

THE BANTAM REVIEW

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AT COVENANT SEMINARY



PAPERS AND ABSTRACTS
FROM THE SECOND ANNUAL
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2013

INCLUDING BOOK REVIEWS
BY THEOLOGICAL FELLOWSHIP OFFICERS

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Preface

The second volume of the *Bantam Review* represents many things: the climax and culmination of our efforts and activities over the last academic year, the continued pursuit of excellence, rigor, fellowship and godliness in our academic ministry in the midst of our seminary studies, as well as the wonderful contributions from our fellows students and colleagues at our second annual conference.

Most of all this volume reflects who we are as a student group. Aaron White (CTS Alum '12) and I began this group last year out of a growing recognition that a number of us at Covenant Theological Seminary wanted to pursue further studies and yet had little support or guidance apart from what we sought out individually. This was no fault of the Seminary. They have primarily committed themselves to the laudable task of preparing future ministers of the church. Rather, our initiative arose from an effort to both affirm the legitimacy of academics and godly scholarship as beneficial to the Church and to provide a venue for regular support, guidance and interaction toward that end. Thus, we organized a weekly meeting for reading and discussion, bi-annual lectures (this year we hosted Dr. Esther L. Meek and Dr. Michael McClymond), and a yearly conference to provide venues for students to interact with each other and notable scholars.

I was reminded recently of the harmony of academics and the ministry of the gospel when I looked at John Owen's *Communion with the Triune God*.¹ It includes an image of the original title page which reads thus, "Communion with the Triune God... by John Owen, D.D., Servant of Jesus Christ in the work of the Gospel." Despite the anti-intellectualism which often prevails in American Evangelical culture, there is a long standing tradition which sees the work of the theologian as service to Jesus and the Church. That tradition stretches from Owen, Calvin and Luther all the way back to Jerome and Augustine along with innumerable others. We stand in that tradition viewing our academic work as part of our service to our Lord and Savior Jesus for the benefit of the Church. We are students of the glory of God, servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, united and strengthened for the task by the Holy Spirit. We selected the crowing rooster as our group icon for this reason; a warning against turning away from our Lord under the pressures of the world (Matt 26:34). We are a fellowship bent on encouraging each other towards loyalty to Jesus. With this in mind, co-chair Philip Ryan, secretary Arthur Keefer and I changed our name from "Covenant Seminary Theological Society" to "The Theological Fellowship at Covenant Seminary" in the hope of making all of the above slightly more explicit and further differentiating ourselves from the seminary.

This year's review includes abstracts from almost every paper presented at our conference. We were thrilled at the variety and excellence of this year's

¹ Kelly Kopic and Justin Taylor, eds.

contributors. We were especially pleased with Dr. Esther L. Meek's plenary session entitled, "Covenant Epistemology: Restoring Love, Wonder, and Wisdom to Scholarship and Seminary." The papers we selected to be published in full were those we felt stood out among student contributions. They were the best quality, but they also made the most significant arguments. Kyle Dillon's (CTS Alum '12) paper is an important and altogether helpful survey of the differences, strengths and weaknesses of various covenantal views. Variety within covenant frameworks is often missed and misunderstood in the shadow of the bigger contrast with Dispensationalism; Dillon's paper is a valuable resource to that end. Kyle Keating's wonderful essay exhibits care, aptitude, and insight. His work answers the question F.F. Bruce raised over twenty years ago, "How does Christ save in Luke-Acts?" Caroline Scruggs contributed a much needed, tightly argued, and thoughtful defense of the traditional reading of 1 Tim 2:12ff. No doubt, this is a hot topic for our day and makes the precision and care she exercises in her short contribution all the more significant. Steven Nicoletti's paper on the presupposition pool in the first century is not only thorough and well-researched, but innovative and profound in pointing a way forward in the discussion of infant baptism. The quality of this paper was attested to when he received the SBL Regional Graduate Award for it. Rev. David Richmon's (CTS Alum '09) work offers a profound and refreshing insight into the central conception of man as he relates to God in Calvin's thought. While offering a welcome corrective to the imbalanced portrayal Calvin's anthropology receives, he also sets the stage for a better understanding of the Eucharist in Calvin's thought and for our practice. Moreover, he has rightly captured the beauty and joy which pulse throughout the *Institutes* as Calvin basks in the overflowing love of the Father. Scott Cress' contribution examining assurance in Jonathan Edwards deals with a topic most readers of Edwards struggle with. The care, historical sensitivity and thoroughness exercised throughout make this a compelling essay. It is this sort of insightful and valuable work which we fully commend to our readers and have committed ourselves to as a group. This year, we, the editorial staff, have included some of our own book reviews in the hopes of expanding not only the size of our humble *Bantam Review* but also its usefulness.

This second volume of the Bantam Review also represents the continued momentum of our efforts from last year. It has been my personal joy to have been a part of the Theological Fellowship at Covenant Seminary for the last two years. It has grown from an ambitious idea Aaron and I had during our summer German class to a fruitful and encouraging ministry. This gives me hope that this group will only continue to produce great scholars and cultivate fellowship, good discussion and loyalty to Jesus and his people.

