistic camp. Martyn Lloyd-Jones declined to take part in ministers' meetings held in conjunction with Harringay. He included within his prayer at the Westminster Chapel service on 1 March 1954 mention of the 'brethren' who were 'ministering in another part of the city', but spoke of reports from the campaign as 'most confusing'.⁵⁷ Fortright opposition was the stance taken by others who followed Lloyd-Jones' lead.⁵⁸ A variety of people, for a variety of theological reasons, opposed Graham. But Graham increasingly saw narrow attitudes as a hindrance to evangelism. As Mark Noll puts it, Graham was committed to the cross-centred and Christ-centred aspects of Fundamentalism, but 'he began to outgrow its combative boundary-setting'.⁵⁹

Graham's political views also caused controversy. In American society in the 1950s a vehemently anti-communist line was standard fare, and

Fundamentalists were among the most vehement. Peace talks with the USSR were, Graham alleged in 1953, 'most dangerous'.⁶⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that a 1954 calendar sent to Graham supporters should have said, with reference to Britain Labour government, that 'what Hitler's bombs could not do, socialism with its accompanying evils shortly accomplished. England's historic faith faltered'.⁶¹ The message caused uproar among Labour Party supporters in Britain and the explanations given by the Graham team, for example that the word socialism should have been secularism, were not wholly plausible. However, Graham publicly insisted on his political neutrality and this was generally accepted. His true feelings at the time were probably indicated when he reported back to America on the telephone for the benefit of his YFC network that communists were threatening strong opposition to his meetings.⁶² British evangelicals did not generally align themselves with strident anti-socialist rhetoric—Pollock in his biography is anxious to play it down—but Roy Cattell was for a time personal assistant to the extremely right-wing journalist Kenneth de Courcey.⁶³ Alfred Owen, appealing to fellow industrialists for funds for Harringay, suggested that the answer to communist infiltration was the militant Christianity which Billy Graham would bring.⁶⁴

56 *The Bulletin*, June 1955, 2.

57 I. H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith, 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1990), 338.

58 As illustrated by E. Hulse, *Billy Graham: The Pastor's Dilemma* (Hounslow: Maurice Allan, 1966).

59 M.A. Noll, 'The Innocence of Billy Graham', *First Things*, No. 79 (January 1998), 37.

60 *Christian Century*, Vol. 70, No. 18 (1953), 552.

61 McLoughlin, *Billy Graham*, 103.

62 *Youth for Christ*, March 1954, 13.

63 *The Christian*, 8 May 1947, 7.

64 Jeremy, *Capitalists and Christians*, 403.

Some aspects of the political rhetoric that characterised American Fundamentalism played well in mobilising evangelicals to concerted effort in Britain.

As the Harringay meetings ended, members of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Alliance expressed their belief that—as Sir Arthur Smith, the Chairman, put it—‘all other aspects of the work of the Alliance was [sic] secondary to the follow up of the Greater London Crusade’. There were suggestions of another major campaign, although it was recognised that this would need ‘a vast sum of money and enormous headquarters’. The Executive Council did not commit itself to this plan, but the thirteen members present agreed that ‘the Evangelical Alliance should regard evangelism as its primary task’. Military figures within the Alliance, such as Lieutenant-General Sir William Dobbie and Major Batt, were attracted by the idea of an ongoing spiritual crusade. With thoughtful pastoral leaders such as John Stott and Gilbert Kirby on the Executive Council, however, the Alliance was always going to seek to be responsive to the wider work of the churches in Britain, and it was agreed that ‘the Alliance had a vital responsibility of ministry to the clergy and the churches to foster and strengthen the spiritual life of the churches’.⁶⁵ Co-operation for a positive purpose, rather than negative conflict, seemed to attract wide support, although in the 1960s evangelical co-operation would be strained to breaking point.

⁶⁵ EA Executive Council Minutes, 25 March 1954.

V Evangelical theological renewal

The 1954 Harringay meetings were followed in 1955 by the All Scotland Crusade and also by meetings in Cambridge University. All of this aided the post-war evangelical resurgence in Britain. As an example of this resurgence, twenty-two out of thirty-two men ordained in the Diocese of Southwark in September 1957 were evangelicals, signalling a major advance which would take place in Anglican evangelical strength.⁶⁶ F. P. Copland Simmons referred in 1959 to the ‘embarrassing numbers’ of people offering themselves for Christian service.⁶⁷ Robert Ferm, a Graham apologist, noted that every year for twelve years after 1954, when students at the Anglican Oak Hill College in London were asked how they had become Christians, the largest single block of responses was ‘from Harringay’.⁶⁸ One Anglican clergyman who described himself as having been a ‘conventional parson’, told Tom Livermore how he had been revolutionised by Harringay. ‘Billy Graham’, he asserted, ‘has done more for me than my university and theological college’.⁶⁹ Writing in 1958, J. C. Pollock, then editor of *The Churchman*, was convinced that in sharp contrast to twenty years previously, when evangelicals were regarded as relics of an era long gone, the initiative now lay

⁶⁶ *Christianity Today*, Vol. 2, No. 15 (1958), 10.

⁶⁷ Letter to Carl Henry, 18 October 1959, in BG Archives, CN 8, Box 17, Folder 91.

⁶⁸ R. O. Ferm, *Billy Graham: Do the Conversions Last?* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1988), 108.

⁶⁹ *Decision*, November 1960, 6.

with them.⁷⁰ This degree of optimism about the future has to be seen in the context of a continuing Christian culture, which Callum Brown has analysed.⁷¹ This, as he argues, was to alter markedly in the 1960s.

Much has been written about the effect of the Graham campaigns on the general strength of evangelicalism. My purpose here is to note the ways in which Billy Graham made a contribution to the changing shape of evangelical theology. It is not that Graham portrayed himself as a theologian. Other individuals and movements made a much greater contribution in this area. Thus the rise of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), which David Bebbington sees as probably the single most important factor in the advance of post-war conservative evangelicalism,⁷² was helping to produce evangelical scholarship, and in 1960 the Methodist historian Skevington Wood, in an article entitled 'Evangelical Prospects in Britain', noted that Clifford Rhodes, director of the Modern Churchman's Union, accepted that the intellectual balance in the Church of England had been weighing down on the evangelical side.⁷³ Through his impact on students, Billy Graham played some role in this development. Harriet Harries has outlined the way in which Billy Graham's Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian

Union (CICCU) mission in 1955 sparked off a debate about Fundamentalism,⁷⁴ with Canon H.K. Luce from Durham complaining that Fundamentalism 'ignored the conclusions of modern scholarship' and should not gain a hearing in Cambridge.⁷⁵ Whether Fundamentalism gained a hearing or not, Graham did.

The Cambridge mission was important since CICCU, with its very large membership, was the epicentre of the IVF. CICCU obtained permission to use Great St Mary's, the University church. This was a period when University students were thinking about issues of belief. A survey of former students at Girton College, a Cambridge women's college, showed that 70% of those who entered the College between 1950- and 1954 said that religion had been 'important' to them during their university years. John Robinson, who was Dean of Clare College, Cambridge, confirmed the high level of religious interest.⁷⁶ Yet Graham was deeply anxious. He recalls in his autobiography that he wrote to John Stott, a Cambridge graduate who had been the missionary for CICCU in 1952, about his feeling that the messages he had prepared were 'weak and shallow'. Stott passed on

⁷⁰ *Christianity Today*, Vol. 2, No. 15 (1958), 11.

⁷¹ Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), 9-15.

⁷² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 259.

⁷³ *Christianity Today*, Vol. 4, No 14 (1960), 13.

⁷⁴ H.A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54-5.

⁷⁵ *The Times*, 15 August 1955, 7

⁷⁶ Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37-8; cf. D.W. Bebbington, 'The Secularisation of British Universities since the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in G.M. Marsden and B.J. Longfield, eds., *The Secularization of the Academy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 268.

the letter to Hugh Gough, another Cambridge graduate, who wrote to Graham telling him to keep to his 'clear simple message'. Great St Mary's and two other churches were packed with students and Graham attempted for three nights to use material which he had attempted to put into an 'intellectual framework', as he put it. He then preached 'a simple Gospel message on the meaning of the Cross', and 400 Cambridge students stayed behind to make a commitment to Christ.⁷⁷ When Graham was invited to visit Cambridge again in 1980 a significant number of evangelical leaders, such as Mark Ruston, Vicar of the Round Church in Cambridge, spoke of the long-term impact of the meetings held in 1955.⁷⁸

Although Graham spoke of his message on the cross of Christ as 'simple', he also insisted that the cross was a profound mystery. The highlight of Graham's All Scotland Crusade was probably a Good Friday sermon broadcast from the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, on BBC TV and radio. In preparation for this, Graham spent time with Professor James Stewart, Professor of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology at the University of Edinburgh. Graham was determined that his sermon should not be ill-digested. Yet beyond his theological probing was his sense of the wonder of the cross. Before preaching, Graham read and re-read the story of the crucifixion, and wrote, 'When I read of His suffering and death by crucifixion it overwhelms

me.'⁷⁹ Similarly, Graham's view of the Bible may be dismissed as naive, as certainly happened, but it is noteworthy that Graham's deepest concern was for how the Bible functioned in people's lives. Stanley High commented that unlike the 'extreme fundamentalists', some of whom seemed more concerned for their views about the Bible than the Bible itself, and 'who make it a book of controversy and division', for Graham it was 'an instrument...of faith'.⁸⁰ Stott, during the debate about Fundamentalism in 1955, wrote to *The Times*, insisting that Graham had denied the description Fundamentalist.⁸¹ Certainly, by the mid-1950s, Graham's approach to theology had more in common with an older inclusive, evangelicalism than with narrower Fundamentalism.

This change was also evident on the ecumenical front. Here Graham's thinking diverged more and more from Fundamentalism's anti-ecumenical stance. He had attended the 1948 World Council of Churches Assembly and it seems that beforehand he had believed that the WCC was going (in some unspecified way) to 'nominate the Anti-Christ'.⁸² According to Pollock, Graham actually found the Assembly 'one of the most thrilling experiences of my life up to that point'.⁸³ In 1951, however, *The Christian Century* was incensed when Gra-

⁷⁹ Pollock, *Billy Graham*, 1966, 196.

⁸⁰ High, *Billy Graham*, 39.

⁸¹ *Times*, 25 August 1955, 14.

⁸² Quoted in Butler, 'Billy Graham and the end of Evangelical Unity', 84.

⁸³ Pollock, *Billy Graham*, 47.

⁷⁷ Graham, *Just as I am*, chapter 14.

⁷⁸ John Elworthy, *Billy Graham in Oxford and Cambridge* (n.p., 1980), 6.

ham supported the Southern Baptist Convention in condemning the WCC. Graham stated that 'the hope of Christianity is the Southern Baptist Convention', while *The Christian Century* saw Southern Baptist ecumenical attitudes as 'perverse, unbrotherly and dangerous'.⁸⁴ The same issues surfaced in Britain in the mid-1950s. Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of York, wrote a militant article on 'The Menace of Fundamentalism', describing Graham's views as 'heretical and sectarian'.⁸⁵ Hugh Gough wrote to Graham about his fear of a conspiracy by 'many prominent people' to frustrate new evangelical initiatives.⁸⁶ Ramsey was in fact wide of the mark in seeing Graham as sectarian. In 1960 Graham traced the way his mind had changed; his concept of the church was no longer 'narrow and provincial'.⁸⁷ Mark Noll argues that Graham was one of the first Protestants to exploit the common ground of the Apostles' Creed with Roman Catholics and with the Orthodox.⁸⁸ This was significant for the process of evangelical theological renewal. The kind of catholicity that Graham embraced was completely at odds with sectarian fundamentalism.

84 *Christian Century*, Vol. 68, No. 28 (1951), 814.

85 P. A. Welsby, *A History of the Church of England, 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 60.

86 Hugh Gough to Billy Graham, 12 April 1956, BG Archives, CN 318, Box 14, Folder 12.

87 *Christian Century*, Vol. 77, No. 7 (1960), 188.

88 Noll, 'The Innocence of Billy Graham', 37.

Conclusion

From his early Fundamentalist beginnings, Billy Graham embarked on his own theological journey. His passion for evangelism meant that he found himself rejecting the restrictions of Fundamentalism. His inclusive and irenic approach meant that he could not be 'an evangelical who is angry about something'.⁸⁹ Graham's visits to Britain in the later 1940s and early 1950s helped to broaden his own outlook. In turn he helped to shape the advancing post-war evangelical movement, not only in America but also in Britain. Adrian Hastings writes of the 'social and sacramental' approach of Donald Soper, that it 'fits very much within the mainstream of modern English religion, just as the evangelicalism of Billy Graham does not'.⁹⁰ The argument is not convincing: Graham fitted remarkably well within the varied Christian scene in London and across England, in the sterner world of Scottish Christianity, and even in the unlikely setting of Great St Mary's, Cambridge. Co-operation and catholicity became the order of the day in evangelism. Graham was concerned that his theology should reflect what we might term today a 'generous orthodoxy'. It was during his British campaigns of 1954 and 1955 that Graham's base of support broadened. As is well known, Graham's acceptance in 1955 of an invitation from the Protestant Council of the City of New York to

89 G.M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 1.

90 Hastings, *English Christianity*, 464.

conduct a Crusade under its auspices signalled a decisive distancing from the Fundamentalist camp. Bob Jones and others hurled vituperation.⁹¹ Instead of being swayed by this, how-

ever, Graham maintained that it was possible to be a convinced evangelical while seeing that the church was bigger than the evangelical movement. In this way Graham produced, as Noll puts it, 'one of the most powerful forces for Christian ecumenicity ever seen—which is to say, himself'.⁹²

91 G. M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 162-5.

92 Noll, 'The Innocence of Billy Graham', 37.

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The Kingdom of God and Postmodern Ecclesiologies: A Compatibility Assessment

Ronald T. Michener

KEYWORDS: *reconciliation, emerging church, violence, kingdom ethics, hospitality, deconstruction*

WHEN MANY THINK of the concept of 'kingdom' they often think spatially, temporally, or historically. The idea of 'kingdom' is like 'empire'. Empires and kingdoms rise and fall, and it all depends on the power of the monarch or monarchial institution and those investing power into such positions. Of course I am oversimplifying something that is actually quite complex. Such matters involve a myriad of socio-political agendas throughout history in various contexts. When our minds are drawn to the 'kingdom of God' we should rightfully think of the realm of God's reign, God's sphere of authority both now and into the eschaton. But the notion of 'kingdom of God' in today's intellectual climate is not without problems. It may evoke images of oppressive dominance and suppressive coercion, failing to show what we may

call 'postmodern sensitivities'.¹ Yet, the theological motif of the kingdom of God in scripture is quite compatible with many postmodern sentiments, and blends in harmony with some central concerns of postmodern moves in ecclesiology. As Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger astutely observe in their book, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*, "The kingdom of God offers a reference point for emerging churches as they dismantle church practices that

1 William Schweiker, 'From Cultural Synthesis to Communicative Action: The Kingdom of God and Ethical Theology', *Modern Theology* 5, no. 4 (1989), 367-87. As Schweiker notes, "The symbol of the "Kingdom" of God is troublesome within our religious and moral situation because of its inscription in patriarchal discourse. The symbol was also 'troublesome' in the early church, but it was reworked, reconceived and re-applied. I am interested in showing how this re-working is also relevant for our postmodern climate.

are no longer culturally viable.² I will affirm that the heart of the kingdom of God is about hospitality and community, not rejection, oppression or despotism. This is not to say that the kingdom of God paradigm is completely 'violence free'. Although ultimate peace is promised as an eschatological reality, this peace comes at a cost: the death of Christ, the suffering of believers, and final judgment.

I recognize in bringing up 'postmodern ecclesiology' that I have scared up a rabbit I cannot shoot in one brief essay. If I attempt to define 'postmodern ecclesiology' then I have already boxed in a concept that refuses to be closed in and labelled. Instead of being contained, it is (to use the buzz words) *emerging, organic, and missional*. There are in fact many postmodern ecclesiologies, ecclesiological sentiments, sensibilities, and conversations on how to do and think about church in a postmodern climate. By this, I mean there are various community centred approaches to 'doing' evangelical church that resonate with the postmodern critique of extreme rationalism, dualistic interpretations of reality and the human person, objectification, absolute claims to knowledge, abuses of power, priority of economic progress, and on the list may go. The broad term emerging to describe these sentiments is 'emerging' itself. Gibbs and Bolger put it in a simple way, 'Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within

postmodern cultures.'³ How then do we speak of the kingdom of God as an instructive integrating motif for our ecclesiological concerns within a postmodern context? And what types of themes emerge, allowing us to continue the conversation?

There are two thinkers who offer us some help in this regard: John D. Caputo and Hans Boersma. In John D. Caputo's article, 'The Poetics of the Impossible and the Kingdom of God', in *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*, he artfully demonstrates how the radical nature of the kingdom of God resonates clearly with postmodern concerns mentioned above.⁴ I will also briefly interact with Hans Boersma's bold proposals regarding the unavoidable violence of the cross as the necessary means by which justice and redemption may occur, especially as seen in his book, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition*, Baker Academic, 2004.

My efforts may seem at first glance paradoxical. In dialogue with Caputo, I will attempt to deny presumptions of the inherent violent oppression of a

2 Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 46.

3 Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 44. Gibbs and Bolger go on to say that this definition includes various spiritual practices including identification with Jesus, transformation of the secular, commitment to community, hospitality to outsiders, and generosity (see p. 45).

4 John D. Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible and the Kingdom of God', in *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001). Caputo's recent book, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* greatly elaborates on this theme in Part Two.

kingdom theology. In dialogue with Boersma, I will affirm his position that there is unavoidable violence that takes place in order to establish the fullness of justice in redemption. In doing this, I will advocate a perspective of the kingdom of God that anticipates full eschatological fulfillment and reconciliation, as the impetus for us to engage in restorative acts of 'kingdom' community through the church. As members of a kingdom community we are appointed to the ministry and message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19). As ministers of reconciliation, we are called to practise redemptive activities in the public sphere as we 'incarnate' the reconciliation we enjoy with the triune God through Christ's atoning work. This is a great deal of what kingdom work is about.

I The Kingdom of God as a Non 'Objective' Reality

The kingdom of God is about God's reign and his reigning authority of love, justice, and community. It is both situated in the present (but not restricted to it) and dynamic. Theologians through the years have attempted to express the kingdom of God as primarily political, spiritual, futurist, or realistic.⁵ But it is important not to force this motif into any one category. It is a variegated, interrelated concept involving each one of these character-

istics. It is oriented not only to the present but also toward the future. It is present and revealed, but not fully present nor fully revealed. The eschatological goal of the kingdom is fullness and peace in the reign of God's loving embrace and authority. Joel B. Green astutely observes that,

In Jesus' ministry of healing and exorcism, announcement of the forgiveness of sins, ministry among the marginalized of society, and open-table fellowship, he demonstrated that, in him, the kingdom of God was already at work in the world. Likewise, while insisting on the this-worldly significance of the kingdom, Jesus also embraced the apocalyptic emphasis on the future of the kingdom of God—God's coming to bring peace and justice to the whole world—were held in dynamic tension in Jesus' message.⁶

But let us remember, the kingdom of God is not really an objective 'thing' at all. As Jesus said in Luke 17:20-21 (NRSV):

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There it is!" For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.'

The kingdom of God, or the kingship

⁵ For a concise overview see Robert H. Stein, 'Kingdom of God' in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 451-52.

⁶ J.B. Green, 'Kingdom of God' in *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics & Pastoral Theology*, ed. David F. Field David J. Atkinson, Arthur Holmes, Oliver O'Donovan (Downers Grove and Leicester: IVP, 1995), 530.

or reign of God is about truthful justice and the renunciation of oppressive violence, spiritually and physically. Jesus is a king of a different nature from Caesar, a king using the resources of 'witness' rather than 'power', pointing to a truth 'not of this world'. Jesus is not contending in the same ring, fighting for dominance in our political arenas. A witness points to the truth, and practises truthful character, rather than trying to create truth and use it to dominate and suppress others.⁷ As Miroslav Volf comments:

The ability to know the truth is not just a matter of what your mind does—whether it adjusts itself adequately to reality or thinks coherently—but is also a matter of what your character is.... Since the self cannot be taken into a power-free space in which its cognition could function undisturbed by power relations, the self must be reshaped within the power relations so as to be willing and capable of pursuing and accepting the truth. In this sense, the truthfulness of being is a pre-condition of adequate knowing.⁸

This is a kingdom, Caputo notes, that is beyond the objective demands of 'the merciless calculations that obtain in the world'. The calculable, sensible, and possible elements within the horizon of the world do not have the last

word.⁹ The 'objective' kingdom of the world looks toward the mastery of time and economics, to allow for greater mastery, control and organization. But the kingdom of God plays a tune that seems cacophonous to the rational, calculable, kingdom of the world. His kingdom is beyond our notions of possibility, beyond our own objectifications of the way things should be or should go.¹⁰ It calls for submission to the grace and surprise of God in our understandings and aspirations for personal power. It calls for a humble confession of our finiteness and sinfulness, and an admission that a detached, unbiased attainment of reality through 'God's eyes' is not possible.¹¹

The kingdom of God is a kingdom turned inside out and upside down. It seems completely illogical and even impossible. It is about a king who rode a simple donkey instead of a spirited stallion in decorated armour. This king turns the ideals of Middle Eastern patriarchy backwards as he tells a story of a celebrated return of a prodigal son who demanded and squandered an early inheritance. It is a king who washes the feet of his subjects and followers; a kingdom with an ironic tendency to go in the opposite direction of expectations. Indeed a strange kingdom. It is in many ways completely

⁹ Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 472.

¹⁰ See Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 471-73.

¹¹ See Merold Westphal, *Blind Spots: Christianity and Postmodern Philosophy* (June 14, 2003), accessed October 2, 2008; available from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_12_120/ai_103996827.

⁷ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 266-67.

⁸ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 269-70.

illogical. Yet, the kingdom of God does abide by a 'certain logic', as Caputo puts it, 'but it is a divine logic'. The world expects regularity and possibility, and 'what goes on in the kingdom looks mad and even impossible'.¹² Of course, this is the 'poetics' of impossibility, for the one living according to the kingdom has developed his/her ear to the poetry of parable, the ironic, the paradoxical. The kingdom of God often antagonizes and, as Caputo adds, 'comes to contest the economy of the world, to loosen the grip of the world's merciless rationality'.¹³

Caputo is forthrightly trying to create lines of communication between deconstruction and the theological motif of kingdom. Deconstruction, if I read Caputo correctly, is even necessary for properly yielding to the kingdom of God. In order to submit to the reign of God, we must allow the deconstructibility of our own self-made authority structures, our ideological idols, our self-built, self-confident mental security systems of knowledge. This is why Caputo says that 'the deconstructibility of things is one of the hallmarks of the kingdom of God'.¹⁴ This is why the use of paradox, as Richard France observes, is 'never far' from Jesus' kingdom language. The kingdom of God is just that, it is God's reign, and it cannot 'be reduced to a human agenda. Its values and princi-

ples constantly offend against human expectation'.¹⁵

In Rom. 14:17, the apostle Paul writes, 'For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.' As ministers of a new covenant, we display Christ's reign not on written tablets of stone, but on human hearts (2 Cor. 3:3). We do not need an objective physical temple to enter to experience the presence of God; we ourselves are the temple and the Spirit of God lives within us (1 Cor 3:16). In his book, *An Emerging Theology for Emerging Churches*, Ray Anderson points out that the shift in thinking from a merely physical temple and a physical reign to a spiritual temple and spiritual reign must have been a difficult, revolutionary way of thinking for the early Christian community in Jerusalem. The 'objectivity' of the temple in Jerusalem had a looming influence on the spiritual lives of the early Christians. Paul desired to shift the influence from the mere physicality and objectivity of the kingdom to a spiritual temple and reign of Christ. Then we see the church at Antioch—separated both geographically and theologically from the temple.¹⁶ Consequently, when the church 'emerged' at Antioch, the interest was not as much in 'kingdom building' as it

¹² Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 470.

¹³ Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 471.

¹⁴ Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 478.

¹⁵ Richard T. France, 'Kingdom of God: New Testament', in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Alistair E. McGrath (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993). France notes especially Mk. 10:13-16, 23-7 (difficulty of the rich to enter kingdom of God, etc.)

