

# AFRICANUS JOURNAL

Vol. II No. 1 | APRIL 2019



# Contents

- 3 Goals of the Journal
- 3 Life of Africanus
- 3 Other Front Matter
- 5 Relationships *not* "Relationships": Life Together Based on Jesus' Words in Luke 6:27-49  
JASON DRAPEAU
- 13 Sikhism and the Christian View of Jesus and Salvation  
PATRICIA TOLEDO
- 18 The Cross as Perversion: Muslim Perspectives on Christ's Person and Work in Relationship to Christian Orthodoxy  
RACHEL GILSON
- 23 Review of *Redeeming Capitalism*  
DAVID W. GILL
- 25 Review of *Cave of Little Faces: A Novel*  
KAREN MASON
- 27 Review of *Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology*  
WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER
- 30 Review of *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence*  
JEFFREY ARTHURS
- 31 Review of *Intercultural Discipleship*  
DEBORAH M. BITZER
- 33 Review of *Preaching as Reminding: Stirring Memory in an Age of Forgetfulness*  
SCOTT M. GIBSON
- 34 Review of *Holy Spokes: The Search for Urban Spirituality on Two Wheels*  
DEB BEATTY MEL

- 36 Review of *Strengthening Families and Ending Abuse*  
JEAN DIMOCK
- 39 Review of *Ancient Christian Texts: Commentaries on Galatians to Philemon*  
FRANCOIS W. AUGUSTIN
- 40 Review of *Ritual Water, Ritual Spirit*  
WOODROW E. WALTON
- 42 Review of *The Letter to Philemon*  
AMBER L. BURGESS
- 44 Review of *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*  
JAE-SEUNG LIM
- 46 Review of *Hidden in Plain View: Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts*  
JOHN M. DEPOE
- 51 Review of *Women of War, Women of Woe*  
CHRISTINE COS
- 54 Review of *Chronological Study Bible*  
BENJAMIN FUNG
- 55 Review of *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*  
JOHN LATHROP
- 57 Review of *Introducing Logic and Critical Thinking*  
EUNTAEK DAVID SHIN
- 60 Review of *A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of Revelation in Evangelical Theology*  
MAUD SANDBO

## Goals of the *Africanus Journal*

The *Africanus Journal* is an award-winning interdisciplinary biblical, theological, and practical journal of the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME). Its goals are to promote:

- a. the mission and work of the members and mentors of the Africanus Guild Ph.D. Research Program of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston;
- b. the principles of the Africanus Guild (evangelical orthodox Christian men and women who are multicultural, multiracial, urban-oriented, studying a Bible without error in a cooperative way);
- c. Christian scholarship that reflects an evangelical perspective, as an affiliate of GCTS-Boston. This is an interdisciplinary journal that publishes high quality articles in areas such as biblical studies, theology, church history, religious research, case studies, and studies related to practical issues in urban ministry. Special issues are organized according to themes or topics that take seriously the contextual nature of ministry situated in the cultural, political, social, economic, and spiritual realities in the urban context.

Scholarly papers may be submitted normally by those who have or are in (or are reviewed by a professor in) a Th.M., D.Min., Ed.D., Th.D., ST.D., Ph.D., or equivalent degree program.

Two issues normally are published per year. <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/resources/AfricanusJournal.cfm>

© 2019 by the Africanus Guild

## Life of Julius Africanus

Julius Africanus was probably born in Jerusalem, many scholars think around A.D. 200. Africanus was considered by the ancients as a man of consummate learning and sharpest judgment (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* 6:128). He was a pupil of Heracles, distinguished for philosophy and other Greek learning, in Alexandria, Egypt around A.D. 231–233. In A.D. 220/226, he performed some duty in behalf of Nicopolis (formerly Emmaus) in Palestine. Later he likely became bishop of Emmaus (Eusebius, *History*, VI.xxxi.2). Origen calls him “a beloved brother in God the Father, through Jesus Christ, His holy Child” (*Letter from Origen to Africanus* 1). Fellow historian Eusebius distinguishes him as “no ordinary historian” (*History*, I. vi.2). Eusebius describes the five books of *Chronologies* as a “monument of labor and accuracy” and cites extensively from his harmony of the evangelists’ genealogies (*History*, VI. xxxi. 1–3). Africanus was a careful historian who sought to defend the truth of the Bible. He is an ancient example of meticulous, detailed scholarship which is historical, biblical, truthful, and devout.

Even though Eusebius describes Africanus as the author of the *Kestoi*, Jerome makes no mention of this (*ANF* 6:124). The author of *Kestoi* is surnamed Sextus, probably a Libyan philosopher who arranged a library in the Pantheon at Rome for the Emperor. The *Kestoi* was probably written toward the end of the 200s. It was not written by a Christian since it contains magical incantations (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* III.412).

The Greek text of Africanus’ writings may be found in Martinus Josephus Routh, *Reliquiae sacrae* II (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974 [1846]), 225–309, and Martin Wallraff, Umberto Roberto, Karl Pinggéra, eds., William Adler, trans., *Iulius Africanus Chronographiae: The Extant Fragments, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* 15 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

The extant writings of Julius Africanus may be found in vol. 1, no 1, April 2009 edition of the *Africanus Journal*.

## Other Front Matter

*Editorial Team for the issue:* J. Saemi Kim, Seong Park, Nicole Rim, John Runyon, Euntaek David Shin, Jennifer Lee Shin, Aída Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer

### *Resources:*

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary faculty publications only and hard copies of this journal may be ordered by emailing [cumebookstore@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:cumebookstore@gordonconwell.edu), [books@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:books@gordonconwell.edu), or telephoning CUME library at 617-427-7293.

Each author is solely legally responsible for the content and the accuracy of facts, citations, references, and quotations rendered and properly attributed in the article appearing under his or her name. Neither Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the Africanus Guild, nor the editorial team is responsible or legally liable for any content or any statements made by any author, but the legal responsibility is solely that author’s once an article appears in print in the *Africanus Journal*.

### *Summary of Content:*

Jesus’s teachings and model and application of them to church life and apologetics unite the articles in this issue.

# THE AFRICANUS GUILD



L to R: Quonekuia Day, Mark Chuanhang Shan, Jennifer Creamer

*“If not for the Africanus Guild, I would not even think of getting a Ph.D. and would not have had the chance to teach my own course at Gordon-Conwell, and be trained to be a Bible teacher, and for this I am most grateful.” –Benjamin Fung*

Benjamin Fung’s Ph.D. was received from North-West University in South Africa 2017  
Quonekuia Day and Mark Shan are Ph.D. candidates with London School of Theology.  
Jennifer Creamer received her Ph.D. from North-West University in 2016.

The Africanus Guild is a support program set up to assist selective, underrepresented constituencies to pursue research Ph.D.s from North-West University and London School of Theology. The Guild is especially oriented to the multicultural, multiracial urban scene. Accepted students are mentored by a Gordon-Conwell faculty member. Candidates may complete the Th.M. at the Boston campus and then apply to the Guild.

## Relationships *not* “Relationships”: Life Together Based on Jesus' Words in Luke 6:27-49

JASON DRAPEAU

For a time while in my undergraduate collegiate studies, I pursued academic coursework toward a prospective career in genetics. Though my scientific study never materialized into workforce placement (I experienced a divine pivot into pastoral ministry), I am still indelibly grateful for my experiences there—and more than just in preparation for a journal article's introduction! In such a scientific field, many of my prerequisite coursework was in the hard sciences—biology, chemistry, and the like. Though some learning took place in the classroom, much of it also occurred in the laboratory.

In developing hypotheses and performing experiments in the science lab, great care was often taken to ensure control of the context and content of the experiment so as to avoid extemporaneous sources of error. Ambient temperature, flawed measuring devices, and similar factors all had potential to play into an experiment's outcome, albeit undesirably. However, with an environment containing greater control and far fewer elements for natural error—such as if experiments were able to be performed “in a vacuum” (literally, as opposed to metaphorically or idiomatically)—then ideally the conclusion of the scientist would solely be contingent upon the outcome of the experiments. It would be much easier, for example, to witness the behavior of fruit flies in a controlled air tunnel than trying to watch little gnats fly around in a sandstorm.

Many of us read God's Word in a still and tranquil vacuum. Having our quiet devotional times, finding that sacred space, and meeting with God is vital in our Christian lives. In these places, we are impressed and moved by what the Holy Spirit has to say through Scripture. Then we exit the vacuum and enter the sandstorm. In this environment, it is not only more naturally difficult to apply God's Word, but it is often harder to recall it as well. Life outside our sacred space seems to do its best to bombard us with distractions from and disagreements with these sacred teachings to which we just were moved previously in the Word and in prayer. The difficulties faced in life often grit against us and challenge us in our application of theology. Though we are trained to hold fast to sound doctrine (2 Tim. 1:13), in certain areas we sometimes find ourselves straying from it and allowing our orthopraxy to differ from our orthodoxy. And there is no clearer example of this than in the discipline of social interaction.

We might read Scripture about God's benevolent kindness and patience toward us as sons and daughters of God, but yet we grow irritated with our own children because of their unruliness just a few moments later. We can be moved when recalling the sacrificial life of Christ, but we become unwilling to help a neighbor because of our busy schedules. I remember a former church attendee who told a story about being touched by the grace of God during a Sunday sermon, only to grow frustrated and express graceless irritation with a fellow driver on the road five minutes after leaving the church parking lot. Life together is indeed challenging at times—even (and maybe especially) for the follower of Christ. There is much need for God to speak and encourage His people in their relationships with each other. God requires for us to show divine mercy and biblical reconciliation in our interpersonal relationships.

As a pastor, I enjoy leading people through not only understanding *what* the Bible has to say, but exactly *why* it has to be said. While more of a challenging and complex discipline, discovering the context behind the content is invaluable when studying God's Word. It is one thing, for example, to hear God say to Joshua that he ought to “be strong and courageous” (Josh. 1:6). It is something else of a blessing indeed to understand that this is reiterated three times in four verses—along with grasping that the preceding message from God was recounting that Joshua's

mentor, Moses, was dead—which together give us a more realistic picture of the Joshua who God was saying should muster courage. God spoke these words to Joshua in the first verses of the book so named precisely because Joshua *needed* courage; vis-à-vis, Joshua was *afraid*. Therefore, God's commands to be courageous are seen as just the gracious and strengthening salve that Joshua needed on his weak and worried heart.

The words of Jesus in Luke 6 lead us to ponder a similar contextual conversation. Parallel to its twin passage in Matthew 5-7 (aptly known as the Sermon on the Mount), Luke's "Sermon on the Plain"<sup>1</sup> has both profoundly theological positions, as well as precise practical assertions. Contained within this greater literary unit of Jesus' sermon in Luke's narrative is a smaller pericope centered around interpersonal relationships. In this sermon to His disciples, Jesus makes sure that He addresses how His followers are to act and interact with each other, in light of how God acts towards them. Specifically, that Jesus preached these words in the hearing of His disciples leads us to recognize that it is valuable for even deeply religious and Spirit-filled Christians to hear—and more so to apply—God's words regarding life together. Our functional theology<sup>2</sup> in day-to-day living with others on earth must match Christ's articulated theology<sup>3</sup> for us as found in Luke 6:27-49, which is that Jesus teaches the community of faith to act contrary to the cultural idea of reciprocity in relationships, and as a result to live out biblical relational reconciliation.

While preaching to His hearers in Luke 6, and immediately following Luke's parallel of Matthew's "Beatitudes" in Luke 6:20-26, Jesus begins His teaching in verses 27-49 by addressing a common misnomer of the time as well as of today: reciprocity. People often have attitudes towards others that are on par with the metric of others' attitudes towards them. This is implicit in the first segment of the passage, Luke 6:27-38. The worldly notion of reciprocity—doing to others what is only fair and reflective based on what they do to me—is not as obvious at first glance within these verses. For instance, Luke never records Jesus saying, "Even though you think that you should only act towards others the way that they act towards you, I *challenge* this reciprocal notion, and instead encourage you to act *this way* with everyone..."<sup>4</sup> More covert in the text—yet just as central to every verse within this literary unit—is Jesus challenging the disciples and others in the greater audience<sup>5</sup> with increased benevolence towards others regardless of those others' demonstrations of kindness (or lack of it) towards the disciples:

"Love your *enemies*, do good to those who *hate* you"<sup>6</sup> (v. 27).

"Bless those who *curse* you, pray for those who *mistreat* you" (v. 28).

"Whoever *hits* you on the cheek, *offer* him the other also" (v. 29).

"Whoever *takes away* what is yours, *do not demand* it back" (v. 30).

"Treat *others* the same way you want them to treat *you*" (v. 31).

"If you *love those who love you*, what credit is that to you?" (v. 32).

"If you *do good to those who do good to you*, what credit is that to you?" (v. 33).

"If you *lend to those from whom you expect to receive*, what credit is that to you?" (v. 34).

"Love your *enemies*" (v. 35).

"Be *merciful*" (v. 36).

---

1 Joel B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 228 (footnote 1).

2 "Functional theology" refers to how we act and live.

3 "Articulated theology" refers to what is spoken or shared about how we are to act and live.

4 Though implicit in Luke's text, it is more explicit in Matthew's parallel sermon; for example, see Matt. 5:38-42, and 43-48.

5 See Luke 6:20—in which Luke mentions Jesus' disciples being the predominant audience, as well as Luke 7:1—in which Luke posits that others "of the people" were also privy to His discourse.

6 Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

“Judge *not*...condemn *not*...*forgive*” (v. 37).

“*Give*” (v. 38).

If nothing was observed but a snapshot of each verse—or even a broad brush stroke of the pericope as a whole—then it might appear that Jesus is advocating a blanket position of pacifism amidst the setting of the Roman occupation of Israel and general Middle Eastern hostility. However under the backdrop of reciprocity—the basic idea of treating others the way they *deserved* to be treated (contrary to Jesus' teaching in v. 31), or treating others the way that they have treated me (implied in almost every verse within this pericope)—Jesus' message is much more theologically and relationally profound.

On mention of verse 31, which could easily be seen as a biblical advocating of reciprocity *par excellence*, it is important to note the contextual difference between Jesus' words and those retribitional words of the day. One will notice that Jesus does *not* say to “Treat others the way that they deserve to be treated,” nor does Jesus say “Treat others the way that they treat you.” Rather, Jesus appeals to universal human self-benevolence: As nobody desires to harm themselves in all rationality and sanity, so should we not desire to harm anyone else either. Jesus' command to “Treat others the same way *you want them to treat you*” seems countercultural to peoples' innate inclination for retribution towards others.

God, in His kindness and mercy, does not treat us as our sins deserve (Ps. 103:10). How then can the Son of God justify anything other than His people doing likewise to those around them? Phenomenally countercultural—but not at all contrary to God's immutable nature—Jesus commands and encourages all people to have the very heart of God towards one another (Luke 6:36).

In addition to the central thematic ideal of Godlikeness towards others, and in contrast to the contextual norm of reciprocity, each of the statements of Jesus in Luke 6:27-38 carries great application in our day-to-day living with others. Take into consideration the practical implications of just a few of the following:

“*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*” (v. 27). Counter to the natural emotional instinct to act out reciprocally when we are harmed, Jesus challenges us to reply practically and oppositely to hate—with an attitude of love. This is not simply because Jesus is a kind of backwards thinker who likes to challenge His followers to swim opposite the current. Rather, Jesus desires for all people to experience life in its fullest and most abundant sense (John 10:10). Knowing that God's commands are for His glory and our good, the commandment to love others is also given not just so we would be obedient children of the Almighty. Loving even the unlovable will pose as a witness to the unloving, and as a freeing joy to ourselves, who are often the ones not immediately being shown love. Disobeying Jesus' command by not loving others will bring not only God's judgment, but also natural interpersonal consequences. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has said, “Hate is just as injurious to the hater as it is to the hated.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus shares His good counsel with us in loving our enemies not exclusively because He is the right and just God, but also because He understands the impact it will have on our lives and our relationships with others: positively if obeyed, negatively if rejected.

“*Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you*” (v. 28). A specific application of the above command is to view loving those who show us hate and extending blessing and praying to those who curse and mistreat us as practical tools in which to show love and quell residual and reciprocal feelings. I have a friend who, undoubtedly influenced by this verse of Scripture (if not the greater body of the Word as a whole), shared that he often prays for those to whom he has a difficult time showing love. He goes on to explain that, if he prays for that person every day for a month, then at the end of the month his attitude is undoubtedly less aggravated toward them and

<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* 2d ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 66.



instead will be more compassionate than it was at first. Jesus' practical words are evidenced as wise and sound.

*“Treat others the same way you want them to treat you” (v. 31).* Jesus speaks the proverbial text of the “Golden Rule” in the direct context of *mistreatment* (“...those who hate you...who curse you...who mistreat you...[who] hits you on the cheek...[who] takes away what is yours...” in vv. 27-30).<sup>8</sup> Probably the most countercultural statement of the bunch, Jesus' words here are inevitably met with some resistance by his hearers. It is no wonder, therefore, that Jesus anticipates this and gives some counterarguments for this resistance in the verses to follow. It is sufficient to say that although mistreating those who mistreat us will certainly feel good at the time, Jesus knows that it will neither be good for our relationships with others, nor for our souls.

*“If you love those who love you, what credit is that?” (vv. 32-34).* These verses are undoubtedly Jesus' anticipation of the natural argument that it might actually *feel* better (some might try to rationalize in thinking that it might actually *be* better) to similarly mistreat those who mistreat them. However Jesus chastises that notion with statements such as “For even sinners do the same” and “what credit is that to you?” (vv. 32, 33, and 34). If those who are mistreated are looking to be bettered in some way—as getting back at others makes us as the oppressed naturally feel more superior in moments of having been made to feel inferior—then Jesus speaks directly in acknowledging that it actually does *not* credit us anything (a synonymous phrase with “being or feeling better”) to get back at those who mistreat us. Also, it can be easily assessed that those who are doing the mistreatment are demonstratively sinning; yet if we as Christ-followers only show love and benevolence towards those who are benevolent to us, and not to those who are mistreating us, then we act as they act and our action is sin just as theirs is sin. Jesus calls us no better than those sinners in the end, and in fact this associates our reciprocity as sin in kind, just as the original mistreatment.

*“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (v. 36).* Yet another clear statement from Jesus about our relationships with others, this verse emphasizes the reasoning behind our mercy toward others. It could be understood in two ways based on the surrounding context—both of which are fair and significant enough evidence to encourage our demonstration of mercy to other people. Verse 36 could be understood as: (a) “Be merciful (to others, even/especially toward those sinful and evil), because “He [God] Himself is kind to [the] ungrateful and evil” (from v. 35b). In this way, our mercy to those less-deserving is to model God's mercy also on the supposedly less-deserving. However, verse 36 could also be interpreted as: (b) “Be merciful (to others), just as your Father is merciful (to *you*).” This interpretation carries much more gravity, because every Christ-follower would naturally desire to receive kindness and mercy from God. Jesus' implication may have been to emphasize the fact that we *have* been shown mercy from God, and thereby it would be seen as greedy and gluttonous—resembling the sinners that Jesus referred to just a few short verses earlier—if we did not concurrently show mercy to others ourselves.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the interpretation of verse 36, it is sufficient to say that Jesus commands His followers to show mercy to one another for much greater reason than “just because.” Following the divine example and receiving divine benevolence are quite sufficient purposes for our own benevolent action.

*“Do not...[and do...]” (vv. 37-38).* More specific and more applicable, these verses are illustrations—as well as practical exhortations—for interaction with one another. In addition to

---

<sup>8</sup> Although it could be considered that Jesus' statement in v. 29 is an actual instance—of “hit[ting] you on the cheek”—it is likely, due to the generalization and ambiguity of v. 30, along with its contextual connection to v. 29, that Jesus' words in these verses are hypothetical. Though they gain very practical ethos if literally occurring, if one of Jesus' hearers actually was struck on the cheek for some reason, for example, it is likely that what is taking place is Jesus presenting a generic illustration that counters natural and cultural norms.

<sup>9</sup> There is some additional biblical evidence to this interpretation, specifically as Matthew's parallel in Matthew 6:12, 14-15 relates to God's demonstration towards us (in this case, regarding forgiveness) relative to our demonstration towards others.

that, Jesus also references the familiar notion of blessings received, which is inevitably a motivator for His hearers. The contextual idea of reciprocity has, at its core, a construct of *receiving better* (for example, if others harm me then I am going to get back at them and somehow harm them, all the while making me feel better myself). This is also reiterated in some respect in the notion of “credit...to you” in verses 32-34, which Jesus mentions three times in these verses. Here, as with verse 37, primarily the action is described, while verse 38 presents the reception—“...it will be measured to you in return.” This is yet another great example of the reasons why Jesus encourages us in our positive and God-mirroring interaction with one another: it will not only be obeying God in what He desires, but it will also be *better for us* to do so.

Although many Bible translations drive the paragraph break after verse 36, the obvious contextual clue for the hard stop in this passage is Luke relaying Jesus’ subject switch with a parable being told at the beginning of verse 39. Additionally, when viewed in light of the relational reciprocity implied in the context, verses 37-38—though somewhat different from the verses preceding—take on more of a conclusion of that which it follows. If Jesus challenges His hearers *not* to treat others the way they deserve to be treated (in v. 31’s contrast with its surrounding verses), but instead to treat them the way God treats Jesus’ hearers and all others as well, then the conclusion of verses 37-38 is the common contextual norm of reciprocity turned on its head. If standard interpersonal inclination was for *me* to treat *others* based on how mean they were to *me*, then Jesus posits in verses 37-38 that *God* could viably treat *us* the way that *we* treated *others*. This argument is weighty and is exactly the ethos that ought to be sufficient for a Christ-follower to have the merciful attitude and actions of God upon others.

The second pericope in this larger literary unit is Luke 6:39-49. Therein lies the *gravitas* of obeying Jesus’ teaching, not only about relationships in verses 27-38, but also in the earlier portion of teaching from His sermon in Luke 6. If we begin to understand the authority and intensity of the conclusion of Jesus’ message in Luke 6, as seen in its ending in verses 39-49, then we will also begin to recognize Jesus’ perspective on the importance of healthy and God-honoring relationships. If in verses 27-38 we see “what we are to do” when living life together, then verses 39-49 are not only the “why you should do it,” but also the consequence and severity for “if it is not done.” Further, once we realize how great is the peril “if it is not done,” then we will understand just how valuable is “what we are to do.”

“*Guide [the] blind*” (v. 39). Jesus’ ultimate interpersonal earthly ministry was as a disciplemaker. His message in Luke 6 is presented to His disciples, as Jesus is teaching and training His disciples to teach and lead others in discipleship. This would be hard to do if the Twelve were blind guides, sinful in their emotional hearts and interpersonal interactions, seemingly trying to disciple and lead others in obedience to the kingdom of God when they themselves were not able to see God’s intention for their actions. Therefore, as Jesus’ commands landed upon His disciples with relative gravity, His encouragement for them was likewise not to be blinded by disobeying His words, since their task was not just to be good friends with others but to be their good disciplers and leaders.

