The Bantam Review

Journal of the Theological Fellowship at Covenant Seminary

Papers and Abstracts
from the Third Annual
Covenant Theological Conference

Held on 21 January 2014

CONTENTS

Preface

Another school term has come to an end, another year for the Theological Fellowship at Covenant Seminary to produce a journal marking the accomplishments of our students, and thank those who have made another year possible. This is the third volume of the *Bantam Review* and is primarily a reflection on our annual theological conference.

This year's conference was unlike any other, mostly because it almost did not happen. We had a particularly turbulent winter with many blizzards and snow days. It was also bitterly cold, which means freezing pipes. Covenant Seminary suffered several burst pipes that flooded a number of classrooms, including all the rooms the conference was scheduled to use. The conference was moved to the chapel; we had hurtled the first obstacle. I knew we were anticipating snow the day of the conference, as we had experienced the year before, but nothing to terrible. When I woke up early in the morning on January 21st, there was an emergency email informing me that school was on a two-hour snow delay. I darted to the window and saw that it had snowed several inches and was in fact still snowing. With the conference originally scheduled to start at 8:30 AM we faced the difficult decision of rescheduling or moving forward. The officers and Dr. Yarbrough decided to move ahead and thus a new schedule was needed. I am very thankful to everyone who attended this year for their flexibility during that busy day. We pushed everything back two hours and half hours and the only real divergence from the schedule was that our plenary address was at the beginning of the day instead of the middle. I would like to thank Dr. Jimmy Agan for being gracious and adaptable under the chaotic circumstances.

The conference was a success despite the inclement weather. We had over sixty people attend. There were twenty-four student presentations, including four from Concordia Seminary. I would like to thank Ruth McDonell (PhD candidate at Concordia) for publicizing the conference among the Concordia students. The conference would not have been a success if it were not for the support the Theological Fellowship receives from the Student Council, particularly Rob Wheeler and Tower Kountze. We were also able to record the entire conference thanks to the efforts of Nathan Lucy.

In this volume we have abstracts of almost every paper presented at the conference. Additionally, we have published in full four papers that were particularly well done. This year we were also delighted to present the first ever Bantam Award to the best Covenant student paper. The award was given to fourth year MDiv student Kyle Keating for his paper, included in this volume, "Covenantal Atonement: Organizing Motifs of the work of Christ." The award remembers the hard work of founders Aaron White (MDiv 12) and Dan Robbins (MDiv 13).

I would also like to thank this year's Bantam Lecturers: Dr. Peter Marten and Dr. Karen Jobes. Dr. Peter Martens (Saint Louis University) gave our Fall Bantam Lecture titled, "Why We Should Study the Reception History of the Bible, or what (the Notorious) Origen Teaches Us." Dr. Karen Jobes (Wheaton) was our Spring Bantam Lecturer. Her lecture was titled, "Quoting God: Why the Greek Old Testament is Important for Understanding the Bible." Dr. Jobes was also gracious enough to host a smaller afternoon session with students interested in ministry and academia.

Throughout the year the Theological Fellowship hosts the Bantam Lecture series, the Annual Theology Conference, and several lunches. I would like to thank all the faculty members who assisted this year's lunch series: Dr. David Chapman, Dr. Dan Doriani, Dr. Hans Bayer, Dr. Brian Aucker, and Dr. Greg Perry. I would also like to thank Arthur Keefer (CTS Alum 2013) for hosting a lunch on the PhD application process.

There are two people who need special recognition. Every year Gerry Reimer assists the Theological Fellowship by printing out materials, coordinating classrooms, and advertising for our events. She always helps and we are indebted to her service. Dr. Robert Yarbrough has been our faculty for the past three years. He attends our covenant group every week, leading the devotional before we start. At least once a semester, he leads one of the weekly discussions. We have always been thankful for his dedication and service but more so this Spring semester. Dr. Yarbrough was on sabbatical but still came to every Covenant group, he presented at the conference, and he attended and advertised for the Spring Bantam Lecture. Thank you, sir, for your dedication and example to us all.

Philip Ryan
Co-Chair of the Theological Fellowship
MAET 14

2013-2014 Calendar

Bantam Lecture Series:

11/11/13 – Dr. Peter Martens, on "Why We Should Study the Reception History of the Bible, or What the (Notorious) Origen Teaches Us."
4/1/14 - Dr. Karen Jobes, on "Quoting God: Why the Greek Old Testament is Important for Understanding the Bible."

2st ANNUAL COVENANT SEMINARY THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

January 22nd - Plenary Address from: Dr. Jimmy Agan, on "Paul as Diakonos Christou: A New Translation and an Ancient Doctrine."

Including papers given by: faculty, alumni, guest graduate students, and current Covenant students. (30 papers given)

TFCS GROUP MEETINGS:

Sept. 24th - Dr. David Chapman-*So You're Thinking of a PhD?*

Oct. 4th - Dr. Dan Doriani- *A PhD Behind the Podium and the Pulpit*

Nov. 14th - Dr. Hans Bayer - *Petrine Epistles and Discipleship*

Mar. 28th - Arthur Keefer-*Preparing for a PhD: A View From Base Camp*

Apr. 29th - Dr. Greg Perry and Dr. Brian Aucker-*US vs. UK PhD Programs*

Conference Papers

Polycarp and Paul
The Reception of the Pauline Epistles in Polycarp's "Letter to the Philippians"

Joseph N. McDaniels

Modern conceptions of canonicity are sophisticated and complex, and while it would be anachronistic to speak in such terms regarding the early Christian church, it is still helpful to examine the views held by the Apostolic Fathers. In what ways did these early fathers regard the writings that are now known as the New Testament? In what manner did they conceptualize apostolic authority? How are these two concepts related? One could not hope to satisfy such broad questions with such a short essay as this. However, by asking a more specific set of representative questions, we can perhaps make some progress. This essay will accordingly examine two prominent members of the early church: the Apostle Paul and the Apostolic Father, Polycarp. We will begin by asking, what is Paul's sense of his own apostolic authority and the authority of his letters? How does this compare to Polycarp's self-understanding? Does Polycarp's view of Paul line up with Paul's view of himself? Finally, is Polycarp's view and use of Paul's letters consistent with Paul's understanding of his own writings? We will begin by focusing on two aspects of Paul's self-understanding regarding his apostolic authority: 1) Paul's view of himself as one in line with the Old Testament prophets; and 2) his complementary view of his own writings. Next, we will examine Polycarp's view of himself and his authority (in contradistinction to Paul), and the manner in which he uses Pauline literature.

It is important to begin with Paul's connection with the OT prophets because it will help to establish the link between Paul's personal (embodied) authority and that of his letters. Paul's call to preach Christ to the Gentiles is reminiscent of those placed on various OT prophets, including Isaiah (49:1) and Jeremiah (1:5). Thomas Schreiner goes so far as to say that Paul "conceives of his call in prophetic terms."[1] Karl Olav Sandnes contends that Paul's call which is rooted in the Damascus Road Christophany "gave Paul a commission which from then on fundamentally directed his life. It is therefore sufficient to consider this revelation in its relationship not to early Christian prophets but to OT prophets who had similar experiences which launched them into a prophetic career."[2] But it

[1] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 44.

[2] Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets? A Contribution to Paul's Self-Understanding* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 59-60.

was more than just Paul's call which linked him to the OT prophets. His entire life after Damascus Road, his mission and his proclamation must be conceived of in relationship to the OT prophets. In his study of Romans, Daniel Chae states that Paul's quotation of Isa 52:15 in Rom. 15:21 "provides the background not only of Paul's apostolic self-understanding and evangelistic principle in 15:20 but also of his missionary practice in 15:19."[3] In other words, Paul "seems to assume that his role is that of fulfilling the prophecy given to Isaiah, in which God calls his servant to a greater ministry to the Gentiles."[4] The prophecy is not only of the Messiah who will provide salvation to the Gentiles, but also the proclamation of that good news to them. Paul then as an apostle to the Gentiles is not only called as the OT prophets were, his life and mission *are* the fulfillment of OT prophecy.[5]

Following after the prophets, then, Paul understands his ministry as proclaiming God's truth (uniquely, that of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles), and as a continuation of God's revelation to them. It is important to note that Paul's access to the authoritative words of the prophets could not come in person, but only through writing. Therefore there already exists clear conceptual bridge from the authority of Paul in-person (like that of the commissioned OT prophets) and the inscripturated authority of his letters. Chae writes of The Letter to the Romans: "Just as [Paul] had planned the visit [to Rome] under the strong sense of his apostolic self-consciousness, so now he writes this letter under the same mandate."[6] Paul's words, then – written or otherwise – carried the same theological weight and veracity as the prophets' words recorded in Scripture.[7] Paul's letters carry the same weight as his in-person words do.[8]

So if this is Paul's conception of his own authority and that of his letters, in what way did the Apostolic Fathers receive them? Unfortunately, we have space to examine only one church father, Polycarp.

Ignatius wrote a letter addressed to Polycarp as Bishop of Smyrna.[9] Irenaeus reported that Polycarp was appointed to such a position by the apostles and that he was instructed by them as well. When Irenaeus was young, he met Polycarp, and

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[3] Daniel Chae, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1997), 30. Note, Chae understands Paul as modifying the original meaning of the text, which applied to Jews, not to Gentiles. See 30ff.

[4] Ibid., 40.

[5] Ibid., 42.

[6] Ibid., 46.

[7] Peter Balla makes a similar argument in his essay "Evidence for an Early Christian Canon (Second and Third Century)" in *The Canon Debate,* eds. Lee Martin MacDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 372-385.

[8] We might even want to say that the letters carry greater weight than the in-person words. But this may be a practical truth based on our total lack of access to the unwritten words of Paul (and those not recorded in Acts).

[9] Ignatius, *Letter to Polycarp*, in *The Apostolic Fathers,* trans. J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 115-118.

wrote that he "always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church hands down, which also alone are true."[10] According to Irenaeus, Polycarp was taught specifically by the apostle John in addition to "the rest who had seen the Lord."[11] Polycarp was martyred around ad 155[12] possibly at the age of 86.[13] Though many of the details are clouded by time, we can say at least that Polycarp was an important church father who overlapped the era between the apostles and the early church. One extant letter remains: *Letter to the Philippians*,[14] written c. ad 110. We will ask three questions of this letter: 1) How does Polycarp view himself and his authority (in contradistinction to Paul); 2) How does Polycarp regard Paul and his authority; and, 3) How does Polycarp regard Pauline literature?
The Bishop of Smyrna begins his letter "Polycarp and the presbyters who are with him."[15] Though Polycarp is the only one named, it is important to note that he does not distinguish himself as a bishop or in any other way, but rather he appears to include himself as one among the presbyters. The majority of Paul's letters, by contrast, begin with an explicit appeal to his identity as an apostle and its connection directly to Jesus.[16] Yet, Polycarp does not even presume to impose on the Philippians. Chapter three, verse one reads: "I am writing these things about righteousness, brothers, not on my own initiative but at your request" (3.1) Polycarp would not presume to speak to the Philippians about a matter as weighty as righteousness. Notice also that he chooses this sentence to refer to his audience as "brothers." He appears keen to establish his equality with the reader.
This verse might not give us too much to work with if it were not immediately followed by a direct contrast to the Apostle Paul, his words and his letters. Polycarp writes "For neither I nor anyone like me is able to replicate the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul. When he was with you he accurately and reliably

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[10] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III.3 in *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, ed. J. Stevenson, ed., rev. W. H. C. Frend, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 128.
[11] Irenaeus, *Letter to Florinus* II in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A. D. 325* eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, rev. A. Cleveland Coxe, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 568. "also how he [Polycarp] would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he would call their words to remembrance."
[12] Though this date is disputed; see discussion in Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, 32-34.
[13] "For eighty-six years I have been his [Jesus'] servant" (in Lightfoot, et. al., *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* (9.3), 139) could either refer to his age at the time of his martyrdom, or the time since he had been converted to Christ.
[14] We will not discuss the question of a two-letter hypothesis. For a defense of unity, see Paul Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and its Allusions to New Testament Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), chap. 10.
[15] All quotations unless otherwise noted come from Bart Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers I*, vol. 24 of *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: University of Harvard Press, 2003), 332-353.
[16] Exceptions include Philemon, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philippians.

taught the word of truth to those who were there at the time. And when he was absent he wrote you letters. If you carefully peer into them, you will be able to be built up in the faith which was given you" (3.2). Let us look for a moment at the various pieces of this verse to get a better view of the whole.