¹⁶ Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove: IVP), 108-9.

was 'in living on the growing edge of the kingdom of God, where the dynamic presence and power of the Holy Spirit was found in a community of the Spirit rather than in a sanctuary of stone and glass.'¹⁷ The mission of the church is not to build an empire to control 'but to experience and express the kingdom of God through the lives of its members as well as the various groups and organizations that they form'.¹⁸

Community centred postmodern ecclesiologies easily resonate with such concerns. Only a few hits on websites with 'Emerging Churches' will tell you that the concern is not with 'objectified' buildings and structures (do I dare say 'foundations'? whether materially or idealistically/rationally), but with communities, people and authentic relationships. The church is the living temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16) empowered to live as kingdom people with the Spirit guiding and directing our lives as we participate in the mission of the King.¹⁹

Saying the kingdom of God cannot be 'objectified' or is not of this world is not to say it is only non-material, mysteriously abstract and non-visible. We must not confuse a criticism of objectivity (especially in terms of false structures of security) to be a criticism

of reality or physical manifestations. But the kingdom of God is holistically spiritual, body and soul, the seen and the unseen, under and for the reign of Christ. Jesus' personal ministry demonstrates that salvation is whole person, whole creation centred.²⁰ Yet for now, the full, fulfilled physical display of the kingdom is deferred. In the meantime, we are to physically display the kingdom of God through kingdom living as spiritual beings in a lost world through acts of charity and justice, proclaiming peace that comes through the reconciling and redeeming work of Jesus.

Caputo also affirms that the kingdom of God is a kingdom involving the body, the flesh. B. Keith Putt notes (referring to an unpublished article of Caputo) that Caputo argues for a Yeshua that speaks to a 'kingdom of flesh' that faces the pain and suffering of disease, hunger, and oppression. As Yeshua reached out to the lepers and outcasts in his kingdom proclamations and activities, so our kingdom ethic must respond responsibly to the outcries of 'afflicted flesh'.²¹

II Welcoming, Forgiving Kingdom of Community

So, the kingdom of God has to do with the total sphere of God's reign, a dynamic, ongoing reign and reconciling work of God for and through his people. It is not about human-con-

17 Anderson, *An Emergent Theology*, 101.

18 Anderson, *An Emergent Theology*, 99.

19 Anderson, *An Emergent Theology*, 109-10. Also see Scot McKnight, 'What is the Emerging Church?', *Fall Contemporary Issues Conference* (Westminster Theological Seminary, October 26-27, 2006), accessed October 2, 2008; available from: www.jezusvolgen.nl/nederlandverandert/watistheemergingchurch_mcknight.pdf

20 Green, 'Kingdom of God', 531.

21 B. Keith Putt, 'The Im/possibility of a Passionate God: A Postconservative Mani(n)festatation of Caputo's Kingdom Christology', *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 24.4 (1997), 452.

trolled empire making agendas. Rather than being about our kingdom, our particular concerns, or our individual life; it is about a redeemed community falling more and more into God's loving, caring fold. In view of this, we cannot ignore the eschatological dimension of the kingdom. It is now, it will continue, and it will continue to manifest itself more fully in God's redemptive work and reconciliation of his creation in the eschaton. As you know, this has been affirmed in the 'already, but not yet' schema of George Eldon Ladd, Robert H. Stein and others.²²

Stanley J. Grenz, suggested that we combine the theological notion of kingdom with community in a dialectic. When God's rule, reign, or 'kingdom' is present, when his will is done, then community emerges. Or, when true Christian community is present, God's will and reign in kingdom is present. For Grenz, the notion of 'eschatological community' is God's program of bringing about a community of the highest order—reconciled people, restored creation all in the presence of a great Redeemer.²³ Postmodern ecclesiologies move away from radical autonomy to a community centredness of the kingdom of God. The individualism pervasive in society often results in sectarianism in the church. John Franke notes that this is the result of 'individualistic ecclesiologies that fail

to comprehend the interconnectedness of the entire church as the one body of Christ in the world, though with diversity in its expression'.²⁴

The kingdom of God is about peace, justice, and reconciliation in the loving community of God's all-caring embrace. But this is a community that does not remain closed to outsiders. It is the kingdom 'not of this world' that reaches out to outcasts, lepers and widows. Humility, grace and compassion are marks of this kingdom community. But this is not simply one religious community, as Jürgen Moltmann states, 'among other communities, as modern pluralism wants to have it, but the beginning of a new creation of all things and a vanguard of saved humanity'.²⁵ This is not to say this kingdom is absent of power, but it is not a power of tyrannical oppression, but an enabling power to love the unlovely, to care where nobody cares, and redeem where freedom was lost.²⁶

Of course, this kind of true kingdom living is inconvenient, often unplanned, and prone to interruptions to the self imposed 'normalcy' of a structured life. It challenges our self-imposed notions of justice, and extends the welcoming hand of mercy and compassion from the justice of

²² See again Stein, 'Kingdom of God', 453; and George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 57-80.

²³ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology For the Community of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 28-30.

²⁴ John Franke, *The Character of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 190.

²⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, 'The Hope for the Kingdom of God and Signs of Hope in the World: The Relevance of Blumhardt's Theology Today', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, 26: 1(2004), 10.

²⁶ See Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001), 291.

God. Caputo describes the kingdom of God as a 'possibility of the impossible' with an 'odd predilection for reversals.'²⁷ He continues,

The last shall be first, sinners are preferred to the righteous, the stranger is the neighbor, the insiders are out. That makes for the astonishing hospitality portrayed in the story of the wedding banquet in which the guests are casual passers-by who are dragged in off the street while the invited guests snub the host. That seems like an excessively mad party, which would stretch the imagination even of a Lewis Carroll.²⁸

This is a welcoming kingdom, where the sceptre of the King remains extended to both nobles and peasants, resident and alien, the healthy and sick, the oppressed, the ostracized. And often, it is the outcast Samaritan 'stranger' who is portrayed as the one with godly character. In fact, we often hear more about those stuck on the outside, than we do about those already on the inside.²⁹ This is a subversive kingdom, overturning, re-situating the notion of power from elitist conceptions from the hands of power brokers into the hands of the 'poor in spirit', the humble, the repentant. Kingdom becomes more the reign of justice and love as displayed in Christian community because of the shared Spirit of God reigning in our hearts. But

this 'justice' is a justice of grace, forgiveness and redemption, not a heartless 'law by the book'. The power of this kingdom is not a power to oppress, but an empowering of grace stemming from the redemptive work of Christ, to serve others justly by inviting them to join the loving embrace of a God who loves and wants to free men and women from oppressive structures.³⁰ The complete fulfillment of the kingdom of God is the fullness of redemption and complete reconciliation of creation to God.

III The Violence of the Kingdom and the Notion of Public Justice

Christians through the years have certainly appealed to the kingdom of God to justify and legitimize various interpretations of reality that have resulted in violent action. But the kingdom of God must not be construed as a grand integrating theological motif that is essentially violent. It is a kingdom of hospitality and warm reception, not usurpation or abusive dominance. All nations, cultures, races and people groups are invited to join in reconciliation with their Creator and with one another. The primary call of the kingdom is not 'self righteous exclusion' but 'inclusion of forgiveness'.³¹ However, violence is not completely absent from the work of the kingdom of God. But, as Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat contend, it is not a kingdom

²⁷ Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 471.

²⁸ Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 471.

²⁹ Caputo, 'The Poetics of the Impossible', 480.

³⁰ Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 112.

³¹ Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 110.

won 'through violence imposed on others but through violence imposed upon the Son'. Although I agree, it is significant to remember that in spite of the imposition of violence upon Jesus, he willfully endured the violence to ensure the redemption and reconciliation of his kingdom and kingdom subjects. Ironically, the violence he endured in his atonement work on the cross in sacrificial love, completely 'disarmed' the regimes of oppressive spiritual powers trying to lay hold on his kingdom.³² This is truly a story that 'redeems our material reality, welcomes the outsider, shares generously, empowers, listens, gives space, and offers true freedom'. Though it has a multiple local expressions, it 'remains the singular *missio Dei*, the kingdom of God, the gospel'.³³

It is the atonement work of Christ that actually allows this kingdom hospitality and practices of justice to take place. As Hans Boersma puts it, 'we may look at divine penal substitution on the cross as an instance of eschatological justice that furthers peace and reconciliation and, as such, offers hope to both victims and perpetrators of violence'.³⁴ Moreover, this violence was endured for the sake of redemption, not a violence imposed upon those receiving the benefits of the redemption. Yet, Christians are often called to suffer for the sake of the kingdom and hence endure violent opposition. Striving for

reconciliation and justice under the reign of Christ means that all other established allegiances must be put aside. Joel Green says it well when he writes, 'All other loyalties and commitments are relativized by the demand of the kingdom, including those of family and State.'³⁵

Proclaiming the unavoidability of violence toward Jesus in the atonement, and the violence that is often imposed upon those proclaiming the radical reconciliation work the atonement has accomplished, is not to say that the kingdom prescribes violence and exclusion. Yet through the crucible of suffering, Christians serving the kingdom have much to offer to those under regimes of violence. As Jesus has suffered, as we (if we) have suffered, we can carry an empowered message of God's grace-filled message of embrace to others, women and men, the sick, the outcasts, the poor—beyond our self-drawn lines in the sand.³⁶ We reach out and actively extend a warm welcome to all peoples, all nations.

This is not to say that we fall prey to a radical pluralism that simply ignores the emotional force of religious or theological differences among people. But we must learn to critically appropriate these differences and learn to participate in friendly engagement with those whose journey seems radically different from our own. Boersma astutely observes the ethics of Derridean hospitality; it is a hospitality of 'utter openness and a readiness to give, unconditionally, all my possessions to the

³² See Walsh and Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed*, 110-111.

³³ Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 46.

³⁴ Hans Boersma, 'Eschatological Justice and the Cross', *Theology Today* 60: 2 (2003), 187.

³⁵ Green, 'Kingdom of God', 529-32.

³⁶ Green, 'Kingdom of God', 531.

stranger knocking on my door. Hospitality means self-sacrifice rather than a sacrificing of the other.³⁷ But with Derrida the fullness of hospitality is always deferred and never arrives. It is an utter impossibility with his lack of transcendent referent.³⁸ Which stirs up this question: Are there any boundaries here?

After all, whether for good or bad, hospitality always makes judgment calls. We try to protect our families from the bad guys, and most of us don't open the door to feed violent convicts. Again Boersma submits, 'Absolute hospitality not only makes it possible for the devil to come in... it makes his arrival unavoidable.'³⁹ Hospitality has boundaries, and is always tempered by our application of wisdom. But the application of hospitable wisdom with perimeters in our kingdom communities, does not imply an ontology of violence. Boundaries in hospitality are necessary margins to keep violent oppressors of injustice at bay. We will fall short in our efforts. But with margins in check, we strive to manifest privately and publicly (through the church), the reality of the hope of the fullness the *civitas Dei* in the eschaton.⁴⁰ Boersma is not saying that this eschatological fullness of hospitality is completely realized this side of glory. But he is saying (and I am agreeing)

that it is our theological and moral obligation to serve the causes of justice in both the church and civil government as we reflect the reconciling and redeeming work of the atonement.⁴¹

By stressing this kingdom ethic of hospitality and justice, I am not advocating a theology of liberation that ignores the personal and supernatural aspects of sin and estrangement from God. This itself would be suppressing the total truth and committing further violence against a personal God.⁴² Our struggle is not simply against flesh and blood. We must not ignore the transcendent, supernatural aspects of personal, existential, familial alienation from God because of sin. I am simply calling for a holistic anthropology when we paint our pictures of reconciliation—being involved in social, or political action for the renewal of human dignity is also helping, initiating restorative acts of justice for the *imago dei*. When we help others to escape from social, political oppression we are displaying the larger reality of freedom from sinful structures as a whole. This is how we, as a Christian kingdom community 'image' the reconciling work of Jesus.⁴³ I believe if we ignore this aspect of reconciliation in kingdom work, and move only at our presupposed pseudo-spiritual understandings, we are harbouring a closet

37 Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 30.

38 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 32, 36.

39 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 237.

40 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 238.

41 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 239.

42 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 248.

43 See Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From the Civil Rights Movement to Today* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 186.

dualism. Real spirituality and theology integrate spirit and body (as we are spirit beings).

I readily agree with Boersma when he submits that Christians must participate in efforts to reform systems of justice so they reflect God's gracious hospitality of the cross.⁴⁴ In *my* affirmation of all these things said however, allow me a caveat. We must not allow our vision of justice to obscure our need to work in the context of personal relationships. We may become so encumbered (as some have) by 'politicking' for just causes, through social action and legislation that we end up (ironically) neglecting the orphans and widows in our midst. The face of the other (I hearken to Levinas) is constantly before us. I believe Charles Marsh affirms this line of thought in his magnificent book, *The Beloved Community*:

The same God who preaches the 'good news to the poor' and 'proclaims release to the captives,' 'recovery of sight to the blind,' and 'liberty to those who are oppressed,' also 'desireth truth in the inward being.' It is not only the 'great house' that is smitten into fragments but the 'little house' as well. Let us not forget that Jesus did not call prophets but disciples, ordinary people willing to lay down their nets and journey through dust-ridden towns. The dream, unanchored in the disciplines of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, becomes an evasion of love's duty in the everyday.⁴⁵

Indeed, as Christ followers, we should be involved socially and politically. But political or social action ought not to take away from our personal care and simple acts of restoration, kindness, and charity in lives of others in their 'everydayness'. To truly witness to the kingdom, it is essential to stay involved with needy persons who live next door, or those sitting in the pew next to us, not just with government programs and systems that may one day promise widespread resolutions. Personal sacrificial care and involvement is key. If we cannot stop and help the suffering Samaritan on the side of the road on the way to the legislative body, or on the way to church, or on the way to some social action committee (whatever that may look like in your country) with an eloquently drafted proposal to help with disaster relief, then perhaps our focus on ecclesiological community is skewed. Our daily responses to the sufferings and needs of others along our path are an essential part of community building.

Marsh, in discussing John Perkins's assessment of the civil rights movement in the United States, describes one of its ultimate failures as its constant preoccupation with legal injustices, at the expense of providing the spiritual disciplines necessary to maintain 'beloved community'. Hence, one might say the civil rights movement committed an injustice to a 'wholistic Gospel'.⁴⁶ It did not recognize that our personal salvation 'is the most enduring source of social engagement, care for the poor, costly forgiveness, and

44 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 255.

45 Marsh, *The Beloved Community*, 149.

46 Marsh, *The Beloved Community*, 176.

reparations for slavery.⁴⁷

The kingdom of God inconveniently interrupts us and moves us beyond ourselves, our agendas, to the other. This flies in face of the predictability of the kingdom of modernity. This is a kingdom that is truly compatible with many postmodern communitarian ecclesiological expressions. Caputo, Boersma, and also Marsh, although coming from different backgrounds and perspectives, certainly help us to see this. The kingdom community demands the practice of spiritual disciplines that must come from faith beyond this worldly affairs, while consistently 'imaging'

that faith in this worldly affairs.

I conclude with this final brief citation from Marsh:

The worldly body of Christ remains the only real counterculture, precisely because it is the place where obedience, gratitude, and praise create free, complex, and multiracial spaces—the most enduring source of forgiveness and reconciliation in a violent and balkanized world.⁴⁸

May we exemplify this by intentional multi-national, multi-cultural contexts within our churches in the postmodern climate.

47 Marsh, *The Beloved Community*, 177.

48 Marsh, *The Beloved Community*, 187.

Cross and Covenant

Interpreting the Atonement for 21st Century Mission

R. Larry Shelton

The cross lies at the heart of Christian faith and yet in a fast-changing cultural context many Christians are struggling to make sense of the atonement and how best to communicate its meaning. Larry Shelton grasps this bull by the horns and sets forth what he considers to be both a solidly biblical and missionally relevant account of Christ's atoning work. At the core of Shelton's thesis is the claim that covenant relationship has to form the centre of our theological reflections on the cross. Moving through both Old and New Testaments, Shelton argues that all the diverse metaphors for atonement can be held together by the organizing notion of 'covenant relationship'. Then, tracing the history of theologies of the cross from the second century through to the contemporary world, he sets forth a Trinitarian, relational, and contemporary model of the atonement that parts company with penal substitutionary accounts.

R. Larry Shelton is Richard B. Parker Professor of Wesleyan Theology at George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Portland

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Paternoster, 9 Holdom Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1QR, UK

Evangelical Catholicity—A Possible Foundation for Exploring Relational Responsibility in a Global Community?

John Beckett

KEY WORDS: *partnership, mission, church, ecclesiology, theological anthropology, identity*

Introduction

It was the day after Christmas, 26 January 2004. My wife and I had just enjoyed a wonderful Christmas day at Whistler in Canada, one of the most beautiful places in the world. We were staying in a spacious and well appointed condominium on the mountain with family and friends. We had enjoyed a wonderful Christmas meal, both plentiful and tasty. There was much to be thankful for.

As I recall, it was nearing lunch time and we were about to settle down for another long meal. I went into our bedroom for a few minutes and turned on the television. I was shocked by images of the tsunami in South East Asia appearing on the screen. There

was mass devastation and loss of life. After a short time I was called to lunch. I remember my father-in-law, who as far as I know was unaware of the terrible devastation of the tsunami, praying a simple and beautiful prayer thanking the Lord for the many blessings that he had lavished upon us in these days.

I was struck by the tension of that day and that moment. Certainly the prayer was an appropriate one. I agreed that the Lord's gracious provision was lavish and worthy of exuberant thanks, but how could we pray that prayer and be thankful when other lives were being devastated? Strangely my mind did not turn to questions about God and suffering as one might expect. Rather, the question at the front of my mind was whether I personally had any responsibility to respond in this situation. I was certain that it was the responsibility of the people of God to respond in this situation. I also had a clear understanding of

John Beckett is the National Coordinator of Micah Challenge Australia. He was previously Partnerships Director for African Enterprise. John completed his Masters in Theology at Regent College in Vancouver and now speaks and writes on the global responsibility of Christians and churches. A leader, Bible teacher and mentor, John lives in Sydney with his beautiful wife Allie.

myself as one of the people of God, but was it *my* responsibility? If so, in what way?

My perception is that many Evangelicals, when confronted with a question like this, consider first the pragmatics of the situation. For example, the tendency is to ask questions like, 'What is the most strategic use of resources?' or 'Who is best located to respond physically to this situation?' While there is nothing wrong with these questions, do the people asking them have any theological understanding of why they are asking such questions, or any theological motivation for responding, or not responding, as the case may be?

When we see great need, where does the strength to engage come from when our first tendency may be to disengage? Where does the capacity to love extraordinarily come from, particularly when one feels disconnected from the specific context of another's need? The events of that day prompted the question before us in this brief case study; *How do believers and churches determine their responsibility to others within and beyond the people of God?*

The answer to that question lies in two more foundational questions. The first of these questions is 'What is my relationship to others?' Humans do not consider themselves responsible for any and every person, nor should they. Rather, responsibility is connected to the nature and strength of the relationship that exists between two people or within a community of people. The second foundational question is, 'What is my purpose?' An individual's understanding of their purpose for existence determines the purpose of their relationships and whether they have

responsibility in certain situations. Purpose, for all humans, but more particularly and consciously for believers, is determined by God's purpose in creating them. Christian believers do not exist only for self; they exist to participate in the *missio Dei*, God's missional movement to all of his creation.

Catholicity—The Potential for an Integrated Approach?

Broadly speaking, the first of the above questions has to do with being or identity and the second with purpose. Too often, in both theological discourse and missional reflection, identity has been divorced from purpose. Determining responsibility for individual believers requires the bringing together and integration of these two.¹ I submit that such integration is possible if we focus on a particular understanding of catholicity.

Before discussing catholicity further it is necessary for me to outline a number of key assumptions in my argument. In this discussion I assume that *it is the mission of individual believers to live in the local church as an anticipation of the catholic people of God, to invite others into that community*, and ultimately to become that community. This statement affirms the local church as the normative New Testament community for the expression of human relational-

¹ However, there are various nuances to this meaning derived from the variety of contexts in which it was used in classical Greek. For outlines of the usage and derivation of the term, see H. Kung, *The Church* (New York: Image Books, 1967), 296-300 and A. Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 14-29.

ity. It affirms that those who are included in Christ through the activity of the Holy Spirit in the present are already included in the eschatological community of the people of God. Therefore, membership of that community forms part of the believer's identity within history. That community will be the fulfillment of the *imago Dei*, perfectly imaging the relational life of the Trinity. Finally, the statement affirms that an essential part of the life of the individual believer is inviting people into the community of the people of God, because the church in history is always incomplete in reference to the catholic people of God.

The particular component of this statement that is our focus here is the *catholicity* of the people of God. Miroslav Volf's perspective on catholicity holds potential, I believe, to help us begin to answer the question before us. Volf goes beyond the usual definitions of catholicity as *universal expansion* of the church or *complete faith*, and argues that catholicity is best understood as *fullness*. *Kat'holou*, from which both the word catholicity and the concept are derived, means a whole, not missing any of the parts which necessarily constitute it.² Volf therefore supports a qualitative understanding of catholicity which is necessarily understood in relation to a certain reference point or goal. While it is true that a local church can be called catholic because it has within it everything it needs in order to be *whole* in reference to ecclesiality,³ its goal is not

merely to be church and its own boundaries are not the limits of its telos. Volf states that 'a local church can be catholic only by way of a connection with an ecclesiological whole transcending it'.⁴ Because church is the gathered *people* of God, the *telos* of the church, its ultimate end, is to be that same *people* gathered together and completed in the eschaton. This is the only gathering of God's people that will be complete and therefore *whole*. Therefore the eschatological people of God is the referent point for the catholicity of any church. Consequently a local church must always be moving toward, and living in light of, the catholicity of the people of God.

If one supports this definition of catholicity, then catholicity and mission are mutually determinative. The missional nature of the church has its foundation in the catholic identity of the eschatological people of God and the missional activity of the church becomes the means by which the church anticipates and ultimately fulfills its catholic identity. The catholic identity of the church requires that it continually moves beyond itself, meaning that the church's catholic identity becomes a motivation for mission. The anticipation of this catholicity requires the intentional formation of relationships within the body. These relationships form part of the means for mission. It is only *in relationship* and *by way of relationship* that the church can actively play its part in the mission of God. In this paradigm, mission becomes the God-given and God-inspired means by which the church

2 That is, the whole Christ and the whole means of salvation.

3 M. Volf, *After our Likeness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 272.

4 Volf, *After*, 264ff.

moves from its incomplete and broken nature in the present to its true and whole nature as the people of God in the eschaton. That is to say, the church cannot be faithful to a local/global missional mandate unless it is actively *living out* and *pursuing* its catholicity.⁵

There are two dimensions to the church's anticipation of catholicity. Participation in the *missio Dei* is both the temporal expansion associated with church growth models for mission and also the healing of brokenness in relationships through intentional reconciliation. The mission of God will be effective only if relationships *within* the community, and those between believers in the community and those *beyond* the community, are properly functioning. Properly functioning relationships within the community are necessary if the church is to fulfil its missional mandate to be salt and light by modelling a redeemed community, and also to be a prophetic witness to society.⁶ Engagement in relationships beyond the boundaries of the church community is necessary in order to be faithful to the call to proclaim and witness to those outside the boundaries of the church who need to hear.

Catholicity and Relational Responsibility

This perspective on catholicity only reinforces that there is a global inter-

dependence between believers as we participate in the *missio Dei*. This global interdependence is based on a common Spirit-mediated identity and a common Spirit-mediated mission. Inclusion in the people of God and a commitment to this common goal is intrinsic to the salvation of all individual believers. It is a necessary part of the life of the believer and the churches of which they are a part. The local church is the normative venue for the believer to enact the relational responsibility that goes hand in hand with this interdependence. However, a broadening of relational responsibility beyond the local church is also necessary.

This represents little more than a beginning point. The application of this thinking to specific contexts such as the one outlined at the beginning of this discussion is by no means simple. Believers cannot, nor are they called, to love all their brothers and sisters in the same way. Within history there are differing levels of relational responsibility between all people. Both Old and New Testament authors assume these distinctions. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel is clearly chosen by God and set apart (Ex. 6:7; Deut. 7:6; 2 Chr. 7:14). There is a distinction in relational responsibility within the nation of Israel and beyond it (Ruth 1:16-2:7). The Mosaic Law outlines different designations and responsibilities concerning one's family as opposed to servants, widows, orphans and neighbours.

In the New Testament some of these relational distinctions are broken down. Certainly the way is opened for all people to be members together in the people of God (Gal. 3:26-29). The distinctions between slave and free,

⁵ This is an already/not yet tension. Believers-in-relation are catholic and therefore that catholicity takes on concrete forms. At the same time, the fulfillment of that catholicity in the eschaton, although guaranteed, must be pursued.

⁶ See Mt. 5:13-16.

male and female, Jew and Gentile are broken down and all are made *one* in Christ. Yet at the same time there is the acknowledgement in the pages of the New Testament that within history various distinctions in relational responsibility remain. In particular there is a responsibility to care for one's own family (1 Tim. 5:4-8) and a heightened responsibility for mutual care amongst believers (Gal. 6:10). There are also both local examples of interdependence and broader examples of interdependence. (See Acts 2: 44-47; 2 Cor. 8-9).