“*Be like [your] teacher*” (v. 40). Undoubtedly linked to the verse above, the “pupil” in verse 40 could also be translated as “disciple,” as the Greek μαθητής is used as such in the original.<sup>10</sup> Very similarly as well to the many verses above in which Jesus called His hearers to be like God in terms of showing mercy, love, and the like, Jesus now reminds them that a disciple will “be like his teacher”—or “on a level with his teacher.”<sup>11</sup> Although no one is the equivalent of God incarnate, we all are given the same opportunity to be just like Him in compassion and obedience to His command in terms of relational reconciliation.

---

10 See, for example, the immediate audience of Jesus’ words in Luke’s narrative as “τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ” (“His [Jesus’] Disciples”).

11 W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Vol. I* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1902), 508.

“*Take out [that which is bad]...[and] bring forth what is good*” (vv. 41-45). Seen in my opinion as having one central unity, these verses do not only refer to relational condemnation: “first make sure you are free from sin in your own life, before you go pointing out sin in other peoples' lives.” Although that certainly is true, it is not in my opinion the complete interpretation of these verses. In light of the entire former pericope about interpersonal mercy to others in light of the divine grace to us (vv. 27-38), and seeing the preceding verses on the disciples' obedience in light of their future discipling commission from Jesus (vv. 39-40), I believe that these verses demonstrate that, in order for Jesus' followers to be obedient children of God and leaders in the community of faith, they must cast away disobedience from their own lives and replace it with attitudes and actions of kindness. If the disciples were indeed to confront *their* disciples about how to appropriately love God and love others, then the Twelve must first guard their own hearts against sinfulness and hypocrisy and also ensure their hearts were filled with goodness and mercy (vv. 41-42, 45).

“*Come...and hear...and do*” (vv. 46-49). Again, although able to be applied broadly relative to any and every “word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4), the nearest loci of these verses is the former pericope of commands from Jesus' “Sermon on the Plain” in Luke 6. Jesus undoubtedly knew that His disciples would need more motivation and illustration for their obedience, which is why Christ shared the vivid home story about the foundational value of obedience to His commands. As many homes in the early centuries A.D. were regularly built of heavier materials rather than light (such as having a home built of masonry rather than 2x4 wood pine studs and drywall as today), and since the homestead largely contained multigenerational families in Jewish culture, the devastation of a foundation (such as Jesus cautions against at the end of v. 49) must have been catastrophic. If His hearers did not come to Him, hear His words, and do what they said regarding faithful relationships with one another, their disobedience to His commands could have detrimental effects on numerous generations of persons in a family. As a pastor, in application to the present day, I notice that withheld forgiveness and irreconciliation are often genuine factors leading to cataclysmic rifts within entire families!<sup>12</sup>

Though Jesus' cautions to His hearers in verses 39-49 can be true about any of His commands that are disregarded and disobeyed, it seems only fitting that these verses speak directly into the immediate context regarding interpersonal relationships in light of God's divine relationship as outlined in verses 27-38 above. In fact, given the relational aspect of the community of faith—including the commands of Jesus to make disciples, share the Gospel, and proclaim the kingdom of God—there is significant need to obey biblical commands of showing mercy and establishing right relationships. I remember a time when an adult child shared with his father, who was a pastor, about his observation of the incredibly unique role that right relationships play in church ministry. He was remarking that in many other professional communities, relational rifts can lead to certain types of “excommunication”—such as the loss of employment in the case of a career, for example—and the real possibility of never seeing the terminated individual again. However, if relationships are made sour in a church meeting on a Friday, there is a very real possibility that those embittered individuals will still be gathering together with irreconciled hearts for worship on Sunday! It goes without saying that Jesus desires that this not be so. The heart of God is for renewed obedience in extending mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation in all of our interpersonal relationships.<sup>13</sup>

The practical relevance of Jesus' words to us today is profound. As in the disciples' day, as well in ours today, rifts in relationships are common. People talk more *about* each other than they

---

12 Jesus' innumerable illustrations and encouragements about obedience in how to love, lead, and live effectively in the relational community of faith show their necessity later on in Luke's Gospel narrative in Luke 17. There, the disciples demonstrate their weak justification and ignorance regarding the very same matters addressed by Jesus earlier in Luke 6 (where Jesus is forced to address how many times the disciples had to forgive others, as they were undoubtedly looking for limitations to be set in their conditional love, whereas Jesus sought limitlessness and unconditionality in Luke 17:3-4).

13 In fact, Jesus' own words in Matthew 5:23-24 address the importance of reconciling relationships prior to participating in corporate worship.

talk *to* each other. Smiles abound across our faces on Sundays, but gripes reign “anonymously” on Facebook posts or in private messages, emails, texts, and phone calls Monday through Saturday. Regardless of what we read in our quiet time, relational time with others is often hard time. Therefore, Jesus' words in Luke 6 are wonderfully relevant in light of how often people grate on us and test our theology.

In my years of lay leadership, parachurch ministry, and professional pastoral ministry in the church, I have witnessed that many theologically-sound spiritual leaders and Christ-followers struggle—with some being downright inept—at maintaining right relationships with others. Especially with people who have inflicted deep wounds in the church, the task of extending forgiveness, showing unconditional love, and embracing the mercy of God can be a challenging one. The manner of changing a grudge-filled heart and transforming it to a place where it extends mercy and grace is often more involved and more invested than a simple theological journal article can remedy. However, a wonderful way to begin our transformation is by applying Jesus' wise counsel in these verses we have been considering from Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, in Luke 6:27-49.

Probably the most impactful thought about how I personally have attempted to implement Jesus' words from Luke 6 in my personal relationships in life and ministry have been by having a humble view of myself in light of my eternal destiny before God. Apart from Christ's saving work on the cross and God's benevolent grace in salvation, I would have no justification before a righteous divine judge. Therefore, it would be foolish for me to live as the unmerciful servant in Jesus' parable (Matt. 18:21-35), and it similarly keeps me grounded in my relationships with others whether I contribute to conflict or am one who is affected by it. Further, living out right relationships in humility under God is also a tangible and relational expression of the Gospel.

A real example that occurred to me illustrates this perfectly: One winter while living in Massachusetts' North Shore, it came to my attention by my non-Christian neighbor that I had inadvertently offended her.<sup>14</sup> After she had sufficiently aired her frustration over the phone, she hung up and a long period of irreconciled distance ensued. My appropriate and non-burdensome attempts to call her back and ask for forgiveness were met with silence. Further, due to our different work schedules, my desires even to see her and reconcile face-to-face in the neighborhood went silent for a number of days. All the same, I patiently prayed that God would present an opportunity for confession and reconciliation. Finally one evening, our paths crossed as we both were walking into the shared driveway. I was so incredibly grateful for the divine opportunity to ask her forgiveness for my offense—regardless of it being inadvertent. What came next was even more divine: She responded, unprompted, by saying that she felt so sorry and so ashamed herself in keeping me at a distance and rebuffing my attempts at reconciliation. I immediately shared with her that I understood her frustration, and I absolutely forgave her completely. Amazed by my immediate and unconditional compassion toward her, she asked how I could come to a place of such reconciliation and forgiveness without hesitation. My response: “It is my joy to lovingly forgive you, because through Jesus Christ, God has graciously forgiven me.” As a result of patient, prayerful, and intentional implementation of biblical relational reconciliation, I was able to transition from relational grit to redemptive grace. My neighbor may not have given her life to Christ that evening, but she at least grew closer to understanding divine benevolence upon the undeserving, all because of a humble view of myself before God and my gracious obedience to Luke 6:27-49.

Just as God's Word accomplishes its intended purpose (Isa. 55:11), so also is my prayer that Jesus' Word would do to its hearers. May Christ's theological and practical precepts regarding life together find their roots in our hearts, and translate to compassionate fruit in our relationships with one another.

---

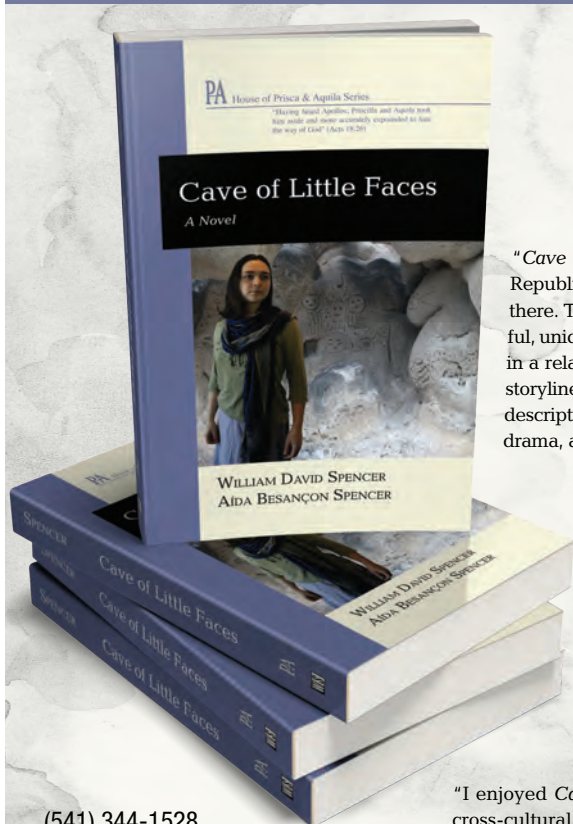
<sup>14</sup> Our diligence in maintaining healthy and biblically-reconciled relationships is all the more vital because we may often be a perpetrator of offense or sin even unintentionally. Our role as obedient Christians is no different whether our sin is premeditated or accidental; we must pursue confession, forgiveness, and right relationships at all cost.

Jason Drapeau is the Senior Pastor of Winchester Community Church, located just outside of Buffalo, NY. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and an alumnus of Gordon-Conwell's Center for Urban Ministerial Education in Boston. Jason is anticipating completion of his theological, practical, and anecdotal book also about biblical relational reconciliation. He, his wife, and his four children live in West Seneca, NY.

# Cave of Little Faces

*A Novel*

WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER  
AÍDA BESANÇON SPENCER



"*Cave of Little Faces* whisks the reader into adventure in the Dominican Republic. The Spencers truly are masters of storytelling. It feels like you are there. This story could easily be made into a movie. The characters are delightful, unique, and so real. The dynamics of Jo's family come across in full color and in a relatable manner, and even the scammers are memorable characters. The storyline is captivating, to say the least. I could not put this book down. The vivid descriptions carried me away to another world—one filled with beauty, intrigue, drama, and a few good laughs as well. Bravo!"

—JENNIFER CREAMER  
School of Biblical Studies, Youth With a Mission

"From their intriguing title, through a roster of memorable characters, to a string of concluding surprises that crackle like fireworks, the Spencers take us on a spiritual roller coaster ride graced with suspense, humor, and dilemmas of high moral complexity. As their heroine, Josefina, finds her way through the forests and mountains of Hispaniola, we realize that hers is a metaphor for the journey we all share—the pilgrimage of life."

—ROBERT BOENIG  
author of the award-winning *C. S. Lewis and the Middle Ages*

"I enjoyed *Cave of Little Faces*! The storyline and the conflicts are great and the cross-cultural setting is one of the book's big strengths. . . . I loved the theology and history the authors brought into the book, managing to make arguments about Christianity's place in history come off as natural and not advertisements for the faith—a rare feat indeed! I also love the way they did the character descriptions. Thank you so much for sharing this wonderful gift with me."

—JASMINE MYERS  
founder and director of the award-winning Still Small Theatre Troupe

(541) 344-1528  
orders@wipfandstock.com  
www.wipfandstock.com

**WS** **WIPF & STOCK**  
An Imprint of WIPF and STOCK Publishers

# Sikhism and the Christian View of Jesus and Salvation<sup>1</sup>

PATRICIA TOLEDO

Inspired by love and unity, the Sikh religion was born amidst sectarian violence of the Punjabi region of Pakistan. While the Sikh belief system appears to have much in common with an orthodox Christian framework, its concept of God, and thus Jesus and salvation, differs greatly. This article will focus on the Christian understanding of Jesus and the Sikh belief system, with a special emphasis on the Sikh view of Jesus and salvation.

## What Christians Believe

According to the traditional Christian view, Jesus was both fully human and fully divine, and thus able to accomplish the great work of salvation for all humankind. Hebrews 1:1-4 tells readers that God appointed his Son to be his mouthpiece and his reflection, saying, “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”<sup>2</sup> Not just a prophet, Jesus has the very nature of God, thus being equal to God himself. The very fact that the New Testament writer says “Son of God” when referring to Jesus points to his divinity (see John 5:18).<sup>3</sup> The omnipresence of Jesus is a main point stressed in various other passages—since he is God, he was at the beginning and will be at the end to be the appointed heir of all things (see John 1:1, Rev. 22:12–17). Colossians 1:15–16 validates this, explaining that God has “delivered us” from darkness into the kingdom of his Son saying, “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created...” Jesus preexisted all things and created all things and became the image of God for humanity.

Scripture not only affirms the divinity of Jesus, but also the humanity. Paul writes in Philippians 2:6, “[Jesus Christ], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” This passage highlights some of the mystery around the identity of Jesus: although he *was* God, he limited himself in his divinity and was born in the same manner as the rest of humanity. On top of taking the bodily form of humanity, he humbled himself to the extent of experiencing the realities of living a human life in a fallen world: he experienced temptation (Matt. 4:1–11), pain and suffering (John 11:35), and, worst of all, a gruesome and underserved death.

The details of Jesus’ human and divine natures remain a mystery, but this duality paved the way for Jesus to perform the act of salvation necessary for all of humanity. The Creed of Nicaea explores the interplay of the divinity and humanity of Jesus and sums up the orthodox view of who he was and is. It says, “One Lord Jesus Christ...through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on earth; who for us and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, became man, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead.” In short, the Creator of the world took on bodily form, died, and defeated death for the salvation of humanity and to administer justice for eternity. This beautiful work of redemption is only possible, however, due to the unique identity and experience of Jesus as both human and divine. The Definition of Chalcedon helps clarify this mystery saying,

<sup>1</sup> This article was originally presented to Prof. William David Spencer as a paper for Systematic Theology 2 in the fall 2017.

<sup>2</sup> All New Testament quotations are from the TNIV, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>3</sup> William Dembski, *Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), p. 43.

“Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved.” In all of the roles of Jesus, he never denied his humanity or his divinity, but instead they worked together to allow him to be the perfect vehicle in which salvation was brought to humankind. Colossians 1:19–20 explains the work of Jesus saying, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” The death of Jesus, a righteous and perfectly spotless sacrificial lamb (1 Pet. 1:19), repaired the brokenness of the world, reconciled humanity to each other and to God, and destroyed the dividing wall of hostility for eternity (Eph. 2:14). This grand act was vital for the salvation of the world as Millard Erickson argues, “The resurrection is particularly significant, for inflicting death was the worst thing that sin and the powers of sin could do to Christ. Death’s inability to hold him symbolizes the totality of his victory... While the Father’s holiness and righteousness and justice required that there be a payment for sin, his love provided it. The propitiation is a fruit of the Father’s divine love.”<sup>4</sup>

### What Sikhs Believe

The Sikh religion, developed in a society with little or no connection to Christians, has many similarities in theology and values to Christianity, but doesn’t hold to the Christian view of the Trinity or Jesus’ work of salvation. The Sikh belief system is more akin to the faith of Hindus and Muslims, as it was birthed by Nanak in the Punjabi region of Pakistan in A.D. 1499 during a time of intense war between the Hindu and Muslim people in the area. The creation story of the religion goes as follows: Nanak, born into a Hindu family, one day went to the river to bathe, disappeared from the river, and was taken into the presence of God. During this experience, Nanak spoke the following words, which have become part of the Sikh holy scriptures: "There is but One God, His name is Truth, He is the Creator, He fears none, He is without hate, He never dies, He is beyond the cycle of births and death, He is self-illuminated, He is realized by the kindness of the True Guru. He was True in the beginning, He was True when the ages commenced and has ever been True, He is also True now."<sup>5</sup> When Nanak returned to the spot from which he disappeared three days later, he remained in a trance-like state until he spoke the words, “There is no Hindu, no Muslim.” The transcendence of one true God over dividing lines of religions became a central point of teaching and doctrine for himself and his followers. He denounced the “blind rituals of Hindus and Muslims” and instead called his followers to pure devotion to God rather than through religious actions such as fasting and prayer.<sup>6</sup> The Sikh scriptures later espoused Nanak’s conviction, reporting, "I observe neither Hindu fasting nor the ritual of the Muslim Ramadan month; Him I serve who at the last shall save. The Lord of universe of the Hindus, Gosain and Allah to me are one; From Hindus and Muslims have I broken free. I perform neither Kaaba pilgrimage nor at bathing spots worship; One sole Lord I serve, and no other. I perform neither the Hindu worship nor the Muslim prayer; To the Sole Formless Lord in my heart I bow. We neither are Hindus nor Muslims; Our body and life belong to the One Supreme Being who alone is both Ram and Allah for us."<sup>7</sup> Upon the deathbed of Guru Nanak, he appointed his successor to carry on the faith of himself and his people in the “Name Divine.” Guru Angad became the second Guru in the history of the Sikh path, and the office of Guru was officially designated, until the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. On the deathbed of the final Guru, Gobind Singh officially appointed the holy scriptures, the *Adi Granth* as the perpetual Guru, thus eliminating the office of a living Guru for Sikhs.<sup>8</sup>

---

4 Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), pp. 794, 835.

5 “The First Master Guru Nanak (1469-1539),” *Sikhism Religion of the Sikh People*, www.sikhs.org, accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

6 “Sikh Religious Philosophy,” *Sikhism Religion of the Sikh People*, www.sikhs.org, accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

7 “Introduction to Sikhism,” *Sikhism Religion of the Sikh People*, www.sikhs.org, accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

8 *Ibid.*

According to Sikh beliefs, “merging with God” is the path to salvation, and it is not achieved through rituals (as stressed above), rather “earning a honest living and avoiding worldly temptation and sins.”<sup>9</sup> “In order to break the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, Sikhs place importance on meditation on the Holy Name and the performance of acts of service and charity. The Sikh scriptures write about the importance of devotion, “Without devotion to the Name Divine is birth in the world gone waste. Such consume poison, poisonous their utterance; Without devotion to the Name, without gain they die, and after death in transmigration wander.”<sup>10</sup> Through devotion and good works, Sikhs believe that people can overcome the five cardinal vices of Kam (lust), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed), Moh (worldly attachment), and Ahankar (pride), and thus achieve salvation. This invitation to pure devotion allows all people, irrespective of religion, the chance to merge with God, especially in view of the Sikh rejection of distinctions such as caste, creed, race, and sex.<sup>11</sup> Guru Nanak was very clear in his teaching that their belief of God is that he is transcendent over all divisions of humankind.

### The Similarities and Contrasts in Beliefs

One of the basic tenets of Sikh faith is that God cannot take human form: “Burnt be the mouth that asserts, the Lord takes birth. He is neither born nor dies; neither enters birth nor departs.”<sup>12</sup> For this reason Sikhs do not believe Jesus could be God, since he had physical form. One analogy used to explain this is the following, “If God is like an ocean, then our soul is like a drop of water taken from the ocean. The drop of water can become one with the ocean but can never be label[ed] as the ocean itself. A human soul can become one with God and attain salvation but can never be label[ed] as God Himself. Jesus could have been one with God but not God Himself.”<sup>13</sup> Sikhs believe that, when a person merges with God, she or he becomes the image of God, but a human could never become God herself. Although Sikhs do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, they still highly respect him as a prophet and teacher and avoid claiming one religion (even Sikhism) could be superior to another religion (for example, Christianity) as a way to attain salvation. Nikki Singh, a Sikh believer who grew up attending Catholic school in India, writes about her views of Jesus Christ from her perspective. She holds him in high reverence and writes extensively about the similarities in teaching and attitude between Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ, but cannot fully embrace the Christian view of Jesus being the sole way to attain salvation. She writes, “So, who is Jesus Christ for me, a Sikh? In my mind he is an enlightener...but when Christ alone is declared the Omega Point, or Baptism the exclusive way to the Kingdom of God, then where do I stand? As a Sikh I have no place.”<sup>14</sup> She explains that even Nanak isn’t viewed as a deity and confesses, “I guess the issue of incarnation really troubles me as a Sikh.”<sup>15</sup>

Viewing Sikhism from a Christian theological view reveals many similarities in values and philosophies, but at the same time glaring differences in terms of salvation and views of God. To begin, both religions place importance on the condition of one’s heart in devotion to God rather than works and outward appearances. The pure devotion with which Sikhs seek God is reminiscent of Jesus’ call on the Pharisees to avoid the external ritual of the law and to remember the heart (Luke 11:37-54). The emphasis on love is also found central to both religious practices—Sikhs label love as the “supreme virtue,” as Singh writes, and it is what empowers followers to be free of harmful perspectives, such as racism and sexism. This is similar to Paul’s focus in 1 Corinthians 13 when he lays out the definition of love and writes in verse 13, “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (NRSV). The Sikh view of equality of people,

---

9 Ibid.

10 “Sikh Religious Philosophy,” *Sikhism Religion of the Sikh People*, [www.sikhs.org](http://www.sikhs.org), accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 “FAQ>Sikh Views on Christianity,” *Real Sikhism*, [www.realsikhism.com](http://www.realsikhism.com), accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

14 “Jesus through Sikh Eyes,” *BBC Religions*, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

15 Ibid.



and Nanak's famous line "There is no Hindu, nor Muslim" also echoes a similar concern to that of the Apostle Paul, when he writes in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (KJV). Both religious traditions place great emphasis on the equality and respect of all people regardless of worldly labels or categories.

While there are philosophical similarities in the religions, the religions part ways theologically when it comes to salvation and the concept of God. The Christian concept of the Trinity, one God in three persons, is highly disputed among Sikhs as theirs is a strictly monotheistic religion and cannot accept Jesus as an expression of God himself. The divinity of Jesus, in particular, is disputed due to their belief that God could never take human form. Instead they believe Christians, by calling Jesus "God," worship a prophet, rather than a God, which to them is contradictory to a monotheistic belief. The incarnation that Christians adhere to, however, affirms monotheism and the existence of one God, and makes room for God the creator to take a shape and a form inexplicable in human terms. If God truly possesses the qualities that Sikhs claim, namely that he is the source of truth and the creator of all things, why would he be limited from taking the form of a human? The fact that God was able to embody a human on earth shows the power and ability to direct creation for God's glory. Sikhs also claim the omnipresence of God, and yet the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus sent after his resurrection shows just how omnipresent God can be, that his Spirit can dwell in and amongst all of humanity.