First Polycarp distinguishes himself from Paul by pointing to the gap between them concerning wisdom. "Neither I nor anyone like me" suggests a whole class of difference. The word translated here "replicate" is the Greek word κατακολουθησαι. BDAG lists "follow," "approach," or "attain (to the wisdom of someone)" as possible translations.[17] Michael Holmes in his translation follows J. B. Lightfoot using the phrase "keep pace with."[18] Kenneth Howell translates the word "emulate."[19] Whichever choice one makes, it is clear that Polycarp does not believe himself to possess the same wisdom as Paul and thereby the same authority. The connection between wisdom and authority is evident in the use of Greek word γαρ at the beginning of verse two (3.2). Polycarp's inability to replicate or to keep pace with Paul's wisdom is the reason he would not write them about righteousness on his own initiative; he is only doing so only at their request.[20] Paul is "blessed" and "glorious;" Polycarp is one of the brothers.

Second, Polycarp has a high view of Paul's teaching. He "accurately and reliably taught the word of truth" in person (3.2). The term translated here "accurately" is the Greek term ακριβως, listed in BDAG as "pertaining to strict conformity to a standard or norm, with focus on careful attention." That translated "reliably" is the term βεβαίως, which BDAG lists as "pertaining to being on a high scale of reliability." This view appears to extend also to Paul's letters. Notice the parallelism between "When he was with you...he taught" and "when he was absent he wrote," and the clear conceptual link it produces. Polycarp recognizes both modes of communication as equally beneficial for his readers. The final clause of verse two supports this. It reads "If you carefully peer into [his letters], you will be able to be built up in the faith which was given you" (3.2) Finally, notice the parallel syntax for the phrases τὸν περὶ ἀληθείας λόγον and τὴν δοθεῖσαν ὑμῖν πίστιν. Both run article, two-word modifier, and then noun. This suggests "the according-to-truth word" and "the given-you faith" are conceptually closely related.[21] It is reasonable to conclude then that Polycarp views Paul's letters as just as accurate and reliable as his in-person teachings.

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[17] Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

[18] Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers in English* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 135-141.

[19] Kenneth J. Howell, *Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna: A New Translation and Theological Commentary*, Vol. 1 of *The Early Church Fathers Series* (Zanesville, OH: CHResources, 2009),

[20] The request for instruction on righteousness demonstrates the respect with which the Philippians viewed Polycarp. Clearly his wisdom was regarded well among them.

[21] I am thankful to Dr. Jimmy Agan for pointing out to me these aspects of the Greek text.

This outlook is consistent with Polycarp's use of Paul's letters throughout the *Letter to the Philippians*. Polycarp makes use of no fewer than ten of Paul's letters. His heavy reliance on these letters and those of other NT writers, as well as on *1 Clement* and a few OT passages has given him a reputation of being uncreative.[22] However, based on the above analysis, it is more plausible to suggest that this is a result of his high view of their work (especially Paul's). Charles Neilson can facetiously write, "whereas the Old Testament was hardly a practical functioning authority for [Polycarp], some Christian writings were," and as such, regarding *Letter to the Philippians*, "it would seem that the Pauline Epistles have more right to be called Scripture than the Old Testament."[23]

It is clear, then, that Polycarp is quoting Paul's letters as a source of authority for his exhortation. Polycarp's high view of Paul's apostolic authority is supported by his inclusion of himself in his own admonitions. In chapter six, we read: "And so we should serve as his slaves, with reverential fear and all respect, just as he commanded, as did the apostles who proclaimed the gospel to us and the prophets who preached, in advance, the coming of our Lord" (6.3). Here he makes a clear distinction between "us" and the apostles and prophets. They are the ones who command and predict; Polycarp and the Philippians are the ones who obey. Even the "blessed" Ignatius, Zosimus, and Rufus, whom Polycarp acknowledges as models of righteousness, are distinguished from "Paul himself and the rest of the apostles" (9.1).[24]

It is of note here that Polycarp includes the apostles among ranks of the prophets. For Polycarp, the apostles are of comparable status to the prophets of old.[25] This is important because the prophets[26] could not be known to him other than through their writings. The prophets were commissioned by God to speak his word to the people, a word that was either written down by them or recorded by witnesses. This demonstrates a clear conceptual link for Polycarp between the authority of the prophets (as commissioned officers) and the writings of the prophets, something Paul recognizes as well (see above). For Polycarp, Paul's writings carry the same authority as his in-person teachings.

This view of Paul's writings is further supported by a verse in chapter 11. Polycarp writes "Or do we not realize that 'the saints will judge the world?' For so Paul teaches" (11.2). Here, Polycarp appears to be directly quoting 1 Corinthians 6:2.[27] What we are concerned with here is the eschatological nature of the quotation. First, we can recognize the uniqueness of the source of revelation: it must come from God. Second, for Polycarp, this quotation is the basis for the ethical teaching

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[22] For a summary of scholarship, see Paul Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament*, chap. 1.

[23] Charles Merritt Nielson, "Polycarp, Paul and the Scriptures," *Anglican Theological Review* 47, no. 2 (April 1965): 207.

[24] Ehrman translates μακαριος "fortunate," though earlier (3.2) he translates "blessed."

[25] Regards them greater than the prophets?

[26] Because these prophets "announced, in advance, the coming of our Lord," I take him to be referring to OT prophets, rather than Christian prophets announcing the second coming.

[27] Berding, 110-11

immediately prior. Kenneth Berding writes, Polycarp's "ethics, as with Paul, were formed by his belief in a future resurrection."[28] Polycarp views Paul's writing as authoritative on matters of eschatology and ethics, and both uses support Polycarp's practice of employing Paul's letters as Scripture.[29]

Most overtly, *Philippians* 12.1 appears to quote Ephesians 4:26 as "sacred Scriptures." Many have attempted to explain away this reference,[30] but the more apparent meaning is that Polycarp regards Ephesians as Scripture. The verse reads "I am confident that you are well trained in the sacred Scriptures and that nothing is hidden from you; but to me this has not been granted. Only, as it is written in these Scriptures, 'Be Angry and do not sin, and do not let the sun go down on your anger'" (12.1). This section of Polycarp's letter is only extant in Latin, so a word-for-word correlation with Ephesians is not possible. The second sentence in the verse begins, *Modo, ut his scripturis dictum est. Scripturis* is the Latin translation for Scriptures – γραφη in Greek.[31] The word *his* ("these") is important because it is referring back to *sacris literis* in the sentence previous, which is translated "sacred Scriptures." Charles Neilson points to Tertullian's usage of the two words *scriptura* and *litterae* in *De Pudicitia* 5:9 as a precedent for their equivalency. He then writes, "With this connection in mind, we can go on to point out that for Polycarp *sacris* modifies both *literis* and *scripturis*. Thus Polycarp *is* speaking of a 'special, peculiar and sanctified Scripture'"[32] when he writes "be angry but do not sin, and do not let the sun go down on your anger." Ephesians contains no 'and' between the two imperatives as it appears here in Polycarp ("...*peccare, et sol*..."). The first of the two phrases comes from Psalm 4:5. In Eph 4:26, it is paired with a second imperative which originates with Paul.[33] Polycarp utilizes both phrases here, and does so in the same order as they appear in Ephesians. In light of this and because of Polycarp's propensity to cite the NT (esp. Paul) over the OT, and his demonstrated knowledge of Ephesians elsewhere in his letter (see 1.3, 14.3), we can conclude that Polycarp has Ephesians primarily in mind here when referring to sacred Scripture.

Paul recognized himself as an apostle, called by God to preach God's word to the Gentiles. Further, he recognized that his own writings were authoritative revelation in line with those of the OT prophets. Polycarp was no stranger to this idea. He conceptualized Paul and his writings as authoritative and treated them as such. Further, he understood himself and his authority in completely different terms than Paul. Given the early dating of *Philippians* (c. ad 110) and Polycarp's relationship

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[28] Berding, 166

[29] For further support of this argument, see Hartog's analysis of Polycarp's use of the verb εγκυπτω in 3.2 as compared to Clement's use of the verb referring to the Hebrew Scriptures in *Polycarp and the New Testament*, 194.

[30] See Berding, *Polycarp and Paul*, 118ff for a catalogue of proposals.

[31] Neilson, 201.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Unfortunately, I am unable to read German and so cannot interact with J.B. Bauer's argument taken up "with some uncertainty" by Berding which suggests Polycarp may have taken both phrases from Ps 4:5. Berding, 119.

with at least the Apostle John, we can suggest that a concept of canonicity—namely that the apostle Paul's writings should be regarded as God's word, as revelation—existed in a significant way among at least one of those who served as an authoritative voice in the first-century church. Polycarp understood the canonical criterion of apostolicity, even if he would not name it as such.

Plundering the Idealists: The Organic Principle in John Nevin's *The Mystical Presence*

KJ Drake

In the last fifteen to twenty years interest in the Mercersburg theology of John Nevin and Phillip Schaff has undergone a sort of renaissance in Reformed circles, particularly among those who desire a more ecclesiastical and sacramental version of the Reformed tradition. However, this renewed interest must be undertaken with appropriate attention to the historical context of Nevin's own thought. This essay will be a step towards this end by investigating Nevin's appropriation and modification of the idealist concept of organic unity, which is of central importance in his 1843 work *The Mystical Presence*.[34] Nothing is more prominent in Nevin scholarship than the recognition of his indebtedness to German philosophical interlocutors; in fact, this is the substance of Charles Hodge's original critique of Nevin.[35] However, Nevin's use of idealism is often presented without specificity or reference to his motives. I will argue that Nevin utilizes the concept of organic unity to formulate his doctrines of the incarnation, the human person, and the Church in service of rearticulating and developing Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Nevin's reformulation of this doctrine targets the low ecclesiological function of the sacraments within the American church, which was encourage by the ahistoricism and individualism of both confessional and revivalist Protestantism.

II. Contemporary American Religion and *The Anxious Bench*

In order to understand Nevin's appropriation of German thought, we must first understand the state of American religion in the 1830-40's and Nevin's growing discomfort with its overly subjective bent. Two factors are of particular importance: Finneyan Revivalism and what Nevin labeled Modern Puritanism. While these two movements are in some sense opposed, they share common themes of ahisotricism and individualism, which will be the main targets of Nevin's critique. In 1830s and 40s, America was in the midst of the so-called Second Great

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[34] William DiPuccio has argued for the primacy of the organic principle in Nevin philosophy (59); however, this is in reference to his thought as whole. He only cites *The Mystical Presence* once, and focuses rather on Nevin's autobiography, occasional essays or reviews, and unpublished lectures. This holds true as well for Carlough's essay. William L. Carlough, "German Idealism and the Theology of John W Nevin," *Reformed Review* 15, no. 3 (Mr 1962): 37–45; William DiPuccio, "Nevin's Idealistic Philosophy," in *Reformed Confessionalism in Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Sam Hamstra Jr and Arie J. Griffioen, ATLA Monograph Series 38 (London: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1995), 43–67.

[35] Charles Hodge, "Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper," *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 20 (1848): 227–278.

Awakening characterized by the work of Charles Finney. In 1836, Finney published, his now famous, *Lectures on Revivals*, which set forth the new methods to conduct revival and maximize conversion.[36] This method of renewal and revival focused on the choice of the individual for God and morality. Because of this emphasis the historical elements of churchly existence were set aside, such as sacraments, liturgy, catechesis, and a trained clergy. These methods offered a view of a church of individuals and a fundamentally optimistic view of human nature, epitomized by the emotionally-charged conversion tactic of the anxious bench.[37] Nevin had firsthand experience of this phenomenon and leveled critique of it and the new revivalism in general in his 1843 work *The Anxious Bench*.[38] In contrast to the individualism and subjectivism of the revivalist, Nevin proclaims, "Christ lives in the Church, and through the Church in its particular member."[39] He will develop this theme more fully in *The Mystical Presence*.

The problem of individualism and ahistoricism was not merely the error of the new wave of revivalism, but was deeply engrained in the thought and practice of the American theological establishment, represented by New England Congregationalism and Calvinist Presbyterianism. Perhaps no place stood for these ideals more than Nevin's *alma mater*, Princeton, epitomized by Hodge's *Systematic Theology*. This ahistorical outlook was deeply tied to the prevailing Common Sense Realism, which reigned as the supreme expression of philosophy within American intellectual circles.[40] This philosophical position became synthesized with certain views of Puritan pietism, which emphasized the supremacy of individual conscience and conversion experiences. This subjective slant led to much the same end as the enthusiasm of the revivalist: the marginalization of the sacramental and of the instrumentality of the church in the Christian life. It is against this backdrop that Nevin turns to German thought and finds the grounding for a more historical and churchly theology.

Particularly through the influence of Johann Neander, Nevin would be one of the few American theologians of his time to engage substantially with the most current German philosophy and theology. Nevin was keenly aware both of his reliance on these sources and of the distinctiveness of this fact in his milieu. Nevin states, "We honor German learning and thought, and stand largely indebted to them for such views as we have come to have of man and the world, of Christianity and the Bible."[41] However, his indebtedness would not be unquestioning. Instead, he

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[36] Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revival* (Bethany House Publishers, 1989).

[37] Derek Nelson, "Charles Finney and John Nevin on Selfhood and Sin: Reformed Anthropologies in Nineteenth-century American Religion," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (November 1, 2010): 280–303.