In scripture believers are commanded both to *love our neighbour* and to *go into all the world*. A tension exists between these two realities which must somehow be maintained. Although the world is always in view, Jesus explicitly states in Luke 10 that the key to inheriting eternal life is found in the fulfillment of the two great commandments: that is, through the two-fold love of God and neighbour. He goes on to exegete the love of neighbour by telling the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10:29). There is both *limitation* and *expansion* in the story.

While the Samaritan responds to one who comes into his immediate sphere of influence, there is no scope for humans to impose their own limitations of culture, nationality, age, gender or social status on the determination of who our neighbour is. We must always be willing to expand our sphere of influence beyond its present boundaries in response to the needs and opportunities God presents to us. Like the Samaritan, our love of neighbour is a way of living rather than a set of regulations.

For too long, I believe, evangelicals have motivated the believers in our churches into action by propagating a simplistic and pragmatic mission-focused alliance where the perceived end of mission justifies many and varied means. We need to recapture our identity as the catholic community of God's people. If we allow that identity to be both the foundation that shapes us and the goal toward which we work, perhaps we open ourselves up to be used by the Spirit to more faithfully and effectively represent Christ to a watching world.

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Humanity's Devil

Carolyn Eng Looi Tan

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THROUGH THE EYES of modern digital communication, human ingenuity to create pain and suffering appears bottomless. Does this propensity derive from the influence of an evil cosmic being? Is the devil a metaphysical reality or a conceptual scapegoat for human wickedness? If it is a reality, how can the devil co-exist with a holy and omnipotent God? The traditional Christian view of the devil as a fallen angel who deceptively led and imprisoned humans in sin, and who heads the demonic realm against God, does not appear to be clearly evidenced in canonical Hebrew scripture.¹ Instead, the function of 'adversary' or 'accuser' (*šātīān*) is ascribed to different humans and angelic beings, named or unnamed, who may be singular or plural.² Indeed, it has been proposed

that the evolution of the concept of the devil in Jewish religious thought has taken place over centuries, with critical milestones occurring during the Babylonian exile, and the emergence of Apocalyptic Judaism during the period of Greco-Roman hegemony.³ Furthermore, it appears that first century Christians may have inherited the concept of the devil from Apocalyptic Judaism.⁴ Recent scholars who have examined the conceptual development of the devil diverge in five ways within a spectrum of thought regarding its ontogeny, namely, that the devil is an ideological myth, or a celestial functionary of God, or the projection of human evil, or a fallen angel, or God's evil and co-equal opposite. This paper evaluates representative scholarship in the light of scripture and contemporary theological perspectives to propose an understanding of the devil's

1 Nicholas Thomas Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (SPCK: London, 1992), 254.

2 Peggy Lynne Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: šātīān in the Hebrew Bible*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 43 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 25-31, 33-34.

3 Gerald Messadié, *A History of the Devil* (New York: Kodansha, 1997), 41, 78-90, 240.

4 Messadié, *A History of the Devil*, 234; Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 42-43; Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan & The Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1987), 10; Wray, T.J. and Gregory Mobley, *The Birth of Satan: Tracing the Devil's Biblical Roots* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 165.

ontogeny that does not deny the goodness or supremacy of God, and explores its implications on Christian life and ministry.

I Theories of the Devil's Ontogeny

1. The devil as an ideological myth (*Kersey Graves; Elaine Pagels*)⁵

Kersey Graves bases his objection to the reality of the devil on the fact that he sees no description of such a person in canonical Hebrew scripture, and he rightly observes that the monotheistic Jews ascribe evil to God himself. He views dualistic ideas concerning the good-evil struggle from ancient Hindu, Assyrian, Egyptian, Peruvian, Grecian and Persian mythology as 'heathen',⁶ and believes that these concepts found their way into Jewish apocryphal writings, and thereby into the New Testament. Graves believes that the 'whole train of ideas and doctrines' concerning the devil have been formulated and preached in order to frighten people into piety.⁷ He is convinced that the devil is a man-made theological construct to absolve God of the responsibility for evil in this world, and concludes that a deity who punishes humans eternally for temporal sins is

one who is 'a thousand times worse and more fiendish than the wickedest of his creatures'.⁸ Although he can be criticised for his scant regard for other religious paradigms, Graves accurately pinpoints the tension within monotheistic theodicy, and he voices the thoughts of many people today.

Elaine Pagels also believes that the devil was contrived by human minds. She maintains that in an era of increasing conflict, the evangelists recounted Jesus' life and message in polemical terms, and the devil represented opposition from *within* the community.⁹ For example, Mark describes Jesus as the one who has been sent by God to contend against the evil demonic forces that infect and possess people (Mk. 3:1-5,7-12), and identifies the coalition of the Pharisees, Herodians and scribes as Satan's agents energised against him (Mk. 3:6, 23-27).¹⁰ Matthew inverts traditional enemies and allies, and with ethnicity no longer a valid criterion for salvation, Jesus divides humans into those belonging to God's kingdom and those belonging to 'the evil one' (Mt. 13:37-39).¹¹ The demonic vilification of the Jewish leaders intensifies in the other gospels, and Jesus denounces his opponents as the devil's progeny (Jn. 8:44).¹² Pagels correctly perceives that this trend of demonising one's enemies has led to devastating consequences in the his-

5 Kersey Graves, *Biography of Satan: Exposing the Origins of the Devil* (California: The Book Tree, 1999); Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

6 Graves, *Biography of Satan*, 29, 63-69, 91.

7 Graves, *Biography of Satan*, 143.

8 Graves, *Biography of Satan*, 118-119, 124, 127.

9 Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, 34, 111.

10 Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, 19-20, 22.

11 Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, 82-83.

12 Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, 88.

tory of the church. However, her subsequent conclusion that the devil must therefore be simply 'a reflection of how we perceive ourselves and those we call "others"'¹³ ignores the very real issues of experienced evil.

For both scholars, it appears that the chronological development in the concept of personified evil is sufficient proof of its human ideation. Hence they perceive anthropocentric motivations for its development. Graves sees the devil answering the need of the religious establishment to terrorise a superstitious laity into pious submission, while Pagels believes that demonisation is society's response to external threat, rallying a community and assuaging consciences of violent acts against demonised foes. Indeed, Messadié takes it further by declaring that the devil himself is nothing but political propaganda dressed up in religion.¹⁴ The testimony of the New Testament writers regarding the existence of a personal devil is then viewed as deluded and misleading. In a purely anthropological paradigm, their conclusions may well be valid. However, in doing away with the devil, they also do

away with God, because the acknowledgement of a transcendent benevolent principle raises the problem of existential evil. Even if the devil is viewed as myth, Bultmann is surely correct in pointing out that mythology does not necessarily imply falsehood, but that it 'expresses a certain understanding of human existence'.¹⁵

2. The devil as a celestial functionary of God (T.J. Wray and Gregory Mobley; Henry A. Kelly)¹⁶

That celestial adversaries exist in the Old Testament, usually as God's functionaries, is well recognised. Indeed, God is portrayed as the one who sent the evil spirit that plagued Saul (1 Sam. 16:14-23, 18:10) and the lying spirit that deceived Ahab's prophets (1 Kgs. 22:20-23), and who both makes weal (*ōšeh šalôm*) and creates woe (*vûḥôrē rā*) (Isa. 45:7). Even Job's Satan remains one of the 'sons of God' (Job 1:6, 2:1), acting as an *agent provocateur* and undertaking his evil tasks with the permission of God (Job 1:12, 2:6). In Zechariah's fourth vision, Satan is the heavenly prosecutor (Zech. 3:1-5).

Against the perspective that in the New Testament Satan's status has been given an entirely different role as the powerful Prince of Darkness, T.J. Wray and Gregory Mobley assert:

13 Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, xvii.

14 Gerald Messadié locates the emergence of the concept of the embodiment of unmitigated evil in Persia in the sixth century B.C.E, with the creation of the evil twin-god, Ahriman, by a priest, Zoroaster. In changing the religious focus to ethical good and evil, he made religion both transcendent and also personally relevant, thereby undermining the cultic power of the ruling class and consolidating power within the priesthood. 'It was politics that gave birth to the Devil, and the Devil is indeed a political invention' (Messadié, *A History of the Devil*, 87).

15 Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 19.

16 Henry Angsar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Even though Satan's character is more clearly defined in the New Testament than it had been in the Hebrew Bible....his essential function in the Bible remains unchanged: he is still the trouble-maker, the stumbling block, the Adversary.¹⁷

They correctly deduce that in the synoptic accounts of Jesus' temptations Satan is still the tempter, tester and adversary, trying to corrupt and divert the messianic mission. '[T]he Satan of the temptation stories is a descendent of the overzealous prosecutor in Job and Zechariah.'¹⁸ Likewise, where Jesus addresses Peter as Satan (Mk. 8:32-33; Mt. 16:22-23), it is because he is a stumbling block and not because he is the Prince of Evil.¹⁹ Wray and Mobley rightly point out that in the undisputed Pauline letters, Paul's infrequent references to the devil portray the latter as an obstructor (1 Thes. 1:18), tester (2 Cor. 12:7), tempter (1 Cor. 7:5-9), deceiver (2 Cor. 2:11, 11:13-15) and punisher (1 Cor. 5:5).²⁰ They see that it is only in Revelation that Satan becomes the Titan of

evil.²¹ They conclude that Satan is a 'heavenly lackey gone bad' but who nevertheless has the important theological function of cosmic scapegoat deflecting blame for evil away from God. However, Wray and Mobley avoid committing themselves to the existence of an actual entity behind this Satan, and hedge by stating that 'Satan is real in the sense that evil is real'.²²

Henry Kelly agrees with Wray and Mobley that in the gospels and undisputed Pauline letters Satan largely retains his functions in the Old Testament,²³ and suggests that 'Satan and God are working hand in glove with each other for the same purpose'.²⁴ For example, Satan snares those who reject the truth, and 'God sends them a powerful delusion' (2 Thes. 2:11),²⁵ and Paul finds divine empowerment through Satanic testing (2 Cor. 12:7-8). Kelly seems more convinced than Wray and Mobley that Satan is a real cele-

17 Wray, and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 113.

18 Wray and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 124. Interestingly, no verbal confrontation between Jesus and Satan appears in the Fourth Gospel, and moreover, it is people rather than demons who oppose Jesus. This raises the question regarding the historicity of the temptation narratives in the synoptic gospels. Were they metaphors used to symbolise Christ's struggle with the forces of evil?

19 Wray and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 123.

20 Wray and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 129-136. They identify Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon as undisputed Pauline letters.

21 Wray and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 147.

22 Wray and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 175-176, 180.

23 Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, p. 62. He perceives the 'Original Biography of Satan' (Satan as celestial functionary) in both Old and New Testaments. He rejects the 'New Biography of Satan' (Satan as fallen angel) because he traces its creation, during the Patristic and medieval eras, from Jewish apocryphal writings (324).

24 Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, p. 120. Even in the other New Testament epistles the devil is portrayed as the accuser (1 Tim. 5:15), adversary (1 Pet. 5:8,9), deceiver (2 Thes. 2:9-10; 1 Tim. 3:7, 5:15; 2 Tim. 2:26) and punisher/rehabilitator (1 Tim. 1:20).

25 All scripture passages are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989).

tial being carrying out God-ordained tasks. Unfortunately, he fails to explore the theological implication of God's creation of an Accuser of humanity. Although he rejects the idea of a pre-mundane angelic rebellion for its lack of scriptural evidence, his own diabolology that sees Satan as a wayward celestial functionary is not greatly different.

The strength of this perspective is that it provides some consistency between the Old and New Testaments with regards to Satan, and there is sufficient biblical support for it.²⁶ In many passages, Satan appears to be functioning with God's permission, and even in obedience to the divine plan. Luke makes the latter point implicitly in his statement 'When the devil *had finished every test...*' (Lk. 4:13, my italics).²⁷ However, these authors admit that Satan appears to grow in power and evil through the New Testament. The weakness of limiting Satan's role to that of God's servant is that his divinely ordained work as tester, tempter and deceiver of humanity poses a severe challenge to the belief that 'God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one' (Jas. 1:13), that 'God is light and in him there is no darkness at all' (1 Jn. 1:5), and 'If you

know that [God] is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right has been born of him' (1 Jn. 2:29). Nevertheless, the idea of Satan as divine servant resonates with Rabbinic Judaism which maintains that God implants within humans a duality of inclinations, towards good (*yēs*er hatôb*) or evil (*yēs*er hara*), and Satan's task is to help humans learn to overcome the latter by placing temptations before them.²⁸

3. The devil as the projection of human evil (*Walter Wink; Nigel Wright*)²⁹

Walter Wink agrees that the biblical testimony promotes two ideas of Satan, as servant of God (*agent provocateur*) and as the Evil One. In overstepping his mandate as God's servant, Satan evolves into God's powerful evil foe.³⁰ However, Wink differs from

28 Regarding the duality of the divine nature, Philip Davies wrote: 'Indeed, the rabbis were capable of suspecting that the same was true of God' (in 'The Origin of Evil in Ancient Judaism', *Australian Biblical Review*, 50 [2002]: 43-54, 43). Even stronger was the statement by C.G. Montefiore and H. Loewe: 'Though God created the *Yetser ha-Ra*, he created the Law as an antidote... against it' (in *A Rabbinic Anthology* [New York: Schocken, 1974], 295).

29 Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament. The Powers: Volume One* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence. The Powers: Volume Two* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986). Nigel Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side: Putting the Power of Evil in its Place* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003).

30 Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 11-30.

26 In his recent overview of Satan as God's servant in both the Old and New Testaments, Sydney H.T. Page succinctly emphasises that Satan's work is used by God to accomplish his good purposes (in 'Satan: God's Servant', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50 [2007]: 449-465).

27 Wray and Mobley, and Kelly, overlook the significance of this portion of the verse that seems to indicate that Satan is completing a predetermined program of testing.

Wray, Mobley and Kelly, in that he sees human choices, to succumb to or to resist temptation, modulating Satan's performance between one and the other. Not only is this modulation occurring at an individual level, but also corporately.³¹ Drawing on his extensive study on the meaning of the power terminology in Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 1:16 and Psalm 54:1,³² Wink is convinced that Israel's religion is a complex henotheism 'in which, under the sole sovereignty and permission of God, vying forces are able to prevail against one another to determine the unfolding of history'.³³ He believes that the 'angels' appointed over each nation (Deut. 32:8-9; Dan. 10:13, 12:1) symbolise corporate spirituality and personality.³⁴

Wink interweaves his Satan-modulation theory and the 'angel of the nations' motif with the Jungian concept that Satan is the projection of the evil within the human psyche. He concludes that the spiritual powers of Ephesians 6:12 and Colossians 1:16 refer not to heavenly entities but 'the inner aspect of material or tangible manifestations of power' by which he means the psychic energy inherent within individuals, organisations and nations,

and also within all material things.³⁵ He sees Satan as 'the actual power that congeals around collective idolatry, injustice, or inhumanity, a power that increases or decreases according to the degree of collective refusal to choose higher values'.³⁶

In a nutshell, Wink believes that Satan is what humans have made it to be. Satan has metamorphosed from the divine policeman and God's intelligence-gatherer into an autonomous suzerain. Satan's 'fall' took place, not in time nor in the universe, but within the human psyche.³⁷ While not a person, Satan is nonetheless real, and exists intra-, supra-, and trans-humanly 'as a profound *experience* of numinous, uncanny power in the psychic and historic lives of real people'.³⁸ Interestingly, he interprets demon possession as the state wherein an individual bears the brunt of the collective malady.³⁹ Bultmann holds a similar view in that he sees Satan as a power made up of 'all particular evils' that grow out of human actions, and which 'mysteriously enslaves every member of the human race'.⁴⁰

The strengths of Wink's innovative perspective are that it incorporates

31 Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 32.

32 By power terminology Wink identifies the terms 'rulers', 'authorities', 'cosmic powers', 'thrones', 'dominions' and 'name'.

33 Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 28.

34 Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 88-93. He identifies the 'angels of the nations' as a special category of the *bene elohim*, the 'sons of God', who are members of the divine council (1 Kgs. 22:19-22; Job 1:6,2:1; Ps. 82:1, 6-7, 89:5-7; Isa 14:13; Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 109).

35 Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 104.

36 Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 105.

37 'Satan has become the world's corporate personality, the symbolic repository of the entire complex of evil existing in the present order' (Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 24).

38 Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 25. He provides the example of the mob spirit to illustrate the trans-human aspect of Satan (Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 105).

39 Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 50.

40 Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, 21.

both polarities of Satan's career in this world, allowing for its changing status in the biblical testimony, and recognises human responsibility without removing the reality of a supra-human evil power. In addition, it integrates some valid observations about human psychology and experience, and brings the spiritual realm closer to earth. However, Wink does not explain adequately how psychic energy, no matter how powerful, can think and plan. The language used to describe the devil, particularly in the New Testament, is distinctly personal, and Satan is portrayed as intelligent (2 Cor. 2:11, 11:14; Eph. 6:11; 1 Pet. 5:8).

Nigel Wright recognises that there is 'an irrational, surd-like power at work in human society' and observes that evil is most obvious and concrete in sinful human behaviour.⁴¹ Even in scripture, the devil is portrayed by his activity, and is never described as having been made in the image of God. Evil is seen as the forceful 'nothingness' of black holes, as discreativity and chaos that negates true creativity, and as having no existence apart from God because it exists parasitically.⁴² Logically then, on the day of redemption, the devil will cease because evil is no more.⁴³ He agrees with Wink that the devil's origin lies within corporate humanity, from which he draws strength.⁴⁴

Wright believes that there is greater objective substance to the devil as a knowing, thinking, willing and acting agent than Wink allows, although both struggle with the personhood terminology used within the biblical description of the devil. He registers his strong discomfort with Wink's Satan-modulation theory that assumes the devil has a legitimate function as the divine adversary. Wright argues that such a doctrine would impugn evil to the will of God, which he rejects as monistic.⁴⁵ Therefore he returns to 'the notion of metaphysical evil, the idea that there was an aberration in creation prior to the human fall', in which creation itself is threatened by possible collapse back into chaos⁴⁶ and proposes a three-staged drama of disruption.

Wright suggests that a pre-human angelic catastrophe *did* occur as the first stage of the whole cosmic fall, despite his recognition that there is little explicit support in canonical scripture.⁴⁷ He accepts that caution is war-

in the existence of humankind. He is the construct albeit a real one, of fallen society. Without a created ontology he is none the less real, but in the same way that a vacuum or a black hole or death itself are real' (Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 70).

⁴⁵ Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 47, 61, 71.

⁴⁶ Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 93.

⁴⁷ Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 92-93, 157. In view of passages that allude to angels who sinned (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4), he disagrees with Barth's position (in *Church Dogmatics, volume III, part 3: The Doctrine of Creation* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960], 371, 480-481) that angels cannot sin because they were not created to have moral freedom (Wright, 63).

⁴¹ Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 56, 58.

⁴² Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 27-41.

⁴³ Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 72.

⁴⁴ 'In this way we can address the question of the ontological status of the devil. Of himself he has none but he does have an *ontological ground* or a point at which he might emerge

ranted because the angelic fall is based on extra-biblical literature, but insists that there are good theological, in contrast to exegetical, reasons for considering the concept. Importantly, this scenario locates the origin of evil within the created sphere, and accounts for physical evil.⁴⁸ However, Wright denies that Satan himself is a fallen angel by locating his origin within the second stage, together with the human fall.⁴⁹ In this way, he incorporates Wink's hypothesis that Satan is the parasitic power of darkness that gorges on the energy of human sin. Finally, in the third stage, the structures of human life and society become pervaded and corrupted by evil. The weakness of Wright's theological paradigm of evil is that in attempting to merge the fallen angel theory with Wink's hypothesis, thereby showing some ambivalence, he appears to have two separate demonic systems, namely, the fallen angels and Satan. He appears unclear as to how both systems integrate, or if they do.

4. The devil as the metaphor of a fallen angel (Jeffrey Burton Russell)⁵⁰

Jeffrey Burton Russell, who has researched extensively into the origin

and development of the devil in many religions and cultures, rejects both the idea that Satan is the psychic projection of human evil, and also that he is 'one of God's functionaries whose morals and motivation continually declined'.⁵¹ Instead, he suggests that the concept of Satan began as 'the personification of the dark side of God'. In harmony with other scholars, Russell notes that as Israel's religion became monotheistic, evil was increasingly separated from the 'good' God as a response to theodicy—Satan emerged as one of the 'sons of God' who also roams the earth as one of the divine messengers (Gen. 6:2,4; Job 1:6, 2:1).⁵² For example, the author of Chronicles altered the pre-exilic narrative of 2 Sam. 24:1 so that it was Satan who incited David to do the census (1 Chr. 21:1), because in the author's post-exilic understanding, he could not conceive that the good God could have planned evil.⁵³

Middle Ages (1984); *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (1986); *Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of God in History* (1988).

51 Russell, *The Devil*, 176-177. He attributes the idea of Satan as the evil spiritual ruler of this present age to Ignatius, Satan's identification with the Eden serpent to Justin Martyr, the idea of Satan as the first angel to rebel against God to Tatian, the idea that Satan's sin was envy of God to Irenaeus, and the idea that Satan was envious of humanity to Tertullian (in *Satan*, 34, 66, 74, 81, 93).

52 Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 31-32, 36-37.

53 In the same way, in the inter-Testamental book of Jubilees, it is Mastema, the prince of evil spirits and not God who asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, and it is Mastema who attempts to kill Moses in Exodus 4:24, taking on all the evil once ascribed to God (Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 38-39).

48 Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 62-64, 92.

49 Wright, *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 157-158.

50 Jeffrey Burton Russell's extensive study on the devil's ontogeny through the same publisher, Cornell University Press, includes *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (1977); *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (1981); *Lucifer: The Devil in the*

In the New Testament, Russell sees a dualist element as a central theme—‘the powers of darkness under the generalship of the Devil are at war with the power of light’.⁵⁴ However, by insisting on the oneness of God, Christianity stops short of dualism, although Russell frankly labels it a semi-dualist religion.⁵⁵ ‘God’ is divided into the good Lord and the devil, but the latter is anomalous because it is conceived as a creature of the good Lord. Being a creature, it had to have been initially good, and therefore it was necessary to assume a moral fall.⁵⁶ Hence, for Russell the devil is a theological necessity in order to preserve the concept of the good Lord.

The fact that a principle of evil has developed a persona over centuries, and integrated numerous strands of philosophy, myth, lore and tradition, poses no difficulties for Russell who holds that ‘historical truth is development through time’,⁵⁷ and will not measure truth by an antiquity scale. He concludes that Judeo-Christian monotheism lives in tension between ambivalent monism and dualism, and indeed, is moving from the former towards the latter. Such tension, according to Russell, is creative.⁵⁸ He himself appears uncomfortable with the idea that God has absolute omnipotence, which he believes led Luther to see the will of God present in all evil.⁵⁹

54 Russell, *The Devil*, 227.

55 Russell, *The Devil*, 227-228. He uses the term ‘mitigated dualism’ (in Russell, *Lucifer*, 187).

56 Russell, *The Devil*, 256.

57 Russell, *The Devil*, 174.

58 Russell, *The Devil*, 251.

59 Russell, *Mephistopheles*, 37-38.

However, he is convinced that radical evil is a real phenomenon that transcends the human consciousness,⁶⁰ and in the final analysis, accepts ‘the traditional Prince of Darkness, a mighty person with intelligence and will whose energies are bent on the destruction of the cosmos and the misery of its creatures’ as an important *metaphor* that enables humanity to confront evil.⁶¹

Russell provides an important key to the apparent progressive metamorphosis of the devil in the bible by speaking in terms of shifting metaphors.⁶² He does not deny that there is a reality behind the metaphors, but remains open to continual contextualisation of the idea of evil as human understanding changes. Nevertheless, he makes an assumption that the reality behind the metaphors remains static. Perhaps it is also important to think about the possibility that the reality itself has undergone ontological change.

5. The devil as God’s equal opposite (*Phil Hancox*)⁶³

Phil Hancox completes the ideological

60 Russell, *The Devil*, 259-260.

61 Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, p. 276. The doctrine that the devil is a good angel who sinned is still taught today (e.g. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 472).

62 Eugene Peterson insightfully defines the metaphor as language that invites the listener to participate in ‘creating the meaning and entering into the action of the word’, a symbolic image that uses the visible to describe the invisible (in *The Jesus Way: A Conversation Following Jesus* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2007], 26).

separation of evil from God, and proposes that the devil is the co-eternal opposite of God.⁶⁴ He supports this view from his interpretation of Colossians 1:16 and John 1:3, from which he argues that since all things were created through Christ, and all things were initially created good, therefore Satan could not have been part of that creation since he was a sinner, liar and murderer from the beginning (1 Jn.3:8; Jn. 8:44).⁶⁵ Hancox (1986:18) uses this circuitous reasoning in order, in his own words, to 'exonerate God from any blame for all the sin and misery that have befallen mankind'.⁶⁶ In his view, God is the creator and Satan, the destroyer. It follows therefore that angels and humans, both made with moral freedom, are divided by their loyalties to God or Satan.