The Sikhs place great emphasis on becoming one with God through meditation as their path to salvation. However, from a Christian perspective, there needs to be a bridge between the divine God and fallen humanity, since sin and brokenness have created a divide that humanity cannot overcome alone. As 1 Timothy 2:5 explains, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and human beings, Christ Jesus, himself human." The concept that simply because one thinks about God often, and tries to imitate him through good works, does not allow people the ability to access God fully in the Christian tradition. An analogy that could help explain this is a little child's dream to be an astronaut—just because she dreams about what it would be like to go into space, reads many books about the subject, and even builds a pretend rocket ship, does not mean she will become a real astronaut. There is a mechanism through which she has the possibility to become an astronaut—she must get accepted into aeronautics programs, pass her exams, and get hired by NASA in order even to have the possibility of being launched into space. This is the same with the belief in Jesus—humans can be good people and desire to be free from sin, but until they go through the process of recognizing the sacrifice of Jesus and accepting his Lordship, they will not have the opportunity to access God fully.

The final main deviation between Sikhism and Christianity is the Sikh belief that salvation is accomplished when people fully "merge" with God (and yet there is a distinction between merging with God and becoming God, which they do not believe possible for humans). In the Christian view, humans are made uniquely in God's likeness (Gen. 1:27) and seen as masterpieces of his hands (Ps. 139:14, Jer. 1:5, Eph. 2:10, Isa. 64:8). Even after death and the end of an earthly existence, each soul that was uniquely created will live on in eternal life. There is no need to "merge" with God to achieve salvation, but to allow our souls to be refined during our earthly life to be prepared for the afterlife. Paul explains this phenomenon about the resurrection of the body in 1 Corinthians 15, teaching, "There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one thing, and that of the earthly is another...It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body" (15:40, 44 NRSV). While the earthly body will not enter into Heaven, people's unique and distinct spirits will live on in perfect communion with the Father. It is not a concept of merging, where one is seemingly absorbed into the greater, but rather each maintains its distinct quality while still in perfect fellowship. This distinction may seem minor, but speaks to each religion's perspective of humans in relation to God.

While in Sikhism God is a transcendent being, Christianity views God as much more reachable and attainable to humanity (through the saving grace of Jesus).

### Reaching Sikhs with the Salvation of Jesus

When exploring an evangelistic conversation with a Sikh believer one would need to have it take place in the context of a trusting relationship. Information alone rarely is enough to change someone's mind, but in the midst of a relationship in which two people with distinct convictions are able to share respectfully, listen deeply, and honor the other person, there is a higher possibility that the person could hear and receive the truth. Once this foundation of mutual trust and respect has been established, an earnest conversation about the two faiths could take place. I would recommend beginning with the similarities of Christianity and Sikhism, as touched on above. Beginning with the places of similarities would help the person see that the leap of faith required for understanding the person and work of Jesus is not as far as one might assume from the outside. It would also help the person identify what is correct in his or her perspective and what does not align. At this point the conversation would naturally lend itself to discussing the main points of divergence in belief, the divinity of Jesus and his salvation offered on the cross. While Sikhs will not readily believe that God could have taken the shape of a human, asking more of why this is their belief could be helpful to understand what blocks them from believing in the divinity of Jesus. Would they agree that God is all powerful? And creator? If yes to both of these questions, why *would he not* be able to take the shape of a human? What limits him?

The next questions I would ask would focus on the need for salvation. How do Sikhs account for sin? What is their concept of justice? If the Sikh could agree that, when a wrong is committed there needs to be a consequence, perhaps she or he could see the need for a sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity. Next, does God desire salvation for all of humanity? Is he a completely loving God? If yes, why would not he go to great lengths (revealing himself in the form of a human) to ensure that humans have a real opportunity for salvation? These questions could help open up the conversation about why Christians believe in the humanity and divinity of Jesus and why they place importance on his salvific work on the cross.

While conversations that allow a person to hear truth, for perhaps the first time, are vital, the real work is done through the Holy Spirit. The process of coming to know Jesus as Lord is highly personal and specific and only he knows the exact way a person needs to receive revelation. For some, it is through conversation. For others, they experience God in a miraculous way. However, he promises us his desire to see all of humanity saved (1 Tim. 2:4), so in his sovereignty he will provide opportunities for all to hear and respond.

Patricia Toledo is pursuing a Master of Arts in Urban Ministry Leadership at the Boston Campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (CUME). She has worked for several years with international populations in the city of Boston and abroad. She has been involved in ministry in the Brighton and Roxbury neighborhoods of Boston since 2010.

# The Cross as Perversion: Muslim Perspectives on Christ's Person and Work in Relationship to Christian Orthodoxy<sup>1</sup>

RACHEL GILSON

Jesus Christ is the most magnetic and controversial human that has ever lived. In our globally-oriented, postmodern cultural moment, it is tempting to believe that any view of Jesus is as valid as another, that his force comes from the particular impact he brings to each individual and group. However, the different ways of revering Jesus reveal that groups are often not talking about the same person. While a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, calling a corpse a rose would do nothing to remove its stench.

There are many ways that Jesus has been misrepresented and mis-revered, applying his name to someone he is not. This article will examine the Muslim Jesus, showing how Islamic refusal to see him as divine not only negatively impacts the view of his person, but also destroys the ability to see and respond to the unique work that he has accomplished in our world. This will be addressed by reviewing the orthodox view of Jesus Christ, outlining the Islamic tradition on the prophet Isa (the Muslim name for Jesus), and then correcting this view through the application of correct doctrine, culminating in a recommendation for a step by step method to help a Muslim person recognize Jesus for who he truly is, and to move from religious error into full biblical orthodoxy.

## What Christians Believe about Jesus

Orthodox Christian teaching affirms “our Lord Jesus Christ [is] perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus represented himself as divine, and the response to him by his followers and his opponents demonstrates that all understood him to be making this claim (John 8:58–59). His apostles taught forthrightly that Jesus was God, showing that this was crucial to their understanding of his person (John 20:28). John’s prologue states that the Word, Jesus, was God (John 1:1), while Paul wrote that Jesus was “in very nature God” (Phil. 2:6, TNIV). The witness of Scripture to the divinity of Jesus contains “a wide variety of material and emphases, but not a divergence of opinion”<sup>3</sup> and led the Nicene fathers to call Jesus “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.”

Similarly, the authors of the New Testament consistently demonstrate that Jesus Christ was “a fully human person, not lacking any of the essential elements of humanity that constitute each of us.”<sup>4</sup> He experienced normal aspects of humanity, including birth, family life, a specific native culture, exhaustion, hunger and thirst.<sup>5</sup> He had a real human body, which was seen, touched, and even died (1 John 1:1–3; Mark 15:43–48). Thus the Creed of Nicaea affirms with the Scriptures<sup>6</sup> that Jesus “was made human.” Further helpful as evidence is that the people of the gospel accounts and the writers of the New Testament epistles never represent a Jesus that is less than human or other than human (cf. John 6:52), simply a Jesus who is human *and* divine. Hence the Chalcedonian Definition confirmed that Jesus Christ must “be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably.”

Because Jesus is fully human and fully divine, he is the only person who could act as the mediator between God and humankind, which he did, becoming the Savior of all who trust in him. His death provided substitutionary atonement; he, rather than sinful humanity, received God’s

1 The first draft of this article was completed for Systematic Theology 2 with Professor William David Spencer fall 2017.

2 Chalcedonian Definition of Faith.

3 Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 625.

4 *Ibid.*, 645.

5 Matt. 1, 4:2; Luke 2; John 4:6, 19:28.

6 Cf. 1 Pet. 3:18; Acts 2:22; Gal. 4:4.

wrath.<sup>7</sup> Even though he was tempted in every way (Heb. 4:15), he never sinned, which meant his death did not pay for his own debt but for ours instead (2 Cor. 5:21). Moreover, the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day<sup>8</sup> from the dead authenticated his mission, words, and purpose,<sup>9</sup> and secured our connection to a living God, seated right now at his right hand.<sup>10</sup> Even more, we have the promise of our own resurrection to life everlasting,<sup>11</sup> a forever salvation worthy of such a great God and Savior as Jesus.

### What Muslims Believe about Isa

This image stands in stark contrast to the Muslim view of Isa, or Jesus. At first this may seem surprising or overstated, considering that Jesus is revered in Islamic thought as a true and great Prophet of Allah. In a unique work, *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*,<sup>12</sup> Tarif Khalidi gathered centuries worth of Muslim writings about Jesus and compiled them into one collection, gifting us all with a rich view into Islamic tradition on him. Throughout these writings, Jesus is referred to as “The Spirit of God” and “The Word of God,” and has miraculous powers to heal and to resurrect the dead.<sup>13</sup> Jesus is reported to have been not touched by Satan at his birth, like other humans.<sup>14</sup> He is sought after as a holy and wise man, a true worshiper of Allah.<sup>15</sup> Mahmoud Ayoub declares Jesus “a special creation; he is the Word of God injected into the human plane of existence.”<sup>16</sup> Surely no higher praises could be conferred on a human. These all confirm the Qur’anic view of Jesus as a blessed holy man.

However, the Islamic witness is that Jesus “remains a human being created by God,”<sup>17</sup> and vigorously rejects his deity. As Muslim scholar Badru Kateregga expresses, “Muslims are genuinely opposed to the belief by Christians that Isa (PBUH) was divine or ‘Son of God.’ The basis of Muslim objection is Qur’anic. Allah says, ‘It is not befitting to (the Majesty of Allah) that He should beget a son.’”<sup>18</sup> In many stories of Jesus outside the Qur’an, this view is confirmed, as, for example, when Jesus resurrects the wrong dead people because of his lack of knowledge, or when he has to ask God for permission to manipulate nature, something that is never seen in the gospel accounts. In one ancient Muslim story, Jesus himself is quoted as saying, “The world existed and I was not in it, and it shall exist and I shall not be in it. All I have are my days which I am now living. If I sin in them, I am indeed a sinner.”<sup>19</sup> This implies a view of himself as created and capable of sin. In another place, God speaks to Jesus saying, “O Jesus, admonish yourself. Once admonished, admonish people. Otherwise, be modest in my sight.”<sup>20</sup> This is certainly not God speaking to Jesus as equal, but as needing correction and direction, even if he is being prepared to lead others. The Muslim Jesus is one “who exemplifies fulfilled humanity, a humanity illuminated by God,”<sup>21</sup> not one who is in any sense divine.

7 Heb. 9:14, 26b; Rom. 3:24–25; Creed of Nicaea “He was crucified for us.”

8 Affirmed throughout Scripture and in the Creed of Nicaea.

9 The resurrection “means, then, that God gave his approval to the claims of Jesus.” Erikson, *Christian Theology*, 612. See also Acts 17:31.

10 Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:6.

11 “We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and to life in the world to come.” Creed of Nicaea. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:24.

12 *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*, edited and translated by Tarif Khalidi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

13 Ibid., cf. §108, 284, 286. See also Qur’an 3:49.

14 Ibid., §207.

15 Ibid., §225.

16 Mahmoud Ayoub, “Towards an Islamic Christology II: The Death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion?” in Mona Siddiqui (ed.), *The Routledge Reader in Christian-Muslim Relations* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 177.

17 Ibid.

18 Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *A Muslim and Christian in Dialogue* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1997), 166.

19 Khalidi, *Muslim Jesus*, § 111.

20 Ibid., 25.

21 Mahmoud Ayoub, “Towards an Islamic Christology,” in Irfan A. Omar (ed.), *A Muslim View of Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 177.

What then do they make of his mission? Kateregga explains that Jesus “was made to follow the footsteps of the prophets and confirm the Law sent down before him...[and his miracles] were meant to serve as proof of the truth of his mission.”<sup>22</sup> The importance and nobility of this role is why Muslims are content to refer to Jesus as Messiah, because he was sent to call Israel to obedience to Allah (Qur’an 3:49, 50). But even his place in Israel can look penultimate at times, because occasionally John the Baptist is shown in Muslim stories to rebuke or correct Jesus.<sup>23</sup> In Islam, Christ is revered as one so holy he ascended to heaven<sup>24</sup> and will return to earth, but “even in his second coming he remains God’s messenger only, a sign of formidable events to come.”<sup>25</sup> This is all he can be, because he is only a human.

There is also no space in Islam for the sacrificial, atoning work of Jesus on the cross. Because he is merely a human, even if a prophet, he has no ability to save. What’s more, there is no need for this work, for “Islam does not identify with the Christian conviction that man needs to be redeemed. The Christian belief in the redemptive sacrificial death of Christ does not fit the Islamic view that man has always been fundamentally good, and that God loves and forgives those who obey his will.”<sup>26</sup> Because the Islamic disposition inclines in this direction, the Christ-event for Muslims answers a question that does not need to be asked. Siddiqui asserts that “there are other ways to come to redemption...a world in which the intimacy of human relations with God does not rest on an event that has occurred but on our constant movement towards him in the hope of events which are about to occur. Forgiveness is not a given, it has not happened yet, not because it needs to be earned but simply because we have not witnessed it yet.”<sup>27</sup>

Allah is free to forgive without an intermediary in this view, which is surely why “Muslims have either rejected or ignored the significance of the cross.”<sup>28</sup> Because Muslim thought allows for the triumph of humanity, “Islam refuses to accept [the] tragic image of the Passion...because the Passion would imply in its eyes that God had failed.”<sup>29</sup> This leads to a complicated history for Muslims around the death of Jesus. To many Muslim writers, it is an affront, “most inappropriate for the Messiah to die through a shameful crucifixion.”<sup>30</sup> There have been various attempts at reconciling this, such as in a saying by Jamal al-Din Wasil that “Jesus is infallible and can only speak the truth, yet the crucifixion he spoke of cannot refer to his own, because the Glorious Qur’an specifically states that Jesus was not crucified or killed.”<sup>31</sup> Ayoub argues that “the Qur’an only denies the death of Jesus on the Cross, and leaves open the question of his actual death.”<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, “even if Muslims came to believe that Jesus did die on the cross before he was raised, in the Qur’anic frame of reference this death has no atoning significance.”<sup>33</sup> Islam is firm on this point. So there is some wiggle room for Muslims on the fact or manner of Jesus’s death, because what this teaching really seeks to deny is the salvific aspect of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection.

### Islam’s Divergency from Christian Beliefs

Orthodox Christianity, on the other hand, lives or dies on this very point. The Creed of Nicaea boldly declares that Jesus “was crucified *for us* under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried.

---

22 Kateregga & Shenk, *Dialogue*, 174.

23 Khalidi, *Muslim Jesus*, §39, 53, 124.

24 *Ibid.*, §16.

25 Mona Siddiqui, *Christians, Muslims and Jesus* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 232.

26 Kateregga & Shenk, *Dialogue*, 175.

27 Siddiqui, *Christians, Muslims and Jesus*, 243.

28 *Ibid.*, 238.

29 Ali Merad, quoted in Siddiqui, *Christians, Muslims and Jesus*, 227.

30 Kateregga & Shenk, *Dialogue*, 175.

31 Khalidi, *Muslim Jesus*, §282.

32 “Islamic Christology II,” 179.

33 Siddiqui, *Christians, Muslims and Jesus*, 231.

The third day he rose again” (emphasis added). The Creed does not equivocate; the point of incarnation through to ascension is all gathered under the heading “For us and for our salvation,” which is derived from and in agreement with the Scriptures.<sup>34</sup>

Because the purpose of the work of Jesus Christ was to draw near to humanity and save it, the mystery of the incarnation is justified. While for the Muslim “the Christian view of incarnation seems to compromise God’s transcendence and sovereignty,”<sup>35</sup> for the Christian, the incarnation is the most precious manifestation of God’s immanence, and the only bridge between fallen humanity and a transcendent, just God. That God the Son, “begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead” should be “in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to manhood”<sup>36</sup> is indeed unspeakably mysterious, and even scandalous. But it is not impossible. The Fathers and the Apostles testified vociferously to both the humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ, as “the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us.”<sup>37</sup> Without Jesus fully inhabiting both deity and humanity and breaking down the wall of hostility between God and humanity as the perfect and only mediator, we would have no hope of drawing near to God and being accepted.

And how might this knowledge be employed by a Christian in conversation with a Muslim? To step into the life of a Muslim and lovingly show her or him Jesus Christ is a privilege, and should never be undertaken in a combative or glib manner. It requires the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the only one who can change hearts and reveal the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And each Muslim person is just that, a human individual, and so there is no one-size-fits all program that would perfectly introduce every Muslim to the truth about Jesus. Care must be taken with each person we meet to see them, truly to hear them authentically, and to pray for guidance in how to explain the hope that we have.

That being said, it remains worthwhile to sketch a general plan of engagement should the Lord bless you with a chance to minister to a Muslim person. To begin, you must soak the encounter in prayer before you arrive. Next, exposure to the Bible is a necessity. The text of the Bible contains incredible power and is one of God’s main tools in enlightening human minds and hearts. The opportunity to flip open to the gospels and demonstrate that Jesus himself and the people around him understood that he was making claims at divinity is important, essential evidence to which Muslims should be exposed. They should also have a chance to read the epistles and see that the earliest followers of Jesus understood him as God. This would also give a great chance to introduce them to the gospel that each human has an incredible need for forgiveness, adoption, and power for righteousness, and that Jesus Christ has provided all that through his death and resurrection.

For many, a great follow-up step would be to expose one’s Muslim friend to the history of the New Testament, how rigorously it has been preserved and how trustworthy it is. In concert with this, the next step would be to expose a Muslim person to a variety of people who have a personal relationship with Jesus, and who can winsomely describe what salvation in his name has produced for them and meant in their lives. Jesus is alive and at work among his people, and the opportunity to see him in the midst of the church should not be denied to anyone who wants to draw near to God.

May God grant us the courage, faithfulness, and love to share the risen Lord Jesus Christ with our Muslim friends and neighbors, for his glory and for their joy.

Rachel Gilson lives in Boston and works with Cru at Boston University and nationally as the director of theological development for Cru Northeast. She has written for *Christianity Today*, *Desiring God*, and The Gospel Coalition, and received her B.A. in History from Yale College. She is completing her Master of Divinity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

---

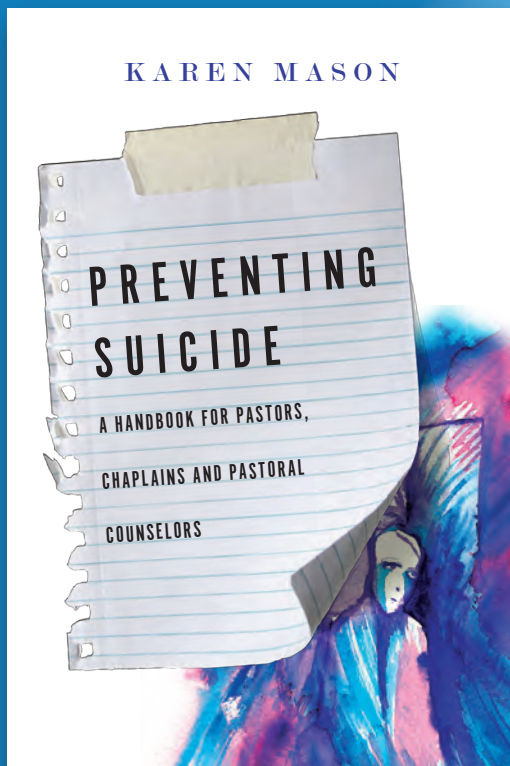
34 Cf. Hebrews 2:5–8; Romans 8:3,4; etc.

35 Kateregga & Shenk, *Dialogue*, 166.

36 Chalcedonian Definition of Faith.

37 Ibid.

# Discover the Church's Role in Suicide Prevention



233 pages, paperback, 978-0-8308-4117-2, \$18.00

Many pastors, chaplains and pastoral counselors play a vital role as agents of hope to people who are struggling, but most of them feel overwhelmed and unprepared to prevent suicides. In this practical handbook, Karen Mason integrates theology and psychology, showing how pastoral caregivers can teach the significance of life, monitor those at risk and intervene when they need help. Discover how you and your church can be proactive in caring for those at risk of self-harm.

*“Do real Christians die by suicide? Yes. Only God knows how many. But most pastors, chaplains and pastoral counselors already know someone they could help choose living instead of dying . . . if only they knew how. If you’re in that role, this book is for you. And if you’re preparing for ministry this book is also for you, because there is little doubt that you are going to find yourself in this dark trysting place where death meets life more often than any of us would wish.”*

**DAVID B. BIEBEL**, coauthor of *Finding Your Way After the Suicide of Someone You Love*



**KAREN MASON** (PhD, University of Denver) is associate professor of counseling and psychology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a psychologist working in the mental health field since 1990. She previously managed the Office of Suicide Prevention for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and is a member of the American Psychological Association.



Professors, visit [IVPACADEMIC.COM](http://IVPACADEMIC.COM) to request an exam copy.

## Review of *Redeeming Capitalism* by Kenneth J. Barnes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018)

DAVID W. GILL

Ken Barnes is Mockler-Phillips Professor of Workplace Theology and Business Ethics and Director of the Mockler Center for Faith & Ethics in the Workplace at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the Boston area. Prof. Barnes has an impressive record of academic study and achievement in both theology and economics—and an equally impressive track record “in the trenches” of leadership in both the business world and the church world. His concern is that contemporary capitalism is deeply flawed and yet is fixable, “redeemable.” This project is not just desirable but essential, according to Barnes, because there is no viable alternative economic theory or practice. The fundamental problem, Barnes argues, is that postmodern capitalism lacks a “moral compass.” *Redeeming Capitalism* proposes a recovery of the virtues, both the classical “cardinal” virtues of self-control, courage, wisdom, and justice *and* the Christian theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Neither government regulation nor ethical decision-making training is capable of redeeming capitalism.

Barnes looks to Adam Smith, whose economic theories in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776)—the “Bible” of capitalism—assumed the moral philosophical grounding of Smith’s earlier work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*—a natural, innate morality “hardwired into our human nature” (p. 32). People normally have empathy, “fellow-feeling,” even compassion toward others. So the pursuit of self-interest highlighted in the *Wealth of Nations* is (or should be) limited, guided, and contextualized by morality. Smith warned that workers must be paid enough to live on and that exorbitant profits for business owners can undermine the functioning of capitalism and markets.

Barnes gives a thumbnail sketch of economic history from traditional economies through feudalism and mercantilism to the early modern capitalism articulated by Smith. He argues that before Smith “the primary driver behind all economic activity was, at its most basic level, survival”: “No overarching ethic constrained the affairs of people beyond the blunt instruments of law and martial coercion” (p. 28). While I grant that survival was then (and now) the primary, most urgent motive of most work by most of the earth’s people, it seems an overgeneralization to describe pre-capitalist work this way. The history of ancient and medieval crafts, guilds, farming, and other labor often, if not usually, took place within traditions of respect for Sabbath, for Creation, for God, and for neighbor. Fair wages, just prices, and the legitimacy (or not) of loans and usury were never unimportant concerns, though Barnes seems to disagree: “No one thought that economic activity, business, trade, commerce, and technology could actually serve a higher purpose . . . promote the common good, and even glorify the Deity” (p. 29).