[38] John W. Nevin, *The Anxious Bench* (Printed at the publication office of the German Ref. Church, 1844).

[39] Ibid., 29–30.

[40] William DiPuccio, *The Interior Sense of Scripture* (Mercer University Press, 1998), 167; Littlejohn, *The Mercersburg Theology and the Quest for Reformed Catholicity*, 21–2.

[41] John W. Nevin, "Our Relations to Germany," *The Mercersburg Review* 14 (October 1867):

sought to plunder the Idealist mind, and set its tools to the task rearticulating Reformed doctrine. He makes this aim plain in his reflection on the relationship of Mercersburg Theology to the German sources later in his life. At this time, he sought to defend the Revised Liturgy of the German Reformed Church, which some considered, ironically given the reception of his early work by Hodge and others, not German enough. "Here it is that, with all our respect for German divinity, we consciously come to a break with it in our thoughts, and feel the necessity of supplementing it with the more practical way of looking at Christianity which we find embodied in the ancient Creeds."[42] This receptive, yet practical, appropriation of German thought is best demonstrated in *The Mystical Presence* wherein Nevin attempts to set forth the Calvinian doctrine of spiritual presence in The Eucharist.

Nevin's argument in *The Mystical Presence* is rooted first in an exposition of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as expressed by John Calvin, who Nevin sees as "emphatically the great theologian of his age."[43] According to Nevin, Calvin's theory of the Supper attempts to articulate a true, spiritual presence of Christ within the eating and drinking of the elements. This spiritual partaking is affected by the power of the Holy Spirit and the believers' Union with Christ in such a way that the believer objectively partakes of Christ both in his humanity and divinity. This partaking is not through a localized presence of the body and blood in the elements, but a communion with Christ as he is seated at the right hand of the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit.[44]

Nevin proceeds to demonstrate that Calvin's view does not represent an oddity within the theology of the early Reformed church, but rather is the standard view of other major Reformed theologians and the resounding testimony of the confessions of the 16th and 17th centuries. Nevin traces the expression of the doctrine from the contemporaries and successors of Calvin, such as Farel, Beza, and Peter Martyr, up to late 17th century English Puritans, such as Richard Hooker and John Owen. Along the way, he surveys and expounds every major confession of the Reformed church from this period: *The Gallic Confession*, *Old Scotch Confession*, *Belgic Confession*, *Second Helvetic Confession*, *The Heidelberg Catechism*, and *Westminster Confession of Faith*.[45] Through this exposition Nevin attempts to show how the "old Calvinistic doctrine had lodged itself in the heart of the Church."[46] However, Nevin's goal was not merely the recitation of authority, but rather to renarrate the development of the Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper from focus on

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[42] Ibid., 632.

[43] John W. Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: And the Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper*, ed. Linden J. DeBie and W. Bradford Littlejohn (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 57.

[44] Ibid., 57–65.

[45] Ibid., 65–91.

[46] Ibid., 85.

Zwingli to Calvin and demonstrate the recurrent emphasis on the objective nature and force of the sacrament.

For Nevin, the importance of the sacrament is explicitly linked with the church's mission, and he recognizes the particular failing of the American Church in this regard. He states,

Never was there a time when it was more important that this Church should understand and fulfill her own mission; and in no part of the world perhaps is this more needed than just here in America, where the tendency to undervalue all that is sacramental and objective in religion, has become unhappily so strong.[47]

This leads into his exposition of the state of the question within 19th-century American theology, which he labels the Modern Puritan view. According to Nevin, this view, which he substantiates through lengthy quotations from major American theologians,[48] robs the Lord's Supper of all mystery by appealing merely to the memorial and symbolic nature of the elements and thereby separating the thing and the thing signified.[49] The influence here of Common Sense Realism should be apparent. Therefore, Nevin concludes, "Calvin's doctrine accordingly is rejected, as *incomprehensible*; not understood by himself (as the great theologian indeed humbly admits), and beyond the understanding also of his readers."[50] In addition, the Modern Puritan theory removes any objective import of the Eucharist, relegating any benefit to subjective remembrance of the recipient, which completely severs any connection between the partaking of the elements and the partaking of Christ.[51]

Nevin completes his chapter on the Modern Puritan view with a discussion that would have been groundbreaking in American theology. Through an exposition of the church fathers, Nevin argues that the Modern Puritan view is an illegitimate development from the doctrine of the early church.[52] While Nevin acknowledges that the doctrine in the early church was "by no means free from obscurity and contradiction," at the same time the early church "must have been in possession of the truth...at least in its essential power and life."[53] Nevin draws on this "power and life" from the works of Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement, Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine in order to establish the teaching that "Christ must himself animate the sacrament and be received in it as the soul of the sacrifice it represented."[54] Here, we see the influence of German thought in that all expositions of these figures from secondary sources originate from the works of Neander and Augustus Ebrard.[55] Through the

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[47] Ibid., 93.
[48] Interestingly, Nevin does not include in this discussion any Princetonian thinkers.
[49] Ibid., 104–6.
[50] Ibid., 105. Italics in original.
[51] Ibid., 106–9. et al.
[52] Ibid., 111–121.
[53] Ibid., 112, 113.
[54] Ibid., 121.

use of these sources and careful historical study, Nevin is able to mount a daunting challenge to the Eucharistic doctrine of his day both by demonstrating its discontinuity with the Reformation and the Reformed Confessions as well as with the spirit and life of the doctrine as present in the early church. However, owing to his understanding of doctrinal development, he proceeds in the next section of *The Mystical Presence* to offer a positive formulation of Calvin's doctrine in light of current German thought forms, especially the organic principle.

German Idealism was not the originator of the organic principle, which traces its development back to Aristotle and Plato, but it is the school that contributed most to the development of the concept.[56] The organic concept states that the whole logically precedes the parts along with an emphasis on self-generation and self-organization.[57] According to Th. Ballauff, "Kant brings to the problem of O. [Organicism] a new twist and elucidation" through adding an emphasis on teleology.[58] Hegel and Schelling take up this concept into their respective metaphysics in order to overcome the mechanistic and dualistic worldview of Spinoza and others.[59] For both thinkers, the organic is a totalitzing concept that grounds much of their thought. According to Fredrick Bieser, one of the modern experts on Hegel's thought in its original context, "For all Hegel's thinking essentially proceeds from an organic vision of the world, a view of the universe as a single vast living organism."[60] Likewise for Schelling, "O. [Organicism] is totality. Its unity springs from synthesis, which can be derived from contradictions/antitheses."[61] The classic image of this organic principle is the oak and the acorn. Within the acorn is contained all that it will be as a mighty oak, and the fully-grown tree bears an organic connection within its parts to the whole from which it sprung.[62] This principle is, therefore, essential for two fundamental concepts of idealism. First, it grounds a monistic view of the "mental and the physical, the ideal and the real, [which] are only different stages of development or degrees of organization of a single living force." Nevin would repeatedly reject monism with respect to God and the world but this tendency can be seen in his anthropology, thanks to the meditation of this concept by his Mercersburg

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[55] Ibid., 111–121.

[56] Th. Ballauff, "Organismus," ed. Joachim Ritter and Günther Bien, *Historisches Wörterbuch Der Philosophie* (Basel: Schwabe, 1971), 1330–31; Frederick Beiser, *Hegel*, New edition (Routledge, 2005), 87.

[57] Beiser, *Hegel*, 81–82.

[58] Kant bringt auch für das problem des O. eine neue Wendung und Klarung. Translation by the author. Ballauff, "Organismus," 1331.

[59] Beiser, *Hegel*, 80–3.

[60] Ibid., 80.

[61] O. ist Totalitat. Seine Einheit entspringt aus Synthesen, die sich aus Gegenstazen herleiten lassen. Translation by the author. Ballauff, "Organismus," 1332; For further discussion of Schelling's organicism see Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), 515–19; 538–50.

[62] Nevin will make explicit use of this imagery. Nevin, *The Mystical Presence*, 155, et al.

colleague Friedrich Rauch. Second, organicism establishes a teleological idealism in the sense that "everything in nature and history conform to a purpose or an end."[63]

In the service of his scientific articulation of the Lord's Supper, Nevin reformulates the doctrines of Adam and Christ, the human constitution, Union with Christ, the Church, and the Incarnation along organic lines. These constructions are nuanced, subtle and interrelated, and they require more exposition than I have time for here, but will offer a brief sketch. According to Nevin, the human race cannot be taken as a discrete collection of human beings but must be understood in an organic unity derived from Adam.[64] The salvation that came to humanity had to do so within this framework and "to be effective must lay hold of the race itself in its organic, universal character before it could extend to individuals."[65] Therefore, the fall of Adam constitutes an "organic ruin; the ruin of our nature, universal and whole," which not only conveys the guilt of sin but the sinful nature.[66] This is, in some sense, an attempt to change the conceptual framework of traditional Reformed theology's Federal Headship model from a *de jure* relationship to an organic one. Christ partakes fully of the nature that was ruined in Adam through the incarnation, and by this act along with his death and resurrection originates a new form of organic life.[67]

Thus, as with the human race as a whole under Adam, Christ constitutes a new human race, which is joined together in the new life of the new creation, which he brought into being. Christ as both fully human and fully divine joined in hypostatic union constitutes this new life and gives it a quality that far exceeds the old humanity and raises it to a "higher character". The Holy Spirit brings humans into this relationship and lodges a new life in the "inmost core of our personality."[68] Nevin later defines this life as "not thinking, nor feeling, nor acting; but the organic unity of all these inseparably joined together."[69] Therefore, "as individuals we are inserted into him by our regeneration which is thus the true counterpart of the first birth that makes us natural men."[70] However, it would be a mistake to think only in the form of individual because, with Nevin's understanding of the organic principle, the parts cannot be understood without the priority of the whole. From this, we can see that there is a real organic unity not only between Christ and the individual believer but a real life that pervades and enlivens the people of God and draws them together. Nevin make this plain when he states, "Christ's life as now described rests not in his separate person but passes over to his people; thus constituting the Church, which is the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."[71] Nevin is attempting to give the church of his day a soteriology and

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[63] Beiser, *Hegel*, 81.
[64] Nevin, *The Mystical Presence*, 145.
[65] Ibid., 147.
[66] Ibid., 146.
[67] Ibid., 147.
[68] Ibid., 147–9.
[69] Ibid., 150.
[70] Ibid., 149.

ecclesiology that recognizes the powerful bond between believers as well as the utter indispensability of the church in the Christian life and piety. This is accomplished only when the pre-established organic unity of believers in Christ is recognized as the bonding element of the church and foundation of faith. The believer can never be conceived of as independent of this organic relationship, which makes a call to Christ apart from a call to the church inappropriate and inconceivable.

It is this organic understanding of the church and Christ that facilitates his formulation of spiritual presence in the Eucharist. We should recall that one of Nevin's major issues with the Lord's Supper as expressed by the Modern Puritans was that their view reduced the effect of the Eucharist to a metal activity of the participant, thereby making it purely subjective.[72] At the same time, his organic articulation allows for the traditional Reformed insistence on the necessity of faith for the effectiveness of the sacrament. "It [the objective presence] belongs to the ordinance in its own nature; which, in this view, is not a picture or remembrancer [sic] simply for the mind, but a true and real exhibition of that which it represents."[73] Through the partaking of the bread and wine, the believer truly and really participates the person of Christ. This is facilitated through Nevin's organic understanding of Christ's person. The full humanity, including body and soul, and divinity of Christ are in an organic union by the very nature of the incarnation. Nevin states that the two natures of Christ are "inseparably knit to his soul and to his divinity too, as a single indivisible life; so that where the latter form of existence is present in a real way, the other must be really present too, so far as its inmost nature is concerned, to the same extent."[74] Therefore, the believer in the eating and drinking of the elements is not only nourished spiritually with the body of Christ but also by his soul and divinity. The benefits of the body and blood are therefore manifold: "the benefits of the new covenant," "spiritual nourishment," and "growth in grace." Yet none of these benefits can be abstracted from the person of Christ who bestows them.[75]

This objective partaking of Christ is accomplished by the Holy Sprit, not as something magical or unnatural but because of the new life that has already been wrought in them. Nevin states, "This implies no *opus operatum*, no mechanical or magical force in the use of the elements. All is by the Spirit; and for the communicant himself, all hangs upon the condition of faith."[76] Nevin can argue this because the union that is actualized in the Eucharist is one that has already been established through faith and regeneration so that communication comes from the "centre of Christ's life and pass over to the centre of ours."[77] Therefore,

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[71] Ibid. Small Caps in original.
[72] Ibid., 107–8.
[73] Ibid., 158.
[74] Ibid., 140.
[75] Ibid., 158–9.
[76] Ibid., 161.
[77] Ibid., 142.

one who partakes of the sacrament without faith and the new life which accompanies it receives nothing but "bare signs", which are of no benefit to the soul.[78] This is not to say, however, that faith adds anything to the sacrament that it lacks, but rather that it is the condition necessary in the recipient to receive what is on offer.[79] Christ is fully offered in the Eucharist regardless of the state of the participant's posture towards it; however, only those who have become partakes of the new life through the power of the Holy Spirit can benefit from this objective presence.