Happily, Hancox is convinced that God has triumphed through Christ and eventually Satan and all his allies will be defeated, because 'it is obvious that God and Satan could not continue indefinitely vying for control in the heavenlies as well as on earth'.⁶⁷ He also theorises that being eternal, Satan cannot be destroyed but is imprisoned

forever in hell.⁶⁸ However, Hancox speculates that Satan will not be enjoying immortality (which he defines as life within the blessed Kingdom of God) but mere godless everlastingness. He bases this idea on the fact that God alone has immortality (1 Tim. 6:16).⁶⁹

In order to reconcile his dualistic perspective with biblical passages that proclaim that there is only one God, for example Isaiah 43:10, Hancox chooses to interpret 'one God' as monolatry (one God for Israel) and not monotheism (one God for the world). He also points to Paul's acknowledgement of 'the god of this world' (2 Cor. 4:2) as further support for the existence of an eternal uncreated Satan.⁷⁰ In his attempt to distance evil from God, Hancox explains away texts like Isaiah 45:7, in which God is said to be the source of both peace and evil, by translating *rā* as 'calamity' instead of 'wickedness'.⁷¹ He also seems to have ignored 2 Thessalonians 2:11 which represents a New Testament witness to God's deception of unbelievers, although he uses the preceding verses to discuss the 'man of lawlessness'. Nor does he adequately explain the subordination of Satan to God in the Old Testament (Job 1:12, 2:6; Zech. 3:2).

Hancox's dualism answers theodicy by allowing God to be perfectly good at the expense of his omnipotence. How-

63 Phil Hancox, *Honest to Satan: A Search for Truth Concerning the Origin, Objectives and Overthrow of Man's Greatest Enemy* (Slacks Creek: Assembly, 1986).

64 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 69.

65 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 13, 32, 38-40, 128.

66 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 18. Using stronger language he states, 'It's a frightful thing...for anyone to attribute to God any alliance with Satan'; 'To suggest that God is part good and part evil is to make a caricature of God' (in Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 12, 126).

67 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 69-70, 99.

68 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 117.

69 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 20-24.

70 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 27-28.

71 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 126. He does have a valid point here, because in Amos 3:6, *rā* is translated as 'disaster' in many English translations.

ever, in order to maintain his theological position, Hancox resorts to unusual biblical hermeneutics. In particular, he redefines immortality, transforms Israel's monotheism into monolatry, and reinterprets or omits contradictory scriptural evidence. Nevertheless, the greatest weakness in his dualistic framework is his attempt to combine the idea of an eternal cosmic dualism with the biblical eschatological scenario of Satan's final downfall. Such an outcome projects a future cosmic imbalance between good and evil, and betrays his view of eternity as linear time, albeit everlasting. Perhaps in recognition of this uneasy logic, Hancox then retreats from full-fledged dualism and declares that 'good and evil do not have identical rights and powers',⁷² which is a philosophically convenient but unsatisfactory answer.

II Theological Integration

Every religion must grapple with the existence of evil and suffering in this world. In many ancient belief systems, the spiritual world is not polarised into good and evil, and indeed, gods are often morally ambivalent.⁷³ For example, Hindu cosmology identifies a hierarchical pantheon, with the supreme but impersonal Brahman at the highest level, followed by devas, devatas or godlings, and finally demons at the bottom. The subordinate divinities can show both benevolence and malice.⁷⁴ In

traditional Africa, the spiritual and physical worlds are viewed as an inseparable whole, and 'the spiritual domain [i]s a chaos of competing forces'.⁷⁵ In Mexico, Quetzalcoatl, the benevolent god of life and art is also the god of death.⁷⁶ Within such paradigms, a supreme devil is noticeably absent. Indeed, it is in monotheistic and dualistic religions that the devil appears, perhaps to explain the co-existence of evil with a good God.⁷⁷

The singular devil was an import to Africa, coming with the world religions of Islam and Christianity, part of the spiritual ensemble in either case. Malicious spirits of the

157 in *Angels and Demons: Perspectives and Practice in Diverse Religious Traditions* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 141-142.

75 Keith Fernando, 'The Spiritual Realm in Traditional African Religion', 21-41 in *Angels and Demons: Perspectives and Practice in Diverse Religious Traditions* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 25. Fernando also points out an important difference between the traditional African and biblical perspective of the spiritual realm, namely the anthropocentricity of the former versus the theocentricity of the latter (see 'Screw-tape Revisited: Demonology Western, African, and Biblical', in *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realm*, Ed. Anthony N.S. Lane [Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1996], 124). A Kenyan Catholic Archbishop was reported as claiming that devil worship was brought into Kenya by Westerners (Edward Miller, 'Reporting on Satan', in *Christian Century*, Nov. 17-24 [1999]: 1111-1112).

76 Russell, *The Devil*, 57.

77 Lap Yan Kung, 'Why Did the Heavenly Father Take My Mother Away?': Theodicy Revisited', in *Asia Journal of Theology*, 15 (2001): 67-92. This author comments in his paper: 'Putting the blame for evil on fallen angels may relieve our puzzle, but it is unfair to them', 86.

72 Hancox, *Honest to Satan*, 125.

73 Andrew Chiu, 'Spirit and Spirits in Classical Asian Religions and Traditions', in *East Asia Journal of Theology*, 4 (1986): 104-120.

74 Chris Gnanakan, 'The Manthiravadi: A South Indian Wounded Warrior-Healer', 140-

village, the family, the locality could thus be subsumed under the authority of the Prince of Evil.⁷⁸

However, the perspective that sees the devil as merely an idea fashioned in human minds for political, social or religious motives, does not appear to adequately account for, nor seriously consider, the depth and extent of human cruelty, particularly in its systematic and societal forms. This view tends to restrict itself to the material realm, and ignores the biblical testimony of transcendent evil. The idea that the devil is an empty myth cannot explain the unspeakable horrors of the world wars, the Holocaust, the repeated genocides and the multiple acts of terrorism, as well as the widespread suicidal addictions and behaviour, that show humanity in the grip of a corporate death-wish. The opposite polar perspective that attributes the source of evil to an uncreated divine twin of God is also biblically insecure, as an eternal cosmic dualism is incompatible with Christian eschatology.

The views that portray the devil as God's servant or as fallen angel both presuppose that the devil is God's creature. From canonical scripture, there is more evidence for the former than the latter. In the first view, God's goodness is challenged, while in the second, his omnipotence. The idea that God purposely created and placed a celestial tempter within his creation goes against the idea of his moral goodness and contradicts the statement that 'God saw everything that he had made,

and indeed, it was very good' (Gen. 1:31). If Satan was a good angel who rebelled, then the dogged persistence of evil particularly after Christ's victory on the cross calls into question God's power. Interestingly, the celestial servant and fallen angel motifs are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, God can use sinful angels to serve his purposes, and on the other, a celestial servant who chooses to work autonomously becomes a rebellious angel. However, Barth argues persuasively that the weight of scripture is in favour of the goodness of angels, and sees these beings as representatives of God's presence; without moral autonomy, they belong totally to God and never to themselves, unlike humans. Therefore, he rejects the idea of an angelic fall.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, as minimal and enigmatic as they may be, biblical references to angelic sin cannot be ignored (Gen. 6:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).⁸⁰ Yet it is important to note that the

79 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 371-380.

80 The identity of the 'sons of God' in Gen 6:1-4 has been debated, but contemporary scholarship leans towards the interpretation that they are angels. This cross-species union between angels and humans may have been a metaphor for the human attempt to achieve immortality. Hence God's punishment is the limitation of the human life span; note that there is no mention of the angels being punished (Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis, Interpretation* [Louisville: John Knox, 1982], 70-72); Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 262-272; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary [Waco: Word, 1987], 139-142). Jude 6 is believed to be dependent on the 1 Enoch embellishment of the narrative in Genesis 6:1-4 (Hamilton, 272).

78 Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, 'Satan Steps Out from the Shadows: Religion and Politics in Africa', in *Africa* 70 (2000): 520-525, p. 525.

event in Genesis 6:1-4 occurs *after*, not before, the human rebellion, and no canonical text links those rebellious angels with Satan.⁸¹ Furthermore, these apostate angels have been imprisoned by God, and are not free to roam the earth (Job 1:7, 2:2). A pre-human cosmic fall is not unambiguously evidenced by the snake in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3), which is portrayed as an animal without any celestial overtones.⁸² The tale is one of deception and complete creaturely rebellion against the Creator, involving both animals and humans (male and female). Bearing in mind the paucity of references to the devil in the Old Testament, a direct linkage between the serpent and Satan was probably not in the author's mind. The view that Isaiah 14:12-21 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 refer to Satan's fall is not uniformly held, and scholars suggest that these passages speak about powerful human rulers rather than about the pre-mundane fate of celestial beings.⁸³ For these rea-

sons, the argument for the concept of Satan as a fallen angel is controversial, while the idea that God planted him in creation to test humans makes God directly responsible for the evil that now engulfs our world, because his

Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39, Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 135-136. Childs suggests that ancient mythologies may have provided the framework for the imagery in Isaiah 14:12-21, particularly the Babylonian-Assyrian myth about Ishtar's descent to the underworld, or the Canannite myth about the cosmic battle of the morning star (Helel) against the supreme El Elyon in which Helel lost and was thrown down to Sheol. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 126. For Ezekiel 28:11-19, see Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 29 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 94-95; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chpts. 25-48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 103-121. In the Septuagint, the prince of Tyre was *with* the cherub in Eden (*meta tou cheroub*, Ezek. 28:14) and it is not the cherub that is cast out from the midst of the stones of fire, but rather, the offender is cast out by the guardian cherub (*kai epage se to cheroub ek mesou lithon purinon*, Ezek. 28:16). Blenkinsopp and Olley suggest that the writer may be comparing the King of Tyre with Adam (Gen. 2-3) who in this imagery possesses both royal and priestly roles [Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel, Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 123-125; John W. Olley, *Ezekiel*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2009), in press]. Habtu identifies the King of Tyre with Satan by linking this passage with Revelation 12:9; however, the latter was written centuries later, and the concept of Satan is absent in the rest of Ezekiel (Tewoldemedhin Habtu, 'Ezekiel' in *African Bible Commentary*, [Nairobi: WordAlive, 2006], 964-965). The Septuagint references were taken from Lancelot C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (London: Bagster & Sons, 1851).

81 The linkage is made in 1 Enoch and Book of Jubilees (1 En VI-VIII, X:4-8,12, XV:4-9, LXIX:6; Jub IV:15,22, V:1-11, X:1-14). Interestingly, while a key theme in 1 Enoch is the corruption of humanity by evil angels, one passage subverts the concept: 'so sin was not sent on earth, but man of himself created it, and those who commit it will be subject to a great curse' (1 En XCVIII:4). Pseudepigraphical references were obtained from H.F.D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984).

82 See Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 188; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 72.

83 For Isaiah 14:12-21, see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 320; Edouard Kitoku Nsiku, 'Isaiah' in *African Bible Commentary*, (Nairobi: WordAlive, 2006), 820;

own celestial servant overstepped his mandate.⁸⁴

Wink's hypothesis that the devil is a human rather than a divine product is worth serious consideration. His idea shares some similarity with Barth's concept of evil. Barth recognised positive and negative aspects in the Genesis 1 creation account, namely light versus darkness, day versus night and land versus water. He differentiates the negative aspects of creation from evil that opposes God's will.⁸⁵ Barth terms the latter 'nothingness' and warns that it often masquerades as the negative aspects of creation.⁸⁶ 'Nothingness is a factor so real that the creature of God, and among his creatures man especially in whom the purpose of creation is revealed, is not only confronted by it and becomes its victim, but makes himself its agent'.⁸⁷ Barth differentiates 'nothingness' from God and humanity, seeing it as a third reality whose very existence is the result of human sin. Its representatives are the devil and demons, and its essence is falsehood and death. Hence, Barth is convinced that angels and demons cannot be bracketed together as though they share a common root, because angels are true creatures of God,

whereas demons exist illegitimately.⁸⁸ However, he denies that 'nothingness' shares any part of humankind, and in this respect, he differs from Wink. Weber, unconvinced by solutions for the ontogeny of the devil that involve dualism, abstraction or divine creation, suggests that the answer may lie somewhere in Barth's concept of 'nothingness', but admits that it remains a mystery.⁸⁹

Pannenberg adds another viewpoint when he applies his intriguing field theory of the Holy Spirit to the angelic realm. He sees the Holy Spirit as a dynamic spiritual 'force-field' manifesting God's lordship, and angels as special centres that form within the unitary movement. When such forces become autonomous centres, they become demonic.⁹⁰ While Pannenberg's concept of angels appears to align with Barth's angelology, his view of demonic ontogeny does not. Nevertheless, when the ideas of Wink, Barth and Pannenberg are considered together, another hypothesis of the devil's origin emerges.

Since canonical scripture does not identify the devil as one of the fallen angels nor speak of its origin, perhaps evil did not begin with an angelic rebellion, but was born when humanity chose autonomy over obedience to God. The devastating flood (Gen. 6-9)

84 God's omnipotence is also questioned, because he seems unable to keep his servant in line.

85 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 295.

86 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 289, 305. 'Nothingness' was the word used to translate Barth's *das Nichtige*. The translators describe their difficulty in finding a term that captures Barth's meaning (in *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 289, translators' footnote).

87 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 352.

88 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 305, 349-368, 522-526.

89 Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics, volume 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 491-493.

90 Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 104-105.

that was the divine punishment for evil involved humans, birds and animals, but no mention was made of angels, and despite the illegitimate union of the 'sons of God' with human females (Gen. 6:1) it was human evil that was God's concern. In the tower of Babel episode, the focus is again on sinful humanity and not on angels (Gen. 11:4). Although people sin individually, humanity exists corporately, and perhaps the coalescence of our evil created, and now feeds, the entity we call the devil.⁹¹ According to this hypothesis, the devil manifests as a quasi-personal power (or powers) that invades and tyrannises individuals, institutions and legitimate human structures of existence.⁹² A possible example of this manifestation may be the mob behaviour when groups of people seem gripped and driven by suprahuman forces to carry out atrocities that as individuals they would not do. Interestingly, it is the human face of evil that is keenly felt by liberation theolo-

gians who struggle with societal and structural evil: 'Humans are beings infected by evil, almost identified with it'.⁹³

Additionally, this hypothesis suggests that the devil be understood as the distorted counterfeit of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁴ The uniqueness of the Holy Spirit is his procession from the Father through the Son; he unites the Son with the Father, and unites humanity with the Son.⁹⁵ Even as the Spirit proceeds from God, perhaps the devil proceeds from corporate human spirituality, and thereby derives the characteristics of personhood from its source. The devil's power and authority as the ruler of this world and this age thus is explicable, as is its illegitimacy. Its power, being derived from human evil, is limited, and it is not another god. Importantly, this hypothesis denies that God created the devil. The devil has been described as the personification of deception and murder (*anthrōpoktonos*, literally 'human-killer', Jn. 8:44), and not surprisingly, God-less humanity seems bent on self-destruction. Demon-possession could perhaps be viewed as a parody of the indwelling of

91 Paul emphasises the power of sin and death over all humanity (e.g. Rom. 3:9, 5:12,21, 6:6,12, 12:21; Tit. 3:3) much more than he does the power of the devil and demonic (e.g. Gal. 4:3,8; Eph. 2:2). Satan is portrayed frequently as the deceiver and tempter (e.g. 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11, 4:4, 11:3,14; Eph. 6:11; 1 Thes. 3:5; 2 Thes. 2:9-10).

92 This same idea is conveyed by Karl Barth (in *Church Dogmatics, volume IV, part 4, Lecture Fragments: The Christian Life* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981], 214-215), Hendrikus Berkhof (in *Christ and the Powers* [Scottsdale: Mennonite, 1977], 27-35), Stanley J. Grenz (in *Theology for the Community of God* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 230-235) and Wright (in *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 70).

93 José Ignacio González Faus, 'Sin' in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, Eds. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996).

94 Although John Calvin believed that God created the devil, he also wrote that Satan often apes God (in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Ed. John T. McNeill [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960], 1.viii.2, 1.xiv.16).

95 Jürgen Moltmann discusses this aspect of intra-Trinitarian relationships in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (London: SCM, 1981), 169-170.

the Holy Spirit, and its characteristic is the eventual destruction of the host.⁹⁶ The biblical teaching that at the eschaton both heaven and earth have to be made anew (Rev. 21:1) suggests that even heaven is awry, perhaps because the devil has contaminated the spiritual realm (Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12: 3).

To sum up, this paper suggests that the devil may be essentially humanity's product, existing both intra- and suprahumanly, rather than being of divine origin or creation.⁹⁷ In this view, Satan grows stronger, albeit parasitically, even as human evil increases. The changing biblical metaphors for Satan may reflect changing human experience and perception of evil, and perhaps also humanity's intuition of its strengthening power. However, the biblical testimony to God's passionate and unalterable love has remained consistent.

III God's Victory Through Christ

The theological implication of this hypothesis is that God's enemy is then primarily humanity, because Satan's

roots are human. Thus, to get rid of the devil, and evil, God has to annihilate humanity. Hence, the wages of sin is indeed death for humans (Rom. 6:23; also Jas. 1:14-15). But through his grace, God chooses to have us live instead. He exemplified his own command to love one's enemies when he chose to redeem us through the death of his own Son through whom he 'condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom. 8:3). God took upon himself the burden and consequence of our rebellion, and thus displayed the depth of his love for his hostile creatures.⁹⁸ The power of evil (and thus the devil) is broken, not because Satan was duped into killing the sinless Son of God, but by the fulfilment of the 'just requirement of the law', God's own law (Rom. 8:4). Reconciliation between God and humanity is thus effected so that subsequently the Holy Spirit can dwell permanently within believers, to complete the process of negating evil and restoring the *imago Dei*. The eschatological destiny of Satan and evil, anomalies in God's creation, is then absolute and eternal negation, dramatically imaged in Revelation 20:10,14.

The idea that the devil originates from human evil does not contradict the synoptic narratives of Jesus' desert confrontation with the devil, and with the demon-possessed (Mt. 4:1-11; Lk.

96 In Africa, where there is a wide acknowledgement of demons, disease and mental illness are often attributed to evil spiritual forces (James Nkansah-Obrempong, 'Angels, Demons and Powers', in *African Bible Commentary*, [Nairobi: WordAlive, 2006], 1454-1455). Nkansah-Obrempong holds to the traditional perspective that the devil is a fallen angel, created by God.

97 Perhaps there is a grain of truth in the myth about Pandora's box. This hypothesis leaves God's goodness and omnipotence intact.

98 'If God's reality and revelation are known in his presence and action in Jesus Christ, he is also known as the God who is confronted by nothingness, for whom it constitutes a problem, who takes it seriously, and who is not engaged indirectly or mediately but with his whole being, involving himself to the utmost' (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3:349).

4:1-12).⁹⁹ As the Logos who is the bearer of the Holy Spirit, yet also human, Jesus Christ would be exquisitely sensitive to the evil power that humans have unleashed, and which rules over them. He would necessarily have to confront it, deny its deceptive power and finally to destroy it by fully satisfying the penalty incurred by its illegitimate birth.¹⁰⁰ Christ's resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into humanity are the evidences of his victory. Why then does evil still seem to thrive in this tired, limping world? The answer is because humanity still exists, and therefore the devil remains, but de-fanged. Through Christ's victory and the power of the Holy Spirit, believers overcome it. Humanity will continue to exist because there are people yet unborn whom God loves and will not give up for the sake of putting an end to evil.

IV Impact on Christian Life and Ministry

As we consider our day-to-day lives, does it really matter whether the devil is a divinely created being or human-

ity's own personified evil? Indeed it does—it affects profoundly how as individuals we view ourselves and other people, believers and non-believers, individuals and organised power structures. It affects how we pray and serve one another. Christian ministry is compelled to move beyond the perimeter of the church to the rest of our hurting family in the world.

When we admit culpability for the devil, our right response to God's overwhelming grace and love can only be complete repentance, worship, obedience and love. Every minute of our continued existence is an undeserved gift from God. Sanctification assumes greater urgency when we realise that it is an oxymoron to allow sin to exist in our lives. Firstly, when we sin we feed the power that subsequently rules over us (Gen. 4:7; Rom. 6:12; 1 Jn. 3:8), and secondly, if we are God's children, sin has no legitimate place in our lives (1 Jn. 3:6). In Christ we died and in Christ we have been given new life (Rom. 6:3-4, 14).

Rejection of sin, however, cannot mean withdrawal from the sinful world, because although we belong to God, we stand in solidarity with all humanity in our corporate contribution to the devil's existence. We can no longer draw separating lines between 'good guys' and 'bad guys' because we are all shareholders in Devil, Inc.¹⁰¹ When Jesus put anger and verbal abuse in the same category as murder (Mt. 5:21-22), he was accurately describing

99 It is interesting that John's gospel records neither. While Satan is described as the father of deception and murder (John 8:44), Jesus is confronted by human opponents and tempters rather than Satan or demons. This raises questions about the historicity of the temptation scene, and highlights the Fourth Evangelist's rejection of exorcism as a sign of Jesus' divinity.

100 As the new Adam (Rom. 5:12-17), Jesus rejected the seduction of human autonomy, and embodied God's command for perfect obedience (Jn. 14:31). In this way, the devil had no power over him (Jn. 14:30).

101 Damning labels like 'axis of evil' which world leaders apply to certain nations demonises them, and justifies war.

the essence, evolution and end-result of sin. As Christians, we cannot recoil from those we think are wicked or who seem to have unacceptable lifestyles, nor can we ignore systematic injustice and wrongdoing, and retreat into holy enclaves. On the contrary, since we all participate in the devil's ontogeny, we must confront its fatal infection with God's power, truth and love, and bring Christ's redeeming hope to fellow sufferers. Evangelism and mission cannot therefore be tinged with condescension, which is the devil's deceptive corruption of empathetic love.

As members within communities, organisations and nations, Christians are commanded to be God's light-bearers (Mt. 5:14-16), allowing Christ's counterculture to transform our human structures of existence. This is a painful process. For example, the only Christ-like response to terrorism is not war, but self-denying love and forgiveness,¹⁰² actualised in concretely addressing the inequitable socioeconomic imbalances that have contributed to resentment and hatred. There are inherent dynamics in the global business and financial networks that advantage the 'haves' and disempower the 'have-nots'. Human organisations and powers can be reclaimed for Christ for whom they have been made (Col. 1:16).¹⁰³ Christians, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are God's change agents, with the emphasis on *God's*, meaning that prayer must lead praxis.

Prayer for others is revolutionised when we recognise the unity we share as humans, which should lead to empathy. When we bring others into God's presence, we stand shoulder to shoulder with them. God hears us, because in Christ he has given humans the privilege of speaking to him on behalf of other humans.¹⁰⁴ It matters greatly when we pray, and even more when we *do not* pray, for our human siblings. In prayer, we confront the root of evil, and God himself prays with us and through us (Rom. 8:26-27). As agents with cosmic influence, we participate in God's redemptive activity.

Conclusion

Theologians from antiquity have struggled to understand the nature of evil, particularly moral evil, and to reconcile its reality with a good and holy creator. Within the human experience of evil is the sense of hostile suprahuman forces which biblical writers initially attributed to evil spirits and celestial functionaries sent by God, and subsequently to demonic powers under the leadership of the devil. Those who deny that the devil exists fail to provide in its place a superior metaphor for the real experience of suprahuman evil. Those who believe that Satan is God's creation have difficulty explaining why a good God would create a being that is unmitigated evil, or even one that might have been initially good but which, in choosing autonomy, could

102 This is strongly affirmed by Nigel Wright (in *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 96-97).

103 See Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 82-83.

104 'Prayer thus lies at the heart of the task of God's people, their glorious, strange, puzzling and ennobling vocation' (Wright, in *A Theology of the Dark Side*, 77).

become such a powerful source of evil. Those who perceive a God-devil dualism are not able to convincingly reconcile this eternal dualism with the eschatological scenario in scripture that proclaims the eventual destruction of the devil and all evil.

However, if the devil is seen as a spiritual entity that proceeds from the coalescence of all human evil, resembling in some perverted fashion the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son, then its reality is affirmed while God's goodness and omnipotence remains intact. God subsequently uses the devil for his own redemptive purposes. This is the diabolism proposed here, and it reinforces

the biblical teaching that sinful humanity is doomed for destruction because humans are the source of evil. Christ's death represents the fulfilment of God's righteous judgement on evil. On the other hand, God's redeeming sacrificial love for his enemies, humankind, is indescribable grace. Through Christ's victory and the Holy Spirit's indwelling, Christians finally have power over evil and the devil. This world will continue to exist until God's human family is complete. Meanwhile, Christians should keep their focus on God, and while acknowledging the deceptive and destructive influence of evil spiritual forces, should cautiously avoid becoming obsessed with the demonic.