“This would all change . . . with . . . Adam Smith” (p. 29). Post-Smith, “The result was a generally healthy economic system that would create wealth in considerable measure and improve general living conditions across large sectors of the population” (p. 46). Barnes follows this optimistic sketch with a chapter on Karl Marx, granting the grievances of workers coming out of the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century but rejecting the analyses and prescriptions of Marx, communism, and socialism. If I may “pile on” just a little, an honest and complete account of capitalism’s history must include slavery, colonialism, land theft, the destruction of cultures, and grievous wounds to the natural environment. I am not convinced that there ever was a “Golden Age” of Smithian capitalism (the post-War American economy of the 1950s and 1960s may come closest, but, even so, I would not want to be a non-white or female in that era). Of course, neither has there ever been a “Golden Age” of Marxism or communism; any project to “redeem socialism” (much less hardcore Marxism or communism) is hopeless (though it would be important to keep Scandinavian socialism in view in contrast to the Russian, Chinese, and Cuban versions!).



Barnes provides a helpful chapter on Max Weber, whose *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) analyzed ways the sixteenth century theology of work and calling, formulated by Martin Luther and John Calvin, motivated individuals toward hard work as obedience to God and a sign of election. Neither Luther nor Calvin put much stock in natural “moral sentiments,” by the way. For them good work was work in faithfulness to the commands of God in Scripture, not the promptings and sentiments of their human nature. Still, I think Barnes is on target to bring together the Protestant tradition with the Enlightenment themes of Smith to help us understand modern capitalism, perhaps especially in large parts of the United States.

What we have today, though, is “postmodern” capitalism, Barnes writes. This means a capitalism untethered from traditional moral constraints and concern for others, a capitalism in which people pursue their own individual profit, often driven by a thirst for conspicuous consumption. Deceptive, harmful business practices, vast and growing inequality, and a radical decline in the kind of trust without which markets are paralyzed, banks fail, debts rise . . . these result from the moral relativism of postmodernity. (Barnes does not discuss how “moral absolutism” is potentially just as destructive). Postmodernity, of course, is the product of the weakness and failure of modernity; there is no going back. Barnes is to be commended for engaging the contemporary critiques of the Occupy Wall Street protestors, Thomas Picketty, Bernie Sanders, and Eve Poole—though in the end he sees their proposals as “utopian” and too reliant on structural changes rather than moral ones.

So what is Barnes’s answer? He argues from both the Bible and historical theology (Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin) for the seven virtues mentioned earlier. These seven virtues are explicitly described and promoted in biblical theology, Barnes points out, but they are also “natural” and perceptible by all people because of “common grace.” That includes the faith, hope, and love of the New Testament. Barnes provides definitions and applied business illustrations of all seven of the virtues though these all invite a lot more discussion. For certain, individual moral *character* and organizational *culture* must play a major role in any kind of redeemed economics

Barnes’s final two chapters are about “Redeeming Capitalism from the Bottom Up” and then “From the Top Down.” A new view of the meaning of work and money and of corporate culture is what Barnes sketches out—but without giving us many hints on how to bring about these desired changes in individuals or organizations. He grants that some government regulation and oversight will be necessary but only as a reflection of “a wholesale change of hearts and minds” (p. 188). I expected the “Top Down” chapter to consider the role of governmental laws, regulations, and oversight, international trade organizations and treaties, and professional guilds. Instead, it made the same arguments for appropriation of the virtues. The “Top Down” chapter focused a little more on the overarching economic *theory* and maybe that is what Barnes means by “top down.” These two closing chapters offer a set of ideals but we are left wishing for some concrete, practical help on how to achieve them.

The characteristics of a good book are that it addresses an important topic (check!), it is articulately written (check!), it is learned, well-researched, and reliable in its basic message (check!), the author is authentic and passionately committed (check!), and, perhaps most importantly, it invites and stimulates us to dig deeper, enter into debate, conversation, and growth (check!). Thus, in the end, I give Barnes’s *Redeeming Capitalism* high marks and a “buy” recommendation.

David W. Gill is retired professor of business ethics (St. Mary’s College of California, Graduate School of Business) and organizational ethics consultant ([www.ethixbiz.com](http://www.ethixbiz.com)). He is the author of *It’s About Excellence: Building Ethically Healthy Organizations* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011) and seven other books.

Review of *Cave of Little Faces: A Novel* by William David Spencer and  
Aída Besançon Spencer, House of Prisca & Aquila Series  
(Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018)

KAREN MASON

How would you spend your retirement after writing/editing 23 nonfiction books, primarily centered on the discussion in the Christian church on women's role in ministry? It is not surprising that Bill and Aída Spencer retired and finished writing a novel that combines many themes including the struggle of a young woman regarding her call to leadership.

However, it would be unfair to the book to say that this is a fictional culmination of their nonfiction work. The book is far more complex than that. *A Cave of Little Faces* is set in the southwestern region of the Dominican Republic, the land of Aída Spencer's birth. It is obvious that Bill and Aída Spencer have spent a great deal of time in the Dominican Republic. They know the geography, the language, the culture and the food and their historical research is obvious throughout the book. The reader is regaled by a sensory feast of descriptions of the region. A rich bonus feature of the book is reading about the Taino people and their language. But the real feast is the complex, credible and diverse characters who dialogue their way through the plot. There is Jo, the young woman who has a calling from God to ministry. Through the book she struggles with understanding a call to a broader leadership role, as a spiritual and organizational leader. There is her family who anchors Jo *and* disrupts her. There is the Taino tribe scattered throughout the Americas, Jo's larger family, a family that teaches her about generous hospitality, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The Taino family in Haiti helps Jo reflect on the needs of the poor and the stewardship of the world's resources. There is also the larger body of Christ found in the cave of little faces, "the happy little faces of these children as they learn to live together in harmony in our great family...a holy body of Christ" (p. 397). But there are also opportunists out to make a buck, greedy thieves and political figures fomenting political takeover. All these characters are woven into a page-turning plot that includes mystery and intrigue. The plot begins to thicken on page 19 when Jo receives an official-looking letter in Spanish naming her as the heir to her Uncle Sol's property and position in the Dominican Republic. Her visit to the home on the beach of Barahona changes her life.

A reader will enjoy reading the book as a good story with believable characters. But on another level a reader might enjoy reading about the struggles of a young woman who faces the prejudice that leadership "is a job for a man" (p. 299). What makes Jo believable is that she is neither a strident radical nor a cocky confident leader but an unsure, at times unwilling, leader, a prayer warrior, a methodical gatherer of information, a careful strategist, and a conscientious leader willing to shoulder the responsibilities of her family and tribe and willing to wade into moral dilemmas with integrity. Her leadership is rooted in her faith in God and his principles. Jo's vow to her tribe is, "*naboria daca*—I am a servant of God" (p. 266). The book explores the theme that leadership is not without sacrifices and requires great faith and integrity. Jo learns about this servant leadership from her ancestor, the great Taino warrior Enrique, but also forges a leadership style all her own, one that is different from her Uncle Sol's.

On another level, a reader will enjoy reading about the clash of cultures. In *Cave of Little Faces*, Bill and Aída Spencer ask us, "How do we negotiate a personal, national, and spiritual minority identity in an often hostile majority world?" (p. 403). They explore the clash of Christian faith with a non-believing world. When opportunists Basil and Starling Heitz set up a "health and wealth thing" (p. 273) around a magnetic pole, Jo's sister Danny is reeled in like a fish on a line, causing a clash between Jo's faith and Danny's spiritual hunger. The Gospel is shared with the agnostic Ismael. Bill and Aída Spencer also explore the clash of economic forces as Jo is called "to help poor

people become something even greater than simply middle class” (p. 5). They even explore contemporary issues like a border wall between Haiti and the Dominican Republic to keep the poverty of Haitians on the other side of the border. Jo’s Aunt Aña expresses the clash of colonists with native peoples: “Why our northern continent [the USA] celebrates the day of this villain [Columbus] in their country and why they named it after a *bobo*—that nincompoop Amerigo Vespucci—has always been a mystery to me. Such a great nation, such a great people, calling itself by the name of a fool” (p. 294). Bill and Aída Spencer explore what descendants of the colonists can do to reconcile with modern-day Tainos. They explore the clash between nonviolent resistance to violent forces. They explore the clash of conservationists and those who destroy the environment. The Tainos and Christian faith help to address these clashes by reminding the reader that we are all the same family and all children are our children.

I would recommend this book to those who are interested in a story rich in the Dominican culture and geography, rich in historical detail about a little-known people, the Tainos, rich in credible characters and rich in the exploration of themes of leadership, women’s leadership, and the clashes of forces reconciled in Christ’s love for his world. And if you know CUME, the Center for Urban Ministerial Education, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, you will enjoy the many references to Jo’s alma mater.

*Cave of Little Faces* has 398 pages, including a poem by William David Spencer “Areyto to the Great Warrior,” a map of the “Regions of the Western Lands of the South” (the Dominican Republic) and a “Glossary of Taino terms.”

Karen Mason, Ph.D., is the Director of the Hamilton Counseling Program, Professor of Counseling and Psychology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Hamilton, MA. She is the author of *Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Clergy, Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors* (IVP, 2014). Reading novels helps her balance her engagement with suicide prevention in faith communities.

## Review of *Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology* by Michael Bird (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017)

WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER

For Australian New Testament Scholar Michael Bird, 2016 was a significant year for defending the full divinity of Jesus Christ in the New Testament documents. In the early months of the year, *Christianity Today* announced he had won its 2015 Book Award for biblical studies for *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus*, while New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary invited him to participate in a panel exploring the New Testament view of Jesus with atheist Bart Ehrman and several liberal and moderate scholars, including Jennifer Knust and Larry Hurtado. As is often the case with conscientious scholars who overprepare, especially evangelicals called upon to give a reason for the belief that Jesus was always God-Amongst-Us, Michael Bird confesses,

As I began preparing my talk on Jesus and adoptionism, it soon became apparent to me that a lot of what was being said about the origins of Christological adoptionism was incorrect. What is more, in response to all this, it soon became clear that I had more to communicate than I had time to speak. What I wrote for the Greer-Heard debate was too substantial for a lecture or even for a journal article on the subject and more suited in length for a short, sharp, and provocative volume on the topic. So here we are! (xi)

Where we are exactly is with a six chapter book on the topic of whether the New Testament writers saw Jesus as always divine, or whether he was awarded divine status by God for his courageous sacrifice for humanity (becoming a sort of equivalent to an ascended master), or whether he was simply the vehicle that God used temporarily to achieve human salvation (as the Holy Spirit coming upon the man Jesus at his baptism and exiting during the crucifixion). A foreword by British New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham puts the question succinctly, “Did early believers in Christ really worship him as a divine figure? Or did they think of Jesus as a merely human figure whom God had exalted to a position of great eminence?” (ix). A preface by Michael Bird follows with acknowledgements and an explanation of how the book came about and then we enter the heart of the book.

Chapter 1, “Christology and Christian Origins,” serves as an introduction and begins by stating the author’s convictions:

I would suggest that early Christologies emerged as the attempt to express, in belief and devotion, what the earliest Christ-believers thought God had revealed in the life, passion, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth. In addition, there was a palpable need to make sense of what they had experienced of Jesus in their own communal and interior religious life...This led to the creation of narratives and propositions that attempted to answer a double-sided question: (1) Who is Jesus? and (2) Who is God in light of the memory of Jesus and the continuing experience of Jesus? This is where Christology began (12).

Those of us who believe the Bible writers were God-inspired and, therefore, inerrant in their original autographs (which is the position of Gordon-Conwell) would feel more comfortable with a reference to divine inspiration, or at least a hint that the composition of the gospels was not all guesswork on the part of the New Testament writers, as they puzzled through the enigma of Jesus. The same could be said for opening statements like, “The raw materials for protoorthodoxy and, indeed, later Nicene Orthodoxy reside in the teachers—and their communities—who wrote the

documents that formed the New Testament” (4). This is not to suggest that Michael Bird was one of the theologically liberal participants in the debate. Not at all. He contends, in opposition to others, that “christological claims do not appear to have been the most contested matters of first-century churches,” but he sees a view of Jesus as divine and human being “intrinsic and defining for certain communities” in the New Testament church, and he references 2 Corinthians 11:4; 1 John 2:22; 4:2, and 2 John 7 for proof. The reason for this high view, he believes, was “because tinkering with Jesus meant tinkering with the type of salvation he provided” (4). While this may seem a far cry from the position of verbal, plenary inspiration, it does assume that Jesus is divine, that his work was salvific, and that this is the message of the New Testament writers Paul and John.

So, in Michael Bird’s view, “Early narrations of the story of Jesus described it as a divinely orchestrated sequence that results in salvation, a salvation in which Jesus played, continues to play, and will yet play, a key role.” And he concludes, “It is clear that conceptions of Jesus’s identity were not determined by abstract speculations, but by his specific role in the deliverance wrought by God and its associated benefits for his followers.” From this foundation, he will then conduct his analysis: “We can affirm that among many early Christ-believers there was broad and near-immediate unity on two key christological ideas: (1) identification of Jesus with the God of Israel...(2) identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the risen and exalted Lord Jesus Christ...These ideas, I submit, were the germinal seeds of christological orthodoxy” (4). From this position, he proceeds to analyze as a whole genre the “invalid portrayals of Jesus” (5), that were trying to “contextualize,” not “undermine belief in Christ” (6), but fell short of the original high understanding of Jesus’s dual nature and, therefore, were rejected by orthodoxy.

With these premises, he now turns specifically to adoptionism, explaining that its proponents “were perceived to be reducing Jesus to a human figure who had acquired divine status by merit” (7). Chapter 1’s final section, “The Goal of This Book,” states clearly, “My objective is to question this quasi-consensus that the earliest retrievable Christology was adoptionist.” His interpreting methodology will be to show that the primal understandings of Jesus were that he was always divine and that adoptionist understandings are later second-century concoctions (9).

On that basis, chapter 2 dismantles the popular theory among theological liberals that “Jesus was thought to have been adopted by God at his resurrection” (11), and he argues cogently from a variety of New Testament texts to provide his proof.

Chapter 3 addresses the popular, but totally unsubstantiated, theory that Mark (rather than the traditional early church consensus that Matthew) was the first gospel and, with it, accompanying theories that Mark contains “features representative of an adoptionist Christology” (34). After presenting the points of contention, both centering in the Bible and the Greco-Roman world, he highlights the “Jewish Denunciation of Human Deification” (49), showing how unlikely the earliest Jewish followers of Jesus would be to adopt such a view and explaining how monotheistic Jews could embrace the divinity of Jesus Christ and why Gentiles, following in their train, would reject “Imperial Deifications” (61), while still confessing Jesus as God-Amongst-Us.

Chapter 4 follows with a careful response to challenges by scholars like James Dunn that Mark’s baptism scene “left his account open to the interpretation that Jesus first *became* the Son of God at the beginning of his ministry” (65). After piling up his proof, Michael Bird points out that “it is possible for a pagan reader immersed in the imperial cult with the deification of emperors to read the baptismal story as adoptionistic,” but not Christ-followers who see Mark’s writing in its context, “because Mark portrays Jesus as a pre-existent figure with transcendent qualities who (ambiguously!) shares in the identity of Israel’s *kurios* ” (106).

Chapter 5 now moves to the topic of “How Jesus Got Adopted in the Second Century,” as the chapter is entitled, giving careful expositions of *The Shepherd of Hermas* and Ebionism, which, he

contends, may have seen Jesus as God-possessed rather than adopted, a view, he adds, possibly held by Cerinthus (c. AD 100), Theodotus (c. AD 189-198), Carpocrates (also 2nd cent.).

Chapter 6 states Michael Bird's conclusion: "There was diversity of Christologies in the early church, and we do find intimations of ideas that later became core tenets of belief among later adherents to monarchian and subordinationist Christologies. However, a fully orb-ed adoptionism emerged relatively late on the scene and was not one of the earliest Christologies" (124). He then objects to several theologians who propose adoptionist perspectives on Christ, concluding by citing Athanasius and Justo Gonzalez that no created human peer, no matter how exalted, could have the power to redeem us. The appendix has a bibliography, an index of names and subjects that is no mere computer index, but breaks down important topics into subjects, and an index of ancient sources (a list of abbreviations follows the preface).

When I was in seminary in the 1960s-early '70s, some professors and fellow students of a more liberal strain did indeed assume that the New Testament was filled with competing views of Christ and, because of this "fact," the gospel was more like an onion rather than an apple. It had no core and, if one peeled away enough, all one had left was the belief of the peeler (a la Schleiermacher). They rarely if ever offered proof but just assumed the validity of this theory. They would have benefitted greatly from reading this insightful, persuasively argued book.

William David Spencer, Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Theology and the Arts (GCTS), is coeditor of *Africanus Journal*, and chief architect of An Evangelical Statement on the Trinity ([www.TrinityStatement.com](http://www.TrinityStatement.com)). He has cowritten and coedited several books on God's nature, including, *The Global God*, *The Prayer Life of Jesus*, and *Dread Jesus*. His latest book about God active in our world is the novel he and his wife, Aida Besançon Spencer, coauthored together: *Cave of Little Faces*.

## Review of *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons* by Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017)

JEFFREY ARTHURS

Writing for ministers and seminary/Bible college students, Matthew Kim has produced a thoughtful, thorough, and timely contribution to the field of practical theology. In particular, he breaks new ground by exploring how the concept of “cultural intelligence” can contribute to homiletics. Professor Kim’s thesis is that preachers can and should understand everyone’s cultural nuances more fully and empathetically in order to move the listeners forward in discipleship to become more Christlike (4). Kim writes as a conservative evangelical who endorses biblical inerrancy (34) and who holds the five “solas” of the Reformation: “Sola scriptura, Sola fide, Sola gratia, Solus Christus, and Soli Deo gloria” (106).

The concept of CQ (cultural intelligence) arose in the early 2000s primarily from the field of business leadership with trendsetting books such as Earley and Ang’s *Cultural Intelligence*. Kim has immersed himself in that literature and even extended it while still keeping his eye on the bullseye of homiletics.

This is the most thorough book on preaching and culture that I am aware of, and readers of the *Africanus Journal* will recognize immediately the relevance of the topic. In 2014, U. S. public schools crossed a threshold wherein non-majority students represented more than 50% of the school population (97). It is projected that by the year 2044 the same statistic will apply to the U. S. population in general (97).

The book’s thoroughness is evidenced by the fact that each of the nine chapters has approximately 50 endnotes with sources drawing from business communication, missiology, linguistics, apologetics, commentaries and exegetical tools, and of course, homiletics. Yet, even with relatively heavy documentation, Kim’s voice is present. He presents a clear and original model on how to do cultural analysis and then how to employ the fruits of that analysis in sermons. The model has three sections each with a user-friendly acronym (HABIT, BRIDGE, and DIALECT). The length of this review does not permit a full summary of each section, but when you pick up a copy you will see how Kim leads the reader through exegesis of the culture embedded in the preaching text, then exegesis of the listeners’ culture(s), and then practical application on how to speak the listeners’ “dialect.” Each chapter uses the three-part model; this adds unity and coherence to this volume. The result is that Kim has written a thorough yet highly usable homiletic. The practical nature of the book includes two appendices—a worksheet and sample sermon.

Another indication of this book’s thoroughness is the topics it addresses. Homiletics books in this genre usually equate “culture” with “ethnicity,” and Kim has a chapter on that, but he also has chapters on denominations, gender, geographical locations, and religions. Furthermore, he devotes a whole chapter to doing an exegesis of the *preacher’s* culture. This gives *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence* both sweep and modesty. The preacher does not stand above culture. No one does. Kim’s own modesty can be seen when he confesses that he has treated others with the same calloused and stereotyped ways in which he has been treated as a Korean-American (e.g. 53, 114).

Kim writes as a scholar and pastor. Readers will appreciate both. Highly recommended for preachers, homiletics classes, and missiology. I myself teach homiletics and I have already added *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence* to my syllabus as a required textbook starting in 2018.

Jeffrey Arthurs, Haddon Robinson Chair of Preaching and Communication, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is author of *Preaching as Reminding* (IVP), *Preaching with Variety* (Kregel), and *Devote Yourself to the Public Reading of Scripture* (Kregel).

Review of *Intercultural Discipleship: Learning from Global Approaches to Spiritual Formation* by W. Jay Moon  
(Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017)

DEBORAH M. BITZER

This book is a response to the nearly universal issue of stagnant spiritual growth and aims to provide a solution by learning from “multiple cultures across the globe and many generations across time” in order to apply “intercultural discipleship practices that produce spiritual growth” (xi). This book, while offering definitions and methods, is designed to be put into action and not merely read. Moon writes “first and foremost for the practitioner” (xii) and incorporates numerous case studies, discipleship activities, study questions, sidebars, charts, graphs, and proverbial truths that facilitate a learning environment in which his audience may interact with the text and immediately implement it to personal situations. The repetitive nature of each chapter allows the reader to study a section in isolation from the rest of the book but still receive a holistic understanding of the overall purpose and key facets of the book. Moon includes two appendixes that further support his readers to disperse the information in a variety of learning settings.

The first portion of *Intercultural Discipleship* outlines the issues that lead to spiritual stagnancy and the proposed solution of intercultural discipleship practices. Moon separates cultural communities into two broad categories: the western world and the majority world. Both cultures are met with “ultimate questions” and “intimate issues.” While the western world relies on the two categories of religion and science to address these key spiritual concerns, the majority world relies on three categories, namely high religion, folk religion, and folk science (25-28). The third category of folk religion is what sets majority world culture so distinctly apart from western world culture. Folk religion is to be understood as “forces and beings of the unseen world that affect this world” (28) and are often expressed as superstitions. Western disciplers historically overlook this third category and as a result poorly respond to what is known as “excluded middle issues,” or “the intimate questions and concerns that require unseen spirit power and guidance to effect change in the world” (31).

Moon argues there are two common results of overlooking excluded middle issues: syncretism (when “two faith systems are mixed”) and split-level Christianity (when “two systems remain separate”) (35). Both syncretism and split-level Christianity produce a worldview in which something (either mixed or remaining separate) is added to faith in Christ. This is not acceptable and must be remedied. The recommended solution is “critical contextualization,” which is the process of making sense of the gospel within a local culture’s “religious analytical system” (36). The purpose for critical contextualization is to promote intercultural discipleship. Moon defines intercultural discipleship as “the process of worldview transformation whereby Jesus followers center their lives on the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33) and obey Christ’s commands in culture (Matt. 28:19-20), utilizing culturally available genres” (53). The remaining content of the book centers around the task of locating these preexisting genres and developing “contextual expressions of Christ in culture” (55) that can prevent excluded middle issues from producing syncretism or split-level Christianity. The primary cultural genres are symbols, rituals, contextualization, stories, proverbs, arts, music, dance, and drama, and holistic integration. Moon addresses each of these genres at length and reveals how each, through critical contextualization, can serve as a vehicle for gospel transformation. The final chapter broadly applies the lessons and methods of intercultural discipleship to the postmodern perspective and lacks the strength found in the definite applications of the previous chapters.

Moon utilizes the Scriptures, research, contemporary Christian works, and experience to build his argument. He applies his proposed methods to the book’s framework which provides an ad-



ditional level of instruction that the reader can only receive through his or her interaction with the book. Stories and proverbs are used to teach the main points of each chapter and many of the discipleship activities require the reader to similarly apply stories, proverbs, rituals and other cultural genres to his or her discipleship ministry. This promotes thoughtful and specific response by the reader and also brings clarity to the sometimes ambiguous main points.