Through the application of an organic understanding of the relationship between the believer and Christ as well as the believer to the church as a whole, John Nevin developed an understanding of the Eucharist that mediated against the individualism and subjectivism of his time while also remaining firmly rooted within the confessional Reformed position. John Nevin's thought offers the American Protestant church a distinctive voice from its history, calling for a more ecclesiastical and objective understanding of Christianity within the context of revivalistic fervor. It takes little imagination to see the application of these teachings to our 21st-century context. The nature of American views of volunteerism and individualism has remained fairly constant from Nevin's time to our own. His calls to understand Christianity through the lenses of historical development and organic unity offer helpful correctives for these trends. However, his example of chastened appropriation with reference to German Idealism, should be imitated by theologian attempting to makes use of Nevin's own thought today. While we should readily agree, and even celebrate, Nevin's reclamation of Calvin's doctrine of spiritual presence within the 19th century's Zwinglian Captivity, we should also be cognizant of the philosophical tools Nevin employs. The organic principle utilized was both innovative for its time and illustratively helpful; however, for our own day the metaphysical presuppositions of this principle are likely no longer tenable based as they are on an idealist ontology, which has been almost universally abandoned by contemporary Anglophone philosophers. This does not, however, invalidate Nevin's contribution, but should spur on theologians, such as Nevin who seek renew interest in the important of the church and sacraments, to offer positive formulations in contemporary idioms with historical self-consciousness.

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[78] Ibid., 162.
[79] Ibid.

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Covenantal Atonement

Kyle A. Keating

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1. Introduction: the problem

When it comes to the atoning work of Christ, there is no shortage of biblical pictures. However, much debate has arisen over which of those pictures might provide the master metaphor for the atonement–the foundational, guiding image for the rest of the biblical pictures. In traditional Reformed circles, penal substitutionary atonement is the theory du jour. This has generally lead to an emphasis on the legal aspects of the work of Christ: his atoning death, justification, and imputed righteousness. With theologians influenced by the postmodern turn, *christus victor* and reconciliation theories have gained prominence. This leads to an emphasis on the cosmic and relational aspects of the work of Christ: namely his atoning death and subsequent resurrection as the defeat of the power of evil and the recovery of shalom. One must ask the question, does the pursuit of such a master metaphor run counter the grain of Scripture, which provides this diversity of images for a reason?

This question has encouraged ongoing theological conversation between a variety of voices. In the book *The Nature of the Atonement*, four different views on the atonement are offered, ranging from Gregory Boyd's view of the centrality of *christus victor*, to Thomas Schreiner's argument for penal substitutional atonement as the foundational atonement motif. Perhaps most interesting is the perspective offered by Joel Green that the diversity of images is meant to provide a kaleidoscopic perspective on the atonement where no single motif deserves special place. In Green's essay, he points out that the diversity of images "congregate around five spheres of public life in antiquity: the court of law (e.g., justification), the world of commerce (e.g., redemption), personal relationships (e.g., reconciliation), worship (e.g., sacrifice), and battleground (e.g., triumph over evil)." These five spheres provide the raw material for the variety of atonement motifs that have emerged throughout church history. So again the question surfaces: is there one particular atonement motif that stands above the rest? Is there a conceptual framework that provides a logical explanation for the diversity of atonement images? Or is Green right in arguing that the diversity of images itself suggests that there is no single organizing principle?

2. A proposed solution: Organizing atonement motifs around the concept of covenant

Green's five spheres do not provide a comprehensive picture of the biblical language of salvation and atonement in Christ, but they do provide an

adequate starting point for considering whether any organizing principle might effectively unite these themes. Is there an organizing principle which can concurrently unite these images and fit with the grain of Scripture? I will argue that the concept of covenant can provide—not a master metaphor—but an organizing principle for these five pictures, fitting each within its proper biblical theological context and providing a means of understanding the interrelationship of each of the pictures. The concept of covenant provides a logical, theocentric, biblical framework for understanding the diversity and unity of the atoning work of Christ. It allows Christians to retain both the more Western-influenced legal aspects and the Eastern-influenced organic aspects of the work of Christ.

3. Presuppositions for concepts of covenant and atonement

Before examining whether the proposed solution fits the biblical and theological data, we must first identify and examine a couple presuppositions. Identifying presupposition is especially important when using language of covenant and atonement that can refer to several biblical or theological concepts.

3.1. Covenant

3.1.1. Foundations of covenant: The hesed of God

God's initial impulse to both create human beings and then condescend into relationship with people is rooted in his *hesed.* God's choosing human beings above all other creatures as *imago dei* and then his choosing of his specific people Israel are both connected to his love: a love that expresses itself in a covenantal impulse. But God's commitment to this covenantal relationship is also expressed in his *hesed,* his fiercely loyal covenantal love for his people. So *hesed* forms both the foundation for covenant relationship and the expression of that relationship itself. Thus, it should not be surprising to see that when it comes to the most important way that God demonstrates his love for his people—through the work of Christ—that work demonstrates God's *hesed* in the same covenantal context. God's *hesed* does not exist apart from the other aspects of his character including his holiness and justice. Indeed, all these aspects inform God's covenantal dealings with his people. However, God's decision to enter to into covenant with humans, a covenant that would then be upheld and governed by God's *hesed,* demonstrates the significance of this aspect of his character in understanding any concept of covenant. The most significant human covenantal relationship, marriage, provides further existential evidence of this point.

3.1.2. Covenant defined: A legally protected relationship

It would perhaps be most helpful to begin with a brief definition of covenant as an organizing principle. The concept of covenant pervades the Scriptures and is the Bible's own term to describe how God interacts with his people. Covenant is introduced in the beginning with Adam, renewed after the fall with Noah, specified in Abraham, and finds its consummation in Christ. Covenant is, in its most simple sense, relationship. In its biblical context, it is first and

foremost the type of relationship that God has with his people. Marriage is the most apt analogy for us in the interpersonal realm. But just as marriage has both a ceremony and specific stipulations (vows), so too does covenant in the Bible with legal stipulations which govern and protect the relationship. Thus, in the stricter biblical sense, covenant can be defined as the legally protected relationship that God possesses with his people wherein they might properly worship him as God and he might bless them as his people. The covenant is legally protected by various promises and stipulations agreed to by both parties at the time of the creation of the covenant. However, it is never *merely* a legal relationship any more than a marriage is *merely* a legal relationship by virtue of bearing legal authority and implications. In the biblical covenants, the legal protects and frames the relational aspects of the covenant.

Another key aspect of covenant that must be noted is that God makes covenant not only with individuals, but with a corporate people. Even when the immediate covenant is made with individuals, those individuals are seen as representatives of a group of people, whether that be humanity as a whole (Adam, Noah), a particular family (Abraham), or a nation (Moses, David). Thus, the concept of covenant always implies a relationship between God and a corporate people, and when a specific individual is concerned, that individual takes on a representative role for the corporate people. This covenant representative embodies the people before God in the covenant relationship. The role of the covenant representative becomes especially significant in understanding the work of Christ as the actions of both the divine initiator of the covenant *and* the representative head of the people.

3.2. Atonement

3.2.1. Foundations of atonement: sin as the problem, atonement as the solution

Atonement, most simply understood, is God's work through Christ that is meant to address the problem of a fallen and broken creation. Thus, to understand atonement, one must first understand the core problem: sin. Sin itself is described by Plantinga as the "culpable disturbance of shalom." But Plantinga also rightly observes that while sin has an active component, it also has passive component: we are also victims of the consequences of sin. Sin is personal, but also corporate. It is individual, but also institutional. Sin enslaves mankind, but it also puts all of creation in the bondage of decay (Rom. 8). The Bible uses a diversity of images to describe sin: sin is sickness, impurity, transgression, betrayal, and so forth—which yields a diversity of consequences: guilt, shame, alienation, etc. The variegated pictures of sin and its consequences unsurprisingly lead to a similar diversity in describing how the triune God addresses it by making atonement.

3.2.2. Identifying central atonement motifs

The diversity of atonement images are conveyed in the earthy, concrete terms of ancient society. Green's categories, while not comprehensive, offer a helpful paradigm in which the hypothesis of a covenantal conception of atonement

can be tested. The five spheres of life that will be evaluated in this essay include: the legal sphere (penal substitution), the economic sphere (redemption), the relational sphere (reconciliation), the warfare sphere (triumph over evil), and the cultic sphere (sacrifice). Societal and cosmic images of disruption of shalom and the restoration of creation are not addressed, though not because they are unimportant. Rather, an examination of the hypothesis of covenant as a framework for understanding atonement can be sufficiently tested against Green's five spheres.

3.2.3. Variegation of atonement motifs rooted in covenant

One primary difference between Green's kaleidoscopic view and a covenantal conception of the variegated atonement motifs is that while Green often roots the diversity of pictures in contextual circumstances (the subjective cultural and historical context of the writers and hearers, both ancient and contemporary), a covenantal conception roots this diversity primarily in the complexity of God's relationship with mankind. This is not to deny that the variation of images necessarily takes on a contextual flavor. These images *are* contextual. But they are not *merely* contextual. Their diversity is simultaneously rooted in the myriad contexts in which they are articulated *and* in the objective nature of God's multifaceted, complex relationship with his creation. Even if the subjective audience were static, a single picture or motif would not be sufficient to describe the work of Christ—we would still need the multiplicity of images on the basis of the complexity of the Christ-event itself.

God's covenantal dealings with his creation, and specifically humanity as the crown of his creation, are complex. It is relationship that is simultaneously legal, societal, relational, emotional, religious, political, and economic. Some mistakenly reduce the concept of covenant to the merely legal and religious. Covenant, in this case, is the legal stipulations of the relationship, which include the legal stipulations concerning the worship of God. But to reduce covenant in this way misses all the different ways that God appeals to his covenant in Scripture for emotional concerns (calling his covenant people—Israel—his son whom he loved, Hosea 11:1), economic terms (profaning the covenant by robbing God, Mal. 3:8-9), and so forth. The complexity and diversity of concept of covenant mean that is can provide a satisfactory framework for understanding the holistic nature of atonement in the Bible. Finally, because covenant, initiated out of love, is the means by which God has chosen to relate to his people, it should not be surprising that the greatest expression of God's love, the atonement, is properly understood in covenantal terms.

4. An evaluation of the concept of covenant within the variegated atonement motifs

The concept of covenant has the advantage of being a very biblical term. The true test of any theological construct is how it fits with the data of Scripture across the canon. Let us then look at each of these five spheres of the saving, atoning work of Christ and examine if the biblical text warrants a covenantal

framework. It should be noted up front that these spheres contain substantial conceptual overlap. Though they are being parsed out for the purpose of evaluation here, they are interrelated—indeed that is the thesis of this essay, namely that they cannot be completely separated because they all share the same conceptual territory.

4.1. The legal sphere: Penal substitution

4.1.1. Definition

Schreiner offers a helpful definition of penal substitution: "The Father, because of his love for human beings, sent his Son (who offered himself willingly and gladly) to satisfy God's justice, so that Christ took the place of sinners. The punishment and penalty we deserved was laid on Christ instead of us, so that in the cross both God's holiness and love are manifested." In the legal sphere, the chief problem that results from sin is human guilt. This guilt convicts humans in the court of law before a holy God, who because of his justice, cannot tolerate sin. Thus God's wrath against sin (a result of his holiness) must be addressed. Thus, Schreiner rightly points out that God's character is a primary concern of penal substitutionary motif. Indeed, Schreiner also argues that it must be the foundational of the motifs because it is so theocentric. Two of the most helpful aspects of penal substitution are its God-centeredness and the centrality of forgiveness. There are strong arguments for the inclusion of penal substitution as biblical picture (contra Green's insistence that penal substitution is not properly part of the biblical kaleidoscope). However, there is neither space, nor is it the goal of this piece to defend the motif of legal substitution.

4.1.2. Concept of covenant within the motif

The conceptual connections to covenant are vivid. God's covenant with his people was full of legal stipulations that they had to keep as part of the maintaining of the covenant. Israel failed to keep those covenant stipulations, as has all mankind, making necessary the work of Christ as the legal substitute: the one who would keep the covenant requirements on his people's behalf (his active obedience) and die the death the law required for covenant breakers (his passive obedience). Thus, Christ was the greater Israel who suffered the punishment of sin (death) in place of his people. Or, as Scot McKnight explains, "He identifies with us, all the way down into death." Christ, though God himself and therefore the initiator of the covenant, became man and fulfilled our covenant obligations. In this way, God keeps both ends of the covenantal bargain such that Christians can only claim our relationship with God on the basis of his grace. In both Galatians and Romans, Paul ties the death of Christ to the punishment due for the breaking of the covenant, and specifically the law. In Galatians Paul says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree…'" (3:13). Jesus cursed death on the cross is conceptually tied to the punishment due to covenant breakers. Romans 8:3-4 explains, "By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (υπερ

αμαρτια), he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us..." Again, the penal nature of the death of Christ is rooted in the legal stipulations of the covenant agreement (the law). The righteous requirement of the law was death (cf. the covenantal agreement in Gen. 15), a death his people deserved, but Christ suffered in their stead.