PATERNOSTER BIBLICAL MONOGRAPHS

The Pauline Concept of Supernatural Powers A Reading from the African Worldview

Kabiro wa Gatumu

While Western biblical scholarship has mainly sought to 'demythologize' Paul's teaching on supernatural powers this book attempts to interpret it from an African worldview. The author analyses, identifies, and critiques major hermeneutical errors and offers a 'bridging hermeneutic' using the method of reader-response criticism.

Kabiro wa Gatumu is an Anglican priest teaching New Testament and Biblical Hermeneutics at St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya.

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Mark J. Keown

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Mark J. Keown is Lecturer in New Testament at Bible College of New Zealand.

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Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare and Mission in Africa

Erwin van der Meer

KEY WORDS: *Spiritual warfare, Africa, demons, demonic*

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH throughout the ages has found itself involved in a spiritual struggle against sin, evil and injustice, both at an individual level and with respect to the structures and forces in human society. These evil forces are identified as Satan and his demons who are portrayed as the causative agents of all kinds of evils.¹ The New Testament portrays Christ as victorious over Satan and his evil forces in an epochal battle in which he bound the strongman Satan and took over his possessions.² Now as the

exalted Lord at God's right hand Christ reigns as cosmic Lord until all his enemies, including death itself, are defeated and the kingdom will be handed over to God.³ Nevertheless, the climax of Christ's victory over the powers of darkness at his first coming did not as yet constitute their total annihilation and disempowerment: Until the final resolution of the problem of evil, at Christ's second coming, the church exists in between these two episodes in the eschatological warfare as described in Holy Scripture. On the one hand we enjoy the benefits and advantage of Christ's defeat of the enemy at the cross (Rom. 8:37), yet on the other hand the church as the body of Christ is involved with him in wrestling against Satan and his destructive forces on earth (Eph. 6:10ff).

The church thus finds itself involved in a spiritual battle. The church is on the defence in resisting evil in the human soul, the community of faith and in the world at large as the

1 J.Verkuyl, *De Boodschap der Bevrijding* in *Onze Tijd* (Kampen: Kok,1970) 50.

2 All the synoptics include the parable of the burglary of a strong man's house, making the point that Jesus is the one tying up the strong man, Satan, ransacking his possessions. D.Powlison, *Power Encounters, Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 130; M.R.Taylor, *Do demons rule your town?* (London: Grace Publications, 1993), 49ff; D.Wenham, *Paul, Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Wenham 1995), 42.

3 T.Longman & D.Reid, *God is a Warrior: Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 136-137.

Rev. Erwin van der Meer holds a Diploma in Chemistry from Van Leeuwenhoek Institute in Delft, Netherlands, a BTh degree from Harare Theological College in Harare, Zimbabwe, a MTh degree from the University of South Africa and has just completed his DTh degree in Missiology at the same university. He is currently involved in theological education and research at grassroot level in Malawi.

salt of the earth opposing sin, evil and decay. The church is also part of Christ's offence against the powers of darkness by proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in word and deed, empowered by the Spirit of the conquering Messiah. In fact, every act of faith and obedience to God, every act of love and kindness is a foretaste to all of creation of the liberation that is yet to come (Rom.8:19-23) and a reminder to Satan and his demons that their end is near. As God's workmanship (Eph.2:10) and his family members we share with Christ in his victory, but also in his suffering, knowing that the present sufferings are not worth comparing with the future glory that will be revealed in us at the consummation (Rom 8:12-18). Consequently, the church by her very existence, in word and in deed, testifies to the manifold wisdom of God to all the spiritual powers in the heavenly realms (Eph.3:10).

Notwithstanding Berkhof's and Barth's theology of the powers as impersonal forces, the church throughout history has always understood these powers as personal spirit beings.⁴ The church throughout the ages has been involved in fighting sin, evil and injustice and so doing battle against the influence of the demonic forces under Satan's command which are at work in human society and blind and mislead the minds of people (Eph. 2:1-2). While the Bible does not deny

human responsibility for promoting false beliefs and ideologies which in turn may inspire oppressive systems, dehumanizing structures and violence, Scripture affirms that behind the human agents, there are evil spirit beings who inspire them. In the midst of opposition and persecution at the hands of political and religious forces the apostle Paul recognizes that the struggle is not against the human agent but rather against evil spiritual powers that inspired and influenced them.⁵ In Ephesians 6:10-18 the apostle Paul points out that behind the visible sins, evils and oppressive structures in society demonic spirits dominate the structures of a sinful world.⁶ Our fellow human beings are not our enemies, even if they are misled, misguided and blinded by Satan, they are to be the object of our love and concern since they are in need of liberation. This is why Christ calls us to love our enemies. However, love for our human enemies does not include condoning the sin and evil they commit and promote, neither on an individual or societal level. It is part and parcel of the life and ministry of the Christian church to resist the devil and his evil schemes by standing firm in faith, righteousness, humility and godliness (Eph.6:10ff; 1 Peter 5:18). This ministry involves unmasking sin for what it really is (Eph.5:8ff) and a refusal to conform to the evil structures of the

⁴ M.Barth, *The Broken Wall: a Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Collins, 1960) and H.Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, translated from the Dutch original by John H. Yoder (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald, 1962).

⁵ F.F.Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the free Spirit* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 422 and J.Stott, *God's new society: The message of Ephesians*, (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1979), 272.

⁶ Longman & Reid, *God is a Warrior*, 141-142 and Verkuyl, *De Boodschap*, 50.

world (Rom.12:1ff), choosing to be led by the Spirit of love rather than yielding to sin (Gal. 5:16ff).

The weapons in this war are not worldly but spiritual, yet not necessarily otherworldly; instead they are part and parcel of 'down to earth' Christian living: The weapons of this warfare are the proclamation and the putting into practice of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in everyday acts of goodness and righteousness, even in the face of temptation and adversity (Eph.6: 17-20; 1 Peter 2:11ff; 3:8ff). It involves repaying evil with good, insults with blessing and hatred with love, even loving our enemies (Matt.5:43-47). Spiritual warfare in Paul's mind also involved demolishing any arguments and ideologies that set themselves up against the knowledge of God in the light of Christ and the salvation he provides (2 Cor. 10;3-5).

Spiritual warfare in church history has often taken different forms. At times the emphasis was on exorcism and the sanctification of the individual soul.⁷ After the example of Christ who, demonstrating the power of the coming kingdom of God, cast out demons from individuals during his life and ministry on earth, so the apostolic church involved themselves with the casting out of demons from those afflicted by them.⁸ At other times the emphasis on

spiritual warfare was in polemics and apologetics.⁹

Unfortunately the church also at times became captive to the powers and conformed to the sinful patterns of this world instead of resisting them. For example, in the third and fourth century AD, part of the church bought into the dualism and excessive speculations concerning the nomenclature of angels and demons in Manicheism, Gnosticism and other peripheral movements which had more in common with Zoroastrianism than with biblical teaching on these matters.¹⁰ Spiritual warfare in this context became almost totally an otherworldly affair, with its focus on angelic beings, demons, secret names and knowledge, with little or no bearing on day to day realities people faced in the world.¹¹ Mysticism of any kind often constitutes a denial or refuge from the realities on the ground and it is probably not accidental that these movements flourished in a politically turbulent era.

The church in Europe during the Medieval period, unfortunately, participated in violent crusades against Muslims and those perceived as heretics.

7 J.Stevenson, *Creeeds, Councils and Controversies; Documents illustrating the history of the Church, AD 337-461*, revised by W.H.C. Frend (London: SPCK, 1987), 200 and J.B.Lightfoot & J.R.Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, revised by Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 417.

8 E.Arnold, *The Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 40.

9 F.X.Gokey, *The Terminology for the Devil and Evil Spirits in the Apostolic Fathers* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1961), 71 and Stevenson, *Creeeds*, 63.

10 R.P.H.Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1988), 234, 312 and P.Hiebert, 'Spiritual Warfare and Worldview' in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, (24 No. 3, July, 2000), 248.

11 See *The Gnostic Works: Hypostasis of the Archons* (II,4); *On the Origin of the World* (II,5 and XIII,2); *The Testimony of Truth*. J.M.Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 160-189.

Having become captive to the political ideologies of the day, the church collaborated with the evil powers, rather than resisting them in the light of scriptural teaching on spiritual warfare.¹² After the Reformation the spiritual warfare emphasis within mainline evangelicalism has been predominantly on keeping one's soul holy by resisting sin and worldly temptations. Later in the 20th century, especially within ecumenical circles linked to the World Council of Churches, the emphasis has been on unmasking and resisting the oppressive political and socio-economic powers in society.¹³ The turbulent 20th century also saw the birth and expansive growth of the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements with a strong emphasis on supernatural experiences in the believer's life and Christian ministry. The resulting revival of mysticism within Evangelicalism in combination with the influence of dispensationalist eschatology led to a gradual shift in spiritual warfare, from primarily resisting sin and temptation, to the 'binding' of demonic influence and the exorcism of sin-promoting demons from individuals.¹⁴

In the context of Christian mission, charismatic evangelical missiologists, C. Peter Wagner, Charles H. Kraft,

George Otis Jr. and others concluded by the late 1980s that if demons are able to hold individuals in bondage, they must also be able to hold people groups and territories in spiritual bondage which explains why church growth and evangelism is more successful in the one region as opposed to another.¹⁵ The obvious solution from their perspective would be to exorcise such territorial demons.¹⁶ This form of spiritual warfare has been labelled strategic level spiritual warfare (SLSW) and involves practices such as spiritual mapping, identificational repentance and warfare prayer against territorial demons.¹⁷

Spiritual mapping is the term used

15 B.A. Mostert, 'An urban mission strategy for reaching entire cities with the gospel. A critical evaluation of the prayer evangelism strategy of Ed Silvano': Thesis submitted as part of the requirements of a DDiv (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2001), 48 and E. Van der Meer, 'Mission and Spiritual mapping in Africa': Mini dissertation submitted as part of the requirements of a MTh in Missiology (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2001), 2 and C.P. Wagner, 'Territorial Spirits' in C. Peter Wagner and F.D. Pennoyer (Eds) *Wrestling with Dark Angels: Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990), 70.

16 C.E. Arnold, 'What About Territorial Spirits?' *Discipleship Journal* (81: May/June 47, 1991) and C.P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer: How to seek God's power and protection in the battle to build His kingdom* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1992), 84.

17 Charles Harris, *Encountering Territorial Spirits*, downloaded on 2001-4-29 from website: <http://www.discernment-ministries.com/Articles/NovDec99.htm>, 1999 and C. Lowe, *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelization* (Fearn, Ross-shire, UK.: Christian Focus, 1998) 11, 16.

12 E. Van der Meer, 'Reflections on Spiritual Mapping' in *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, (20 (1), 2001), 54.

13 Barth, *Broken Wall*, 81 and Berkhof, *Christ*, 41 and Verkuyl, *De Kern*, 268.

14 Brian M. Chapman, *Seeing the Unseen: A look at Spiritual Mapping and Territorial spirits*, downloaded on 2000-4-28 from website: <http://www.missionreview.com/index.asp?id=4281>, 2001 and der Meer, 'Reflections', 58-63.

for the kind of 'spiritual' research based on a territory's religious environment, culture, folklore, history, as well as socio-economic and political factors. This kind of research, combined with direct charismatic inspiration, enables the prayer warriors to 'map' the strategies of Satan and his territorial demons over given locations by discerning their names and what past or present sins and evils they use to keep people in bondage.¹⁸ The next step is to identify with the sins, atrocities or other evils committed in the territory and repent of these on behalf of the past and present perpetrators in order to cancel the perceived legal rights the territorial demons may have gained through these so-called demonic entrances, to influence and blind people to the gospel.¹⁹ The last step is aggressive warfare prayer, also called militant intercession, in order to bind the territorial demons, also called demonic strongmen, which is supposedly more effective when they are addressed by their proper name.²⁰

Aggressive warfare prayer may temporarily loosen the hold of territorial spirits over the people in a territory who may then come to Christ more freely.²¹

The successful marketing of SLSW within the context of missions as a new and more effective strategy in the form of best-selling novels,²² popular 'how-to' books and videos²³ has raised concern within the global missiological community, especially among conservative Evangelical missiologists. Initially the proponents of SLSW found a useful vehicle for the promotion of their ideas within the AD2000 and Beyond movement, a movement linked to the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, one of the major ecumenical vehicles of Evangelicals world-wide.²⁴ Chief SLSW proponent C. Peter Wagner coordinated the so-called Prayer-Track of the AD2000 and Beyond movement which gave him and others a strategic platform to influence

18 Arnold, 'What About', 47 and A.Scott Moreau, *Gaining Perspective on Territorial Spirits*, downloaded on 2000-3-21 from website: [Http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/dufe/Papers/terspir.htm](http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/dufe/Papers/terspir.htm) and K.Sjöberg, 'Spiritual Mapping for Prophetic Prayer Actions' in C.P.Wagner (ed) *Breaking Strongholds in your City* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993), 108.

19 C.Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1991), 235-238; 243.

20 Lowe, *Territorial*, 23-24 and Mostert, 'Urban mission', 188 and M.R.Taylor, *Do demons rule your town?* (London: Grace Publications, 1993), 49 and C.P.Wagner, 'Territorial Spirits and World Missions', *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (25: no.3, July, 1989), 282 and Wagner, 'Spiritual', 3-27.

21 Taylor, *Do demons*, 91 and Wagner, 'Spiritual', 15-16.

22 See the best-selling novels by Frank Peretti, *This Present Darkness* (1986), and *Piercing the Darkness* (1989).

23 The writings by the chief proponent of SLSW, missiologist C. Peter Wagner are all written in this style. This is also the case in the writings by other prominent SLSW writers, Cindy Jacobs, George Otis and most others.

24 AD2000. Mobilizing Global Prayer for Evangelism, downloaded on 2000-7-11 from website: [Http://www.ad2000.org/gcowe95/prayer.html](http://www.ad2000.org/gcowe95/prayer.html) and G.Van Rheeën, 'Modern and Postmodern Syncretism in Theology and Missions' in C. Douglas McConnell (ed), *The Holy Spirit and Mission Dynamics* (Evangelical Missiological Society Series, Pasadena, CA: Carey, 1997), 169.

millions of Christian intercessors worldwide with the new spiritual warfare theology.²⁵ However, a few years later the Intercession Working Group (IWG) of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) met in London to discuss the subject of spiritual warfare and issued several warnings. The working group warned against the current pre-occupation in Evangelicalism with the demonic and the powers of darkness, the danger of reverting to pagan worldviews, the promotion of mechanistic spiritual warfare 'technologies' as well as the danger of being insensitive in dealing with other cultures (IWG 1993). The working group pointed out that from a biblical perspective the issue in spiritual warfare is not so much the issue of power, but rather the issue of truth versus falsehood. In spite of these warnings SLSW gained more and more momentum in the western world and was exported to all continents around the globe, gaining popularity in South America²⁶ and increasingly in Africa in the context of AD 2000 related prayer movements.²⁷

25 D.Greenlee, 'Territorial Spirits Reconsidered', *Missiology: An International Review* XXII (no.4, October, 1997), 507.

26 H.Caballeros, 'Defeating the Enemy with the Help of Spiritual Mapping' in Wagner, *Breaking*, 123 and Lowe, *Territorial*, 114 and E.Silvoso, 'Prayer Power in Argentina' in Wagner, *Engaging*, 109-115 and C.P.Wagner, *Lighting the World* (Ventura: Regal, 1992), 136-137.

27 NUPSA 2000. Network for United Prayer in South Africa, downloaded on 2000-5-8 from website: [Http://www.nupsa.org.za](http://www.nupsa.org.za) and A.S. Gaines, 'The Apology That Shook a Continent' in *Charisma Magazine* (March 2000), 77-88

Examples of Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare in Africa

The new spiritual warfare theology is fast spreading throughout Africa, especially within evangelical churches with a (neo-) Pentecostal dispensation. The following examples demonstrate how widespread the movement is.

In East Africa we meet Pastor Thomas Meethu of the Kenya Prayer Cave. In 1988, he and his wife, Margaret, felt called by God to move to Kiambu, 'a notorious, violence-ridden suburb of Nairobi' and a 'ministry graveyard' for churches for years. They began six months of fervent prayer and research and discovered that the demonic principality over Kiambu was 'Witchcraft', and that its chief human channel was a spiritual healer called 'Momma Jane'. After months of prayer, Muthee held a crusade that 'brought about 200 people to Christ'. Their church in the basement of a grocery store was dubbed 'The Prayer Cave,' as members set up round-the-clock intercession. Mama Jane counterattacked, he says, but eventually 'the demonic influence—the 'principality' over Kiambu—was believed to be broken', and the traditional healer left town. According to Muthee, the atmosphere in Kiambu changed dramatically: bars closed, the crime rate dropped, people began to move to the area, and the economy took an upturn. The church now has 5,000 members, he says, and

and B.Trinidad, *Spiritual Mapping and Warfare Praying as Catalysts for Church Growth*, downloaded on 2000-3-12 from website: [Http://cma-world.com/spirwar.htm](http://cma-world.com/spirwar.htm).

400 members meet to pray daily at 6 am.²⁸

In West Africa, recently a group of African intercessors, and representatives from the United States and the Caribbean, gathered at Ouidah, Benin on the invitation of President Mathieu Kérékou to witness his national apology for his ancestors' role in the capturing and selling of other Africans into slavery. They also sought to break the curses which were proclaimed by the slaves, and allegedly, at least partly, contributed to the unnatural poverty of Ghana and other African nations.²⁹ The intercessors believe that the evils of slavery still have a spiritual effect on the descendants of the slaves in the Caribbean and Americas, as well as in the continent of Africa. Prayer, identificational repentance and proclaiming release in the spiritual realm, are the weapons by which the intercessors for Africa seek to undo the effects of the slave trade.³⁰ Also in West Africa, a missionary in Mali, using SLSW techniques, concluded that there are at least 5 demonic strongholds to be engaged in SLSW: pride, mammon, Islam, disunity, and a territorial spirit

with as symbol three crocodiles.³¹

In Southern Africa a group of SLSW intercessors spent tens of thousands of South African Rands in 1999 on a prayer journey through Africa, from the southernmost tip of Africa to the Middle East. They sought to create a spiritual corridor, a spiritual highway through Africa. Believing that the spiritual foundations in Africa are witchcraft and idolatry, they sought to deal with these foundations of sin in the continent. A main component of the prayer team were Bushmen Christians, who were going to deal with the sins of their ancestors at the various Bushmen shrines on the continent.³² In 2000, NUPSA,³³ an AD 2000 and Beyond movement, related spiritual warfare organization in South Africa and called for a 40 day fast from 01 November to 10 December 2000. Their aim was to address Africa's problems with SLSW: 'We as a continent will have to engage in serious intercession, fasting and spiritual warfare.' The major issues in the continent can be properly addressed only if, 'through united, aggressive, focused, believing intercession, fasting and spiritual warfare', we confront the principalities and powers that are affecting the

28 Christian Science Monitor: Targeting cities with 'spiritual mapping', originally published on 1999-9-23. Downloaded on 2000-8-18 from website: [Http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1999/09/23/p15s1.htm](http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1999/09/23/p15s1.htm) and G.Otis, *Transformations, A Video Documentary* (Sentinel Group, 1999) available through YWAM via website: <http://www.ywam.org> and C.P.Wagner, *Praying with Power; How to pray effectively and hear clearly from God.* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), 86.

29 Gaines, 'The Apology', 77-80.

30 Nwankpa in Gaines, 'The Apology', 84.

31 Trinidad, *Spiritual*.

32 NUPSA 2000a. Highway Through Africa, downloaded on 2000-5-8 from website: [Http://www.nupsa.org.za/highway.htm](http://www.nupsa.org.za/highway.htm).

33 NUPSA stands for Network for United Prayer in South Africa and is linked to the AD 2000 and beyond movement and is currently led by Bennie Mostert who wrote his doctoral thesis in 1997 (University of Pretoria) about the prayer evangelism strategy of South American evangelist Edgar Silvo who makes extensive use of SLSW.

entire continent.³⁴ The NUPSA webpage gave recommendations for the 40 day fast, including suggestions for intercession, identificational repentance and other practices closely related to SLSW.

In politically turbulent Zimbabwe many prefer not to blame the economic and political malaise on the political leaders and the socio-economic dynamics, but rather on a variety of territorial spirits named after the liberation war heroes Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kaguvi, including a crocodile spirit over Harare.³⁵ Instead of addressing the issues and confronting the evils in the country, many charismatic evangelicals prefer to participate in all night (national) prayer meetings attempting to bind these alleged territorial spirits in prayer.³⁶

Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare and The African Religious Context

Few people in Africa will question that the African context is influenced by what is happening globally, and there is a need to pay attention to the dynamics specific to the African context when

it comes to evaluating spiritual mapping and SLSW. For example, when it comes to evaluating spiritual mapping and SLSW in relation to African traditional religions and beliefs, it is evident that there are several similarities. As in spiritual mapping and SLSW thought, in traditional religion in sub-Saharan Africa there is a quest for supernatural power to overcome evil forces and spirits which endanger life on earth and may hinder the achievement of health and prosperity.³⁷ In this respect spiritual mapping and SLSW may be received uncritically by some people living within the African context as it caters to what many Africans perceive as their greatest need, namely the need for power to overcome supernatural obstacles.³⁸

Traditionally, the people of Africa recognize the existence of evil spiritual forces: malevolent spirits abound and are ready to harm people, especially when manipulated by witches and sorcerers.³⁹ African evangelical Christians, generally, identify these powers as the demons and evil spirits mentioned in Holy Scripture.⁴⁰ Some Christian traditions imported into Africa have insufficiently dealt with the issue

34 NUPSA 2000b. 'Transformation', downloaded on 2000-8-19 from website: <http://www.nupsa.org.za/transform.htm>.

35 R.Chiundiza, 'High Level Powers in Zimbabwe' in Wagner, *Engaging*, 123-124 and Zimchurch, *Crocodile again*, posted on 27-4-2001 in email conference of the Zimbabwe Church: zimchurch@egroups. Free subscription via website: <http://www.egroups.co.uk/group/zimchurch>.

36 P.Dube, *Leadership*, a seminar organized by Africa Enterprise in Harare, Zimbabwe (24 February, 2000) and der Meer, *Mission*, 58.

37 H.L.Pretorius et al. *Reflecting on Mission in the African Context* (Bloemfontein: Pro Christo, 1987), 122-123; 127.

38 D.J.Bosch, *Het Evangelie in Afrikaans Gewaad* (Kampen: Kok, 1974), 84 and F.M.Lufuluabo, 'Bantoe opvatting en Christendom' in M.Hebga et al, *Afrika en Christendom* (Hilversum: Brand, 1967), 53.

39 O.Imasogie, *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa* (Achimota, Ghana: ACP, 1983), 62 and J.S.Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 99.

40 Imasogie, *Guidelines*, 80.

of malevolent spirits and demons and consequently many African Christians continue to live in fear of these spirits and of the sorcerers and witches who manipulate these powers.⁴¹ It is important that the Christian church in Africa addresses the problem of supernatural evil in a biblical, contextual and pastorally sensitive manner.⁴²

Mainline evangelicalism, generally, has acknowledged the existence of malevolent spirits, identifying them as demons, and has stressed Christ's victory over the demons and that all those on Christ's side have nothing to fear from these evil forces.⁴³ Simple trust in Christ and obedience to God is enough to protect Christians from the attacks of the devil and his demons.⁴⁴ To deliver unbelievers from the power of the devil and his demons is first and foremost helping them to get to know Christ and become his disciples. This must be accompanied by prayer for deliverance and protection. The new spiritual warfare, in contrast, puts more emphasis on the believer having to conquer and disarm the powers through SLSW prayer-warfare.⁴⁵ In a world teeming with demons it is human vigilance that strikes the deciding blow in battle.⁴⁶

41 Imasogie, *Guidelines*, 52 and Mbiti in Bosch, *Het Evangelie*, 77.

42 Imasogie, *Guidelines*, 80-81 and M. ma Mpolo, 'Witchcraft, Drams and Pastoral Counseling' in M. ma Mpolo & W. Kalu (eds), *Counseling & Pastoral Theology* (Ibadan: WCC/Daystar Press, 1985), 124.