Overall, this book serves to produce purposeful discipleship practices that draw from a diverse set of cultural customs and traditions, thus preventing the western discipler from the counterproductive limits of a monocultural worldview. It is most helpful for the practitioner whose primary ministry is located in a majority world culture that is not his or her own. The practitioner who ministers in a predominantly postmodern or western context will need to work hard to find realistic ways to apply the intercultural discipleship methods proposed in this book but would be well rewarded in doing so.

Deborah Bitzer is an M.Div. student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston Center for Urban Ministerial Education. Her heart is to work alongside the local church and community organizations to spread the gospel in urban neighborhoods through community development and spiritual formation.

## Empowering English Language Learners

### *Successful Strategies of Christian Educators*

EDITED BY

JEANNE C. DEFazio

WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER

*Empowering English Language Learners* showcases strategies of those who teach English as a second language in pre-schools, graduate schools, secular public schools, and private Christian schools. What makes this book unique is the way each teacher evaluates teaching strategy through personal experience. This book explains what works and what doesn't.

---

"Like the neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan, what if the help needed in the story is the learning of English? Would you give? *Empowering English Language Learners* is a book that helps you to experience what happens when the Christian value of being a 'neighbor' is embraced in teaching English to the non-English speakers in different settings. Lively and practical!"

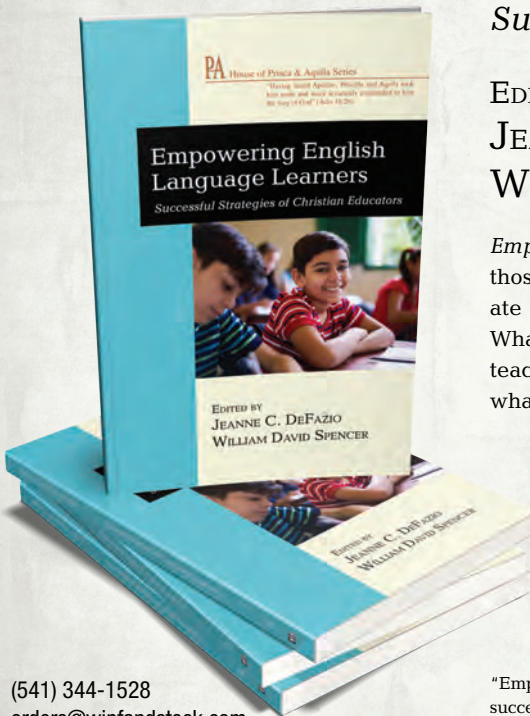
—SEONG HYUN PARK

Dean of Boston Campus and Assistant Professor of Old Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"Empowering ELLs is a very important topic for all teachers. Many strategies for successfully empowering ELLs have been made by experienced and effective teachers and administrators in secular and Christian settings to students of all age levels. I highly recommend this book as an indispensable resource for all."

—AIDA BESANÇON SPENCER

Senior Professor of New Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary



(541) 344-1528  
orders@wipfandstock.com  
www.wipfandstock.com

**WS WIPF & STOCK**  
An Imprint of WIPF and STOCK Publishers

## Review of *Preaching as Reminding: Stirring Memory in an Age of Forgetfulness* by Jeffrey Arthurs (Downers Grove: IVP, 2017)

SCOTT M. GIBSON

This book is for preachers, preachers who are called to the task of communicating God's Word to the Lord's people week after week. The preaching responsibility involves the aspect of reminding—to remind listeners, to stir their memories, to help them to remember that which they already know about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, about the Word, and how this instruction makes a difference in their living. Through narrative and ceremony, the preacher serves as one of God's remembrancers.

The concept of being one of "the Lord's remembrancers" is credited to Lancelot Andrewes, a chaplain to Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Andrewes preached the sermon, "Remember Lot's Wife," drawing the metaphor from the royal court. Arthurs notes that to be a king or queen's remembrancer "is the oldest judicial position in continual existence in Great Britain," having been established in 1154 by King Henry II (3). Additionally, Arthurs cites Jonathan Edwards who observed that preaching functions "to stir up the pure minds of the saints, quicken their affections by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance" (4). Finally to build his case, Arthurs refers to 2 Peter 1:12-13, where Peter states, "I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them...I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder" (6). From this foundation, Jeffrey Arthurs continues to shape carefully his argument of preachers as God's remembrancers throughout the chapters, all the while providing application showing what a remembrancer does and how listeners can be further stirred in being reminded of the Word and work of God.

The chapters flow well from one to the other—seven chapters in all: 1) God Remembers (and Forgets); 2) We Forget (and Remember); 3) The Lord's Remembrancers; 4) Style as a Tool for Stirring Memory; 5) Story as a Tool for Stirring Memory; 6) Delivery as a Tool for Stirring Memory; 7) Ceremony and Symbol as Tools for Stirring Memory. From one aspect to the other, Arthurs continues to develop and deepen the concept of preachers as God's remembrancers. The bibliography is rich and helpful in pointing readers to further reading.

This book is instructive for the seminary student and for the seasoned preacher. Arthurs has identified an area of homiletics that has been neglected, even overlooked—the place of preaching as reminding. Arthurs notes, "One of [the] most crucial functions preaching accomplishes, a function often neglected in homiletics textbooks, is the stirring of memory" (7). The book would serve as an excellent textbook, whether in introductory or advanced preaching courses.

Arthurs' contribution to the field of homiletics cannot be ignored. His unique and important discovery of this lacunae of homiletical study is worth acknowledging and celebrating. Now, preachers have no excuse to leave out—or, even forget(!)—the strategic role reminding has in preaching.

Scott M. Gibson is Professor of Preaching and holder of the David E. Garland Chair of Preaching at Baylor University/Truett Seminary in Waco, Texas. He also served as the Haddon W. Robinson Professor of Preaching and Ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, where he was on faculty for twenty-seven years. His publications include *Preaching for Special Services* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) and *Preaching with a Plan: Sermon Strategies for Growing Mature Believers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012) and editor of *The Worlds of the Preacher: Navigating Biblical, Cultural, and Personal Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018) and *Training Preachers: A Guide to Teaching Homiletics* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2019).

## Review of *Holy Spokes: The Search for Urban Spirituality on Two Wheels* by Laura Everett (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017)

DEB BEATTY MEL

Laura Everett's *Holy Spokes* explores the ways in which the bicycle and cycling serve as an extended metaphor for the Christian walk. Drawing on the author's personal experience of becoming an urban cyclist—first by necessity and, over time, fully embracing the practice—this book takes us with her along the bike path of a deeper spirituality and a growing love for the city in which she has chosen to live and minister.

The book is written for those who want to learn how to deepen their relationship with their community, especially if it is a community to which they have relocated. It is cleverly organized by grouping different concepts and their illustrative anecdotes around the parts of a bicycle. Each chapter begins with a citation either from or about Brother Lawrence, whose ability to commune with God while going about his everyday work underscores Everett's observation that "mundane tasks done with intention bring us closer to the holy" (7).

The first three chapters explore the process of orienting one's life around a particular way of being, establishing habits, and persevering in them. The frame of the bicycle is her symbol for what monastic communities call the Rule of Life: a set of priorities and practices that form the basis for their lives (13). The decision to move primarily by bicycle will influence choice of school or job and other fundamental choices.

In the fourth chapter, "Tires and Tubes | Border Crossing," Everett begins to discuss her growing awareness of the different cultural communities making up the city, including the history of those communities and the visible evidence of that history along the roads. "All roads are political," she notes: some are plowed or repaired more quickly than others (48–49). The following chapter, "Lights | Visibility," discusses a growing sense of self-worth that emerges from a cyclist's need to make herself visible to motorists and others, and one's right to "take the lane" when conditions require it (70). Chapters six and seven explore the need for Sabbath rest and the importance of adapting to new circumstances, and chapter 8 delves into the concept of finding a pace that will allow forward movement without burnout.

One concept explored in Chapter 8, "Chain | Embodiment," is the importance of engaging in real-world experiences rather than being dominated by intellectual pursuits. The community aspect of cycling, which is in many ways a solitary activity, has strong parallels to one's faith journey and its community. The physical action of cycling has led Everett to spontaneous conversations with God, something "for sure I never found . . . sitting on my couch, reading a book on my own" (124). The following chapters explore the appreciation of people as individuals rather than seeing them as anonymous members of a group, and the recognition of and respect for one's limitations. In the concluding chapter, the author reflects on the joys she has found in her riding and her journey to becoming a bona fide urban cyclist.

Two practical appendices follow: an order for a Blessing of the Bicycles service and one for a Ghost Bike service. Ghost bikes are memorials (white-painted bikes) installed at the location of fatal accidents where a cyclist has been killed, usually by a motor vehicle. They serve both as an expression of grief for the cyclist's loved ones and a cautionary reminder for drivers who need to be aware of cyclists sharing the road with them.

*Holy Spokes* has many keen insights. I particularly appreciated the way the author explores both the positive and negative implications of visibility in Chapter 5. On one hand, visibility is necessary for safety and a healthy sense of self-worth: "I am worth being seen" (60). On the other,

visibility can lead to unwanted attention, sexualized and/or violent. Cycling has changed the way she views her body, and, in particular, her thighs: no longer as something shameful that must be hidden, but as a source of power (122).

The author is not an evangelical. Jesus is barely mentioned in *Holy Spokes*, and Scripture references are few and general. The Blessing of the Bicycles service is inclusive of other faiths and those with no faith. The author includes anecdotes drawn from her same-sex relationship and marriage (78, 122, 132). Still, many aspects of her journey will resonate with evangelicals, such as her humility, vulnerability, and honest, unfiltered prayers (79). One can hear echoes of Scriptures in the pages, though they are not cited; her intention to “meet the ignorance or obliviousness of my neighbor with gentleness, clarity, and grace” (56) brings to mind “repay evil with blessing” in 1 Peter 3:9. The concept of embodiment explored in Chapter 8 echoes the concept of incarnation.

This book is written from the perspective of a white person. While the “invisible cyclists” from Boston’s communities of color are mentioned (61), there is no in-depth exploration of their experiences. The chapter on crossing boundaries (ch. 4) recounts the author’s decision to shift her commuting route from the relative safety of the bike path to an “unprotected” route through ethnically diverse neighborhoods (50). However, the relationships with these neighborhoods and their denizens are fleeting. Everett is humble about the fact that her understanding of the city’s other cultures can lack depth; she admits that she did not pay enough attention to cross-cultural issues at a memorial ceremony for a young cyclist of Haitian descent (68) and recounts how she has learned from the experience.

The reader will find more depth to Everett’s winsome exploration of cycling culture and history. We learn about “fixies” (single-gear bikes), “Freds” (old-school male cyclists), and the type of handlebars preferred by bicycle messengers (88). We learn that cycling was originally an occupation solely of the wealthy which later became democratized (75–76). And how refreshing that her bicycle mechanic is a woman (30)!

As a three-season cyclist in Boston myself, I could identify with many of the anecdotes recounted by Everett. I have skirted the awkwardly placed lamppost near Green Street Station (3) and waited at a light next to the cyclist with a bird affixed to the top of his helmet (130). The relatable author with a humble voice does not claim to have a formula for successful ministry, but to have found a vantage point from her bicycle seat offering an unexpected and welcome perspective on her faith and her place in the city she has chosen to call home. On her bicycle, she is more accessible and more vulnerable, finding a new way to experience her neighbors and connecting with the cycling community. Her openness to new experiences is admirable, for it is in unfamiliar territory that we often encounter God.

One of my previous pastors would take regular prayer walks around the church building, saying prayers for the neighbors as she went. As I read *Holy Spokes*, I found myself thinking, why not a prayer bike ride? For those in ministry who want to gain a fresh perspective on their city or neighborhood, the bicycle may just be the perfect vehicle.

Deb Beatty Mel is a licensed minister at International Community Church in Allston (Boston), Massachusetts, and a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She works at Boston Building Resources, just one block off the South-west Corridor bike path.

**Review of: *Strengthening Families and Ending Abuse: Churches and Their Leaders Look to the Future* edited by Nancy Nason-Clark, Barbara Fisher-Townsend, Victoria Fahlberg. House of Prisca & Aquila Series  
(Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013)**

JEAN DIMOCK

*Strengthening Families and Ending Abuse* honors Dr. Catherine Clark Kroeger as the founder and president of PASCH (Peace and Safety in the Christian Home), a resource for family members experiencing domestic violence and those who work with them. Dr. Kroeger died on Valentine's Day in 2011 before this book was published. This edited work comes from the plenary sessions and workshops at the last of five PASCH conferences held near Vancouver, Canada. While the publication of this book delivers the end of PASCH, its mission continues worldwide in various forms. Many operate with Dr. Kroeger's influence in different, creative, and effective ways, but with the same goal of assuring peace and safety in the Christian home, thus strengthening the family. Inside the essays of this book, the reader will hear from many of those who carry on the task of educating others concerning family abuse and helping those involved in domestic violence.

The editors who compiled the essays that form *Strengthening* are well-seasoned on the issue of domestic violence and are very well qualified not only to edit, but also to contribute to such a work. Nancy Nason-Clark is an author who chairs the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick in Canada and is the Director of the RAVE Project. Barbara Fisher-Townsend is a Contract Academic in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick with a completed post-doctoral fellowship with the RAVE project, and teaches family violence courses in the Department of Sociology and for the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research certificate program in family violence. Victoria Fahlberg founded ACODE in Rio de Janeiro, which is a social service/mental health clinic, and has worked with immigrants and refugees since 2001 in the United States. She has also served as a consultant for UNICEF, was a member of the Governor's Commission for Domestic and Sexual Violence for four years, and was the Executive Director of One Lowell in Lowell, Massachusetts from 2002-2010.

*Strengthening* is divided into three sections. Part I, "Strengthening Families," honors the legacy of Catherine Clark Kroeger and her work. It also impresses upon the reader the need to address domestic abuse in the home. Part II, "Working to Strengthen Individuals within Family Life," addresses support for women and children who leave their abusive relationship; support for domestic violence victims in rural communities; support from the top levels of church leadership and where gaps exist in those responses. Part III, "Plan for Action," relays examples of positive responses to those affected by domestic violence, as well as how to support caregivers and educate church youth.

*Strengthening* allows the reader to hear from survivors of domestic violence along with those involved in Christian ministry, sociologists, teachers, professors, psychologists, and others whose work and/or experiences are related to domestic violence. Research information is provided, along with many resources and direction toward strengthening families and ending abuse. While each chapter has recognizable value, addressing each chapter and every contributor is not possible here. We will look at a just a few to give the reader a taste of this important work.

Amy Rasmussen Buckley, who holds a Master of Divinity from George Fox Evangelical Seminary and who serves on the board of Life Together International, wrote two essays in the first section of this publication. In one of her essays, she wrote as Catherine Clark Kroeger's student and academic assistant at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, speaking about Cathy's strong faith and clear efforts to "correct 'a terrible evil' that affects so many Christian families." Juan Carlos

Arean and Nancy Raines wrote a chapter in this first section that addresses children exposed to domestic violence. They illustrate how family violence affects children, the resilience of these children, and what helps them heal, all considering the heart, the mind, and the spirit. Arean is the director of the National Latin@Network for Healthy Families and has led workshops on family violence prevention not only in the U.S. but also in other countries as well. Raines is a Spiritual Counselor for a hospice program and has worked as a Staff Chaplain at Massachusetts General Hospital.

In the second part of the book, Lorrie Wasyliw describes the importance of “Second Stage Programming,” which shows the reader the importance of giving victims of domestic violence a safe and loving environment where there are practical life helps and where God can heal and do His restorative work. Wasyliw is the President of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in British Columbia and is the founder and Executive Director of “Women in Need Gaining Strength.”

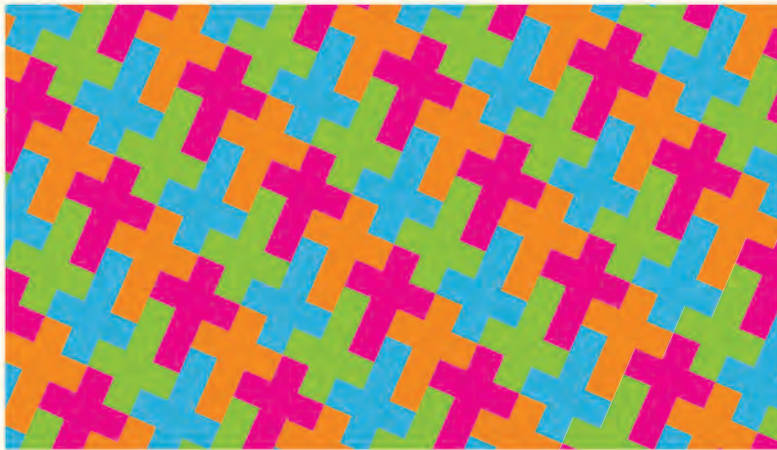
The last section of the book contains a chapter by Irene Sevcik, Nancy Nason-Clark, Michael Rothery, and Robert Pynn that addresses “Caring for the Caregivers.” They explain how FaithLink was established, thus connecting both religious communities and secular agencies to provide healing for those affected by domestic violence. Nason-Clark is one of the book’s editors; Sevcik is a social worker who concentrated on children and families needing services and included those caught in intimate partner violence; Rothery is a professor emeritus from University of Calgary’s Faculty of Social Work with a strong interest in violence in adult intimate relationships; Pynn is the Anglican Dean Emeritus of Calgary and helped found HomeFront and FaithLink.

While *Strengthening* does address children with a chapter and other mentionings, a reader might want to consider further the importance of strengthening the family by regarding more inclusive information about the children in domestic violence families who view the abuses. An understanding of what children experience, how they respond to domestic violence in their homes, why they respond the way they do, how domestic violence in their homes affects their relationships to each of their parents as well as the world around them, the resulting medical and psychological challenges, and what can be done to help these children, all need to be understood equally with the experiences of children and adults who are directly abused in the home, as well as those adults providing abusive behaviors. The information in *Strengthening* concerning the victims and survivors as well as the batterers is tremendous, however, the work would have been more complete with the inclusion of additional and more specific information about the children involved in such situations, since they are an essential consideration in the families where there is abuse. Knowing more fully how children are affected and how they specifically can be helped is an important component in strengthening the family.

As a whole, this work should be viewed as an important inclusion in seminary curriculum related to family life, domestic violence, counseling, including pastoral counseling, and other courses that merely touch on domestic violence or should do so. Anyone working with those in domestic violence families, even seasoned advocates, or those who could potentially be faced with the task of helping those in domestic violence families (e.g., lawyers, pastors, neighbors, doctors, nurses, etc.) would benefit from reading *Strengthening*.

Not only is there much credibility in this work because of the production of essential information from those for whom domestic violence is a part of their work and concern, but the book is also riddled with innumerable resources for the reader. Even the domestic violence specialist will find content that will expand knowledge and understanding. The redemptive component that washes throughout the entire book offers encouragement and hope within a very dark and difficult subject matter. Given the pervasiveness of domestic violence in each of our communities and the fact that it affects each one of us in some way, whether we recognize it or not, *Strengthening Families and Ending Abuse* is a book not only to put on your must-read list, but it must be read.

Jean Dimock received her M.A. and D.Min. degrees from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, at its Boston Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME). Her doctoral research and thesis concerned domestic violence. She is now a domestic violence specialist who served as a New Hampshire guardian ad litem and works with women across the nation who find themselves in domestic violence homes. She also helps the children involved by giving the adults understanding regarding what their children are experiencing and why certain behaviors exist. Jean also served as adjunct professor of both philosophy and psychology courses at Great Bay Community College in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Professorial duties provided information that led to her chapter contribution for *Empowering English Language Learners: Successful Strategies for Christian Educators*, an edited work by Jeanne D. DeFazio and William David Spencer. She lives on the New Hampshire Seacoast with her husband and has two children, two grandchildren, and two felines.



# PREACHING AS REMINDING

*Stirring Memory in an Age of Forgetfulness*



JEFFREY D. ARTHURS



**Review of *Ancient Christian Texts: Commentaries on Galatians to Philemon* by Ambrosiaster translated and edited by Thomas C. Oden and Gerald L. Bray (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009)**

FRANCOIS W. AUGUSTIN

This translation and editing work on *Commentaries on Galatians to Philemon* is the byproduct of careful scholarship by reputable scholars Gerald L. Bray, research professor at Beeson Divinity School and Thomas C. Oden, former theology professor at Drew University. The volume is part of a series that helps the English-speaking world discover the treasures of biblical exegesis gathered by the early church father, Ambrosiaster, who lived in the fourth century A.D. To the delight of church historians, biblical exegetes, everyday pastors, and Sunday School teachers, we gain exposure to the thought process and motifs of the early church fathers and how they interpreted Scripture. Ambrosiaster's proximity to the early apostles adds credence to his interpretation of the biblical text, thus enabling us in the twenty-first century to calibrate our own doctrines to biblical truth. If being a Christian is akin to belonging to a tribe, this selection and translation is a compass that leads to uncovering one's roots.

For reasons not made explicit by either Ambrosiaster or the editors, this verse by verse commentary covers most of Paul's corpus but omits Romans and First and Second Corinthians. Nevertheless, it does not shy away from topics that many of today's Christians find controversial. One example is his commentary on Ephesians 4:11, where Ambrosiaster may disappoint those who believe in the continuation of the ascension gifts such as Apostles and Prophets. He equates the gift of an apostle to the role or office of Bishop and the gift of a prophet to the role or office of a biblical expositor. His argument is that the gifts of apostles and prophets came into existence solely as a means to "support the beginnings of the faith [and that] once churches were established all over the place and offices set up, the system changed from what it had originally been" (49). This is the argument often made by twentieth and twenty-first century cessationists. In addition, Ambrosiaster takes a progressive view on issues such as human dignity in his commentary on Philemon verse 15 (162) but a conservative view on the role of women in ministry in his commentary on 1 Timothy 3:11 (128).

Regardless of one's view on the aforementioned topics, what is to be appreciated about Ambrosiaster's methodology in biblical exegesis is his preference to compare Scripture with Scripture and his insistence on the authority of Scripture to interpret history and judge world affairs. When it comes to the former, instead of limiting his exegesis to the single text at hand, an approach common among today's biblical exegetes, Ambrosiaster uses direct quotations from other biblical passages to underscore his interpretation of the text. For example, when commenting on Colossians 2:20, he quotes 1 John 2:16, wherein the Apostle John exhorts Christians not to love this world (92). In interpreting history and judging world affairs, he equates the "mystery of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 (115) to the influence of Satan in the brutal reigns of Nero, Diocletian, and Julian, which spanned from A.D. 54 to 363, well into Ambrosiaster's era.

Due to the paucity of translated texts from the patristic period and Ambrosiaster's approach to biblical exegesis, this translation by editors Oden and Bray should serve as a reference book to any serious student of church history and Bible interpretation. To the exegesis student, this series exposes them to Patristic biblical interpretation methodology. And to anyone who has an interest in church history or biblical exegesis, this series is a must-have. If you are one who embraces the Nicene faith, you will find in Ambrosiaster a faithful ally.