4.1.3. Evaluation of conceptual relationship

Penal substitution is a theocentric picture of the atonement. However, framing penal substitution in terms of covenant does not lessen the its theocentricity, but instead brings it into sharper focus. The covenantal framework is chiefly concerned with how God condescends and relates with mankind—that is, his character in relation to his creation. That character is displayed in his formation of a covenant relationship with his people that is governed by legal stipulations (implicit at first, more explicit in later iterations of the covenant). The failure of the people of God to maintain their covenant obligations brought the righteous judgment of God upon them. Penal substitution suggests that Christ embraced that punishment on our behalf, swallowing it whole leaving no remnant. Penal substitution is best understood in a covenantal context because it keeps us from picturing the character, values, and decision-making of God functioning as mere transactions. Though the atonement has legal aspects, these legal aspects do not exist for themselves or simply to solve the math problem of God's holiness and our sinfulness. It allows us to see God's holiness and his love not as mutually exclusive (or even opposing) aspects of God's character, but rather as complementary attributes that mutually describe one another. Rather, the legal nature of the atonement forms the spine of the covenantal relationship that God has with his people. It gives the relationship structure, expectation, and boundaries. Thus, we do well to affirm the significance of penal substitution while explaining it in the context of covenant to protect us from an imbalance between the legal and relational aspects of the atonement.

4.2. The economic sphere: Redemption

4.2.1. Definition

In the economic sphere, sin is a problem because it has led to slavery. In the ancient world, especially in New Testament contexts, slavery was often the result of economic circumstances. One might be sold into slavery in order to pay an outstanding debt. As long as that debt remained unpaid, the master had full rights over the debtor—the debtor's freedom was forfeit. In order to ensure the debtors freedom, a ransom fee had to be paid equivalent to the worth of the slave (either the value of their work or their debt). This marketplace imagery was used in the New Testament to describe the work of Christ. In this motif, Christ's death functions as the ransom payment that delivers God's people from their slavery to sin.

4.2.2. Concept of covenant within the motif

Is there room for an economic motif within the concept of covenant? This sphere perhaps offers the least natural fit to the concept of covenant. While, broadly speaking, covenant typically included economic transactions (the lesser party paying a form of tribute to the stronger party), God's covenant with his people often does not emphasize the economic component of the relationship. The people of Israel were certainly called to tithe, giving the first-fruits to the LORD (no small economic sacrifice); but that tithe was not meant to be a payment for sin, but an expression of love, gratitude, and ongoing covenant loyalty. Thus, speaking in terms of the structure of the covenant, there does not seem to be an obvious parallel between the economic aspects of the covenant relationship and the economic motif of Christ's atoning work.

Perhaps one reason for this is because the problem of slavery functioned differently in the initial context of God's covenantal relationship with his people. For example, God's people are enslaved in Egypt, but not because of an economic debt owed, but rather by virtue of subjugation and exploitation. Israel was, as it were, cheap labor that could be controlled and ruled over. Thus, the problem of sin as slavery meant something distinct from the economic sphere that it often takes in the New Testament, where sin yields a debt that must be paid in return for freedom.

However, thinking in terms of the Exodus specifically, there is some suggestion that we can draw connections between the final plague of the death of the first-born child and the subsequent establishment of covenant worship through the giving of the first-born animals in sacrifice. Thus, we might see a suggestion that the paschal lamb functions as a type of payment that is then recapitulated in the ongoing sacrifice of the firstborn of the livestock. It is a sacrifice of remembrance and thanksgiving—but also a reflection of the debt born by the animal in place of the people, securing their freedom from slavery. The concepts are not one and the same, but there is a striking similarity between the how the sacrifice of the paschal lamb secures the freedom of the people of Israel and the way that the sacrifice of Christ is pictured as a ransom payment to secure the freedom of his people. In this way, the sacrificial system is linked to the economic system within the covenantal economy of Israel.

If we see the exodus as a type of redemption, then it follows that the work of Christ functions in much the same way. In Luke 9:31, Christ is talking to Moses and Elijah about the exodus he is about to accomplish in Jerusalem. The allusion to the exodus (in the midst of the other great covenantal figureheads) is no mere accident. Christ is going to accomplish a deliverance that exceeds even the first exodus. It is notably within this context of the transfiguration that Jesus' ransom saying in Mark 10:45 comes, further unpacking how Christ will deliver his covenant people: he will give his life as a ransom.

4.2.3. Evaluation of conceptual relationship

Redemption in the economic sphere is clearly an important aspect of how the New Testament expounds the work of Christ. If we see the exodus as the

decisive redemptive work of the Old Testament—the freeing of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt—then it follows that the decisive redemptive work in the New Testament—the freeing of God's people from the bondage of slavery to sin and death—fits the pattern. The exodus itself can be seen as a chiefly covenantal action wherein God's loyalty to his covenant partner Israel causes him to remember them in captivity and deliver them from their captors. For the people, the purchase price for their freedom is the paschal lamb, offered in place of the first-born child. This form of payment would then become a part of the covenantal economy of Israel in the form of the tithing of the first-born of the flock. In the New Testament, Christ himself is the payment that seals the freedom and deliverance of his people. He is their ransom payment (Mk. 10:45), the greater paschal lamb, even as the deliverance he secures is more permanent and comprehensive. While the economic sphere of the New Testament world in which this motif is based does not naturally appear covenantal, it is clear that there is substantial conceptual overlap in God's covenantal deliverance of his people in the exodus and his deliverance of his people through the death of Christ as a ransom for sin.

4.3. The relational sphere: Reconciliation

4.3.1. Definition

Reconciliation offers the most obviously relational category in which to understand the atonement. In this context, sin results in alienation—primarily humanity's alienation with God, but secondarily alienation with one another and with creation. Alienation is a cosmic problem that finds its source in humanity's broken relationship with God. The language of reconciliation can contain overlap with other spheres. For example, alienation can be the result of a debt owed (redemption) or a promise broken (penal substitution). But the motif carries its own conceptual weight as well. The concept of alienation carries with it the idea of distance and isolation—a relational separation from God. This separation is expressed in the physical (the inability of the average people to enter the Holy of Holies), but is also emotional. So long as the people of God are alienated from him, they are unable to relate to him as they were created: as members of his family. The weight of alienation can also be measured by the quality of the relationship that was lost. What did humanity lose? Adam and Eve lost perfect communion with the very presence of God in Eden. The depth of the relationship lost indicates the gravity of the alienation as well as its emotional weight.

The relational sphere is also the social sphere. Lepers, for example, were cast outside of the camp because of their ceremonial uncleanness (see 4.5.1 below), but that uncleanness also resulted in their social alienation. Thus, sin was not merely a physical and spiritual problem for the leper, but a social one as well. Thus, alienation can be understood as both a personal and corporate consequence of sin.

The work of Christ, understood in this conceptual category, is the means by which a broken relationship between God and humanity is reconciled. The alienation experienced in the garden is undone as the temple curtain is torn and we

are able to draw near to God once again. The intimate relationship that was lost is restored as God's people are adopted into his family and called his sons and daughters. In this motif, Christ's death and resurrection function to ontologically address the source of alienation—sin—so that the restored relationship is no mere ruse, but true reconciliation where the source of offense has been adequately addressed. God, as the offended party in the relationship, takes the initiative to restore the relationship in Christ, who undertakes the burden of that restoration.

4.3.2. Concept of covenant within the motif

Christ as reconciler is the picture that most explicitly connects with the concept of covenant, primarily because they are concerned with the same sphere–relationship. The initial covenant with Adam was the very creation of relationship between God and man. When sin entered the world via Adam's rebellion, that relationship was destroyed and alienation between God and man became the governing reality. Thus, sin can be seen as the antithesis of covenant. Where covenant establishes relationship, sin destroys it. Thus, Christ's reconciling work is essentially a type of covenantal re-creation—it is the reestablishing of a relationship that sin has destroyed. It is only the work of Christ that makes peace in the covenant relationship, restoring it. "God, the offended party, takes the initiative and accomplishes the reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). This is an apt description of the purpose of covenant as well! God initiates covenant in order to establish relationship with his people in Genesis 1 and 2, and maintains and reconfirms that covenant in order to restore relationship with his alienated people from Genesis 3 and onward.

The New Testament further amplifies the effect of the work of Christ in the relational sphere. The relational aspect of the work of Christ has both negative (what it removes) and positive (what it establishes) effects. Not only does the cross-work grant peace to the relationship and remove alienation (the negative effect), but it also leads to the adoption of God's people as his very own sons and daughters (the positive effect). Alienation is removed and the intimacy of covenant relationship is magnified with the language of adoption and sonship. In the Old Testament covenant is still pictured as an intimate relationship between God and his people (for example, the Psalms), but in the New Testament that covenantal intimacy gets further expounded with familial imagery, even as Jesus uses that familial language to describe himself and his relationship with the Father. Family becomes a more fleshed out way of talking about the relational aspects of the covenant.

God's people were originally vice-regents with God in Eden. They became alienated to God through sin. His people have now become sons and heirs of God in Christ.

4.3.3. Evaluation of conceptual relationship

The concept of covenant significantly amplifies the atonement motif of reconciliation. If what was lost in Eden was perfect communion and relationship

with God (and one another) expressed through covenant, then the work of Christ can be appropriately seen as the restoration of that covenantal relationship through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the Edenic covenant we are described as vice-regents with God; in the new covenant we are pictured as sons of God and co-heirs with Christ. Not only is relationship restored and alienation removed, but the intimacy of the imagery used to describe our relationship with God and other is magnified with the language of adoption and familiar heirship.

4.4. The military sphere: *Christus victor*

4.4.1. Definition

In the sphere of warfare, sin is pictured as the enemy. Satan, then, becomes the embodiment of sin and wields it as a weapon against all of creation. Thus, the problem of sin is that it is a power that stands opposed to the kingdom of God. It sets itself up as an autonomous, antagonizing force against the people of God. Satan, as the head of that power, functions as the place where that power is most concentrated. Atonement then refers to the work of Christ in overcoming the power of sin, Satan, and death through his life, death, and especially resurrection. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8). *Christus victor* was the most popular atonement motif in the first thousand years of church history.

4.4.2. Concept of covenant within the motif

Gustaf Aulén reintroduced the Church to *christus victor*, the understanding that Christ's work was to conquer and defeat the enemies of God and his people, namely sin, Satan, and death. *Christus victor* is another aspect of the atonement that finds its roots in covenant.

Covenantal agreements typically functioned as hierarchical relationships: the stronger part (the suzerain) initiated a covenantal agreement with the weaker party (the vassal). In the covenantal agreement, the stronger party agreed to protect the weaker party in return for fealty. Christ, as a representative of God, functions in this role of the stronger party, protecting the weaker party against the attacks of Satan. Thus Christ fulfills the covenant obligations of suzerain in defending his people from her enemies: sin, Satan, and death.

While the New Testament does not use explicitly covenantal language to describe Christ's victory over Satan, it is clear that his victory is won on behalf of his people so that they might be restored to their intended place of dominion, ruler over the earth (Gen. 1:26-28, 2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 5:10). The ruler of this world has been conquered so as to inaugurate the reign of the true King and to restore the rule of his vice-regents (humanity) first established in the covenant of creation. The sub-rule of humanity as the weaker party of the covenantal agreement is vindicated and reestablished through the victory of Christ over Satan.

Another conceptual connection here is between the role of king within the Bible's covenantal framework. David was a type of Christ, fulfilling the role of the champion of God's people against her enemies. Christ, as the antitype, takes up

this role and fights on behalf of his people as their covenant representative, their champion. Hebrews 1:13 and 10:13 pick up on this role of Christ as covenant champion, applying Psalm 110 to Christ and pointing out that he has triumphed over his enemies by making them a footstool.

Finally, the ransom to Satan motif (made known to most contemporary readers through C.S. Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*) can be understood as both a form of redemption (4.2) or *christus victor*, where the death of Christ is a form of payment made to Satan (as opposed to a payment demanded by God's wrath) in order to free those he rules over (sinful humanity). However, Satan is deceived into believing that the death of Christ will be a victory over the kingdom of God—but through the self-sacrificial death of Christ and his subsequent resurrection, Satan is defeated and disarmed. This aspect of *christus victor* is more difficult to understand in covenantal terms. But what Lewis describes as "a magic deeper still," a magic that is rooted before time in the very nature of God's love—his *hesed*—is a magic that is based in God's covenantal impulse toward his people. The same love that overcomes the enemy of God's people is the love that made them his people in the first place. It is love rooted and displayed in covenant.