43 Pretorius, *Reflecting*, 127.

44 Verkuyl, *De Kern*, 273.

45 Mostert, 'urban mission', 175.

46 D.Powlison, *Power Encounters, Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 59.

In Indo-European mythology, as well as in many African Traditional Religions, prayer is a means to control and manipulate the gods or spirit-beings.⁴⁷ Much of prayer in African traditional worship is petitionary in nature with as main objective to get as much out of the supreme being as possible. There does not seem to be any concern about the deity's will or plan, which is the opposite of the Christian perspective on prayer as communion with God.⁴⁸ Spiritual mapping and SLSW in Africa may well result in a syncretism of revived Indo-European mythology, African traditional beliefs and Christianity which in its dualism undermines the sovereignty of God. Also, when prayer, as submission to and communicating with God, is re-defined as a spiritual power-tool and when Christian discipleship becomes a quest for spiritual power, then we have virtually reduced God to an impersonal source of power that can be manipulated at will, as long as we use the right techniques. The practices and beliefs of spiritual mapping and SLSW may therefore re-enforce a magical mindset, which makes the human being the agent who has to wield power against the spiritual enemies, rather than emphasizing faith in Christ and in the sovereignty of God.⁴⁹ Such a magical mindset, which is common in African

47 P.Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 209

48 J.Muthengi, 'The work and worship of the Christian Church' in S. Ngewa, M. Shaw & T. Tinou, *Issues in African Traditional Theology* (Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers, 1998), 254-255

49 Pretorius, *Reflecting*, 128-129

traditional religions, is predominantly focused on personal benefit, or that of one's community, rather than on pleasing the Creator.⁵⁰

Biblically speaking, and from the perspective of the history of the Christian church, the central issue in prayer and discipleship is not a matter of power, but rather submission to God and from that state of mind resisting the devil's schemes and unmasking them for the intimidation, temptation, sin, deception and delusion they really represent.⁵¹ Consequently, we have to conclude that the spiritual mapping and SLSW worldview, is not a biblically and/or church-historically sound answer to the fear of a malevolent spirit world experienced by so many African people. At the same time, Evangelicals cannot agree with the quasi-scientific modernist alternative of demythologizing the demonic powers⁵² nor can we allow the post-modern myth-making and a New-Age style re-enchantment of the world to dictate a super-naturalism to us that is neither biblical, nor useful. Instead, it is crucial for us to re-appreciate the biblical teaching about the powers, the demonic realm, from the biblical perspective of Christ's victory on the cross.

Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare and Contextualization in Africa

The practices and beliefs found in SLSW are a danger to the proper contextualization of Christianity in Africa by labelling features of African culture as demonic. Such an approach to African culture and religion hinders the process of genuine inculturation and indigenization of the Christian gospel.⁵³ African culture and African traditional religion can easily be misunderstood and misrepresented as having happened regularly in past missionary reflection on African culture and religion.⁵⁴ From a biblical perspective, any human culture will have some demonically inspired sinful and oppressive structures, beliefs and practices which need to be identified and carefully addressed, but this should be done by indigenous believers who will have a more thorough understanding of their culture and context than 'spiritual warriors' coming from other contexts (IWG 1993). It is essential that we do not label things as demonic just because some expert in spiritual warfare labels them as such from the perspective of his or her beliefs and worldview.

Another danger that presents itself in SLSW is the danger of overly focus-

50 F.Moyo, Interviews at Harare Theological College (3-12 September and 10 November, 2000). Mr. F. Moyo is a colleague of the writer of this study and a research assistant at Harare Theological College and also lectures in (Christian) ethics, African Traditional Religions & Christianity, and apologetics. He is also the director of Lovemore House in Harare, a Christian NGO which runs a home for abandoned street children.

51 Hiebert, *Anthropological*, 209-213.

52 Imasogie, *Guidelines*, 46-53.

53 Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, 'Is Mutuality Possible? An African Response', *Missiology—An International Review* (XXIX: No. 1, January, 2001), 46-47.

54 B.Bujo, *African theology*, (Kampala: St.Paul, 1992), 45 and A.Shorter, 'New Attitudes to African Culture and African Religions' in Shorter et al, *Toward African Christian Maturity* (Kampala: St. Paul, 1987), 27.

ing on traditional cultural elements as demonic and overlooking the demonic in the contemporary socio-economic and political realm. It is unfortunate that many Christians, including African Christians, tend to suspect the demonic predominantly in traditional culture and religion, and often fail to recognize that Satan and his demons are very active in the socio-economic and political aspects of life.⁵⁵ The church as salt and light in society must critically examine anything within our context from a biblically informed point of view, and avoid being conformed to the world by being renewed in our minds (Rom. 12:1-3).

Islam together with ATR and Christianity is a major religious force in the African continent. Most Evangelicals in Africa, regard Islam as a major threat to Christianity, both for historical reasons and because of its rapid progress. Generally, the evangelical church tends to attribute the spread to Satan's work in the world without giving much thought to why many Africans choose Islam rather than Christianity.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, spiritual mapping may re-enforce this negative perception of Islam with its labelling of Islam as demonic.⁵⁷ We are told to Conduct Strategic Spiritual Warfare against the demonic prince of Persia and the spirit of Babylon who are perceived as ancient territorial principalities who have resisted the Kingdom of God in Iran and Iraq for centuries.

These powers together with other demonic spirits are perceived as ruling the Muslim world⁵⁸ and allegedly must be bound through the use of SLSW before we can snatch the treasures of darkness under Islam's domination from Satan's clutches.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, such an emphasis on aggressive spiritual warfare and the use of militaristic terms may remind Muslims more of the crusades of the Middle Ages, than of the love of Christ and may actually prevent them from ever considering the gospel of Christ. Our approach to Islam must occur in an atmosphere of respect and Christian love, which is a more accurate reflection of what the gospel of Christ entails.⁶⁰ We must put aside the crusader mentality and pursue a compassionate rather than an antagonistic mode of ministry.⁶¹

55 Dube, *Leadership*; Moyo, Interviews.

56 O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992), 329.

57 Trinidad, 'Spiritual' and 'Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical Perspective', *Christian Research Journal* (Summer 1992), 38.

58 FridayFax, *Queen of Heaven*, email newsletter 10 (October 1998). For subscriptions: <http://www.cmd.org.nz> and J.Hopson, *Confronting the Queen of Heaven-A Missions Trip Report*, downloaded on 2000-03-12 from website: <http://www.do-you-love-me.org/wsomers/contq.html>.

59 Don Newman, '10 Keys to Unlocking Muslim Strongholds', *Mission Frontiers* 1992-06-01, downloaded on 2001-4-28 from website: <http://www.missionreview.com/index.asp?id=2477>.

60 Pretorius, *Reflecting*, 146.

61 'IWG Spiritual Warfare', a paper drafted by the Intercession working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization at Fairmile, London (July 10-14 1993), downloaded on 2000-3-21 from website: <http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/statements/spwar.html> and Lausanne Committee on World Evangelisation, 'Deliver Us from Evil' Consultation Statement on Spiritual Warfare issued at the Lausanne DUFE Consultation in Nairobi 2000-10-11, downloaded on 2001-4-28 from website: <http://www.missionreview.com/index.asp?id=3033>.

Evangelical Responses

In 2000 the LCWE, in conjunction with the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA), organized a special consultation on spiritual warfare in Nairobi, Kenya, from 16 to 22 August 20, with as title 'Deliver Us From Evil', in order to attempt to come to grips with the many complex issues related to spiritual warfare.⁶² The consultation warned against some of the excesses common in SLSW and affirmed the findings of the 1993 report by the IWG and the earlier Manila Manifesto of 1989, recognizing that Satan and his demons, or evil spirits, are ontological realities rather than impersonal influences or structures, who should be overcome by the truth of the gospel applied in evangelism, social action, Christian living, by promoting righteousness and by exposing and resisting what is evil.⁶³

The increasing popularity of SLSW as a quick fix for obstacles faced in mission and evangelism activities in Africa means that Evangelicals and the church at large in Africa cannot afford

to ignore the new spiritual warfare trend within Evangelicalism. As is the case with other theologies originating from the West, the new spiritual warfare theology, SLSW, needs to be critically reviewed and evaluated from both a biblical perspective as well as in the light of the African context. The LCWE consultation in Nairobi has been a good start, but with SLSW theology being spread predominantly among the laity via its populist literature and lay missions such as Youth with a Mission (YWAM), what might be discussed and resolved in the African theological community may not touch base with what is happening and being promoted at grassroots levels by the proponents of SLSW. The consequences for contextualization of Christianity in Africa are manifold and may result in a superficial and an otherworldly approach to the dynamics and issues that play a role in the African context.⁶⁴ Instead we should rather approach the problem of the demonic holistically in the light of the ministry of Christ and the church and with sensitivity to the context in which we seek to participate in God's liberating Mission.

62 Lausanne Committee on World Evangelisation, 'Deliver Us from Evil' Consultation Statement on Spiritual Warfare issued at the Lausanne DUFE Consultation in Nairobi 2000-10-11.

63 LCWE 2000. Lausanne Committee on World Evangelisation, 'Deliver Us from Evil' Consultation Statement on Spiritual Warfare issued at the Lausanne DUFE Consultation in Nairobi 2000-10-11.

64 In the context of Malawi anno 2008, horrible witch hunts have resulted in the torture and extra judicial killings of many suspected witches and Satanists as traditional beliefs mixed with Christian spiritual warfare elements have produced a dangerous demonology not unlike late medieval demonology in 15th and 16th century Europe.

Theological Education by Extension in South Sudan

Verena Schafroth

KEYWORDS: *Episcopal Church of Sudan, Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), civil war, revival, illiteracy*

I Introduction

The numerical base of Christianity has shifted over the last 100 years to the so-called *global south* comprising Africa, Asia and Latin America, with 8.7 million African Christians in 1900 rising to 389 million African Christians in 2005.¹ This tremendous growth has also brought great challenges for the churches in Africa, especially in the area of theological training, since theological schools cannot generate the number of pastors needed to oversee the churches, leaving them theologically weak. An often quoted saying and

sad reality is that the African Church is like a river, which is several miles wide, but only an inch deep.

In response to this problem, the Guatemala-born *Theological Education by Extension* method of pastoral training, in short *TEE*, has been developed. It has spread around the world at a rapid rate over the last 46 years ever since its inception in 1963.² By 1980, it had reached 77 countries encompassing 55,378 extension students, of which 38.1% were in Africa.³ The formal launching of the TEE services by the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) in 1987 meant that TEE programmes gained

1 F.R. Kinsler, 'Equipping God's People for Mission,' *International Review of Mission* (71/1982), 134.

2 P.J. Harrison, 'Forty Years On: The Evaluation of Theological Education by Extension (TEE)', *Evangelical Review of Theology*, (28/2004), 316.

3 W.C. Weld, *The World Directory of Theological Education by Extension: 1980 Supplement* (Wheaton: CAMEO, 1980), 6.

Verena Schafroth is a missionary with Elim International Missions (UK) working in South Sudan in partnership with the Africa Inland Mission. She has been in Sudan since 2006 working with the church and now serves as a lecturer at Gideon Theological College, South Sudan. She has earned a first class BA from Manchester University and a first class Master of Theology from Bangor University both taught at Regents Theological College, UK. One of her recent publications "Female Genital Mutilation and the Church in Africa," was published in October 2009 by *Missiology: An International Review*. Her contact email is crossrene@hotmail.co.uk

more formal accreditation within Africa. When the *ACTEA Dictionary of TEE Programmes in Africa* was published in 1993, 152 TEE programmes were listed in 31 African countries using 47 languages. By 2002, the number had reached 342 programmes and is still increasing.⁴

Theological Education by Extension will be assessed and proposed as a viable theological training programme for South Sudan (SS). This study will be substantiated by the examination of available literature concerning TEE and empirical data requested and gathered in SS in the form of interviews and a questionnaire which was sent out to 600 tutors and students of the TEE programme of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS). The first part of this paper will give an overview of recent political developments in order to put the Sudanese Church into its social and political context resulting from almost 50 years of war. Having discussed these various contexts, their impact on TEE in SS will be investigated, especially focusing on the TEE programme of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS).

II TEE and the Church in South Sudan

1. Second Civil War: Revival in the South

Today, Sudan is perhaps best known internationally for the second civil war between the northern and southern

halves of the country, which started again in 1983. After the National Islamic Front (NIF) gained power, Sharia law was proclaimed over SS in 1983.⁵

The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) came into being in 1984. The outbreak of the second war caught the church in the south largely unprepared and left it bewildered.⁶ However, a large-scale famine occurred from 1985-1987 in SS, which resulted in the founding of the United Nations (UN) *Operation Lifeline Sudan* in 1989.⁷ This represented the beginning of international relief and development involvement with Sudan. This, together with the new peace, which was brought about by the SPLA, provided a more stable environment for social and church life in those areas of the south.

Large-scale revival came to SS in the 1990s, in refugee camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) inside Sudan and especially in camps in Ethiopia. When these camps were dissolved in 1991, many southerners returned as Christians and started to share the good news in their communities.⁸ The former child soldiers, now returning as part of the SPLA, often

5 A. De Waal, *Famine Crimes* (London: African Rights, 1997), 88.

6 R. Werner, W. Anderson, and A. Wheeler, *Day of Devastation, Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church across 2,000 Years* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 2000), 525.

7 De Waal, *Famine Crimes*, 97.

8 A.M. Preller, 'Present and Future Challenges to the Church in Africa—With Special Reference to the Church in Sudan', MA Dissertation, University of Pretoria/South Africa, 2006, 180.

4 A. Wheeler, (ed.) *Voices from Africa* (London: Church House Publishing, 2002), 130.

saw themselves as the 'chosen generation', committed to the liberation struggle, but motivated by their Christian faith. For the first time, Bible study groups, prayer meetings and Sunday worship became part of life in the SPLA.

Large services and prayer meetings were held and the common experience of war, hunger, and bereavement resulted in an astonishing sense of unity and common purpose amongst the churches, which the founding of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) in 1990 signified.⁹ At a denominational level, one of the best examples of revival and church growth is the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC), which was founded by the Sudan United Mission in the Nuba Mountains. When the last missionary had left in 1964, there were 150 baptised believers and a New Testament in 5 Nuba languages. 40 years later without any outside influence, SCOC is estimated to have grown to between 80,000 and 200,000 church members by 2004.¹⁰

2. The Church after the Peace Agreement

The second civil war ended in January 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). During the interim period, which will end in 2011, the SPLA governs SS aided by the United Nations and many NGOs. As such, the churches in SS are at a crossroads, experiencing radical changes.

Church leaders must lead their members in having a relevant and strong voice. They must guide church members in spiritual matters and work for bringing new growth and spiritual depth in the hundreds of rural congregations.¹¹ Not only is the church a political voice, but also a reconciliatory one. Inter-tribal warfare has flared up in SS ever since the CPA, due to considerable people movements of IDPs and returning refugees.¹² The Christian message of reconciliation is not only to be applied to the North/South conflict, but also to internal tribal issues.

Despite the war, during this time many new churches were founded. Whole communities were reshaped by the gospel in SS and the church expanded through indigenous leaders, who had little if any secular and theological education and often only minimal Bible knowledge.¹³ These local leaders developed an indigenous approach to evangelism and church planting without the presence of ordained pastors. Consequently, one of the major challenges the churches in SS face today is to now develop these leaders for these many new churches.

3. TEE and the Church in South Sudan

According to *Operation World*, the proportion of Christians in SS rose from 5% in 1960 to 70% in 2000.¹⁴ The liter-

⁹ Rolandsen, *Guerrilla Government*, 130.

¹⁰ P. Johnstone, and J. Mandryk, *Operation World*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), 597.

¹¹ Preller, *Challenges*, 272.

¹² Preller, *Challenges*, 277.

¹³ Preller, *Challenges*, 283.

¹⁴ Johnstone and Mandryk, 597.

acy rate is about 60%¹⁵ but due to the underdevelopment of the south and the long civil war preventing education, statistics have to be separated from the north and looked at individually. The UNICEF statistics published in 2004 come closest to reality in the south and place the literacy rate at 24%, only 12% for women.¹⁶ This situation is not likely to change overnight as UNICEF furthermore reports that by 2006, only 22% of an estimated 2.2 million school age children were enrolled in primary school; four boys attend school for every girl.¹⁷

When considering the literacy rates, one will realise that the normal requirement set for seminary attendance of a completed secondary education, will reap only a small harvest in the south. Residential colleges were also often the targets of air strikes during the civil war, and a high rate of people movement made residential teaching almost impossible.¹⁸ These factors, coupled with the sheer numbers of pastors needed to cater for the new churches, leads one back to the model of TEE, which is proposed here as a viable option for the training of the ministry in the south.

15 The World Factbook, *Sudan*, accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/su.html> on 08 October 2008.

16 Unicef, *Towards a Baseline: Best Estimates of Social Indicators for Southern Sudan* (Juba: New Sudan Centre for Statistics and Evaluation in Association with Unicef, 2004), 3.

17 Unicef, *Unicef Southern Sudan: Quarterly Report January—March 2006*, accessed at www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/UNICEF_Southern_Sudan_Quarterly_Report_Jan-Mar_2006.pdf on 12 September 2008.

18 Werner et al, *Day of Devastation*, 509.

III A Proposal for TEE in South Sudan

This section is aimed at painting a picture of what TEE in Sudan could look like in the future.

1. Inter-denominational Cooperation

Statistically, the best-working programmes are inter-denominational ones, because resources can be pooled. An inter-denominational SS TEE project would guarantee quality and also standardise TEE. Accreditation could be sought from ACTEA to make the programme more official and give the students a better 'international' qualification on finishing the programme. However, this may be unlikely. Denominationalism has increased considerably and it is probably more feasible to assume that a denomination would adopt a TEE programme and arrange it around its own structures.

Whether denominational or inter-denominational, the one thing which will make or break the programme, will be grassroots support from the churches that want their pastors to be trained. Although the acceptance of a programme will be fostered by a general promotion by leaders, it has to be made sure that churches are 'on board'. One suggestion would be to produce a 'vision, purpose and requirements booklet' to distribute to churches, similar to a normal degree prospectus. The TEE program of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (TEE-ECS) has now been operating for 8 years quite successfully, and one reason for this is that they have complete support from the grassroots level.

2. Programmed Texts for Sudan

TEE-ECS currently uses a set of 12 TEE texts, originally written by Andrew Wheeler.¹⁹ The books were written specifically for the Sudan and fit that context very well. However, while some of the books have been updated, many still date back to the 1980s. One particular area of need is the TEE text on Sudanese Church History, which dates back to 1982, but Sudan has had major revival and church growth since.²⁰ A full set of books is available in English and the Arabic script—about half of the books are available in Dinka, Bari and Moru.

Coming back to a point made earlier about the low literacy rate in SS, it might seem almost pointless to talk about the translation of materials if people might not be able to read and study them. While TEE-ECS currently uses only the English PTs, and therefore requires a good working level of English in order to enrol for the programme, as soon as materials are translated into native Sudanese tongues, enrolment is estimated to increase. Furthermore, as soon as materials are translated, they can be recorded for oral use. The MegaVoice Players have been an impressive resource in order to make oral scriptures more available and can also be used to distribute TEE programmes.²¹ ACROSS has a large Christian radio

ministry based in Yei, SS, which could also be commissioned to do the recordings.²² Literacy classes should be offered alongside the provision of oral TEE programmes and manuals.

3. Questionnaire Results

In August 2008, Rev. Wick agreed to assist with the distribution of a questionnaire amongst her students and tutors of TEE-ECS.²³ Rev. Wick was given 600 copies of the questionnaire for each of her 500 students and 100 tutors. Unfortunately she was able to hand out only 150 of the 600 questionnaires and collected 42, due to communication difficulties. Although the author hoped for a larger quantitative sample, it was decided nevertheless to bring in the 42 collected samples as qualitative research and draw pointers from them for future TEE work in SS.

Statistically, the average age of TEE participants is between 30 and 44 years. Only three out of the 42 participants were female, similar to the general trend for Africa. This problem should be specifically targeted for any new programme starting up in Sudan. The average amount of education was at a lower secondary level. This is surprising as the general level of education in SS is considerably lower than that due to the years of war but TEE-ECS requires fluency in written and

¹⁹ SLC, *Catalogue 2006* (Nairobi: ACROSS, 2006), 4-5.

²⁰ A. Wheeler, *The Church in Sudanese History* (Nairobi: SLC, 1982), 1-99.

²¹ *MegaVoice, Breaking the Silence*, accessed at www.megavoice.com/players.php on 09 October 2008.

²² ACROSS, accessed at www.across-sudan.org on 10 October 2008.

²³ The questionnaire was taken from G. Holland, *TEE Study Materials—Which Way for a Changing Africa?* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing, 1993). The questionnaire was changed to suit the local SS context.

spoken English, which will have been achieved only by those having had more than primary education. If a TEE programme were to be developed in the mother tongue, the general level of education would most likely be only at higher primary. 62% of participants lived in a village setting, which will influence the infrastructure of a TEE programme. More local small classes will need to be founded due to the lack of good roads and public transport to reach towns.

Problems with drunkenness in the family were highly reported. However, the books developed for TEE in Sudan do not address alcoholism at all and this topic would certainly have to be included to make the programme socially relevant. The recommendation would be to couple it with teaching on how to deal with traumatic experiences.

40 people responded yes to the question concerning the need for deliverance from long-term sickness. This reflects the low medical care provided in SS at present. While TEE can hardly improve the health care system in SS, there is still a need for teaching on healing, for a theology of suffering and teaching on how/when to pray for and counsel sick people. In addition to this, 43% of participants stated that the most recent prayer request in their church was prayer for healing.

Question 23 dealt with young people falling into sexual sins and received a staggering 39 yes answers. Partly, this shows the inability of the church to affect traditional ways of marriage formation in SS, which usually requires the woman to be pregnant first before she gets married in order to show that she is fertile. Given this background, it

is hard to understand why the current books do not deal with the topic at all. There is no teaching on marriage, or on pre-marital behaviour nor on sexual ethics. The same issue came up with question 19, referring to problems caused by polygamy, which is also not addressed in the current books. Given the fact that polygamy is still prevalent everywhere in Sudan it is simply astounding that this topic is not discussed at all. 38% of participants also stated that someone recently came to them for advice on marriage. Polygamy was also stated as the number one reason for people leaving the church. The rather obvious conclusion here is to include biblical teaching on marriage, on sexual ethics and polygamy in the TEE schedule and to produce a new TEE manual for these topics.

Not knowing how to do evangelism, and deliverance from evil spirits, both received 86% of yes answers. The high percentage for the question on evangelism is rather surprising as there is a TEE manual and good teaching on evangelism. A suggestion would be to have practical evangelism and outreach being incorporated into the teaching. SS is still largely animistic in outlook and a strong belief in the evil supernatural is often retained. The fact that this is not being dealt with in the current TEE books is again rather astonishing. The obvious conclusion here is to produce a TEE manual on how to deal with traditional beliefs and also to free up considerable time in class to talk about it.

4. TEE and Social Issues

It is mandatory that TEE be made relevant not only to the spiritual context in

SS, but also to the social one, otherwise it will produce only inward-looking leaders.²⁴ Issues like trauma and grief counselling, the return of refugees, HIV/AIDS, tribalism, community development and grass-roots political involvement have to be addressed. TEE students should be encouraged to reflect critically on what is happening around them in their culture and to take action. They should furthermore be taught how to identify key leaders and organisations that may be able to give direction on dealing with these problems.²⁵

So far not a single TEE text used in SS addresses these issues, as has been made partly obvious in the preceding section. TEE-ECS has tried to solve the problem by putting on seminars on specific issues like HIV/AIDS, which are then run in the different dioceses.²⁶ This, however, does not negate the need for further PTs on these issues. It seems that NGOs and UNHCR are much more proactive in this regard than the church—one would think, however, that the future of the church in SS very much depends on how it reacts to the changing social and economic challenges. Where better to start than with its future leaders?

Another social issue is the place of women in church and family. Women should be openly encouraged to take

part in TEE and also be given the chance to then use what they have learned in church. Since women in Sudan are generally less educated than men, special support and care should be given to them.

5. A Viable Administrative Base

Lo identifies a solid 'administrative infrastructure' as an important part of a successful TEE programme.²⁷ This means that any programme needs a full-time, salaried director to oversee it. Most Sudanese are farmers and they have to tend to their fields or hold down another demanding job to support their large families. If a programme is to work well, then people need to be given the chance to focus on their work and be paid for it. Wick also identified the issue of non-payment of tutors as one of the main reasons for a lack of motivation and poor quality of the tutorials.²⁸ Since tutors are not full-time but indeed part-time, the solution often practised is to offer 'incentives.'²⁹ These can be anything from a small amount of money, to in-kind gifts.

Once a course is up and running it is important to provide adequate administrative resources to ensure stability and continuity. Often, however, the emphasis falls upon writing and tutoring whilst the administrative details are neglected. This in turn leads to the logistical support becoming over-

²⁴ R. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999), 136.