Francois Augustin is Pastor of a new church plant called The Livingstone Church-Boston in the Jamaica Plain area of Boston. He is a graduate of Harvard University and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.



**Review of *Ritual Water, Ritual Spirit: Analysis of the Timing,  
Mechanism and Manifestation of Spirit-Reception in Luke-Acts*  
by David J. McCollough, Paternoster Biblical Monographs  
(Milton Keynes, U.K: Authentic Media, 2017)**

WOODROW E. WALTON

The author, David McCollough, identifies the key issues of his book in regards to the relation of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the life of faith in respect to one's baptism, the laying on of hands, or other such physical rite of initiation into the Spirit-driven life (p. 41). He concentrates on the New Testament documents of the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, which are both written by Luke. He sees a variation in the reception of the Holy Spirit as reported in Luke's gospel and as related in Acts.

McCollough opens his discussion with a review of the understandings of twenty-three New Testament scholars in the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, and Germany before launching into his own discussions of the narratives of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles as to the reception of the Holy Spirit in the lives of new believers in the Christ, Jesus. He observes variations in the impartation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of specific believers by Jesus, some by prayer, and others by the laying on of hands. Luke depicts the apostles as going from individual to individual and situation to situation in describing the dynamic of the Spirit within the converts.

McCollough narrows his study to the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles as these are where the variety of the reception of the Holy Spirit is the greatest, beginning with the baptism of Jesus as recorded in Luke 3 and continuing on to the reception of the Holy Spirit by all those in prayer in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost, and later the occasion of the conversion of the Samaritans and of the treasurer to the Queen of Ethiopia (Acts 8), the conversion of Paul, and, lastly, by those gathered in the home of Cornelius (Acts 12).

McCollough relies on more than twenty-three different authors, drawing from "Pentecostal" and non-Pentecostal scholarship, and particularly, British and Continental [European] research in Luke-Acts, thereby casting his monograph on the gift of the Holy Spirit as described in Luke-Acts against a broad ecumenical background, in dealing with the Scriptures. This reviewer noticed references to Ben Witherington, Jr., Craig S. Keener, Dan Wallace, Henry Swete, three scholars this reviewer has come to know over the years.

Swete is a well-known British scholar of the New Testament, while both Witherington and Wallace are New Testament specialists in the United States with Witherington at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky and Dan Wallace at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas, the former a Methodist School, and the latter an interdenominational evangelical graduate theological institute. Keener is a National Baptist minister who got his theological education at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri. McCollough, the author, studied at Southwestern Assemblies of God University at Waxahachi, Texas, before proceeding to Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, and to Ph.D. studies at the London School of Theology (Middlesex University) in the United Kingdom.

McCollough, in England, having conversed with this reviewer by telephone, admitted that he was not himself an Assembly of God minister, but was, nonetheless, of Pentecostal persuasion and had studied under John Wyckoff at Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie (AGCU) and was conversant with Wyckoff's work on the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation. In this reviewer's estimation, he was wise in casting his work *Ritual Water, Ritual Spirit* against an ecumenical background.

He wrote, “For Luke, repentance is not equated with baptism, but if one repents, one will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (p. 131) and “The timing is not made explicit” (pp. 86-87). What is offered by Dr. McCollough is an analysis of the relationship between baptism and the infilling of the Holy Spirit in the new believer’s life. Together, there is a common affinity, despite the difference. There is a common thread which affects the new believer at different times and in community, whether it be conversion, as in Paul’s experience, when the believers are together in prayer in the Upper Room, then in the home of Cornelius, and when Peter shared his testimony. Lives are changed. Assembled individuals are forged together into a community having a common mission. Conversely, an individual traveler traveling alone is joined by another lone traveler and in conversation together a mission is born within another country.

Wading through a complicated but rewarding line of study, as McCollough’s *Ritual Water, Ritual Spirit*, is well worth the effort.

Woodrow E. Walton, D.Min., is a Sr. Retired Ordained Minister of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and a former Dean of a graduate school of theology in Oklahoma. He and his wife make their home in Fort Worth, Texas.



## Master of Arts in Counseling

Guiding and Restoring People in the City to a Life in Christ

The Master of Arts in Counseling (MACO) at Gordon-Conwell, Boston Campus is designed to integrate Christian theology and psychology within an urban context. Our courses pair rigorous academics with discipleship development and apprenticeship.

Choose from two tracks:

- 1) *Mental Health Licensure Track* (\*30-course requirement) prepares students for the MHC state licensure for clinical counseling practice.
- 2) *Pastoral Care Non-Licensure Track* (\*\*20-course requirement) equips students not intending to pursue licensure to better address the needs of those in the urban church and community.

\*3 years completion

\*\*2 years completion

For more information visit:  
[www.gordonconwell.edu/maco](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/maco)

BOSTON CAMPUS  
**GORDON CONWELL**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CONTACT  
Admissions Office  
90 Warren Street, Roxbury MA 02119  
t: 617.427.7293 e: [cumeinfo@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:cumeinfo@gordonconwell.edu)  
[www.gordonconwell.edu/boston](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/boston)

## Review of *The Letter to Philemon*, New International Commentary on the New Testament by Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017)

AMBER L. BURGESS

*The Letter to Philemon* is a commentary that has been written during our crucial time in human history, as it introduces modern readers to slavery within an ancient Greco-Roman construct, and thereby provides insights with which readers may approach the problem of slavery today. An array of people will find this commentary helpful due to its background information and its readability. As a result, pastors and seminary students with an understanding of Greek would find this commentary useful. Even those with little to no knowledge of Greek would be able to understand the contents of this commentary. It is evident that McKnight wrote this commentary to be insightful for those who know Greek, as well as understandable for those who do not. His purpose in writing this commentary was to help modern readers view the letter of Philemon as a letter of reconciliation, rather than a letter focused solely on the ethics of slavery (1). With the book being focused on reconciliation within a master-slave relationship, the content of it consists largely of the ancient understanding of slavery.

This commentary is split into two major parts. The first part deals with background information, such as slavery within Philemon's context, authorship and date, social structure, the events that took place prior to the writing of the letter, the structure of the letter, and its rhetoric. The second part of the book is dedicated to the commentary of the letter, with the letter being broken down into four sections: the introduction, thanksgiving, an appeal made by Paul on behalf of Onesimus, and the conclusion. Throughout this second part of the commentary, McKnight takes a verse by verse approach to exegesis throughout each section.

This is not McKnight's first published commentary in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series. He also published *The Letter of James* in 2011, commentaries on Galatians and 1 Peter in the NIV Application Commentary series, as well as numerous other books and articles. He received his PhD from the University of Nottingham (UK) and is currently the Julius R. Mantey Chair of New Testament at Northern Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. The sources for this commentary span primary sources, several commentaries, and numerous articles and books pertaining to the ancient world of Paul and Philemon.

There are many positive aspects to *The Letter to Philemon* that should be addressed. First, one can read this commentary with ease. McKnight does not use language that a person with limited knowledge of this letter would not be able to understand. The whole book is 114 pages, which makes it easy for readers to read in a short time frame. The second portion dealing with the verse by verse commentary is another positive aspect. Readers receive a verse by verse discussion on the whole letter of Philemon, equipped with background information and subtle Greek analysis (i.e., 63), which is helpful for readers to reference the commentary during personal study. A third positive note on this commentary is the extensive discussion on slavery in the ancient world (6-29). McKnight dedicates most of the introduction to the background on slavery, while also providing perspective to Onesimus's situation as a slave under Philemon (30-38). Another positive aspect of the commentary section is the background knowledge of the people mentioned in the letter to Philemon. Readers often glance over these names when reading through the letter, without ever knowing who they are. McKnight gives life to the people, such as Paul (50-53), Timothy (53-54), Philemon (55-57), Apphia (57-58), Archippus (58), and the church (58-59). Lastly, regarding disputable information, different conclusions are provided, that scholars have suggested. He not only includes the evangelical perspective, the tradition with which he aligns, but he also provides the critical perspectives for his readers (i.e., 37-39; 41-46), both of which are essentially helpful for pastors and

students to see the different perspectives laid out before them, as well as be exposed to perspectives they would not normally encounter in an evangelical setting.

In regards to some criticisms of the commentary, there are three that should be addressed. While structurally, the commentary is laid out well for modern readers, within the introduction (1-48) are numerous block quotes (i.e., 3, 7, 8, 9-10, 14-15, etc.), which, while providing information that is sufficient and helpful, often disrupt the flow of an argument. As with all well-delivered works of writing, the readers are left with wanting more, but a second critique is the absence of application for the modern reader: how this letter is applied to a twenty-first century context; how slavery in the ancient world relates to slavery in the modern world; what ministers of the Gospel can do to encourage reconciliation within and outside of the church; what this letter means for racial and gender reconciliation. Further discussion on modern application would have been helpful to answer at least some of these questions. A final critique is the absence of a substantial conclusion at the end of the commentary. McKnight ends the commentary section with the conclusion of the letter (111-114), but neglects to bring together everything that was discussed concerning the letter. It seemed to me as if the commentary simply ended without a final note on what was discussed.

Nevertheless, *The Letter to Philemon* by Scot McKnight provides substantial background information on the ancient world, as well as brings the ancient world to our very own finger tips. Despite the criticisms, this commentary is highly recommended for seminary students to buy for their personal library. It will help students and pastors preach from the Letter to Philemon, and bring to life its fruitful message. Also, it is recommended that seminary professors use it as a reference book for a New Testament introduction course, or a course focused on the Letter to Philemon.

Amber L. Burgess is a 2016 and 2018 graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts, receiving degrees in both Biblical Languages and New Testament. Amber works as a high school Bible and elementary teacher at Harvest Christian School in Sandstone, Minnesota. During the summer months, Amber works as the Registrar at Grindstone Lake Bible Camp, also located in Sandstone, Minnesota, where her husband is the Executive Director. They have been working together in different ministry contexts since 2012, and hope to see many more years of joint fruitful ministry.

**Review of *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs* by Craig L. Blomberg (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016)**

JAE-SEUNG LIM

The historicity of the New Testament has been one of the most controversial topics among Christian scholars and even the laity. As the title indicates, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament* presumes the reliability of the Scripture. The author canvasses the New Testament to convince readers that the New Testament is historically reliable through meticulously looking into both the external and internal evidence of each New Testament book. Through this book, Craig L. Blomberg not only expands on his previous book, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1987), written twenty years ago, but provides in-depth and broadened information regarding other books of the New Testament, including the Gospels.

Part one covers the first three chapters, which attempt to demonstrate the credibility of the Synoptic Gospels. Upon mentioning the formation of the Synoptic Gospels, Blomberg stresses the importance and the credibility of oral traditions in the ancient Middle Eastern world. His primary postulation is that the authors of the Gospels “behaved like normal historians and biographers” (29). After defending the credibility of each of the three Gospels, Blomberg addresses the problems among the Synoptics, contending that, of any particular episode from the life or the sayings of Christ seeming to contradict between the Gospels, genuine “contradictions occur only when information in one Gospel cannot be true if information in another text is also true” (97). Subsequently, specific issues which were picked by Blomberg such as “the birth narratives,” “John the Baptist,” and so on are presented with the assertions of the skeptics and the defense of the author. One of the significant contributions of this book is the author’s presentation of extraordinary evidence from not only Scripture itself but also from archaeological, topographical, and other ancient materials. The same structure is presented in part two, which deals with the Gospel of John. Part three addresses the authenticity of the book of Acts and Paul’s Epistles, and part four deals with the rest of the New Testament. Various topics regarding each book are taken and resolved. Despite omitting some of the critical points concerning the arguments, Blomberg consistently points at the necessary information of each book and its controversial issues through which he suggests evidence that proves the historicity and the authenticity of the New Testament. Part five addresses non-canonical Christian literature. The Nag Hammadi documents and the New Testament Apocrypha support the certainty of the Greek Testaments even though those are not capable of competing with the New Testament canon. Finally, the last part concludes this book with a defense of the miracles against the hermeneutical claims of prominent skeptics including Gerd Lüdmann and John Dominic Crossan.

This book treats sufficient fundamental data of the New Testament such as the authorship, background setting, and its genre, culminating in a robust defense of the reliability of the Scripture. It might seem to offer somewhat superficial knowledge of the New Testament at first, but this characteristic makes it possible to scrutinize the whole New Testament in the aspect of an evangelical or a conservative theology. The laity who are interested in the historicity of the New Testament could study the history of the argument and gain balanced theological perspective through this book, and many seminarians may use this book as an introduction to the New Testament because of the broad range of the information. Furthermore, I believe that this massive work can be used for courses on biblical theology in evangelical colleges and seminaries. Through this book, Blomberg greatly contributes to Christian literature and enhances the reliability of Scripture and its message.

Jae-Seung Lim has served as a Byington Scholar for Dr. Áida Besançon Spencer while studying his M.A. in Religion at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He finished a Th.M. in New Testament studies at Gordon-Conwell, graduating *Cum Laude* in 2015, and began a Ph.D. in New Testament studies at McMaster Divinity College in the fall of 2017.

**WIPF & STOCK**

An Imprint of WIPF and STOCK Publishers

199 West 8th Avenue, Ste. 3, Eugene, OR 97401

Telephone (541) 344-1528 • Fax (541) 344-1506

Visit our Web site at [www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com)

## REACHING FOR THE NEW JERUSALEM

### A Biblical and Theological Framework for the City

Edited by

SEONG HYUN PARK

ÁIDA BESANÇON SPENCER

WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER

The task of this book is to examine the biblical and theological meaning of the city and our mission within it. It starts with the premise that the garden is lost, and we are headed toward the New Jerusalem, the city of God. In the meanwhile, we dwell in earthly cities that need to be adjusted to God's city: "[T]he fall has conditioned us to fear the city . . . though, historically, God intended it to provide safety, even refuge. . . . We have to band together and act to take back our communities if we are to help God in the divine task of reconciling the world to Godself by assisting God in adjusting our communities to God's New Jerusalem, rebuilding our own cities of Enoch on the blueprints of Christ . . . to go into all the world and share his good news, building the Christian community along the lines of the New Jerusalem, a city of light in which God is revealed." (from the Introduction by William David Spencer)

Toward achieving this goal, this single, accessible volume brings together the biblical, the systematic, and the practical aspects of urban ministry by various contributors who are urban practitioners and theologians themselves, and have taught at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston Campus.

**URBAN VOICE**

978-1-62564-060-4 / \$26 / 234 PP. / PAPER

SEONG HYUN PARK (PhD, Harvard University) is the Assistant Dean of Boston Campus and Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He coedits the *Africanus Journal*, the *Africanus Monograph Series*, and the *Urban Voice Series*.

ÁIDA BESANÇON SPENCER (PhD, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is Professor of New Testament at the Hamilton Campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Among her books are *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry*, *Paul's Literary Style*, *2 Corinthians*, and *Pastoral Epistles*.

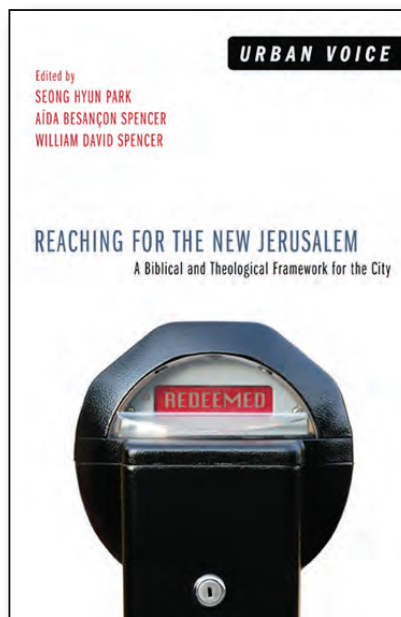
WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER (ThD, Boston University School of Theology) is Ranked Adjunct Professor of Theology and the Arts at the Boston Campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Mysterium and Mystery: The Clerical Crime Novel*, *Dread Jesus*, *Name in the Papers: An Urban Adventure Novel*, and co-editor of *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*.

"The many authors of this book offer a fresh paradigm for our mission and ministry in the city—to rebuild our cities of Enoch on the blueprint plans of the New Jerusalem, the blueprints of Christ!"

ELDIN VILLAFANE, Professor of Christian Social Ethics; Founding Director of the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"Written by a diverse cadre of urban theological specialists and practitioners, this compilation is timely, scholarly, relevant, probing, and enlightening. Like a spiritual laser, rays of hope and healing keep flashing through the pages of these articles written by men and women of solid biblical faith who every day work, research, teach, and 'pray for the peace of the city' as they point us to the 'beautiful city of God.'"

MICHAEL E. HAYNES, Pastor Emeritus, Twelfth Baptist Church, Boston, MA



**Media, Examination, and Review Copies:**

Contact: James Stock

(541) 344-1528, ext 103 or [James@wipfandstock.com](mailto:James@wipfandstock.com)

**Orders:** Contact your favorite bookseller or order directly from the publisher via phone (541) 344-1528,

fax (541) 344-1506 or e-mail us at [orders@wipfandstock.com](mailto:orders@wipfandstock.com)

## Review of *Hidden in Plain View: Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts* by Lydia McGrew (Chillicothe, OH: DeWard, 2017)

JOHN M. DEPOE

Have you ever wondered how Sherlock Holmes might conduct a forensic study of the Gospels, and what such a study would tell us? To my satisfaction, *Hidden in Plain View* gives us one plausible way such a meticulous study of the Gospels and Acts might go. In this work, Dr. Lydia McGrew revives an apologetic argument based on undesigned coincidences. This style of argument originated with William Paley's eighteenth century masterpiece, *Horae Paulinae*, which was developed throughout the nineteenth century by divines such as J. J. Blunt and T. R. Birks. The ultimate conclusion of her book is that the Gospels and Acts *are* highly reliable historical documents based on eyewitness testimony, which in turn has significant consequences for rejecting higher textual critical approaches to the New Testament as well as for rethinking the appropriate approach for conducting evidential historical apologetics.

McGrew characterizes an undesigned coincidence as “a notable connection between two or more accounts or texts that does not seem to have been planned by the person or people giving the accounts. Despite their apparent independence, the items fit together like pieces of a puzzle” (12). Throughout *Hidden in Plain View*, readers are presented passages from two or more books of the New Testament and then shown how their contents fit together in such a way that the best explanation is that each source is an independent, firsthand witness of the recorded event. It is important to stress that the argument from undesigned coincidences aims to do more than merely harmonize some of the accounts found in the Gospels and Acts. Unlike harmonization where the goal is to demonstrate consistency between apparently divergent accounts of the same event, undesigned coincidences intend to show that the accounts are rooted in reliable independent eyewitness testimony, thereby providing some degree of evidence that these accounts are true. As stressed by J. Warner Wallace, a cold case detective who has expertise in testing the merits of eyewitness testimony (who also wrote the afterword for *Hidden in Plain View*), the incidental details between two accounts of the same event often can inadvertently provide support for the reliability of both sources. For example, one person might report that Smith's voice was strained when he gave a speech, while another source tells us that Smith went to a doctor the day before the speech to treat a sore throat (without mentioning the speech at all). In this case, the first witness reports the effects without the cause, while the second provides the cause without the effect. The incidental details of the two accounts fit together in such a way as to constitute some basis for thinking that both are true. After all, it strains credulity to believe that both reports are falsehoods that accidentally interlock in precisely this way to illuminate each other. Moreover, the hypothesis that there is overt collusion between these sources is unlikely since conspirators are going to make the confirmation they are trying to create more obvious. Thus, the most plausible explanation is that each account represents an independent eyewitness's perspective of facts with which each one is acquainted.

*Hidden in Plain View* offers students of the Gospels and Acts both a broad understanding of these texts and a number of significant points concerning the individual passages. Since the broader insights are built upon the inferences she draws from the individual texts, it is best to start with McGrew's discussion of the individual texts. Her study of Gospels involves over 20 events that relate to over 50 passages from the New Testament. She investigates 30 events from the book of Acts that involve over 45 passages found in Acts and Paul's epistles. This is noteworthy both to indicate the extent of her study for the broader conclusions to be discussed below and to highlight how this book may prove useful to those studying the New Testament.

McGrew's discussion of the feeding of the 5,000 serves as an excellent illustration of undesigned coincidences in the Gospels since this story is found with incidental variations in all four gospels. Mark 6:39 records that the people sat down on the *green* grass, which is a striking detail to include that might pique the curiosities of the reader. Why mention that the grass was green? Isn't Palestine generally a dry and barren region where it would be unusual for the grass to be green? If Mark's Gospel were the only account of this miracle, perhaps these questions would remain unanswered curiosities that do not necessarily detract from the credibility of his account. McGrew points us to John 6:4 that informs us that the feeding took place when the Passover was at hand, which would set the event in the part of spring where the grass would be green. Although John's Gospel does not say that the grass was green, and Mark's Gospel does not tell us that it was near Passover, together the two accounts provide mutual support for the truth of both reports.

Another undesigned coincidence from the feeding of the 5,000 begins with an oddity from John 6:5 where Jesus asks Philip where they can buy bread to feed the crowd. Of all the disciples, one wonders, why ask Philip? The answer can be pieced together by considering a number of passages that were not intended to answer this question. The first piece of the answer to this puzzle is found in Luke 9:10 that relays the feeding of the 5,000 occurs near Bethsaida. Next, we learn from other passages in John's Gospel (1:43-44; 12:21) – completely unconnected to the feeding of the 5,000 – that Philip is from Bethsaida. In light of these incidental data, it explains why Jesus would ask Philip this regional-specific question. These minor pieces of information about the feeding of the 5,000 and Philip are not likely to have been falsely planted by the Gospel writers in the hope that readers centuries later will put together a case to infer their truthfulness. Thus, it is most reasonable to recognize that these offhand details provide significant evidence that each Gospel writer is reporting accurate, yet differing, perspectives of the same facts.

At this point, some might try to defend the textual critical theories by noting that even among more conservative scholars the Gospels are likely to be dated decades after the life of Christ and that two of the Gospels (Mark and Luke) do not claim authorship from eyewitnesses of the accounts they report. To the second point, McGrew's contention is that the sources used by Mark and Luke must have been closely acquainted with the facts. Otherwise, the incidental details that constitute the undesigned coincidences would not cohere as we find them. As for those who wish to hold on to theories of textual development (such as well-known theories by Farmer and Griesbach), these positions fail to take seriously the subtlety of the evidence of undesigned coincidences. One or two undesigned coincidences could be explained as strokes of luck, but over twenty events from more than fifty passages is too improbable for independent works of fiction to accomplish by chance. To suppose that they were planted by later Gospel writers who intentionally redacted the texts to include these coincidences is farfetched as well. One problem with this explanation is that conspirators are not this subtle. As McGrew emphasizes throughout this book, it is implausible to think that the texts were edited to include these fine points in order to corroborate one another. Instead, conspirators fabricate explicit and direct evidence that serves their purposes. The second problem with this explanation is that the undesigned coincidences work in multiple textual "directions." This diversity of explanation is underscored by McGrew's organization of the first three chapters of *Hidden in Plain View*. Chapter one describes undesigned coincidences where the synoptic Gospels explain passages from John. The second chapter includes undesigned coincidences where John explains the synoptics. McGrew covers undesigned coincidences among the synoptic Gospels in chapter three. As one becomes steeped in the data for undesigned coincidences in terms of their number, variety, and "direction," it becomes apparent that no singular textual theory of dependence can plausibly account for them.