4.4.3. Evaluation of conceptual relationship

Perhaps the least naturally covenantal, *christus victor* nevertheless fits within a covenantal understanding of the atonement. The atoning work of Christ can b seen bidirectionally within this warfare imagery: as the representative of Yahweh (and God himself), he represents the stronger party in the covenantal agreement, protecting the weaker vassal from her enemies. As the representative of Israel, he functions as her covenantal champion, her representative on the battlefield against her enemies. He overcomes Satan through the deeper magic of his covenant *hesed*.

Conceptions of *christus victor* which see Satan's work as merely accusing the brethren before God, as though Satan's only power is accusation, run the risk of seeing Satan merely as an instrument of God's wrath, rather than seeing him as an actual, real enemy, with the real power to destroy. Now to say that Satan has real power is not the same as saying that he has ultimate power. The biblical story is not some sort of yin and yang battle between good and evil where the outcome is uncertain. But it is a battle—a battle against a real enemy with real casualties. The concept of covenant allows Satan to be understood as a real enemy without seeing him outside of the authority of God.

4.5. The cultic sphere: Atoning sacrifice

4.5.1. Definition

In the cultic sphere sin present a problem primarily because it effects impurity in the people of God. Impurity is primarily cultic language that references ones state as either impure/unclean, clean, holy, or very holy. The people of God were by default clean, the priests holy, and the high priest very holy. However, one of sins effects was to make one unclean or impure. This impurity was ceremonial, but also moral. In the Old Testament world there was not a sharp divide between the ceremonial and the ethical. Thus, if one was impure (even for natural reasons

such as menstruation), the impurity itself was an ethical problem that needed to be resolved. Additionally, the effect of moral transgression was to make one ceremonially unclean, an impurity that prevented one from living and worshipping among the people. The ultimate effect of impurity was to cause distance from a holy God and prohibit the individual from participating in the worship of God among the people. Thus, the work of Christ in the cultic or ceremonial sphere functioned to purify God's people from their sin allowing them to draw near to God in worship.

4.5.2. Concept of covenant within the motif

The work of Christ draws much of its foundation from the Mosaic covenant's sacrificial system for ritual and moral purity. While the Mosaic covenant had provisions for such defilements in their system of worship, those provision were temporary provisos until Christ would come as the ultimate, final sacrifice which would take away his people's impurity once and for all. The language of atonement itself is covenantal language, rooted in the sacrificial system of the mosaic covenant. The word for atonement in the Old Testament (*kipper*), in the context of sin and impurity, could include elements of both purification and ransoming, purgation and atonement. In the New Testament, sacrificial language abounds in describing the work of Christ. John the Baptist names Jesus as "the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn. 1:29). In John's letter he writes that "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). The book of Hebrews is at various points an exposition on this theme. Jesus death is understood as a sacrificial death in the pattern of the atoning sacrifice of the Mosaic administration of the covenant. But it is also understood to be the atoning sacrifice *par excellence* with permanent effects which allow God's people to approach his holy throne boldly in worship because they have been fully cleansed by the blood of Christ.

4.5.3. Evaluation of conceptual relationship

It is clear that Christ's work as an atoning sacrifice is a deeply covenantal reality. It is rooted in the Mosaic sacrificial system which understood sin to be both an ethical and religious (ceremonial) problem. The function of the atoning sacrifice, therefore, was to both deal with sin as guilt (ransoming) and sin as pollution (purification). This sphere clearly overlaps with others, especially penal substitution and redemption. But in this particular sphere it is clear that the work of Christ establishes the ground by which people can once again properly worship God—the very thing that covenant was supposed to establish and govern. The purpose of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament was to provide the proper context in which sinful people could properly worship a holy God. The work of Christ provides a new context in which sinful people can properly worship God, through the sacrifice and mediation of Christ. In his new covenant, Christ establishes a context for worship and governs that worship through his own mediation as both sacrifice and priest; the effects of impurity are wiped away and proper worship is restored.

4.6 Preliminary conclusions

The context of this paper does not leave room for the type of thorough investigation of all the biblical data for each atonement motif. Instead, the purpose of this section has been to evaluate whether the concept of covenant is consistent with each of these spheres conceptually and theologically. While a few notes have been made were Scripture supports a conceptual or theological connection, the bulk of the work of assessing the biblical data calls for another more comprehensive assessment. This preliminary examination of the concept of covenant in the atoning work of Christ shows how ubiquitous the idea of covenant is in the New Testament images of the work of Christ. If we are to approach the work of Christ canonically, then we must see his work as the culmination of the creative and redemptive purposes of God—purposes which are centered on God's desire to be in covenant relationship with his creation. Leaving off the discussion of whether covenant is the best way to organize images of the atonement, it is clear that covenant at the very least provides another important angle with which to view the variegated ways the New Testament describes the work of Christ.

5. Alternative syntheses

There is not space here for a full exploration of other syntheses of atonement motifs. But one alternative synthesis is worth addressing because it contains the greatest amount of conceptual overlap with what has been presented here.

Scot McKnight offers another way of synthesizing the atonement motif: he describes the atoning work of Christ as *identification for incorporation.* Here the idea is that Christ as fully identified himself with fallen humanity such that he might incorporate them into himself. Christ has gone all the way down, identifying with us even into death, such that he might bring us all the way up into the glory of triune Godhead. McKnight's synthesis has much to commend it. The first part of the phrase reflects both the inclusive representative nature and the exclusive substitutionary nature of the work of Christ. The latter half of the phrase emphasizes that God's people are saved into a community: salvation is both personal and communal. The phrase as a whole neatly ties christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology together. One of the weaknesses of this synthesis is that it uses abstract concepts and language that the Scriptures themselves do not use to describe the work of Christ. It seems that the idea of covenant itself provides a more biblical gloss for these same concepts. The work of Christ then is understood as Christ's identification with his covenant people so that they might be incorporated into a new covenant community. Christ identifies himself with the lesser party in the covenant agreement that he might properly represent them and be a substitute for them so that they might be incorporated into the covenant community of God. Thus, the soteriological aspects of the work of Christ are properly understood in their covenantal and corporate (ecclesiological) contexts. McKnight's proposal properly balances the variety of atonement motifs, and a concept of covenant might provide a more concrete conceptual hook on which to hang the synthesis of identification for incorporation.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary

The diversity of biblical images for the saving work of Christ has always yielded debate about the definitive way to understand the atonement. The apparent tension between various pictures, whether in emphasis or substance, leads to theologians gravitating toward individual pictures as the primary way the Bible describes the atonement. Some proposals have suggested letting the diversity of images stand as is—a sort of kaleidoscopic approach. I have argued that it is the appropriate endeavor of the systematician to seek to synthesize these pictures, and hypothesized that the best synthesis of these pictures is found in the concept of covenant. After briefly articulating key presuppositions for understanding ideas of covenant and atonement, I evaluated the hypothesis against five different pictures of the atonement from five different spheres of life: legal,, economic, relational, military, and cultic. Evaluating the hypothesis against these pictures has yielded both strengths and weaknesses.

6.2. Strengths of the Proposed Model

The following are strengths of organizing atonement motifs around the concepts of covenant:

1. Maintains corporate emphasis without losing individual responsibility

The concept of covenant properly balances the dual biblical emphases of salvation as having both corporate and individual effects. The work of Christ simultaneously establishes a people of God in Christ—his covenant people—and secures the salvation of individuals within that covenant people. The concept of covenant both maintains the corporate emphasis of salvation (God saves his people into a community), but does not neglect the individuals responsibility within the covenant community to respond personally to the saving work of Christ.

2. Maintains the centrality of the relational in the economy of God's interaction with his people without losing its other implications.

Covenant is first and foremost a relational concept before it is a legal, economic, military, or ceremonial concept. While the covenant relationship is governed by laws and possesses all sorts of economic, military, and ceremonial implications, it is chiefly a *relationship.* Thus, organizing the pictures of the work of Christ around a concept of covenant restores a proper emphasis on the relational sphere, rather than making the work of Christ into a mere legal or economic transaction.

3. Recognizes and addresses the multiplicity of problems that sin creates, both internal and external.

Evangelicals have often erred in emphasizing the internal problems that sin creates: guilt, impurity, alienation, to the exclusion of its external problems: the opposition of Satan his principalities and powers. The proposed model acknowledges both the internal problems of sin in terms of its effects on our relationship with God, as well as the external threats to that relationship. God's commitment to his covenant people means that he will make provisions for the

internal problems while simultaneously addressing their external threats. If Christ's work is understood
covenantally, it is understood both to address the internal problems within the covenant people, as well as the enemies of the covenant people.

4. Uses biblical language and categories for understanding God's relationship with his creation.

Contra McKnight's proposal (described in section 5), this model uses biblical language and categories for understanding how God relates to his creation. If each time God relates to his people he uses the vehicle of covenant to establish and administer this relationship, then it should come as no surprise that his redemptive work, which aims at the restoration of right relationship between the creator and created, would be best understood using that same vehicle.

6.3. Weakness of the Proposed Model

There are, however, weaknesses in the model:

1. Some motifs connect more naturally (reconciliation) than others (redemption).

Even as the concept of covenant rightly restores the relational emphasis of the work of Christ, it struggles to account for some of the other New Testament images of the atonement, especially those that are rooted in the first century hellenistic world as opposed to the Old Testament. This problem can be seen especially in the use of the concept of redemption, an idea that is most immediately connected to the first century practice of redeeming slaves out of captivity by virtue of paying a ransom price.

2. The NT authors do not always use covenantal background, categories, or language to describe various aspects of the work of Christ.

Similar to point one, this weakness is rooted in the reality that New Testament authors do not always appeal to the concept of covenant even when it seems like it might fit. While the concept of covenant appears all over the New Testament, whether directly or indirectly via related concepts, it seems that the New Testament itself does use covenant as the explicit lens for understanding the work of Christ. This weakness is partially offset by the fact that the same argument could be made concerning the trinity and theology proper. There are plenty of critical doctrines that rely on synthesis and inference from the biblical data. Nonetheless, the lack of explicit covenantal framing for the pictures of the atonement should make us cautious of artificially imposing that structure upon the text.

6.3. Final Conclusions

This far too brief survey has sought to demonstrate the variegated atonement motifs can be clearly connected to and organized by the biblical concept of covenant. Indeed, covenant theology actually provides a synthesizing impulse that helps make sense of the diversity of pictures of the work of Christ in a contemporary situation where much of the Church's discussion surrounds which picture is most central. Covenant provides a relational, legal, and biblical context for understanding the multifaceted work of Christ from his incarnation to his second coming. It is not clear from this study, however, that covenant is the

definitive way in which these pictures must be organized. At the very least, understanding these pictures in their covenantal context will allow the Church to understand the monumental work of Christ in its proper canonical context, providing much-needed balance to our understanding of the atonement. There is, however, much more work to be done in developing a more fully fleshed out explanation of covenant as an organizing picture for the work of Christ and the doctrine of the atonement.

The Conquests of Joshua and Raids of Muhammad: Theological Reflections on an Old Problem

Caleb J. Miller

Introduction

Every house has multiple entryways, but only one front door. Identifying the front door is important for obvious reasons. Climbing through a window just is not convenient; it can be dangerous. Ultimately, however, climbing through a window does not take you where you want to go; into the heart of the home. The front door, then, serves a purpose. Not only is it an entryway, but it also provides immediate access to all the other points of the house. The same argument, I believe, can be made for theologians. Each has one or two key theological convictions that seemingly determine and shape their theological enterprise. Fortunately, John Calvin positioned his "front door" on the first page of the *Institutes*. He notes, "True and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves."[80] While this statement seems rather plain, if not obvious, it has not, at least from my limited investigation come to serve as *the* entry point for reading and understanding Calvin. These "two parts" of Calvin's theological project form a consistent theme that runs throughout the *Institutes*: God and man are forever bound to each another. Contrary to critics, the metaphor guiding this relational horizon is not primarily that of Divine Judge and helpless sinner. Rather the opposite is true. B. A. Gerrish observes: "Not the divine despot but the Parent-God, who is goodness itself, was the object of Calvin's piety and therefore the main theme of his doctrine of God."[81] Therefore, God is not only to be feared as Lord, he is also to be loved as Father. This I will argue orients and positions humanity in a specific manner and plays an essential role in correctly reading Calvin's anthropology. If true knowledge of God permits true knowledge of ourselves, and God has revealed himself as *paterfamilias*, then the fundamental category for humanity is not "sinner" but "child" or "offspring." Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to explore this relationship with a particular emphasis on man as a grateful recipient of God's Fatherly beneficence. Calvin, I will contend, envisions man primarily as a Eucharistic creature, charged to reciprocate God's endless goodness with endless thanksgiving and praise.