²⁵ J. Lo, 'Seven Ingredients of a successful TEE programme', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (38/2002), 339.

²⁶ Wick, *Interview*.

²⁷ Harrison, *Forty Years On*, 324.

²⁸ Wick, *Interview*.

²⁹ S.G. Snook, *Developing Leaders through Theological Education by Extension—Case Studies from Africa* (Wheaton: Billy Graham Center, 1992), 54.

stretched and an otherwise useful TEE programme grinding to a halt. Especially in a country like SS, which lacks basic infrastructure, logistical planning is very important. The administration generally has to (1) fit the context, (2) be run with integrity and (3) be funded well.³⁰ When considering the context of SS, communication is slow, sometimes things get lost, and book deliveries can be late. TEE-ECS tried to aid this situation by providing bicycles and motor bikes to some tutors who have groups spread out over a large area. A pragmatic suggestion would also be to build up a 'circle of mail carriers'. NGOs and local people frequently travel to places and can often take letters, a handful of books or a small box with them. It is advisable to have local TEE centres spread over SS, where books can be stored safely and exam papers/details of students kept. Small libraries could also be established there to help students in advanced classes.

Funding has to be considered candidly, as it is always likely to be an issue in developing countries. While students should pay for their books, this tends to cover only 5-15% of running a TEE programme and funds for salaries, incentives, and travel costs have to be found somewhere else. The funding issue would be aided by inter-denominational cooperation. Furthermore, it is easier for a large programme with a number of participating churches to apply for donor funding than for a small programme to do so.

A few suggestions for finding local funding include the following: where

possible, 'in kind' payments, i.e. goats, chickens etc., should be accepted in payment of fees. Furthermore, creative fund-raising schemes can be initiated locally, e.g. TEE gardens or hostels led by students, whose proceeds would go towards the programme.³¹ In addition, solutions have to be found to develop less costly books, possibly producing them locally in order to avoid transportation and custom costs.³²

Conclusion

During the last 22 years of war, ending in January 2005, SS has experienced a revival similar to that in South Korea and the percentage of Christians is now estimated at 70%. However, the churches consist generally of farmers or cattle herders that are mainly illiterate or semi-literate—the leaders are often older with good standing in their communities but no education and little knowledge of the Bible. Unless the church in SS finds a way to cater for all these new churches and believers, they will become an example of that sad saying that says that the African church is like a river, which is a mile wide but only an inch deep. SS has had one of the earliest inter-denominational TEE programmes in Africa and therefore has a good history to turn to when considering TEE for the future. Hence, the first proposal for a new TEE programme in SS is pointing to the past, suggesting inter-denominational cooperation as a vital and significant factor for a successful and affordable programme.

³⁰ Harrison, 323.

³¹ Wick, *Interview*.

³² Snook, *Developing Leaders*, 54.

There are already TEE manuals that were written specially for the Sudan in the 1980s, which are a valuable resource to use, although they are dated. ECS restarted their TEE programme in 2001, which has since excelled at training their pastors, both ordained and lay—TEE-ECS is using the Sudan TEE manuals. TEE-ECS has therefore been used in this paper as an example and a platform from which to make further suggestions and to test the manuals as to how well they still respond to the current social and political context in SS. There are teaching gaps, particularly on marriage, drunkenness, and the spiritual world, which have to be addressed in a new programme (and of course would be suggested as an improvement for TEE-ECS as well). More in depth discussion is needed on the reality of salvation and also more practical evangelism

outreach training to substantiate teaching on evangelism in tutorials. Generally, it was found that TEE is not yet responding well to social issues in SS—trauma counselling, a theology of suffering for SS and teaching on HIV/AIDS are still issues left unaddressed. In order to make the programme accessible to semi-literates and illiterates, it is proposed to develop the teaching on tape or megavoice player.

As far as funding goes for TEE in SS, it is unlikely that a new programme would be completely self-sufficient at the beginning due to the many years of war and the unavailability of hard currency. Therefore, a few donor organisations have been proposed who have funded TEE in the past. However, although donor funds can be sought, self-sustainability should always be the aim.

Chaos or Control?

Authority in Crisis in Church and State

Timothy Bradshaw

Western society is in the process of undergoing profound changes in moral ethos and in the structure of relationships as more and more areas of life are commodified. The Church is now having to grapple with the challenges to its authority-patterns posed by contemporary individualism, reductionism, consumerism and moral relativism.

This book seeks to address theologically the question of authority in terms of the poles of *freedom* and *form*. The tendency of each pole is to dominate. When 'freedom' dominates we have chaos but when 'form' dominates we have control (as exemplified in Islamic societies).

Thus the choice facing the West *looks like* one between chaos and control. Bradshaw argues that this is a false choice. He suggests that Christ is the form for human freedom and diversity, and that the Church has sufficient apostolic guides and practices to chart its way ahead in faith. The book maintains that Western, liberal, capitalist democracy needs to recover a Christian ethical basis to avoid the dangers of both chaos and of control.

Timothy Bradshaw is Tutor in Christian Doctrine, Regent's Park College, Oxford.

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Keith Warrington
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Book Reviews

ERT (2010) 34:2, 176-178

Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter,
Keith Warrington

London: T&T Clark, 2008.
ISBN-10: 0-567-04452-1.
Paper back, pp 336, indices.

Reviewed by Don McLellan, Campus Director, Harvest Bible College Brisbane Campus, Australia.

Keith Warrington manages to make Pentecostal theology look rather like a large packet of M&Ms: lots of different

colours but all the same shape and all tasting pretty similar. In two early chapters he attempts to define Pentecostalism itself and to come up with the essence of Pentecostal theology, but it is hard to be convinced that they are that simple. Indeed, the pages that follow demonstrate their complexity in spite of Warrington's attempts to homogenise them.

The strength of this book lies in the fact that Warrington does thorough and detailed research into Pentecostal theology, both academic and lay. His book is a compendium of Pentecostal views on most but not all subsets of systematic

theology, with particular attention paid to those for which Pentecostalism is famous (e.g. healing, exorcism, the Holy Spirit and his gifts) and with nearly one third of its pages on how Pentecostals understand God. We may thereby observe the incredible and sometimes rather disconcerting diversity of thought within the movement, while picking out some of its consistent emphases and affirmations and noting the maturation of thought therein. This is the book's major contribution, which is why it may be a worthwhile addition to the libraries of pastors and theological institutions.

But its strength is also its weakness. Warrington does not engage in critical analysis of most of the points of view he canvasses. Indeed, some heterodoxies such as the Oneness Pentecostal view of God are reported quite uncritically. There are places within this work where he makes some useful proposals of his own, but they do not appear to be located in anything but the broadest systematic scheme, they are asserted rather than argued, and there is little attempt to join them into a coherent whole. Mostly we are left either with outlines of ideas that Warrington has observed, or proposals concerning what Pentecostals believe based on his attempt to produce a consensus from the literature.

The weaknesses of some areas of Pentecostal theology are also highlighted, though probably unintentionally. For example, only now are Pentecostal theologians beginning to give serious consideration to ecclesiology. Warrington notes, again uncritically, that many of the myriad systems of governance within Pentecostal denominations have developed for pragmatic reasons (p. 136). Efforts to develop ecclesiologies by the likes of Frank Macchia, Veli-Matti Kärkäinen, Augustus Cerillo Jr et al

remain embryonic by any measure. Warrington's reports on these merely highlight how far they have still to go.

Warrington's praxis arises from the presupposition that the God-encounter is the root stock of Pentecostal theology, hence the book's subtitle and the direction it takes. The assertion that, 'Pentecostals believe that the main purpose of the Bible is to help them develop their experience of and relationship with God...' (p. 188) typifies Warrington's outlook. However, this immediately raises the question of where authority really lies. Is it in the God-encounter, or is it in the Bible? Or if it is in both, which of them takes precedence? Or if one does not take precedence over the other, why is it that, historically, they have so often been in conflict? Warrington does not provide clear answers to these questions, and the reader may be left with the impression that the subjective experience of a God-encounter is all it takes to get the right answers out of the Bible.

To this reviewer, Warrington's attempt to ground theology on a platform as nebulous as subjective experience makes the whole work less than convincing. However, this is probably the point of greatest weakness in most Pentecostal theologies. Subjective experience, being by definition individualistic, even when considered in the light of the Bible, is unlikely ever to provide a sound platform for systematic theology.

In summary, Warrington has provided a compendium of Pentecostal thought to which he makes his own moderate contribution. The book is useful for gaining an appreciation of the core of Pentecostal theology as well as for seeing its vast array of peripheral stuff, and the bibliography is extensive and valuable. However, in all but a few instances Warrington has not argued the Pentecostal view, let alone

his own point of view, so that we mostly have a rather unsatisfying theology by assertion.

Merely reporting the consensus of Pentecostal thinking rather than engaging in critical discussion does not satisfy the need for a thorough-going Pentecostal apologia. *Pentecostal Theology* is worth reading for its outlines of Pentecostal viewpoints and the development of recent Pentecostal thought, but if readers are looking for a true systematic theology, they will not find it here.

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The Consolations of Theology

Edited by Brian S. Rosner

ISBN: 978-0-8028-6040-8

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008
Paperback, 170 pages

*Reviewed by Patrick Mitchel, Director of
Studies and Lecturer in Theology, Irish
Bible Institute*

Intentionally paralleling Alain de Botton's popular *Consolations of Philosophy*, this book aims to show how theology at its best speaks powerful words of consolation into the midst of everyday life. Six authors (five from Moore Theological College, Sydney) choose a great theologian of the past and unpack, through a mixture of biography and discussion, how they continue to speak to specific human struggles, namely: anger (Lactantius); obsession (Augustine); despair (Luther); anxiety (Kierkegaard); disappointment (Bonhoeffer); and pain (Lewis).

The results are an enjoyable, educative, highly readable and, at the same time, pastorally warm volume. In fact, the structure of each chapter has a sermon-like feel. Each begins with a contemporary connection, moves on to 'exegesis' of

a theologian's thought and finally points of pastoral application in light of the gospel. There is something valuable for most readers here; including thinking Christians, students, pastors and counselors.

Richard Gibson takes on Lactantius, a tutor to Constantine's son and survivor of Diocletian's reign, and certainly the least known character of the six. Contrary to the Stoics' goal to eradicate passions like anger, God, Lactantius avers, must be understood as being moved by both kindness *and* anger. Paradoxically, the anger of God brings consolation to the soul. Contemporary Stoics who reject the notion of an angry God, fail to see how God's judgement leads to hope. A hope that is forged at the cross where God's anger and kindness meet and that looks forward to the ultimate destruction of sin, evil and death that so mar this broken world.

Andrew Cameron's short discussion on 'Augustine and Obsession' again brings out how sharply Christianity stood against competing contemporary views of reality—in this instance the Manichee's dualistic notion of good and evil, where the only escape from obsession and desire was release from the body. But such a bleak view offers no consolation at all. Augustine's great contribution here is to point to a Mediator who knows our human inability to order our emotions. To be in Christ is to have the Spirit poured into our hearts and so, reorientate our affections to where we can say with Augustine, 'you have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you'.

Despair is a plague of contemporary life. Mark Thompson mines Luther's own dramatic lifelong struggles with *Anfechtungen* to offer consolation to those similarly afflicted today. Especially valuable here is

how real experience of God comes through 'the furnace of struggle and despair'. God is not far away, rather he is revealed most truly at the cross.

Søren Kierkegaard, the 'melancholy Dane' and theologian of *angst*, is an apt choice to speak to anxiety. In what is the most theologically demanding chapter in the book, Peter Bolt, like Thompson on despair, concludes with Kierkegaard that anxiety properly used can lead to the consolation of deep joy as we trust in the promises and actions of God.

In a short pen-portrait of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Brian Rosner not only describes the man's sheer courage, he also captures the humanity of an iconic figure separated from his beloved fiancée. In a moving passage, Rosner describes how Bonhoeffer's faith led him not to wallow in regret, nor renounce life as a form of self-protection, nor deny the pain of separation, nor give up hope in this life and 'wait for heaven'. He concludes with eight 'lessons' on dealing with disappointment that are well worth further reflection.

Robert Banks, of Fuller Theological Seminary, skilfully re-tells the familiar story of C. S. Lewis' personal encounter with bereavement and suffering, first as a soldier in the Great War and then closer to home with the death of his wife, Joy. From biography he moves on to unpack Lewis' thinking about pain in *The Problem of Pain and A Grief Observed*—the latter Banks calls Lewis's own 'Book of Job'.

In distinctive ways, each of these past figures speaks of how both the immanence and the transcendence of God provide a rich source of consolation in the crucible of real life. It is indeed great news that God is the immanent 'God of all comfort' while simultaneously the transcendent Lord of all history. Highly recommended.

ERT (2010) 34:2, 179-181

The Divine Spiration of Scripture: Challenging Evangelical Perspectives.

A. T. B. McGowan

978-1-84414-220-2

Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2007.

Paperback, 229, bibliography, index of names

Reviewed by Carlos Bovell, Instructor of philosophy, Burlington County College, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey USA

In *The Divine Spiration of Scripture: Challenging Evangelical Perspectives*, A. T. B. McGowan throws down the gauntlet to American evangelical scholars and challenges them to seriously rethink their inerrantist doctrines of scripture, pitting an American-styled 'inerrancy' against a European-styled 'infallibility' and finding the former seriously wanting in several respects. Although McGowan explains that his chief aim in the book is 'to clarify my own understanding of the doctrine of Scripture and to make a contribution to the debate among evangelicals regarding its significance for today', he seems clearly aware that his treatise is going to ruffle very many feathers. In fact, he states this himself, 'Among evangelicals in the USA, the word 'inerrancy' has become something of a sacred talisman and there is a deep sensitivity in respect of any questioning of this word. Indeed, one might reasonably expect something of a firestorm directed against any challenge to its continued usage.' And a firestorm indeed is what he should fully expect for in successive discussions, McGowan challenges, among other things, the locus of scripture, the vocabulary of scripture, the doctrine of scripture, and the use of scripture in evangelical churches.

McGowan begins by observing that while the innovation of Reformation confessions to move the doctrine of scripture to the beginning of the theological corpus may make some logical sense, it makes no *theological* sense to discontinue the setting of scripture 'in the wider context of revelation and that revelation be firmly rooted *within the doctrine of God.*' (emphasis added) Specifically, scripture should be seen as 'an aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit in the context of God's self-revelation'. It is interesting to note that during the course of his address on what epistemological concerns might be raised by reassigning scripture's theological locus, McGowan invokes the apologetic tactics of Cornelius van Til. Subsequently, during the course of his extended affirmation that '[t]he Scriptures are God's Word and God does not mislead us,' McGowan defers to Herman Bavinck, contrasting him to B. B. Warfield.

The author takes issue with the traditional translation of *theopneustos* as 'inspired' in 2 Tim. 3:16, opting rather for the phrase, 'divine spiration': 'The doctrine of divine spiration (inspiration) is the affirmation that at certain times and in certain places, God the Holy Spirit caused men to write books and his supervisory action was such that although these books are truly the work of human beings, they are also the Word of God. The church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, ultimately came to recognize that there are sixty-six books that God caused to be written in this way over a long period of time.' Yet, to be sure, '[i]n order to avoid misunderstanding...it is better to reside the authority in God rather than in the Scriptures themselves.' McGowan suggests, too, that the terms 'illumination,' 'perspicuity,' and 'inerrancy' be replaced with 'recognition,' 'comprehension,' and 'infallibility' respective-

ly, explaining that each of the latter helpfully emphasizes the main role that God the Holy Spirit must play in an evangelical theology of scripture. Indeed, the main focus of the work is an extended discussion that aims to lend considerable support for McGowan's ascertainment that 'to argue that the only kind of Bible God was able to give us was one with inerrant *autographa* is untenable'. All in all, the book addresses the importance of the Holy Spirit, the rise of liberal theology, the birth of fundamentalism, a European alternative to inerrancy, scripture's relation to ecclesial confessions, and scripture's use in preaching by ministers in the churches. There is not the space to enumerate the various considerations that appear to support McGowan's stance. Two points must suffice to fill out the present review.

Perhaps most pertinent to present discussions of scripture is McGowan's conviction that, 'We must take seriously the Bible that God did, in fact, give us and allow the empirical data rather than theological assertion to determine our doctrine of scripture'. A conscious choice is made here to allow the phenomena of scripture to take precedence over the content of scripture (i.e., extended theological interpretations regarding its own authority) during the course of formulating an evangelical doctrine of scripture. This methodological decision will certainly be disputed by many who disagree with McGowan. Although the present reviewer's sympathies lie entirely with McGowan, privileging what scripture actually is above what scripture actually says (or, better, what theological traditions say that scripture says) may be too progressive a move for McGowan's intended audience. Second, the author's arguments against inerrancy will appear sound (to the extent that they are valid)

only against those inerrantists who actually hold to the premises of each of his various arguments. In other words, as he tries to speak to a wide-ranging, inerrantist audience, it may be the case that prospective members of that audience will deny that they hold to certain of his premises, causing McGowan's arguments to lose their cumulative effect. That said, if you are a person who is at such a place in your faith that you are ready to take a good, hard and long look at your inerrantist doctrine of scripture, McGowan's book is for you!

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Linking Arms, Linking Lives

Ronald J. Sider, John M. Perkins,
Wayne L. Gordon, F Albert Tizon.

ISBN 978-0-8010-7083-9 (pbk)

Paperback, pp.239

Contents, Acknowledgements,
Foreword, Endnotes

*Reviewed by Bryan A Johnson, M.Phil,
B.Th, A.C.A.*

Noel Castellanos caught my attention in the foreword by quoting urbanologist Bob Lutpon who researched the *suburbanization of poverty*. This phenomenon of recent decades implies that the poor are as prevalent in the suburbs as they were in the urban neighbourhoods. This demographic shift has caused the re-thinking of urban ministry. The focus of ministry has changed from the location of the underprivileged to a people centred approach. Ministries working among the poor began to realise that they were ministering in suburbia and the urban city. The story of how meaningful partnerships have developed as a result of this shift in the location of the poor is the subject of this interesting book. Suburban churches

that had little experience in holistic ministry needed the urban church leaders' experience to mentor them through the process of developing a holistic approach to ministry among the poor.

Compiling this book was a unique opportunity to bring together the wealth of experience of two very well known reconciliation ministry practitioners, John Perkins, and Wayne L. Gordon, and two equally well known theologians who have made a significant contribution to a theology of kingdom economics, Ronald J Sider, and F. Albert Tizon. The result of this editorial partnership is a book that highlights the plight of the suburban poor and marginalised. The theological foundation for the book is grounded in mission, and develops a brief synopsis of economic justice in Israel, Jesus justice and the community of twelve, economic koinonia in the early church, and the multi-ethnic community of the early church. Global recession is an opportune time to benefit from contemplation on an economic koinonia in the church.

The theological introduction warranted a more in depth discussion of economic interdependence in relation to kingdom partnerships because money has so often been the cause of ineffective ministry partnerships. Often one party has the power in the relationship, that being the partner who controls the flow of funds. A cooperative model of economic development paves the way for greater power sharing, and the potential to transform a community rather than just a few select individuals. The economic power of ministry partnerships needs an in depth study, and this book seemed to avoid providing the reader the intimate details on how economic power sharing became a reality in the models of ministry it focussed on.

The call to Spirit empowered holistic min-

istry started at the cross. The theology of the cross made the holistic mission of the early church meaningful, and the book gives a brief biblical and theological foundation for holistic urban/suburban ministry.

Chapters 1-3 explain the biblical basis of mission, and the *koinonia* of the early church. They introduce what the writers call partnership essentials. The early 1980s Consultation on 'Sharing Jesus in the 2/3rds world' focussed on the dominance of western mission. The 2/3rds world did not want to reject western mission involvement. Rather, they wanted to develop a more meaningful partnership with Western Christians based on equality and mutuality...they wanted partnership. The West was confronted with the clarion call for mutuality in ministry partnerships.

Perkin's and Gordon's ministry partnership became an urban/suburban ministry based on the fruit of deep reconciliation, and the pain associated with this level of reflection. Authentic partnership is possible only when our deepest fears about each other are exposed and trust is developed. Collaborative action emerges when we experience this level of honesty in our relationships. The *Do's* and *Don't's* of urban/suburban groups, urban partners, suburban partners, are helpful guidelines derived from the vast wealth of ministry experience, and research of the authors. Fruit comes from kingdom ministry, and partnership produces more fruit than individual effort. This book could help heal the dichotomy of the urban/suburban ministry divide through its model of partnership and numerous case studies.

Models of ministry partnerships scope partnerships of churches with churches, churches with para-church organisations, businessmen and ordinary saints. These models are not just ideas. They are sto-

ries of many ministries that partnered in biblical relationships to produce 700 urban/suburban ministries across the United States of America.

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Faith Comes By Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism.

Editors: Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson

ISBN: 978-1-84474-243-1

Published by: Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2008. Paperback, 270 pp. (with bibliography and index)

Reviewed by Terrance L. Tiessen, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology and Ethics, Providence Theological Seminary, Otterburne, MB, Canada.

For synergists, who believe that God wishes everyone to be saved and is doing his utmost to bring that about, *inclusivism* is most natural. For monergists, however, the matter is less obvious, since God has not chosen to save everyone, and Calvinists have characteristically been gospel exclusivists. In this valuable book, a group of excellent Calvinistic scholars make a case for gospel exclusivism.

C. W. Morgan sets the stage with a helpful classification of types of inclusivism and exclusivism. This is a helpful analysis, but a good case could be made for adding to the list, 'special revelation inclusivism'. Within the discussion of 'special revelation exclusivism,' for instance, one finds inclusivism in statements cited from W. G. T. Shedd and T. George (29-30), at least as to means, if not content. The summary definition (36) is also inclusivistic, 'They must hear the gospel and trust Christ to be saved, *unless* God chooses to send them special revela-

tion in an extraordinary way' (36, emphasis added).

The succeeding essays are all well done and speak to the key arguments of evangelical inclusivists in various ways. D. Strange responds to the case for general revelation as sufficient for saving faith. W. Edgar responds to the apologetic concern of synergistic inclusivists that exclusivism is unjust. E. Schnabel describes Paul's attitude to other religions, addressing particularly the proposal of world religions inclusivism. W. Kaiser analyses the cases of individuals whom some have identified as holy pagans but he sets so high the bar of saving revelation (faith in the Seed) that he is occasionally pushed toward the implicit faith that he is resisting in inclusivism. S. Wellum then focuses specifically on the issue of how explicit faith must be in order to be saving.

R. Peterson offers a summary of the different interpretations characteristically given to key biblical texts by inclusivists and exclusivists. The nature of the gospel is exegeted from each section of the New Testament, by A. J. Köstenberger and a case is made, by J. N. Jennings, for the church's mission as participation in God's zeal for his world. The book is helpfully wrapped up with answers from the editors to eight 'notable questions.'

Peterson asks, '*What would it take to disprove inclusivism biblically to its proponents?*' (199-200). That question is much easier for an inclusivist to answer than Peterson assumes and I believe that the divergence derives largely from different starting points. Inclusivists start with God's great mercy and grace (cf. Exodus 34:6). They therefore assume God's gracious intentions toward sinners but are listening for any explicit statements that God saves only those whom he reaches with the gospel through Christian mis-

sionaries. They find no such texts, even when they carefully read the works of gospel exclusivists. Exclusivists, on the other hand, are strongly impressed by the frequent New Testament affirmations of the efficacy of the proclamation of the gospel for salvation. Lacking specific biblical statements that God saves some who do not hear the gospel, and hearing the frequent New Testament condemnations of those who reject Christ, they find it obvious that knowledge of the gospel is necessary for salvation.

Numerous of the essayists express concern that inclusivism will harm the church's missionary motivation, so it is encouraging to see C. J. H. Wright's work commended in regard to the missionary mandate (183 n 155), given that he has so explicitly affirmed an inclusivist position. There is a puzzling discordance between the confidence of some of the essayists that some or all who die in the womb or in infancy (a very large part of the human race) are saved by God's grace in Christ without any knowledge of him, and their confidence that adults can be saved only if they hear the gospel.

I would like to see gospel exclusivists address an issue that struck me with new importance as I read these essays. Few of the essayists said much about salvation outside the old covenant community. But they frequently object to the manner in which inclusivists distinguish between people's chronological and epistemological location, and to the argument that even when God has made important new revelation of himself, those who are ignorant of that revelation can be saved by the faith that sufficed prior to that revelation. When the gospel exclusivist principle is applied throughout history, it has the strange effect of portraying God's saving program as narrowing each time he reveals himself more explicitly. Thus the

covenant made with Abraham, which spoke of God's plan to bless all nations, would have suddenly excluded from God's saving work any who were ignorant of the covenantal revelation that had just been made. Should God's covenants and his immediate saving work be so closely equated?