In her discussion of undesigned coincidences between Acts and Paul's letters, McGrew not only infers the general truthfulness of these sources concerning the life of Paul and the history of Acts, but her detective work goes further to sort out other details about Paul's life. For instance,



she considers a number of undesigned coincidences that provide evidence about the location and chronology of Paul's writing of his epistles. To take one example, she draws the conclusion that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus during the period recorded in Acts 19:21-22. Notice that 1 Corinthians indicates that Timothy is on his way to Corinth (4:17) but also that Timothy will arrive *after* the letter is received (16:10). The passage from Acts informs readers that Timothy and Erastus have been sent ahead of Paul and that their journey will take them through Macedonia. There is, however, a faster and more direct route to Corinth from Ephesus by sea, which could be used to deliver his epistle before Timothy arrives. Another place of convergence occurs in 1 Corinthians 16:6, where Paul states that he may stay in Corinth for the following winter and Acts 20:13 that indicates he stayed in Greece for three months after his time in Ephesus. Although Acts does not mention Timothy's ultimate destination or Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians, it fits perfectly with Paul's account in 1 Corinthians about Timothy's journey (he left before the letter but will arrive after the letter). Moreover, the chronology given in Acts maintains that Paul stayed in Greece for three months after his time in Ephesus, which also agrees with his stated intention to remain in Corinth over the winter. The variety in the accounting of these fastidious details rules out any possibility that the authors of Acts or 1 Corinthians wrote their texts with knowledge of the other. Reason compels the reader to acknowledge that the best explanation of these accounts is that they are both based on distinct firsthand sources that were closely acquainted with the facts upon which they are based.

Another example from McGrew's catalog of undesigned coincidences between Acts and Paul's epistles examines the phrase, "an ambassador in a chain" from Ephesians 6:18-20. While most translations pluralize "chains" in this passage, the Greek *halusei* is singular. The same *halusei* (singular) is used in Acts 28:20 that records a statement from Paul about his own imprisonment. Of course, there are many other ways to report imprisonment that involves bonds or chains (plural), but McGrew cites a number of historical sources that confirm that the most literal way to depict Paul's imprisonment is to be bound by one chain to a soldier (although she is careful to note that the colloquial plural of "chains" or "bonds" is compatible with Paul being bound by a chain to a soldier). Since there are so many other ways to describe imprisonment, it would be quite a significant stroke of luck for the author of Acts to use the same literal description given by Paul in Ephesians, if the accounts were fabricated falsehoods. The fact that Acts and Ephesians both use the literal description of a chain (singular) offers good reason to believe that the author of Acts was truly Paul's companion at the time of this imprisonment.

From this brief sampling, I hope to convey a glimmer of the wealth of insights that *Hidden in Plain View* contains. As noted earlier, the bulk of the text is dedicated to exposing these undesigned coincidences. One of the strengths in this portion of the book is how McGrew explores that fictionalization or intentional collusion between these sources is not a viable alternative to their truthful accounting. While one may carp at some of her specific cases of undesigned coincidences (e.g., I am not entirely convinced that the empty water pots in John 2:7 are explained by the ritual washing mentioned in Mark 7:34 and Matt. 15:2), the cumulative force of the vast number of them constitutes a significant body of evidence. Indeed, one does not have to agree with McGrew about every set of passages she believes makes for an undesigned coincidence to accept the broader case she is making. All that matters for the overall argument is that a reasonably large number of these passages are in fact undesigned coincidences, which she succeeds in establishing in my judgment.

As a student of nineteenth century apologetics, I have perused some of the old books on undesigned coincidences, and it is worth noting that McGrew's book is an excellent starting point on the argument from undesigned coincidences. However, readers ought to keep in mind that her work is not a comprehensive catalog of undesigned coincidences in the Gospels and Acts (nor does it profess to do so). Not only are there more undesigned coincidences in the Gospels and Acts, but the Old Testament is chockfull of interconnections between texts where this line of argument applies, and readers should consult J. J. Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences* (1833) as an entry point for

this study. *Hidden in Plain View* modernizes the argument engaging with some current scholarship (such as that of Richard Bauckham, Richard Burridge, F. F. Bruce, Colin Hemer, to name a few), and she adds to the older scholarship through her original discoveries of undesigned coincidences as well.

As for her broader conclusions, McGrew draws a number of important conclusions about the Gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters. The central point, which I have already noted multiple times, is that the sources behind these documents are firsthand eyewitnesses who were acquainted with the facts that they report. As a corollary, she infers that much of contemporary New Testament studies are grievously mistaken in attempting to analyze the text of the New Testament as a series of literary forms that evolved over time from various communities that redacted the accounts according to their theological and other social interests. The argument from undesigned coincidences provides compelling evidence that these form critical theories are wrong, which is reinforced by the way in which the undesigned coincidences run through different types of stories (teachings, miracles, Jesus' trial, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, etc.) and how the connections run multiple "directions" throughout all of the texts.

McGrew's final chapter, "Reclaiming the Forward Position," is a rousing call for Christians to reconsider the approach for biblical apologetics. In particular, she takes aim at the "minimal facts approach" that favors presenting arguments that support the historicity of key events in Jesus' life (e.g., birth and death) only on the basis of a handful of claims that are widely accepted across New Testament studies. While this tack is useful in certain contexts, it significantly handicaps the defense of the Gospels if taken as a baseline standard for admissible evidence in biblical apologetics. Such an approach holds the evidence hostage to the trends and intellectual vices that have run amok throughout New Testament studies. Of course, it is remarkable that some have marshaled arguments for the reliability of the Gospels within these narrow confines, but in general one should seek to build a case for one's position from the best available evidence.

The argument from undesigned coincidences provides one line of reasoning that undermines the higher critical theories assumed throughout New Testament studies: If this field of study is built upon a defective foundation, surely it is a mistake for apologists to argue from evidence that is only widely accepted from devotees of this discipline. Contrary to mainstream trends among New Testament scholars, the argument from undesigned coincidences provides evidence that the Gospels, Acts, and many of Paul's epistles are carefully preserved and unedited accounts based on those who had firsthand knowledge of the recorded events. Instead of contending for the principal historical events of Christianity on the basis of a minimal set of widely accepted facts, apologists who employ the argument from undesigned coincidences (along with other older arguments that have fallen out of fashion, see McGrew's comments on pages 224-225) can argue for these truths from the general reliability of the Gospels. Having disposed of theories of literary development as a plausible explanation for the content of the Gospels, the reader must come to grips with the eyewitness records of the evangelists. Their testimonies must fall into one of the following categories: intentional falsehoods, unintentional falsehoods, or true accounts. I believe that the argument from undesigned coincidences effectively rules out the first two options and convincingly substantiates the third.

Another reason for apologists to invest in the argument from undesigned coincidences is that many of the putative coincidences are demonstrable without hearers being required to have significant background knowledge of ancient languages and sources outside of the Gospels. In many cases, one can show there is an undesigned coincidence with nothing more than a good Bible translation. Open up Matthew 14:1-2, for instance, and take note that it relates what Herod told his servants. How could the early church know what Herod told his servants? The answer is supplied by Luke 8:1-3 that casually mentions that Joanna, Herod's household manager, is one of Jesus's followers.

In conclusion, I strongly endorse *Hidden in Plain View*. This work illuminates and confirms the reliability of the Gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters. Not only will seminary students and undergraduates benefit from this text as a general resource on the New Testament, but interested laypeople can profit from it as well since it is written in a straightforward and accessible way. *Hidden in Plain View* should be considered for courses that cover the text and historicity of the New Testament, studies of the historical Jesus (or the historical Paul), and historical or biblical apologetics. I found the book intellectually stimulating and encouraging to my faith. I believe that it will prove likewise to many others as well.

John M. DePoe is the Academic Dean of the Schools of Logic and Rhetoric at Kingdom Preparatory Academy in Lubbock, Texas. He is a graduate from Hardin-Simmons University (B.A.), the Logsdon School of Theology (M.A.), Western Michigan University (M.A.), and the University of Iowa (Ph.D.). His academic writings focus primarily on issues related to epistemology and philosophy of religion.

**WS WIPF & STOCK**

An Imprint of WIPF and STOCK Publishers  
wipfandstock.com • (541) 344-1528

*Africanus Monograph Series*



Volume 3

## A Defense for the Chronological Order of Luke's Gospel

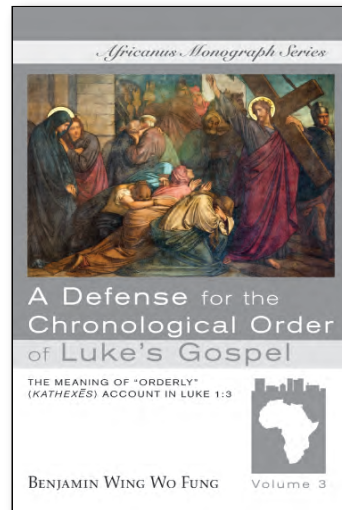
THE MEANING OF "ORDERLY" (KATHEXĒS) ACCOUNT IN LUKE 1:3

BENJAMIN WING WO FUNG

For decades scholars have reached no consensus on the writing order of Luke's gospel. The author, through a thorough study of the word "orderly" in Luke 1:3; a comparison of Luke's writing methodologies with those of the Greco-Roman historians; and a detailed investigation of the differences in the narrative accounts among the Synoptic Gospels, concludes that Luke writes in chronological order. The author also explains how Luke has employed writing methodologies commonly used by Greco-Roman historians to write the prefaces in Luke-Acts and divide the Gospel into sections, and the implications of these writing methodologies on Luke's writing order. He explicates the possible reasons behind the differences in the writing style between the "travel" section (9:52b to 19:44) and the rest of the Gospel, proposes the central theme of Luke-Acts, and assesses the possible implications for accepting Luke's chronological writing order on biblical studies.

"This is a pivotal work for today's New Testament scholarship, and Benjamin Fung includes several creative ways to research it. Many years ago, treating Luke's gospel in chronological order was a given, but today it is questioned by some liberal and evangelical scholars. Fung has done exhaustive and careful research showing how a chronological perspective fits well within the Gospel, and outside it, as a technique common among ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish historians. This is a must read for anyone interested in affirming the chronological order of the Gospel of Luke."  
—AIDA BESANÇON SPENCER, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"In his preface the author of Luke states that he wrote an 'orderly' account. However, scholars have no consensus on the writing order of this gospel. Dr. Fung aimed to ascertain Luke's writing order by evaluating different suggestions, conducting textual, grammatical, and semantic studies, analyzing the narrative sequence in Luke's gospel and comparing it with writing methodologies of Greco-Roman and Jewish historians. Fung's well motivated finding is that Luke wrote his gospel in chronological order."  
—FRANCOIS P. VIJJOEN, North-West University, South Africa



978-1-5326-5113-7 / \$36 / 312 pp. / paper

Benjamin Wing Wo Fung is a CPA in Hong Kong and the United States. He acquired his PhD from the North-West University in South Africa in 2017 and this book is his PhD thesis. He was an adjunct professor of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and taught a Greek Head Start class and a New Testament Survey class at the Center for Urban Ministerial Education in Boston from 2008 to 2009. He currently preaches and teaches at various churches and Bible colleges in Hong Kong.

**Media, Examination, and Review Copies:**  
Contact: Shanalea Forrest  
(541) 344-1528, ext 151 or shanalea@wipfandstock.com

**Orders:** Contact your favorite bookseller or order directly from the publisher via phone (541) 344-1528, fax (541) 344-1506 or e-mail us at orders@wipfandstock.com

# Review of *Women of War, Women of Woe: Joshua and Judges through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters* edited by Marion A. Taylor and Christiana de Groot (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016)

CHRISTINE COS

*Women of War, Women of Woe* is a follow-up volume to Marion Taylor and Heather Weir's 2006 edited work, *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women in Genesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006). Marion A. Taylor is Professor of Old Testament at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto and Christiana de Groot is Professor of Religion at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This volume adds to the growing corpus of literature emerging in the wider field of history of biblical interpretation and the more specific focus on women's interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Clearly as the written legacy of women interpreters is discovered or rather, rediscovered, it leaves in its wake a wide and fertile field for interpretive research and analysis.

In the introduction to the book, Taylor and de Groot acknowledge, "in spite of the cultural and historical distance between us and the women in Scripture and [those] in the nineteenth-century, our common humanity shines through. Their hopes and struggles resonate with our own" (1). While recognizing the common concerns and issues that unite women across the ages, the authors also acknowledge that women in the nineteenth-century also had their own agendas and assumptions which informed each one's particular perspective, often resulting in extraordinary readings of the biblical text.

Taylor and de Groot introduce the book's main focus by drilling down through the layers of existing scholarship to recover women's writing and analyze the many factors that contribute to what is often observed as "a distinctive female lens" (4). The accounts of the conquest and settlement of Canaan in the books of Joshua and Judges mirrored the violence and conflict of the nineteenth-century (5).<sup>2</sup> Like all interpreters, women interpreters sought to address the challenges of applying moral standards and finding spiritual meaning in texts separated by time and culture while also attempting to address the issue of warfare in their own day. Taylor and de Groot succinctly outline the primary issues of gender confronting women of the time and ascertain how gender role assumptions influenced women's biblical interpretation (6).

Yet, because women in the nineteenth-century, however well-educated, were not members of the "credentialed" class of theologians and interpreters of Scripture, the definition of what constitutes biblical interpretation had to be broadened by Taylor and de Groot to include other genres besides traditional commentaries and sermons (10).<sup>3</sup> It is from this broad field of interpretive genres that the editors selected the interlocutors included in this volume. At the same time, Taylor and de Groot recognize the limitations of the pool of writings they drew from; they were unable to find any substantial writings on the books of Joshua and Judges by Catholic, Canadian, African American and other racial minority women (16).

---

1 The Society of Biblical Literature supports a dedicated program unit on *Recovering Female Interpreters of the Bible*. (See <https://www.sbl-site.org>.) Publications focusing on the History of Biblical Interpretation include the Blackwell Commentary series "Through the Centuries." Taylor's own work includes the groundbreaking *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters*, coedited with Agnes Choi (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012) and *Rediscovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, also edited with Christiana de Groot (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007). The most in-depth and detailed example of scholarship in this area is Joy Schroeder's *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

2 These conflicts include: The War of 1812 (1812-15), the Crimean War (1854-56), the American Civil War (1861-65), and rebellions in the English colonies of Canada, India, South Africa, Nepal and Ireland.

3 These included poetry, drama, devotional literature and the popular eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "female biography," employed to include the women in Scripture. These non-traditional genres generated less censure from church authorities and also made women's interpretations more accessible to their intended popular audiences.

The book specifically focuses on eight female figures from the books of Joshua and Judges: Rahab, Achsah, Deborah, Jael, Manoah's Wife, Jephthah's Daughter, Delilah, and the Levite's Concubine. Each figure is treated in biblical order in each successive chapter. Taylor and de Groot provide a brief summary of each biblical woman's story and the interpretive challenges nineteenth-century women faced when confronted with the text. The bulk of each chapter is comprised of selected excerpts from the written reflections of nineteenth-century British and American women from various religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. A very brief biographical summary precedes each excerpt.

Each chapter is capped by a series of "study questions" which could be used with a variety of audiences, from a church Bible study to a seminary or graduate school classroom. A thorough bibliography and index are provided at the back of the book. In general, the study questions ask the reader not only to think deeply about the issues raised in the biblical text, but also to ask questions of the interpretations provided in each chapter. Readers are encouraged to think about the "interpretive lens" employed in the written excerpts as well as look for any potential cultural and historical bias on the part of the interpreters and oneself. As a result, this book can stand alone as a companion to study women in the Bible, but can also function as a curriculum requirement for any class studying the Old Testament, History of Biblical Interpretation, or even the topic of Women Interpreters.

For the student of the Bible, the chief objective of studying Scripture is to discern its application to life. To that end, Taylor and de Groot highlight the fact that the interpretations of the books of Joshua and Judges by nineteenth-century women can aid the application of Scripture to our modern social, cultural and Western Christian context: "Reading what nineteenth-century interpreters say about women, war, and violence...is especially significant today as we engage these same issues today...The conquest and settlement narratives were relevant in the nineteenth-century and continue to address our time" (2).<sup>4</sup>

One powerful example is Josephine Butler's (1828-1906) use of Judges 19 as the foundation for her opposition to the Contagious Diseases Act of 1864 and the inconsistent treatment of men versus women (248). As a suffragist and social reformer, Butler became an advocate for the plight of prostitutes. In many of her writings on the subject, Butler drew attention to the parallels between the abuse of the concubine and the situation of contemporary prostitutes. She wrote: "There is a weak and prostrate figure lying at our door; to this door she turns for help" (250).<sup>5</sup> Butler clearly laid the responsibility for these unprotected women at the feet of the Christian community, described as "the selfish sleepers to whom the pale cold hands appeal in vain" (250) and called them to action, "Shall we still sleep?" (250), holding Jesus' example as the *type* to be emulated. In this, Josephine Butler's candid and outspoken writings spur the same type of social justice advocacy practiced today.

Lastly, Taylor and de Groot assert that reading nineteenth-century women's biblical interpretations makes us all "better readers and interpreters of Scripture...We learn about their history and culture. Because they viewed Scripture as a mirror of themselves, they reveal much of their own lives to their readers. Their efforts to right the wrongs they perceived in their culture, notably their struggles for the rights of women, children, and the marginalized, their advocacy for education for girls as well as boys, and their concern for the health of mothers and their unborn children, educate us" (17).

---

4 The authors make reference to Jimmy Carter's recent book, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014). A more influential book on the plight of women around the world is *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, written by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

5 Josephine Butler, "The Lovers of the Lost," *Contemporary Review* 13 (1870): 1619.

It is equally evident throughout the book that not every woman interpreter in the nineteenth-century was of one accord on the complex debates of woman's nature, power and place in the home and society; many transgressed societal norms in some arenas while advocating for conventional norms in others: "These women interpreters are an illuminating case study in how feminist ideals of women's equal worth, roles, and opportunities developed by fits and starts in the nineteenth century" (8). *Women of War, Women of Woe* reinforces the fact that the early history of feminism was largely neither anti-Bible nor anti-Church. Many orthodox, Christian women advocated for the elevation of women at home, in society and even in the Church by "preaching with their pens."<sup>6</sup>

This book is designed to teach and advocate for a more inclusive analysis of the Bible, especially within the growing field of historical biblical interpretation. Due to the growing advocacy of women's education and suffrage, the number of written works by women bloomed exponentially in the nineteenth-century. As with any underrepresented or lost history, a more accurate representation of perspectives reduces the perpetuation of potentially myopic interpretations, enabling a worldwide Church to learn better lessons from the whole of its history.

Christine Cos, M.A. Old Testament (2006) and M.Div. (2010), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA was an Athanasius Scholar for Systematic Theology as well as a Teaching Fellow for Hebrew Language at Gordon-Conwell's Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME). She is currently a candidate in the Ph.D. program at Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto and is a Licensed Minister with the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

---

<sup>6</sup> This phrase was coined by R.S. Foster in his sermon *A Treatise on the Need of the M.E. Church with Respect to Her Ministry*, published in 1855. "This is an age of books, of reading, of the pen. The printed page has become an all-pervading agency, the silent preacher in a million sanctuaries. [The minister] will need to command this power—he must *preach with the pen* as well as with the tongue, from the page as well as from the pulpit, amid the quiet at home as well as the excitement of the throng." See R.S. Foster, *A Treatise on the Need of the M.E. Church with Respect to Her Ministry, Embodied in A Sermon, and Preached by Request Before the New York East Conference, May 22, 1855*, (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1855), 48. Emphasis mine.

## Review of *Chronological Study Bible* by Thomas Nelson (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2014)

BENJAMIN FUNG

The *Chronological Study Bible* (“*Study Bible*”) divides the Scripture into nine epochs. Different from other conventional Bibles, the *Study Bible* changes the original positions of biblical books and passages and tries to arrange them in a timesequential manner, in order to provide general readers with a better understanding of the Bible messages.

For example, the *Study Bible* places a number of psalms next to their relevant descriptions in the historical books to give readers a better understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the authors in those times. For instance, Psalm 3 (David’s psalm composed during the time when he fled from his son Absalom) is placed at the end of 2 Samuel 15. (It includes a description about Absalom’s pursuit of David.) The *Study Bible* also tries to rearrange the prophetic books so that they are in chronological order. This approach helps the readers better understand the background information of the prophetic books, especially about the timing of the events described therein.

The *Study Bible* also provides information for quite a number of biblical passages regarding archaeology, ancient culture, and etcetera. For example, archaeological information is given in Genesis 5 which describes a Sumerian king list from southern Mesopotamia. According to the *Study Bible*, it records all the kings who ruled the land from early third millennium B.C. to early second millennium B.C. It shows that, similar to the exceptional longevity as described for the earlier descendents of Adam before the Genesis flood (some over 900 years old – see Gen 5:5, 8, 11), the monarchs in the early period on the list ruled for very lengthy periods. The list also briefly mentions a big flood which is similar to the Genesis flood. Similar to the biblical description of decreasing life spans after the flood, the lengths of reigns of the kings on the list gradually decreased from thousands to hundreds of years, and, finally, fell within the normal span of a human lifetime as humans experience nowadays. Hence, it indirectly supports the historical reliability of the Bible.

However, the *Study Bible* sometimes does not appear to have taken into account some important information about time which is apparent from the Scripture. For example, while it combines the contents of the four gospels into a single book and rearranges the narrative accounts therein, according to their time-sequential order, it does not address the possible meaning(s) of the word “orderly account” in Luke 1:3, which very likely indicates Luke’s writing order. And if the meaning of “orderly account” implies chronological order, the arrangement of the narrative accounts in the four gospels has to take into consideration Luke’s chronological writing order. As a result, the placement of some narrative accounts should have been quite different from what is currently done in the *Study Bible*. Moreover, the *Study Bible* sometimes does not give reason(s) why a narrative account is put in a particular place. For example, it places Luke 11:5-13 between Luke 6:37-49 and Luke 7:17 without giving any reason.

Nonetheless, the *Chronological Study Bible* is a helpful resource for understanding the historical and cultural background of many biblical passages and will be beneficial to both Bible students and teachers.

Benjamin Fung acquired his Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament from the North-West University in South Africa in 2017 under the Africanus Guild of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston. He taught New Testament Survey as an adjunct professor for the Boston campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2009 and was the sole pastor of the Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church from June 2010 to May 2012. He is also a certified public accountant in both the U.S.A and Hong Kong. He is currently teaching and preaching in various churches and Bible schools in Hong Kong.