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[80] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.1.1.

[81] B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 41.

Gracious God

Calvin's doctrine of God is not speculative or abstract; that is, he rarely considers what God is in himself. Rather, Calvin concluded that God's "being" is fundamentally covenantal or relational. More succinctly, we discern God's "being"—his character and nature—via "what he is willing to be to us."[82] The force of this statement is found in the preposition "to." "To" denotes motion and direction. God *is* just as He speaks and acts towards his people and creation. Act and being, therefore, are irrevocably tied. For Calvin, God is not a detached deity, eschewing involvement with the world. Instead, God is the Sovereign Father who acts according to His own pleasure and will, but for the good and benefit of His people. Calvin surmised that in his character "God is 'good and merciful,' 'benign and beneficent,' 'the fount and source of all good,' 'our fecund author,' whose 'will is prone to beneficence,' and in whom dwells a 'perfect affluence,' nothing less than an 'affinity' of good things."[83] It is therefore accurate to conclude that Calvin's doctrine of God's Fatherhood entails at least two fundamental principles: first, God is man's greatest "good," and second, God is the Giver of all good gifts.

One of Calvin's chief metaphors for God is that of a spring or flowing fountain. This image seeks to uncover not only the indefinite magnitude of God's gracious character, but also his paternal care. He writes:

> It is not enough simply to hold that God is one who should be worshipped and adored by all, unless we are persuaded also that he is the fountain of all good, so that we should seek nothing anywhere else but in him. I take this to mean not only that he sustains this world...but also that not one drop of wisdom and light, or justice, or power, or uprightness, or genuine truth will be found that does not flow from him, and of which he is not the cause.[84]

Here, Calvin understands God's goodness as his governance and general fatherly beneficence. He is the supplier of justice, power, and truth. But it is not simply that God orders all things according to his providence; he also intervenes, mediating his presence through his works. His goodness distills "to us by drops from heaven and form so many streams conducting us to the fountain-head."[85] In this way, he makes himself known, "lisping" in a language appropriate to our condition. Accordingly, God "renders himself near and familiar to us and in some manner communicates

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[82] Calvin, 3.2.6.

[83] B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism* (1956; repr., Philadelphia: P&R Pub. Co., 1980), 169.

[84] Calvin, 1.2.2.

[85] Ibid., 1.1.1.

himself [to us]."[86] Therefore, God is never distant from his people, but like a father, he is near and always within ear's reach.

However, Calvin's understanding of God's goodness is always readily juxtaposed against man's persistent poverty and need. Key to man's humanity is his ongoing dependence on the One who fashioned him: creatureliness entails dependence. Calvin writes, "Our poverty conduces [us] to a clearer display of the infinite fullness of God."[87] Even in his state of innocence Adam never approached God from a position of wealth, but always from a position of need; and this for a clear reason, namely "our very need itself turns our eyes upward to seek from there what we lack."[88] Therefore, Calvin identifies God as the Giver of all good gifts. To this end, he concludes, "We should note God's fatherly love to humanity in the very order of creation. He did not create Adam until he had enriched the world with full abundance of good things...He shows his wonderful goodness to us by assuming the burden of a prudent and conscientious head of the family."[89] The implication is clear: just as a good father showers his children with both plain and extraordinary gifts, so too does God care for his children. God's manifold gifts are present throughout the order of creation, as well as in our personal talents. Calvin observes that men "have within themselves a workshop graced with God's unnumbered works." He concludes: "Shall we be deemed the inventors of so many arts and useful inventions that God may be defrauded of his praise, though experience tells us plainly enough, that whatever we possess is dispensed to us in unequal measures by another hand?"[90] God, therefore, does not withhold his bounty from man, but gives to him liberally and without cost. Whatever we possess is the result of his Fatherly provision and goodness.

Grateful Man

At the beginning I noted that true knowledge of God permits true knowledge of self. According to Calvin, God is both Lord and Father, and blesses his creatures with innumerable gifts, thus demonstrating his goodness. An argument, therefore, can be made that if God's goodness is inextricably tied to his person or being, then a correlative statement can be made about man. Man's identity, therefore, is connected to the way he responds to God's goodness. As God's image bearers, the correlative response to God's Fatherly benevolence should be thanksgiving and gratitude. Thus for Calvin, man is most "manlike" when he responds to God's blessings with childlike thanksgiving and praise. This is clearly seen in Calvin's 1542 Geneva Catechism. Q&A 1, 2, and 7 are particularly instructive:

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[86] Ibid., 1.5.10.
[87] Ibid., 1.1.1.
[88] Gerrish, 24.
[89] Calvin, 1.14.2.
[90] Ibid., 1.5.5.

Minister: What is the chief end of human life?
Child: To know God by whom we were created.

Minister: Why do you say that?
Child: Because He created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which He Himself is the beginning, should be devoted to His glory.

Minister: How do we honor him aright?
Child: By putting our trust entirely in Him, by serving Him in obedience to His will, by calling upon Him in all our need, seeking salvation and every good thing in Him, and acknowledging with heart and mouth that all our good proceeds from Him.

For Calvin thanksgiving proceeds from a mind and heart that acknowledges God's kindness in his gifts. God's gracious giving and man's grateful receiving are thus the center of covenant life. For man, to be thankful is part and parcel with covenant faithfulness and is a gesture of trust. It is this reciprocal process that gives man his identity as a "eucharistic" creature. Paraphrasing Calvin, Garrish notes, "While the whole created order reflects God's glory, humanity is distinguished from the mute creation by its ability to reflect God's glory in a conscious response of thanksgiving."[91] Man alone is able to give voice to the inexpressible gifts of God. With "heart and mouth" man is not only bound to gratitude, as a loyal subject gives praise to his Lord, but finds his greatest joy in articulating his Father's grace.

The picture we receive from Calvin, particularly in the *Institutes* 1.5.1ff., is that of God's created universe, established and made by God to reveal his glory. It is into this "theater of glory" that man is placed. Although part of creation, man has been charged as its king and caretaker, to rule and subdue that which is unruly. Nonetheless, man is also a priest. He stands between God and creation, voicing one to the other both thanksgiving and blessing. In this manner, man images God. T. F. Torrance notes, "Calvin thinks of God as having made man to be the conscious correlative of His grace in a life of thankful response, but in a way that it is only as man reflects in thankfulness and praise the grace and glory of God that he himself becomes established as a man in the image of God."[92] While it would be too much to say that the *Imago dei* is entirely constitutive of God's giving and man's thankful response, it is nevertheless instructive to see the bearing this line of thinking had upon Calvin's conception of man. Calvin writes, "It is intended that man should remember whence he received his life in order that he might acknowledge that he lives not by his own power but by the kindness of God alone

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[91] Gerrish, 43.
[92] T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1957), 71.

and that life is not an intrinsic good, but proceeds from God...He cannot otherwise retain it than by acknowledging that it was received from Him."[93]

To summarize, man's identity and knowledge of himself are inextricably tied to God's person and character. If true knowledge of God reveals that He is our benevolent Father, then we are to conclude that our primary posture should be that of thankful children. A correlative—indeed, covenantal—relationship therefore must undergird any discussion of God's giving and man's thankful receiving. As God gives he proves himself to be "good," that "we are in truth his children, whom he has received into his faithful care to feed and bring up."[94] Part and parcel to this reality, then, is man's grateful response. Thanksgiving is indicative of our true "selves." As Torrance observes, "*Imago dei* is not a dead but a living image, not a mute expression of the divine glory, but a witness-bearing image evoked by the wonderful grace of God in calling man into communion with Himself, and having its own essential motion contrapuntal to the gracious and continual giving of the Father."[95] For this reason, as man moves toward God in thanksgiving, he most like God, reflecting his glory and goodness. Therefore, to be a "eucharistic" creature—a being full of thanksgiving and praise—is to prove ourselves to be sons and daughters of the living God.

Ingratitude and the Drama of Redemption

It is my hope that the preceding reorients discussions of Calvin's anthropology. For Calvin, "grateful" and "obedient" man is the norm and ideal, the "way things were meant to be." Moreover, man's "eucharistic" self is the focal or orienting point to which Calvin often returns in discussing both sin and redemption. For example, Calvin writes:

> But knowledge of ourselves lies first in considering what were given at creation and how generously God continues his favor toward us, in order to know how great our natural excellence would be if only it had remained unblemished; yet at the same time to bear in mind that there is nothing of our own, but that we hold on sufferance whatever God has bestowed upon us. Hence we are ever dependent on him.[96]

It is clear from this statement that Calvin harbors no ill will against humanity *per se*; instead, he clearly recognizes the devastating effects sin has wrought upon humanity. Even while chastising humanity's sin, a theme of longing and/or homesickness lingers throughout the *Institutes*. In this way his own rhetorical and

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[93] J. Calvin, *Commentaries*, at Gen. 2:9.
[94] Calvin, 1.14.22.
[95] Torrance, 71.
[96] Calvin, 2.1.1.

narrative style corresponds with that of Scripture. The thematic categories of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation are fundamental to Calvin's reading of Scripture. He aptly maneuvers between these four scenes, often juxtaposing one against another, as he does in the quote above. Humanity is always, therefore, treated as humanity—God's created, image-bearers, and thus something precious and worthy of recovery. For Calvin sin is a volitional act of the will, as well as parasitic enemy. Adam's sin was significantly more complex than merely plucking fruit from a forbidden tree. In Calvin's mind, Adam's sin consisted chiefly in pride. But this statement is merely synecdochal. Calvin goes on to conclude:

> But thereafter ambition and pride, together with ungratefulness, arose, because Adam by seeking more than was granted him shamefully spurned God's great bounty, which had been lavished upon him. To have been made in the likeness of God seemed a small matter to a son of earth unless he also equality with God—a monstrous wickedness![97]

At the heart of Adam's rebellion resided a deep ingratitude for God's gifts and provisions. In his sin, all that was gifted to Adam was set aside in favor of that which he could not have: "The special race created to reflect the bounty of God in thankful acknowledgment thus fell into the thankless pride that spurns God's bounty."[98] But not only did Adam an act of ingratitude, he also spread the disease of ingratitude to his posterity. Rather than living in thankful response to God's gifts, man now lives and yearns for that which he can grasp. Commenting on the nature of thanksgiving, Calvin notes, "For many indeed understand that the blessings which they enjoy are the gifts of God, and praise him in their works; but not being persuaded that these have been given to them, how can they give thanks to God as the Giver?"[99] In futility many men refuse to credit God for his blessings. Instead they take that which was intended as a gift and make it an idol, worshipping it rather than the God who gave it to them.

Despite Adam's rebellion and his posterity's persistent ingratitude, God did not leave humanity totality helpless. In fact, Calvin notes that this was in fact the end for which Christ was promised: "The end for which Christ was promised from the beginning, is sufficiently known; it was to restore a fallen world, and to succor ruined men."[100] Keeping covenant with man, God gave his Son as a gift in order that humanity might be restored to its original glory. Christ, therefore, succeeded where man had previously failed. He was the "eucharistic" creature *par excellence*, reciprocating and identifying with the Father's own self-giving nature. To this end, Calvin surmises:

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[97] Ibid., 2.1.4.
[98] Gerrish, 46.
[99] Calvin, 3.19.8.
[100] Ibid., 2.12.4.

> The Lord will not lose in us that which is his own, he yet discovers something that his goodness may love. For notwithstanding we are sinners through our own fault, yet we are still his creatures; notwithstanding we have brought death upon ourselves, yet he had created us for life. Thus, by a pure and gratuitous love towards us, he is excited to receive us into his favor.[101]

Through Christ, God restores in us what was lost in the Fall and reestablishes communion with himself once again based on the covenant dynamic of giving and receiving.

In conclusion, Calvin's anthropology is neither grim nor overly optimistic; rather it is realistic just as the Scripture is. Man's vocation is to bring glory to God by thankfully receiving all that comes from the Lord's hand. He is to do this with gratitude in his heart as a symbol of his child-like affection. Despite humanity's persistent sin, man is not left entirely helpless. The same God who gave to us in the beginning—creating us in his image and likeness—gives to us now through Jesus Christ. God did spare what was most precious to him. Instead he gave freely of himself, so that we might be reconciled to Him in love forever.

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[101] Ibid., 2.16.3.

Student Titles & Abstracts[102]

The Genre of Wisdom Literature and its Significance For the Interpretation of James 1:25

Arthur J Keefer

Literary context and grammar provide inconclusive evidence for the relationship of participles in James 1:25. However, accounting for the genre of James resolves this interpretive difficulty. Building upon a definition of Wisdom literature based in a prototype theory of genre, I argue that the Book of James coheres with Jewish Wisdom literature more than proposed alternatives and cues the reader to expect a central element of Wisdom—the admonishment to pursue wisdom or its equivalent through learning or study. This element illuminates the reading of 1:25, as I argue that the doer of the word "looks into" and "continues" looking into the law.