Among evangelicals, discussion of this issue is bound to continue and this fine collection of essays by noted evangelical scholars makes a valuable contribution to that ongoing quest for God's truth.

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**Passionate Conviction:
Contemporary Discourses on
Christian Apologetics,
Edited by Paul Copan and
William Lane Craig.**

Grand Rapids: Broadman and
Holman Publishing Group, 2007.
Paperback, P. 280. \$19.99.

*Reviewed by Glenn B. Siniscalchi,
Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA*

It is not a surprise for Evangelicals to hear that Paul Copan and William Lane Craig are two of the leading Christian apologists in North America. Their academic service to the church continues to epitomize the best work in the renaissance of Anglo-American philosophy of religion in the last forty years. As a result of this increasingly popular revival, professional societies such as the Evangelical Philosophical Society have been formed by leading Christian scholars to provide a sophisticated voice on behalf of the Christian community. It is encouraging to observe that, while many Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and other Protestants continue to depreciate the discipline of apologetics, Evangelicals

have been taking the lead in presenting first-rate arguments in reputable journals and other publications in defence of the faith.

Copan and Craig's *Passionate Conviction* is not the exception to this movement. It brings together essays from the annual fall conference on apologetics that is held in conjunction with the Evangelical Philosophical Society, the C.S. Lewis institute, and the graduate program in apologetics at Biola University. The book will appeal to theologians, philosophers, pastors, intelligent laymen, and college level students who are sympathetic to the validity of apologetics in today's world. Perhaps the book's greatest strength lies in its ability to discuss newly formulated arguments for God's existence, the historical evidences for Jesus, the problem of postmodern relativism, and the uniqueness of Christianity in a highly accessible manner for the non-specialist.

Setting the stage for the rest of the book are William Lane Craig ('In Intellectual Neutral' 2-16) and J.P. Moreland's ('Living Smart' 17-37) essays on the importance of intelligently believing and living the Christian life by seriously taking Jesus's command to love God with all our minds (Matt. 22:37). Undoubtedly the biggest reason why non-Evangelical Christians will resist *Passionate Conviction* is that apologetics still has so many negative connotations attached to it. The whole notion of defending Christianity with reason and hard evidences will seem preposterous and, in the worst case scenario, even offensive to non-Evangelicals and unbelievers. Craig and Moreland attempt to dispel this myth in the first two chapters.

Part two, which is the longest section of the book, is dedicated to issues related to natural theology. The essays are written by Michael A. Murray, 'Why Doesn't God

Make His Existence More Evident to Us?' (38-51), R. Douglas Geivett, 'Two Versions of the Cosmological Argument,' (52-68), W. Jay Richards, 'The Contemporary Argument for Design: An Overview,' (69-78), and Paul Copan, 'A Moral Argument' (79-93). Reading Murray's essay will come as a surprise to many Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant theologians working in the mainstream. Here Murray responds to what is probably the atheist's newest argument in defence of unbelief: if God existed, then he would give nonbelievers more evidence of his existence. But since God is not making his existence more apparent, then he must not exist. While this argument might seem novel, mystical theologians of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have framed the problem in different terms, preferring to emphasize the paradoxical relationship between apophatic and kataphatic theology instead. According to these theologians, God is hidden from us. A God who is not hidden and thus beyond the reach of our limited, earthly vision of the divine nature would not be an infinite, incomprehensible God.

The next section is dedicated to apologetics and the historical origins of Christianity. Of these essays, N. T. Wright's, 'Jesus' Resurrection and Christian Origins' (123-139) is the most helpful and enlightening. In an era of heightened historical consciousness amounting to a revolution in the way that human beings understand reality, Christians are left vulnerable to the sceptic's charge that the church's traditional beliefs about Jesus can be explained in mythological categories. Stated as such, Christians cannot avoid the historical question of whether God raised Jesus from the dead after he was crucified and buried (see Craig Evans' essay 'What Do We Know for Sure About Jesus' Death?'

109-122, for arguments for the historicity of Jesus' death and burial). Charles Quarles 'Revisionist Views About Jesus' (94-108) composes his essay in the same apologetic spirit, responding to Dan Brown's controversial book *The Da Vinci Code*.

The remaining chapters elaborate on selected themes in comparative religions, postmodernism, and the practical import of intelligently defending the Christian faith. These essays are written by Craig J. Hazen, 'Christianity in a World of Religions' (140-153), Harold Netland, 'The East Comes West' (or Why Jesus instead of the Buddha?) (154-169), L. Ross Bush, 'Christ in the New Age' (170-186), and Emir Fethi Caner, 'Islam and Christianity' 187-205. These essays epitomize the book's introductory character. To be sure, comparative religious scholars can spend their entire career learning and arguing about the plausibility of Christianity and how this fares with another religion, let alone learn the ways in which Christianity compares with many religions.

Postmodernism is yet another hot topic that scholars can spend their entire career studying, writing, and arguing about. Thus a critical apologist will carefully read what postmodernists have to say on their own grounds instead of lumping them all together in one category in order to debunk them. Yet, remaining faithful to its intended audience, *Passionate Conviction* provides introductory lessons for the layman on how to respond to the more common slogans that Christians confront in a postmodern culture (e.g. 'Christianity may be true for you, but it is not for me!'). It is surprising to me that J.P. Moreland ('The Challenges of Postmodernism' 206-210) and Francis Beckwith, 'Is Morality Relative?' 211-226) never spell out the tremendous

amount of good that postmodernism is having on Christian belief. For one thing, as a reaction to modernity, postmodernism is not necessarily hostile to Christian faith, but serves as a correction to the dogmatism of the past.

All in all, this book has plenty of food for thought for the beginner who desperately needs to perceive that Christianity is not a blind leap in the dark, but a rational step of faith into the light. If Evangelical apologists want their publications to be taken more seriously by the broader academic community of theologians, then they will have to wisely defend the legitimacy of apologetics (as Craig and Moreland indeed do in the first section), albeit they must do so under the larger umbrella of issues that concern theologians such as ecumenism, contextual theology, globalization, and inculturation.

If Evangelicals start doing this, then they ought to be able to make inroads into the wider Christian culture. For their enthusiasm for the gospel is infectious. Nowhere is apologetics more desperately needed than in the mainstream of Christian thought. As Pope Benedict XVI explains, 'The faith cannot be liberated if reason itself does not open up again. If the door to metaphysical cognition remains closed, if the limits of human knowledge set by Kant are impassable, faith is destined to atrophy: It simply lack air to breathe' (taken from his lecture 'Relativism: The Central Problem for Faith Today,' an address delivered at the meeting of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the Latin American Bishops, held at Guadalajara, Mexico, May 1996). So long as we are living in the church age, there will always be a need to give a reason for our hope.

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A Higher Throne: Evangelicals and Public Theology

Edited by Chris Greene

Nottingham, Apollos, 2008

ISBN 978-1-84474-277-6

Paperback, pages 201, bibliography

Reviewed by Dr Brian Edgar, Ringwood, 3134 Australia

A Higher Throne explores the public role of Christian belief and particularly its function in providing a foundation for government. Although there are a number of contributors with different perspectives, this book puts forward a conservative, reformed, evangelical position, and generally argues for a strong view of the relationship between church and state. The book is a compilation of papers delivered by lecturers at the Oak Hill College (London, Church of England) School of Theology.

Daniel Strange, with on 'Evangelical public theology: what on earth? why on earth? how on earth?' (47 pages) sets the scene via a survey of the concept of public theology and a discussion of whether a specifically evangelical public theology can actually be both publicly accessible and representative of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. May one who operates from a Wesleyan perspective suggest that the underlying theological issue Strange grapples with here—relating to common grace—might be helped by reference to the notion of prevenient grace, which does not so sharply isolate salvific themes from God's grace in the world, and which could be a means of bringing back together the apparently separated issues of Christian universality and Christian uniqueness? There is a useful comparison of recent trends in public theology with the long-standing evangelical

debate about the relationship of social action and evangelism. Strange discusses two approaches to 'two-kingdoms' theology—one tending towards separation and the other (his preferred option) being a stronger or 'thicker' transformationist version of public theology.

Kirsten Birkett begins 'New Living in an Old Creation' (20 pages) by asking whether things other than gospel preaching (such as social justice or public service) are worth doing, whether they are appropriate for Christians and whether there are two classes of Christian—those in gospel work and those not. Her conclusions are 'yes', 'yes' and 'no', but I am not sure that she resolves the underlying problem about their relationship. She follows the apostle Paul in saying that God gives some to be evangelists, teachers, preachers etc, and updates it to say that others are politicians, newspaper columnists and rubbish collectors etc. While it is right to attribute value to all of these and there is no real need of a hierarchy or any suggestion that some are unworthy of Christian attention this approach does not deal with the differences. Paul could have included in his list tentmakers, farmers and fishermen, but he didn't.

Spiritual gifts, on the one hand, and vocations such as politics or farming, on the other are not, may I suggest, in the same category (and the contemporary situation where the gift of being a pastor is also a full-time, paid vocation is something of an aberration in New Testament terms, albeit one that may be considered to operate appropriately today). One may, for example, fulfil the ministry of a pastor, evangelist or teacher through the work of a rubbish collector. This chapter also includes a useful and interesting discussion of resurrection ethics and the work of Oliver O'Donovan. The concepts of transformation by the Spirit and the

renewal of creation provide insights on relationship between 'work in the kingdom' and 'work in the world' which do not relate to 'two loves' (of God and neighbour) but one—which is life in Christ.

David Field writes (33 pages) on Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex* (1644) and the Reformed tradition of political thought which leads to a covenanted nation and confessionally Christian state. This stands, he argues, in contrast with 'evangelical defeatism' which prefers the separation of church and state. A Christian 'principled pluralism' is not acceptable, as it asserts that there is a part of life where Jesus is not Lord. Recognising that this is by no means acceptable to all evangelicals, Field deals with 16 objections to the confessionally Christian state. The only alternatives Field sees are for the state to have a false confession, which is idolatrous, or no confession, which is inevitably tyrannical because the actions of the state are ungrounded.

Others might argue that the absence of a religious confession does not necessarily mean that there cannot be a consensus or some minimal conditions for living together, but Field rejects natural law arguments which might support this on the basis that no part of the world can be discussed without reference to Christ. Given the strength with which Calvinist/Reformed positions are put in this volume, it is perhaps appropriate to say once again that a more conjunctive (eg Wesleyan) theology would make a good dialogue partner—allowing perhaps for the kind of Christological emphasis missing in Reformed discussions of natural law and common grace.

Garry J. Williams has a long (60 pages) discussion of Gabbatha (the judgment seat, John 19:13), and Golgotha and the implications of penal substitutionary

atonement in the public arena. The cross, he rightly argues, has a place in an evangelical public theology. He examines the connection of the cross with politics in Reformed writing (especially Grotius) and scripture: they meet at the judgement seat. In the first part he examines the way that political concepts of law and judgement affect one's theology of the cross and then, in part two, he moves from the cross to the public square. There is a critique of those who want to remove the direct action of God from the cross and a discussion of the nature of reformatory and retributive understandings of punishment. He discusses C. S. Lewis' well known arguments but goes beyond what he sees as Lewis' expediency to argue for rulers having a stronger remit to punish retributively. The immediate implications of a Christian view of punishment on state actions are seen to be limited but there is an expressed expectation that Christendom will return soon in parts of the world and eventually to Europe and to Britain.

The book concludes with a sermon (10 pages) preached by David Field on being 'inescapably political'. It also presents not only a vigorous claim for Christian political involvement but also specifically for a confessionally Christian state and for all politicians to be Christian. There is also room for controversy in the claim that while Christians love the enemies of Christ to be converted that nonetheless 'if we love our enemies and they're not going to get converted, then the sooner they die, the better for them anyway'. While bearing in mind the context and the conceptually more limited scope of a sermon (although it is also reprinted as an article here) there seems no doubt that in many parts of the world if the same ideas were preached on behalf of Islam they would be considered inflammatory.

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Christian Ethics in Africa

Laurenti Magesa

Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002

ISBN 9966-888-87-X

Paperback, pp170

Reviewed by Justus K. Musya

No longer bound by any traditional or orthodox worldview, modern life in Africa is in the midst of an ethical crisis. In *Christian Ethics in Africa*, the author helps readers to view existing ethical issues from a Christian perspective. The book is comprehensive in scope and thought-provoking in tenor. Divided into three parts, with ten chapters, it poses vexing theological and missiological questions, questions that are accentuated by the unfavourable cultural setting in which the church in Africa operates. Given its shrewd analysis, its respect for objective methods of gathering knowledge, and of analysing social phenomenon, and given its helpful insights and recommendations, many of which are implicit, it should promote African theology and missiology.

In his introductory remarks, Magesa stresses the need to inculcate the gospel, against the background of an evolved cultural milieu. He asserts that 'Inculcation recaptures the original models of being African and being Christian' (p.15). That process aims to 'construct ways and forms of Christian living that make space for people's cultural identities to be expressed' (p. 19).

In Part One, Magesa provides a competent treatise on the ethics of liberation vis a vis human dignity, providing a stable framework from which to promote human dignity: Christ as liberator. He asserts that 'To consider Jesus Christ as our liberator in the African situation is much

more than just a metaphor. [Doing so] is an attempt to present the only Jesus that can be comprehensible and credible among the African rural masses, urban poor and idealistic youth.' (p. 43). If so, human dignity takes on a telling spiritual character. It ought to flow from a social setting in which justice is assured and freedom is regarded. Magesa contends, 'The task involves not merely the idea of promoting the greatest good for the greatest number, but rather in so far as it is possible, the greatest good of all. It involves the active promotion of a society based on equality and the interaction of individual freedom and social cohesiveness' (p. 72). Magesa concludes Part One by ably juxtaposing theology and democracy, showing the conceptual convergence of Christian beliefs and democratic thought, and implicitly, the attendant issues of social justice.

In Part, Two the author introduces the reader to the outcome of the colonial enterprise on the African psyche. By furnishing a survey of the consequences of slavery, five hundred years after the Atlantic slave trade, he enables one to see why that psyche is characterized by, among other things, self-diminution. His argument is plausible, with considerable explanatory power. He expands these ideas in chapter 7. Magesa has adequately provided an account of the anthropological outcomes of colonialism. He aptly juxtaposes slave trade and racism (pp.94-97), analyses the effects of slave trade on African consciousness (pp.98-106), and suggests a correlation (ideological parity) between the slave trade and the caste system (pp. 107-110). In that vein, he implies that the work of expatriates in Africa is a vestige of that system. He asserts, 'To be perfectly frank, practical attitudes of many western organizations towards Africa today appear to be much

like those of the 19th century' (p.111). To remedy that anachronism, he remarks, Africans must change how they think about themselves. To that end, if domesticated or contextualised, Christian values and ethics would be facilitative (p. 119).

In Part Three, Magesa explores the challenges facing the church in East Africa. These challenges are exemplified by doctrinal distortions and the misapplication of biblical thought. These challenges are also referable to the incompetence of the church, its missiological failure vis a vis its indispensable role as the social conscience of any nation (pp.125-141). To correct that anomaly, the church should develop and sustain a lucid and socially palpable role. To him, its position on social and ethical issues should be popularly recognized (p. 138).

In the final chapter, Magesa criticizes the sheepish adoption by the African church of Vatican ideas on social issues over the past centuries. In nine theses, he ably illustrates that the African perspective on the same remains undeveloped, defined solely by that 'foreign' thought. That lack of novelty indicates that African theology and missiology are yet immature philosophically and hermeneutically. The African church should define social and ethical issues in its own terms, formulating its own parlance and taxonomy. Were it to do so, it would outgrow its undue commitment to Vatican formulations. It would have the theoretical basis on which to make appropriate interventions (p. 145). The scripture, as well as the vision of the church Fathers, admits of broad applications. If so, the African church retains enormous latitude to render culturally sensitive solutions. Fortunately, African theology has begun to shed its restrictive, conceptual and contextual model of social thought (p. 170).

Together, Magesa's book addresses perti-

nent theological and misionological subjects, ideas that would be useful in promoting missions and in unravelling Africa's muddled ethical problems. His ecclesiastic methodology, entailing theological, philosophical, historical, and sociological instruments, is apposite. It helps the reader appreciate the complexity of ethical, socio-cultural, and even socio-political questions that are prevalent in Africa presently. It forces the reader to appreciate the call for dialogue between scriptures (pp. 23,33, 38) and African culture and history, (pp. 93-111; 144-170). Besides these macro aspects of inculturation, the book also provides guidelines with which to forge a personal approach to ethical living.

Nevertheless, Magesa's book carries some disturbing exegetical and hermeneutical flaws. He asks, 'What, then is the theological justification for our struggle in Africa for justice, human rights, human dignity, [is it not] the just distribution of Africa's and the world's resources?' He then quotes Philippians 2: 6-8 as the applicable verse for the foregoing (which is an instance of reading into the Bible). Instead, he might have initially derived the meaning of that text independent of any extraneous context, bereft of any underlying, adulterating presuppositions. Implicitly, the type of hermeneutical mistake that Magesa makes only serves to demonstrate the potential for distortions in developing a genuine African voice apropos issues of social justice.

The book has other logical flaws of meaning and intention. It presumes, rather than demonstrates, what an African culture is. Even were his taxonomy accurate, the idea of 'African' perspective, experience or even consciousness, is scarcely homogenous. What is more, studies seemingly suggest that cultural orthodoxy has

waned as an ethos in Africa, at least in many urban areas—no less perhaps than in the rural areas.

In wrapping up, the book is helpful in building a fund of knowledge with which to support missiology in theory and in praxis. It is an informative text given the prevailing secular ethos in many places in Africa, belief systems that are indifferent, if not hostile, to the Judeo-Christian worldview. And it provides fodder for a multidisciplinary research, in anthropology, sociology, and missiology. Therefore, I highly recommend the book for all African theologians and preachers who desire to reach Christians within the context of their culture.

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**Subverting Global Myths:
Theology and the Public Issues
Shaping our World**

Vinoth Ramachandra

ISBN 978-0-8308-2885-2

IVP Academic, 2008

Pb., pp 296, Index

*Reviewed by J. Daniel Salinas, Ph.D.,
General Secretary GBUP, Paraguay*

If you think prophets are funny-looking men from the distant past, think again. What about a PhD Sri Lankan nuclear engineer? Ramachandra writes poignantly and boldly to our times. He avoids the East-West dichotomy which usually blames the wealthy West for the maladies in the world. Ramachandra's words are reminders to all of us of how easily we worship our own creations, leaving the one and only true God out of our lives. He describes six myths that have captured our souls: the myths of terrorism, religious violence, human rights, multiculturalism, science, and post colonialism.

Drawing from many ancient and modern sources, including his worldwide experience, Ramachandra shows how secular the Christian church has become by accepting uncritically the agenda of the media gurus in a globalized world. For example, 'Despite all the liberal rhetoric about "equality," who in the world of the media or the academy really believes that the life of a Nepali peasant, say, is as valuable as that of a Hollywood actress or a football star?' (11). Stories of hope, interreligious dialogue, peacemaking, integration, and true freedom that show the power of the Christian message when it is lived out by believers in their communities, will never appear in the mainstream media.

Ramachandra shows theologically that Christian people hold a real possibility of making a difference, of 'subverting the global myths' when they take seriously the implications and consequences of the Bible's teachings. In regard to terrorism, for instance, he says, 'Christians abide in a hope that is not based on the conditions of world history. It is rooted, nevertheless, in a conviction that God has not abandoned God's world to usurping 'principalities and powers,' but has acted decisively in Christ for its healing and re-creation.' (56). Talking of human rights, 'The God who expresses his solidarity with us by taking human flesh, relativizes all differences of ethnicity, education, class, gender or citizenship. There is a sense in which humankind is one family.' (118). Later, discussing multiculturalism he asserts that, 'perhaps it is only Christians who can confidently hope that everything that is true, beautiful, just and pleasing to God in every period of human history and in every human culture has not disappeared forever but will be retrieved, restored and redirected toward the eternal worship of God and the risen

Christ.' (147). On science, Ramachandra reminds us that, 'If we are creatures made in the image of the Creator, sharing the earth with other creatures, animate and inanimate, yet called to wise dominion over it, it is not presumptuous of men and women to seek to understand their Creator's world. Both the rationality of the universe and the rationality of the scientific explorer are grounded in the ultimate rationality and faithfulness of the Creator.' (187)

It is in the section on post-colonialism, however, that I find Ramachandra's prophetic voice more assertive; specifically in the implications for theology. For instance, in these days of severe anti-immigration measures, he reminds the readers that, 'It is salutary to remember that it is Africa, not Europe or North America, that is host to the largest number of refugees in the world (with millions of Christians among them), followed by south Asia.' (255). Ramachandra notices that Asian, African and Latin American theologies are labelled 'contextual'. He asks, 'Why are North American or British or German theologies never named as such?' His answer,

Western theologies are simply assumed to be universal, but non-Western theologies are 'contextual.' The insularity of most Western theological institutions is astonishing. The study of other cultures and societies is a marginal concern despite the growth of Asian and African communities in the cities of Europe and North America. The only situation in which the typical theology student is likely to learn about other cultures, histories and religions is if he were to follow a course in missiology. In the more academic faculties, these courses do not exist. (258)

Ramachandra is a showcase of what he

says. Even though he writes in English and his books are available in Europe and North America, he remains mostly unknown to theologians from those continents. Ramachandra also sees implications for church history. The diversity of the global community today, 'requires a more diversified understanding of Christian tradition than that which is given in the dominant master narrative of Western Christianity' (259). Such a paradigm shift demands that we do not 'act as if the play

starts with us. If we change the story line, import scenes from other plays or rewrite the ending, we have another play and not the Christian one' (260).

There is a huge need for other voices joining the theological dialogue, instead of the same people saying the same things the same way over again. Ramachandra should be one of these voices. This book is evidence that what he has to say is worth listening to.

Creation at Worship

Ecology, Creation and Christian Worship

Christopher J. Voke

The western Church finds itself in the context of a culture that faces ecological crisis. How can we be equipped to live as disciples in such a world?

Chris Voke argues that public worship plays a role in shaping the vision and values of a community and empowering it for daily life. Thus the restoration of the vision of God as creator and the dimension of creation to the content of worship services will be critical in shaping communities that can face contemporary challenges. Voke shows that a grasp of the links between creation and redemption and an appreciation of the significance of Jesus' humanity will enable Christ-centred worship that gives a proper place and value to creation.

This book aims to challenge present practice, to propose changes in public worship, to justify these theologically and practically and to show ways in which a vision of the Creator and his creation may be incorporated into liturgy by those responsible for planning and leading worship. Filled with theological insight and practical examples this book will be of great help to church leaders, worship leaders and theologians.

Christopher J. Voke is Deputy Principal of Spurgeon's College, London

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STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY AND THOUGHT

Healing in the Early Church

The Church's Ministry of Healing and Exorcism from the First to the Fifth Century

Andrew Daunton-Fear

This is the most comprehensive investigation yet made into the healing activity of the Early Church.

The author shows that there was a vigorous healing and exorcism ministry in the centuries that followed the apostles, though it fluctuated somewhat and changed its mode. The pre-Nicene Fathers recognized its great apologetic value as a dramatic demonstration of the superiority of the Christian God over pagan rivals. The place of anointing with oil, baptismal healing, the growing role of the shrines of martyrs in the post-Nicene church, and the positive view of the medical profession are amongst the issues explored.

Andrew Daunton-Fear is a Lecturer in Church History and Pastoral Studies at St Andrew's Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines

978-1-84227-623-5 / 229 x 152mm / 350pp (est.) / £24.99 (est.)

Missionary Imperialists?

Missionaries, Government and the Growth of the British Empire in the Tropics, 1860-1885

John Darch

This study examines whether British Protestant missionaries really did seek to build the British Empire alongside the kingdom of God.

The author concludes that where missionaries did aid imperial development it was largely incidental, an 'imperialism of result' rather than an 'imperialism of intent'.

John Darch lectured in Church History at St John's College, Nottingham.

978-1-84227-560-3 / 229 x 152mm / 300pp (est.) / £24.99 (est.)

Religious Dissent in the Local Community

The Covenanter Movement in Fife

Alison G. Muir

This work examines the covenanter movement in Fife.

Beginning with an analysis of protestant dissent in Fife between c.1610 and 1637/38 consideration is given to the period of covenanter rule before tracing the continuation of protestant dissent during the Restoration period. Finally, by focusing closely on four areas of Fife the impact of the events of the period on local institutions and behaviours is analysed.

Alison Muir works with Historic Scotland.

978-1-84227-438-5 / 229 x 152mm / 300pp (est.) / £24.99 (est.)

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