## Review of *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* by Craig S. Keener (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016)

JOHN LATHROP

Craig Keener's first book, *And Marries Another*, was published in 1991. Since that time he has written a number of other books, many of which are academic titles. Some of his books are biblical commentaries; he has written commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Revelation. He has earned the respect of many, both inside and outside of the academic community. Keener has firmly established himself as a New Testament scholar who is very thorough in the treatment of the subjects that he writes about; *Spirit Hermeneutics* is no exception.

Unlike a number of his earlier works, this book does not deal with a particular section of Scripture, such as the New Testament, or a specific book in the New Testament. This present volume is about the interpretation and application of biblical texts. It was originally supposed to be part of a series of books on Pentecostal theology (3). Because of the length of the book, it was decided that it would be published outside of the series for which it was originally intended (3).

The text of *Spirit Hermeneutics* consists of an introduction, six sections, a conclusion, and three appendices. Eighteen chapters make up the six sections. The six sections are: "A Theological Reading Toward Praxis and Mission," "Global Readings," "Connection with the Designated Sense," "Epistemology and the Spirit," "Intrabiblical Models for Reading Scripture," and "Whose Charismatic Interpretation?" The three appendices are: "Some Theoretical Attempts to Bridge Understanding," "Postcolonial Approaches," and "The Global Charismatic Scholarly Community."

In the introduction, Keener tells his readers what the purpose of the book is. He writes: "*Spirit Hermeneutics* is primarily designed to function as biblical theological reflection supporting a dynamic, experiential reading of Scripture" (1). He maintains that Scripture itself provides a model that calls its readers to an experiential appropriation of its truth (1). This appropriation includes the supernatural experiences recorded in Scripture, things such as "people hearing from God, prophesying, and experiencing miracles" (5). He says that if the church is to be truly biblical it must be experiential (11). However, though Keener is a strong advocate for an experiential faith, he is careful to say that the Christian's experience should be one that is thoroughly rooted in a sound understanding of the Scriptures as they were given in their original context. In chapter 1 he explains that if we read the Scriptures experientially in a responsible way we will not resort to purely subjective interpretations (25).

This book contains many valuable insights as well as carefully reasoned theology. For example, Keener writes about a number of things that influence how a person interprets a biblical passage. He observes that none of us comes to a text completely unbiased; we all have presuppositions (26, 174–175). Though we may desire to be impartial as we approach biblical texts, we are not entirely impartial. Our presuppositions are derived from a number of different sources; these include: culture, tradition, previous instruction, and experience (26). He makes an interesting observation about personal experience: he says that those who have had experiences similar to those that people in Scripture had will have a greater appreciation for, or understanding of, those experiences than people who have not had such experiences (6–7, 26, 44). Much later in the book, he shares a personal example which demonstrates that sometimes our experience can help us to see a truth that is already in Scripture (116). He and his family experienced a spiritual attack, but the nature of the attack did not fit well with his theology at the time; he later found a text in Job that affirmed that evil spirits can indeed do things such as he had experienced (116).



In *Spirit Hermeneutics*, Keener addresses some issues about which there are differences of opinion among biblical interpreters. There are two that I will mention here: biblical narratives and cessationism.

Some people believe that you cannot develop doctrine from biblical narratives, or apply narrative portions of Scripture to our lives today; they see narratives only as valid for setting forth past biblical history (166). Keener points out that narrative is the largest genre of Scripture and to ignore its training leaves the church only partially equipped (167). In fact, he says that Scripture directs us to learn from and apply the truth of biblical narratives to our lives; texts that teach this include Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (22). He shows that Paul expected his readers to regard the experience of the Israelites (1 Cor 10) as a warning that they should take to heart (254).

Keener also addresses the viewpoint of hard cessationism, the belief that certain spiritual gifts are no longer in operation today. He says that this belief is very selective in its reasoning and its arguments are based on theological inferences about Scripture rather than on Scripture itself (55). For example, this viewpoint excludes the contemporary exercise of the gift of prophecy, a gift that 1 Corinthians 14:1, 39 instructs believers to pursue (55). Cessationism is a postbiblical doctrine (55). Keener further points out that the cessationist view is being abandoned by most Christians (284). Having taken issue with the cessationists' viewpoint, he points out that many Christians are continuationists in doctrine, but act more like cessationists in practice (8–9, 284).

The main focus of this book is hearing the Spirit's voice in Scripture (1). Even so, one message that comes through is the need to interpret correctly the biblical texts in their culture and context before applying them to our own contexts (1, 3). This emphasis is not surprising. Keener is a Charismatic scholar whose specialties include historical and cultural background; he is also known as an exegete. With all of the emphasis in this book on experience, what is clear is that the author believes that the biblical text is what should inform our understanding and practice of scriptural truth.

In addition to studying the biblical texts in their cultural and historical contexts in order to interpret them correctly to the best of our ability, Keener says that we should welcome the input of readers from other cultural contexts. He refers to these as global readings and devotes four chapters to this subject, chapters 3 through 6. Receiving input from people in other cultures can alert us to our blind spots and help them to see theirs (79–81). For example, those of us who live in the West typically have blind spots regarding spirits and miracles, however, if we will listen to believers from other parts of the world that have more experience with them, we can learn from them (88–96). In support of the idea that we can learn from believers in other contexts, the author cites the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation (150). He points out that, though each church received a message that was contextualized to their particular situation, the Lord said multiple times (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) that those who have an ear should hear what the Spirit says to the churches (150).

Some of the terminology used in this book is the language of the academic community. However, this language is kept to a minimum so a non-academic reader can still benefit from this book. It is well written and its message is clear. I would recommend this book to anyone who sincerely wants to engage, interpret, and apply the biblical text. It is a work of great substance that makes a valuable contribution to bringing together Word and Spirit. This text would be of great value in a course on biblical interpretation, New Testament exegesis, or a spiritual formation course.

John P. Lathrop is a 2003 graduate of Gordon-Conwell Boston Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME) (M.A. in Urban Ministry). He is an ordained minister with the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies. He has written for *Vista Magazine*, *Pneuma Review*, *Priscilla Papers*, *Jurnal Jaffrey* (Indonesia), *Christian Trends* (India), and is a regular contributor to *Berita Mujizat* ("Miracle News") in Indonesia. He has contributed to *The Foundations of Faith* (Pleasant Word, 2007) and *Some Men are Our Heroes* (Wipf & Stock, 2010), and is the author of four books including *Answer the Prayer of Jesus: A Call for Biblical Unity* (Wipf & Stock, 2011).

## Review of *Introducing Logic and Critical Thinking: The Skills of Reasoning and the Virtues of Inquiry* by T. Ryan Byerly (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017)

EUNTAEK DAVID SHIN

This textbook is designed for undergraduate students and instructors in courses that cover logic and intellectual virtues. Providing a Christian perspective, especially in the section on intellectual virtues, the book bears in mind an audience of Christian students. The twofold goal of the book—to introduce students to skills of reasoning and virtues of inquiry—structures the book into two parts.

Part 1 (chs. 1-3), “The Skills of Reasoning,” introduces the standard material pertinent to introductory logic or critical thinking courses for undergraduates. Chapter 1 begins with the notion of an “argument” as used in philosophy, exposing the reader to terminologies used in logic, such as validity, soundness, and cogency. With these foundations, chapter 2 proceeds to deductive logic, covering famous form methods—*modus ponens*, *modus tollens*, disjunctive syllogism, constructive dilemma, and hypothetical syllogism—as well as the counterexample method, Venn Diagram method, and proof method, with two separate sections: “proof method” (e.g., 63) and “expanded proof method with predicates and quantifiers” (e.g., 84). Finally, chapter 3 covers inductive logic, dealing with statistical syllogism, induction by enumeration, arguments from authority,<sup>1</sup> arguments from analogy, and inference to the best explanation.

Part 2 (chs. 4-6), “The Virtues of Inquiry,” addresses the ethics of our intellect, describing intellectual virtues along with their opposing vices. Chapter 4 centers specifically on matters of internal virtues “exhibited in a person’s own private pursuit of intellectual goods” (181). This chapter lays out what it means to love intellectual excellence: “sacrificing for intellectual goods, taking an interest in that which is worthy of investigation, taking an interest in that which is explanatorily fundamental, and ensuring that one’s attitudes are adequately supported” (162), as opposed to “being inadequately concerned for the truth, being complacent in the pursuit of intellectual accomplishments, valuing intellectual accomplishments only for their ties to other, extrinsic goods, and pursuing intellectual goods recklessly rather than excellently” (162). Other internal virtues discussed are intellectual courage and caution (rather than intellectual cowardice and pedantry/recklessness), and introspective vigilance (opposed to confirmation bias, *post hoc* fallacy, slippery slope fallacy, introspective aloofness, and introspective arrogance).

The next two chapters move beyond internal virtues and address virtues of the individual in relation to others. Chapter 5 focuses on the virtue of depending on other inquirers of intellectual goods, discussing matters of trust (as opposed to credulity, condescension, and injustice, e.g., *ad hominem* fallacy), interpretive charity (as opposed to interpretive stinginess, e.g., straw man fallacy, interpretive face blindness), and intellectual empathy (opposed to biasedness, close-mindedness, and intellectual laziness). Chapter 6 deals with intellectual virtues that the inquirer ought to display for other inquirers. This chapter addresses notions of intellectual generosity (in contrast to intellectual selfishness and intellectual patronization), communicative clarity (instead of ambiguous use of terms, phrases, or structures), and audience sensitivity (in contrast to intellectual narcissism and intellectual snobbery).

---

1 It is worth noting that “argument from authority” is not to be confused with the fallacy of asserting the truth of a statement *solely because* the statement is uttered by an expert, for instance. Rather, for the author, dealing with *inductive* arguments—thus dealing with probabilistic accounts rather than those of necessity—an authority of a particular statement is “someone who is *more likely than not* to have a true belief about whether P is true” (124) (emphasis mine).

What is most commendable in this book is its articulation and explanation of intellectual virtues, which are sometimes found lacking even among the brightest scholars. Even if the reader may disagree with the author's theological convictions (and foundations), the virtues and vices as portrayed in the textbook stand applicable to any serious student who wishes to use his or her intellect in a proper manner. This reviewer suspects that the fallacies committed, consciously or more often unconsciously, will be brought forth in light of this book's gentle explanations and numerous examples.

Furthermore, the textbook is friendly and approachable for those with no background in logic or others who may be intimidated by the subject. For such readers, the textbook displays clarity in structure and language, making the content accessible and easily comprehensible. Each sub-section of a chapter unfolds in the following order: explanations of concepts, a summary, a review of key ideas, and exercises. The approachability of this textbook is especially seen when the author explains concepts: almost every concept in the book is followed by an illustration. For example, after defining slippery slope fallacy as, "an informal fallacy in which one reasons in accordance with a chain of conditional ("if . . . then") statements where the connection between the conditionals' antecedents and their consequents is tenuous" (177), the author not only provides a paragraph that explains this definition,<sup>2</sup> but also gives the following illustration:

Imagine that Francis is thinking about whether to vote for a particular political candidate, Ms. Archer. He reasons that if Ms. Archer is elected, then gender inequality will become a priority of her office. And if gender inequality becomes a priority of her office, her office will institute policies that overcorrect for this inequality, making it very difficult for men to get jobs. And if these policies are instituted, then Francis's own job security will be threatened. So if Ms. Archer is elected, his job security will be threatened. Such a line of reasoning is bound to contain tenuous connections and so illustrates well the slippery slope fallacy (177).

A final praiseworthy aspect of this book is the abundance of exercises. Neither the technical skill nor ethical dimension of logic and reasoning can be sufficiently nurtured through the understanding or memorization of the concepts alone. Rather, it is through the practice of logic that advances a student's skill and virtue in the discipline. Indeed, this textbook provides approximately 346 exercises that reflect the use and misuse of logic in various areas, for example, daily communication, politics, theology, philosophy, and ethics. Moreover, the textbook appropriately provides more exercises for sections on the proof method and expanded proof method with predicates and quantifiers, which will prepare students of analytic philosophy for further logic courses and philosophy courses in general.

As an introductory textbook on logic and critical thinking, this book is recommended by this reviewer to students who have no background or little exposure to this field, but who desire to improve their skill in logic and critical thinking. Specifically, the first part of the book could benefit a student who wants some exposure to logic as typically used in analytic philosophy. The second part of the book could benefit students not just of philosophy, but also students of other fields. For seminary students, for instance, chapter 5.3 on intellectual empathy may be helpful in counseling; chapter 6.3 on audience sensitivity may be beneficial in preaching, evangelism, and apologetics. Chapter 6.2 on communicative clarity will benefit any student who wishes to improve her or his skills in paper writing and presentations. Finally, the exercises throughout this textbook will benefit students of theology, church history, and the Bible to be scholars with greater scrutiny.

---

<sup>2</sup> The author writes, "For example, a person may reason: if P, then Q; and if Q, then R; and if R, then S; so if P, then S, even though P provides at most weak support for Q, Q at most weak support for R, and R at most weak support for S. Of course, there is nothing problematic about reasoning in accordance with conditionals if each of the conditional claims is a claim we have good reason to be confident about. But in cases where the conditional claims are ones we should be only slightly confident about (at best), the connection between what we start with and what we end with becomes illusory" (177).

Euntaek David Shin is a Th.M. student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He holds a B.S. in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and an M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell. He served as Dr. William David Spencer’s Byington Scholar and his Athanasius Teaching Scholar in theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s Boston Center for Urban Ministerial Education.

**WIPF & STOCK**

An Imprint of WIPF and STOCK Publishers

199 West 8th Avenue, Ste. 3, Eugene, OR 97401

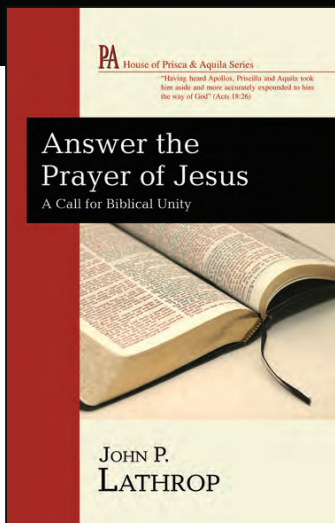
Telephone (541) 344-1528 • Fax (541) 344-1506

Visit our Web site at [www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com)

HOUSE OF PRISCA AND AQUILA SERIES

# Answer the Prayer of Jesus

## A Call for Biblical Unity



**JOHN P. LATHROP**

God has accomplished many great things through the church, but can the church be even more effective? Is there something the church can do to be both more pleasing to the Lord and more productive? *Answer the Prayer of Jesus* speaks to these questions. The church can be more effective if it seeks to answer the prayer of Jesus in John 17. Unity is important to the mission of the church of Jesus Christ. In this book both the challenges and possibilities of unity are examined. Drawing from Scripture and his experiences of contemporary church life, the John Lathrop gives specific examples of unity. He also offers practical advice about how one can become part of the answer to the prayer of Jesus. This book will enable you to see a small portion of what God is doing in the world today and will encourage you to become part of it.

978-1-60899-392-5 / \$16 / 128 pp. / paper

**JOHN P. LATHROP** is a graduate of Zion Bible College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He is an ordained minister with the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies and the author of two other books, *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers Then and Now* (2008) and *The Power and Practice of the Church: God, Discipleship, and Ministry* (2010).

“I would recommend this book, written so thoughtfully, to everybody who desires to become part of the answer to the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ for Christian unity. Unless we all take his appeal to heart and become pro-active in building unity, we will not have the joy of helping to answer the prayer of our Saviour.”

—MIKE PLAYER, General Overseer, International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies

“At a time when our culture is marked by needless division and strife, our friend John Lathrop sounds a hope-filled trumpet call for the power of unity among the body of Christ. Just as marriages are transformed when two different people begin walking as one, so will the church be transformed—and world-changing!—when we become the unified people for which Jesus prayed.”

—JEFF and SHAUNTI FELDHahn, best-selling authors of *For Women Only* and *For Men Only*

“I have personally witnessed God use John Lathrop’s commitment to see the body of Christ work together. I am glad John has put his passions to the pen (or keyboard in this case). I pray God uses this book to inspire us all to work together to see God’s kingdom come, that we might be ‘one,’ as Jesus prayed.”

—GARRETT SMITH, Director of Outreach and Spiritual Formation, Newton Presbyterian Church, and author of *Comfortably Jewish*

“In a broken and shattered world there is no greater challenge to the Church than to respond in the affirmative to its Lord’s call to biblical unity (John 17). The call of Pastor Lathrop for us to be part of the answer to Jesus’ prayer request is one that is both relevant and biblically sound. Taken to heart, Pastor Lathrop’s biblical exposition and practical teachings should contribute significantly to ‘Answer the Prayer of Jesus.’ This book is indeed a gift to the Church as it seeks to ‘stand firm in the one Spirit’ (Phil 1:27).”

—ELDIN VILLAFANE, Professor of Christian Social Ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and author of *Beyond Cheap Grace*

Order via phone (541) 344-1528, fax (541) 344-1506, or e-mail us at [orders@wipfandstock.com](mailto:orders@wipfandstock.com).

**Review of *A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of Revelation  
in Evangelical Theology* by Carisa A. Ash  
(Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015)**

MAUD SANDBO

“God teaches through his written Word that he reveals himself outside of Scripture” (1). With these words of introduction, Carisa A. Ash sets the course for her book, *A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of Revelation in Evangelical Theology* (based on her recent dissertation from Dallas Theological Seminary). Ash grounds her analysis of evangelical theology’s approach to revelation with the claim: “Revelation through the creation is real revelation” (2). She proposes that previous expositions have too narrowly defined the doctrine of revelation, and thus Christians have been offered a limited view of God’s revelation. Her thesis, in accord with Bonaventure’s *Soul’s Journey into God*, demands a more profound examination of the “significance of the created order as a form of revelation” (3). Her introduction lays a broad foundation for the subsequent survey and discussion by clarifying and defining ideas crucial for this discussion: for example, evangelicalism, revelation, integration, and systematic theology. She categorizes evangelical theologians as systematizing either (1) the biblical text, (2) doctrines, or (3) all truth, and observes that evangelicals “affirm the reality that God reveals through the created order but then neglect its usefulness” (22). In response to this depreciation of general revelation and lack of adequate attention to the fundamental doctrine of revelation in general, she offers her analysis to stimulate others to fill the gap.

In chapter one, Ash proposes that since “Revelation, regardless of form, comes from God and retains his character” (21), a renewed theology of revelation which takes into account all of its forms—the created order, Scripture, and the Incarnation—must be developed to meet the needs of the church. Chapter two examines the works of over three dozen major theologians since Hodge, separated into the three basic categories—those attempting to systematize the biblical text, doctrines, or all truth—and argues that study of the forms of “Scripture and the created order” must be integrated in a theology that is properly systematic and comprehensive. Evangelical systematic theologians have attended to the significance of the created order, but primarily in opposition, or as proof, evidence or application, illustration or analogy, and only rarely in integration.

Chapter three exposes how evangelicals have described the relationship between general and special revelation and approached their integration since Frank Gabelein. Ash distinguishes further between those who have characterized this relationship as reliant on the Bible, uni-directional (the Bible informing study), leaning toward Scripture, or in mutually informing relationship, coherent with H. Richard Niebuhr’s categories in *Christ and Culture*. She explains that integration of truth in revelation presupposes: 1) “truth from Scripture does not contradict with truth in creation” (62); 2) “That which is true comes from God” (62); 3) truth is revealed by God, whether in created order or Scripture; and 4) Scripture constitutes the basis and framework for reliable interpretation (63). “However, in practice three of the four methods prescribed by evangelicals betray a neglect of the created order” (74).

Ash encourages theologians to engage more rigorously with integration. This requires faith and flexibility to move beyond the propositional/experiential divisions in evaluating revelation. Ash offers her analysis and the work of Herman Bavinck as a starting point for ongoing exploration of integrated approaches to revelation.

Chapter four outlines some further categorical problems associated with traditional (dualistic) approaches to questions about revelation: the ambiguity between revelation and reason, and the “confusion” between general and special revelation. Chapter five then explores how a theology of revelation may be developed. Ash emphasizes the need to examine revelation’s sources (all revela-

tion is from God), its forms (created order, incarnation, and Scripture in complementary relationship), its characteristics (truth, authority, sufficiency, and perspicuity), its recipients (fallen and finite), its content (the divine attributes and the inner-workings of creation), and its effects. She stresses that there is a relationship between the forms (144), and cites eighteenth century American theologian Jonathan Edwards and the renowned twentieth century Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck as exemplary models for integrating these into a coherent theology (151-3).

Ash shows diligence and insight in her brief but comprehensive survey of modern evangelical systematic theology. Her own systematic treatment of the subject, from the historical survey of recent evangelical theology to the focus on problems related to the study of general revelation, likewise makes this book valuable for both students and accomplished scholars. Her explanations are cogent and build on each other, making them accessible to the student. However, she also calls for a reevaluation of the theology of revelation in all its forms and dimensions. The problems represented by a theology of revelation are fundamental and complex. Carisa Ash provides a valuable challenge to the reader by uncovering inconsistencies in evangelical thought which need attention. Her carefully detailed outline helps the reader immensely, but also reveals the North Atlantic bias in twentieth century theology. It was disappointing to find few citations from women or indigenous theologians. This snapshot reveals the existing imbalance in opportunities for majority groups to contribute to scholarly debate or publish their contributions in the field of theology.

Carisa A. Ash has made a valuable contribution to the church in this book. The clarity of her proposal contrasts with the complexity of the task. However, Ash bravely calls our attention to this critical area for understanding God's call on our lives.

If we concede that all true revelation is from God, then questions immediately arise: 1) how do we distinguish mimicry or falsity in revelation? 2) How can a finite human mind effectively comprehend God's revelation without distortion? I would also question the advisability of using the work of Bonaventure as guide, as his neo-platonic perspective retains an intrinsic dualism, the same dualism which must be countered if one is to achieve a more integrated theology of revelation.

Although Ash mentions the actions of the Trinity in revelation, she neglects to fully explore Trinitarian aspects that might be instructive and help to clarify how to integrate various forms of revelation. Certainly, after the fall and continuing throughout history, God's revelation to humanity has become increasingly specialized and specific in the written and living word. Ash makes a vital and important point that these additions to revelation in no way contradict or supersede forms of general revelation; these types of revelation continue to complement each other in revealing God's attributes, actions, and purposes. Ash reiterates her position: "Scripture instructs that God reveals outside of Scripture" (104) and "God employs the entirety of revelation" (109). Theologians thus are challenged to elucidate with greater specificity how Christians can recognize, understand, and use the disparate forms of revelation inherent in Creation, Incarnation, and Holy Scripture in truly complementary ways, in order to build a coherent and integrated theology of revelation.

Ash's critical review reveals the need for a renaissance of scholarship. A theology which does justice to all of God's revelation will seek and discover significant sources in all scholarly and practical disciplines to shape a theology of revelation that resembles the actual nature of God.

Maud Sandbo, M.F.S. (Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies), M.Div., M.A. (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) continues to seek ways to integrate theology with advances in science, anthropology, and the humanities, and provides editorial assistance to aspiring scholars and authors.