"A Reformed View of the Poor in the Missiological Purposes of God: A Synthesis of Mission, Theology, Evangelism, and Social Concern"

Cody A. Brobst

In this paper, the reader will take a look at the biblical portrait (we are all poor, and yet we are not), the theological portrait (God created the poor, and Jesus came to save the poor), and the contemporary portrait (our duty to the poor, and our contextual calling). The goal is to see how God's purposes in mission are understood and attempt to draw the connections by the great biblical theme of God's heart for the poor, which appears to be an elevated trajectory of the Scriptures. The argument for this will be that the word "redemption" provides the necessary link to create a synthesis of four main ideas (mission, theology, evangelism, and social concern). Sometimes these ideas divide those in the Church, and sometimes they are neglected by those of various traditions. The hope is that we would then view our entire lives holistically as a constant vehicle of God's missiological purposes. We do this best when we consider our calling and the context, which we minister in. Finally, it is ultimately through the person and work of Jesus Christ that we have the ability to do so.

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[102] All students attend or have graduated from Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, unless otherwise indicated.

Polycarp and Paul: The Reception of the Pauline Epistles in Polycarp's "Letter to the Philippians"
Joseph McDaniels

Though much work has been done on the reception of the New Testament documents in the early church, there appears to remain a deficit of study regarding Polycarp. Many scholars believe that the current New Testament canon was set by the church centuries after composition. By examining Polycarp's "Letter to the Philippians," we can discover the manner in which this prominent Apostolic Father received the Apostle Paul's letters. By way of method, this essay will examine: 1) Paul's self-understanding and authority; 2) Paul's view of the authority of his written word; 3) Polycarp's self-understanding (in contradistinction to Paul's) and regard for his own letter(s); and, 4) Polycarp's esteem and usage of Paul's letters in light of these other discoveries. This study will conclude that Polycarp considered at least Paul's writings as the authoritative word of God, lending weight to the argument that the New Testament texts received a kind of authoritative canonical status very early in church history.

Benefactions in 2 Corinthians 9:8-11
Ruth Whiteford, Concordia Seminary Ph.D. Student

Many issues addressed in Paul's epistles to the Corinthian congregation may be illuminated by tensions due to the integration of a spectrum of socio-economic classes into one body of Christ. In this paper, I considered Paul's language of patronage, benefaction, and friendship in 2 Corinthians 9:8-11 and utilized socio-rhetorical criticism in order to investigate his presentation on giving within this particular context. Paul provides a new paradigm of χάρις, αὐτάρκεια, and δικαιοσύνη, which provide implications for how believers are to relate to God and to the rest of the Church. Anything good that they have is a benefaction from God. The ability to give is a gift from God, but it is also the proper response to him. The giving and sharing of resources among Christians does not provide the givers with honor, but God, the true Giver, and, once again, Christians have a sufficiency that comes from God that makes true giving possible. This genuine giving enables horizontal unity within the Church, which in turn creates right order, or righteousness, in the world. In the midst of the Corinthian circumstances, Paul's directives in the Jerusalem collection had to be followed, or the church indeed was following another Christ and another gospel.

Foreshadowing the New Temple: The Baptist's Echo of Joel 4 in the Final Theophanic "Tenting" of "the Word" in John 1
Aaron White

Specifically, my article posits that in the dwelling of "the Word," as proclaimed by John the Baptist and unique to John 1, there is an allusion to the apocalyptic dwelling of the LORD found in Joel 4:17-21 (LXX). The allusion stems from a verbal correspondence between κατασκηνόω in Joel 4:17,21 and σκηνόω in John 1:14, that is a visible manifestation of broader echoing motifs. The motifs observed in this allusion are, first, in the themes found in the Jewish theophanic traditions rooted in Ex. 34:6-7, and second, the implied ecclesiological statements made in Joel 4 in relation to the LORD's final dwelling also observed in John 1. Jesus' criticism of the waywardness of the Temple and the proclamation that he himself is its replacement, as the New Temple, is a well-known theme that plays a critical role in the fourth gospel. I suggest that the unique echoing motifs of Joel 4 in John 1:14 forecasts the later extrapolated role of Jesus as the New Temple in John's Gospel.

Missing Mission?: The Missional Possibilities of Special Needs Ministry
Greg Baughman

Ministry to persons with disability can be difficult. Special needs ministries will rarely be successful from a financial or social perspective. In spite of the many complexities and challenges, it is my contention that special needs ministry not only should be embraced as an aspect of the church's mission, but that there are untapped missiological benefits in doing so.
To prove this thesis, the paper begins with a brief redemptive-historical theology of disability. Beginning with creation and culminating in redemption and consummation we see that God does not leave persons with disability on the margins, but cares for them deeply. In the second section, the practice of the church today is considered. When the number of persons with disability in society are compared to the numbers in our churches, we see that the church has much room for growth. In the final section, the benefits of special needs ministry are outlined. These benefits can be categorized under three headings: the theological, the cultural, and the evangelistic. In each of these areas we see that our churches would benefit greatly were they to embrace ministry to persons with disability.

Christian Science: A Liberal Response to the Church? A study of Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*
Katie Beim-Esche

J. Gresham Machen's (1881-1937) classic book *Christianity and Liberalism* is a product of the modernist-fundamentalist battle of the early 20th century. Here

Machen contends that "liberalism is not a legitimate form of historic Christianity but rather a different religion completely." Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), discoverer and founder of Christian Science (CS), offers another response to the Church. In my paper I compare CS theology with Machen's assessment of liberalism in contrast to his understanding of biblical Christianity. Surprisingly Machen's assessment of liberalism is fundamentally consistent with that of CS. I conclude that the consequence of the false teaching of liberalism is devastating. CS is just one example of the danger that comes from turning away from the true Gospel. It is often easier to identify systematic errors and heresy in extreme religious contexts like CS rather than in mainstream denominations. Thus studying religious cults like CS can be helpful in identifying liberal influences and teaching in the Church today. In many ways our hearts are numb to liberalism.

Missions as Reconciliation

Samuel Belz

How does the black church in America understand its missional mandate? What is its missiological self-understanding, especially when there are so few black missionaries overseas? To get at these questions, it turns out we must first discover the theological roots of the black church. In light of the history of slavery, segregation and discrimination both here and on the mission field throughout the centuries, we come to understand that the theological roots of the black church are fundamentally liberation. Discovering the divergence between various missiological self-understandings, as in the white and black churches of America, leads us to understand missions as reconciliation. The first realization within the new paradigm is that we must all conceive of theology as essentially contextual. This involves the creative interpretation of the gospel for a diversity of contexts. How well our theology speaks to the most oppressed in our midst must become the measure of the quality of our reflection. In the end, this is where missions as reconciliation must lead us.

Winning Souls: Is There More of the Mission of God's People than Spiritual Conversion?

Joe Congdon

Unique historical developments in American evangelicalism have resulted in a flattening of the role and mission of God's people. What is better understood as a robust calling to reflect God's image to creation and to each other is often boiled down to "winning souls." Confusion abounds as to what constitutes the real work of the Christian. Brief analysis of five common errors in the church today shows how our practice and thinking as the church can fail to properly overlap with God's mission. As a case in point, one application is given in regard to how a missionary might begin to bring healing in the way he speaks to an American congregation

Canon and Authority in Papias
Luke Irwin

Textual and Thematic Hinges Between Is. 52.13-53.12 and Is. 54
Aaron Goldstein

Plundering the Idealists
K. J. Drake

Primeval Chronology
Jeremy Sexton

Proto-Neo-Calvinism: Comparing The Mercersburg Theology of Schaff and Nevin with the Reformational Theology of Kuyper and Bavinck
Dustin Messer

Esther Beauty Queen or Beautiful Queen? Considering Esther's Character in Light of the Unfolding Narrative in the Book of Esther
Staci King

The Mind of the Church and the Mind of Scripture: An Examination of the Development of Conciliar Theology
Tim Butler

Adolph Schlatter and Ulrich Wilckens
Daniel Gleich

A Look at the Land in the Old and New Testaments: An Evaluation of the Connection to Creation and Kingdom
Jamie Stowell

Yahweh's Conquest
Brian Taylor

Paul Gerhard'ts Eschatological Vision and Its Revision
Ruth McDonnell, Assistant Director of MA Programs, PhD student Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Missions as Reconciliation
Sam Belz

Ancient and Near Eastern Views of Circumcision
Jarad Corzine

The Conquests of Joshua and Raids of Muhammad: Theological Reflections on an Old Problem
Caleb Miller

Paul as Diakonos Christou: A New Translation and an Ancient Doctrine
Dr. Jimmy Agan

Should Evangelicals Embrace Historical Criticism? The Hays-Ansberry Proposal
Dr. Bob Yarbrough

Theological Fellowship Covenant Group

This year we had the opportunity to read and interact with many talented scholars and valuable primary sources. We would like to inform you of what the Theological Fellowship read over the year and thank all those who spoke at our events.

Fall 2013- Apostolic Fathers

During the Fall semester of 2013, we focused on readings from the earliest Christian writers, circa A.D. 100-200. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers give unique perspective to the formation of Christian doctrine during the years following the death of the Apostles. While the great majority of these writings are epistolary, they nevertheless contain a broad array of purposes and designs. The writings of Ignatius serve to bolster the faith of Christians who fear his coming martyrdom. The Epistle to Diognetus offers our earliest example of post-biblical apologetic. The Didache instructs new proselytes in the way of holiness. The Epistle of Barnabas makes the case for an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament. Every item in the corpus was invaluable for our understanding of 2nd century Christianity and the progress of the gospel. These writings were supplemented by a lecture from Dr. Peter Martens entitled, "Why We Should Study the Reception History of the Bible, or What the (Notorious) Origen Teaches Us." While not an Apostolic Father in the proper sense, Origen's exegesis gave us a sense of the trajectory that the Fathers set for subsequent generations of believers.

9/4-The Letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians
9/11-The Letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians
9/18-The Letter of Ignatius to the Trallians
9/25-1 Clement (Ch. 1-25)
10/2-1 Clement (Ch. 26-49)
10/9-The Didache
10/23-The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus
10/30-The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians
11/6-The Epistle of Barnabas
11/13-Papias fragments
11/20-The Martyrdom of Polycarp
1/21- The Third Annual Theological Conference with speaker, Dr. Jimmy Agan and his plenary lecture, "Paul as Diakonos Christou: A New Translation and an Ancient Doctrine."

Spring 2014-Septuagint

This semester the Fellowship had the opportunity to delve into the fascinating world of the Septuagint. The LXX is a treasure for the scholar on many levels. First, the Septuagint was the first translation of the Hebrew Bible into any language and as such gives us details on a section of Jewish culture in the

Intertestamental period. Scribal exactness, imported phraseology and contextualized word choice all give clues to the translators' mindset. The Letter of Aristeas proved to be helpful in this regard, as well. Second, the LXX also provides (in theory) the ability to reconstruct a tradition of a Hebrew Vorlage, or parent text, that is independent from the Masoretic Text. Although we found out that this venture is fraught with difficulty, there is much to be gained from an examination of the Old Greek in conjunction with the MT. Finally, study of the Septuagint allows for a greater understanding of the theological battles of the early church, who based their arguments on the Greek and not on the Hebrew. During the semester we translated several passages of the LXX and read selections from Karen Jobes' and Moises Silva's "Invitation to the Septuagint." Dr. Jobes was kind enough to travel to Covenant and be our spring Bantam Lecturer. She gave a lecture entitled, "Quoting God: Why the Greek Old Testament is Important for Understanding the Bible."

2/19-"Introduction: Why Study the Septuagint?" by Karen Jobes and Moises Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, Introduction
2/26-Translation of LXX Psalm 110:1-4
3/5-Translation of LXX Psalm 110: 5-7
3/12-"The Origin of the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions" by Karen Jobes and Moises Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, Ch. 1
3/26- The Letter of Aristeas
4/2 & 9-Translation of LXX Exodus 20: 1-6
4/16- Translation of LXX Exodus 20: 7-11
4/23- "Using the Septuagint for the Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible" by Karen Jobes and Moises Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, Ch. 7
4/30- "Septuagint and the New Testament" by Karen Jobes and Moises Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, Ch. 9
5/5- Translation of the LXX Exodus 20:12-17

Ministry Lunches: The purpose of these lectures is for the faculty and students to have discussions regarding academic ministry, pursuing PhD studies, and all of the joys and troubles of the academic-church life. We would like to thank Drs. David Chapman, Dan Doriani and Hans Bayer for their participation in the Fall Lunches. We would also like to thank Arthur Keefer and Drs. Greg Perry and Brian Aucker for their gracious service in the Spring Ministry Lunches.

Sean Duncan, Co-Chair