Lastly, this second volume represents the many kindnesses, notes and words of encouragement, time spent, help and money given to us from the folks at Covenant Theological Seminary. Thanks are due especially to Mike Higgins, Mark McElmurry, Tomoko Steinbach, Chris Florence and Gerry Reimer for their patience and help. Student Council's commitment to us and support have been a great encouragement. Philip Ryan and I would like especially to thank our wives for

their unceasing support of this 'hobbie' of ours. Thanks to all the professors who gave of their time to our group either in ministry lunches, Q&A sessions, lectures or in presenting papers at our conference alongside their students: Dr. Hans Bayer, Dr. Daniel Kim, Dr. Brad Matthews, Dr. David Jones, Dr. Jay Sklar, Dr. Jimmy Agan, Dr. Brian Aucker, Dr. Esther L. Meek (Geneva), Dr. Michael McClymond (SLU) and Dr. Michael Bird (Ridley). Special thanks are reserved for our mentor, sponsor and advocate, Dr. Bob Yarbrough. His support, commitment, and even the occasional smirk have meant the world to us.

Daniel Robbins
Co-Founder of the Theological Fellowship
M.Div. 2013

2012-2013 Calendar

Bantam Lecture Series:

April 12th – Dr. Michael McClymond on “Did Edwards Change his Mind?” from his recent work *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (co-authored with G. McDermott)

2st ANNUAL COVENANT SEMINARY THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

January 22nd - Plenary Address from: Dr. Esther Meek on *Covenant Epistemology*
Including papers given by: Faculty, alumni, guest graduate students, and current Covenant students. (attendance 60; 30 papers given)

TFCS GROUP MEETINGS:

Oct. 18th - Dr. Daniel Kim - *Pursuing a Doctorate at an Evangelical Institution*

Nov. 6th - Dr. Brad Matthews - *Hurdles in the Ph.D. Process*

Nov. 14th - Dr. Hans Bayer - *Teaching Theology in Eastern Europe*

Mar. 12th - Dr. Brian Aucker - *Burning Up on Re-Entry: The Loss of an Academic Idol*

Apr. 16th - Dr. Bob Yarbrough - *Ph.D. and Family Life*

Conference Papers

Who Belongs in the New Covenant? Three Views and Their Implications for Infant Baptism

Kyle A. Dillon

Introduction

One of the ongoing debates within the evangelical world centers on the question of infant baptism—that is, should we baptize professing believers only, or should we baptize both believers and their children? As both sides of the debate agree, there is no explicit command in Scripture for one practice or the other, so it is generally believed that the matter must be settled *indirectly*, by determining the role that baptism plays within broader theological frameworks. This morning I'm going to survey various attempts to situate baptism within the context of the New Covenant.

The New Covenant is a recurring theme in Scripture. In the OT, it's mentioned explicitly only once, in Jeremiah 31. According to this passage, which is found in the context of Judah's promised return from Babylonian exile, the Lord makes a "new covenant" with the houses of Israel and Judah. This covenant is unlike the old covenant that their forefathers had broken; it leads to the internalization of God's law and to the full forgiveness of sin. We could also connect Jeremiah 31 with the restoration prophecies in Deuteronomy 30 and Ezekiel 36. While these prophecies do not explicitly refer to a New Covenant, they do share the underlying idea that the Lord himself will deal directly with the problem that had necessitated Israel's punishment by exile in the first place. Since the problem was Israel's heart, God would intervene to change their heart. In the NT, the phrase "new covenant" is found in several places, including Luke 22, 1 Corinthians 11, 2 Corinthians 3, and Hebrews 8, 9, 12. These passages variously tie the New Covenant to the Lord's Supper, to a ministry of the Spirit rather than the letter, to Christ's mediation and sacrificial death, and to better, eternal promises.

Now there is no passage of Scripture that explicitly ties the New Covenant either to the practice of baptism or to the children of believers.

Connecting these three concepts must therefore be done inductively, based on inferences from the biblical text. In this paper, I will present and evaluate three different views on the relationship between the New Covenant, baptism, and believers' children. These three views are not exhaustive of Christian views on baptism; rather, they represent three different perspectives from within the Calvinistic tradition. In the order that I am presenting them, they are the Progressive Covenantal view, the Augustinian view, and the Traditional Reformed view. The first view opposes infant baptism, while the second two support it. I will personally land between the Augustinian view and the Traditional Reformed view.

The Progressive Covenantal View

I begin with the Progressive Covenantal view. This position, which is gaining popularity among Reformed Baptists, is described primarily in two works—first, in *Believers' Baptism*, edited by Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2007), and most recently in *Kingdom through Covenant*, by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012). This second work seeks to take a middle ground between traditional Covenant Theology and dispensationalism; hence the name “Progressive Covenantalism.”

The essence of Progressive Covenantalism is that the New Covenant signifies a visible community consisting of spiritually regenerate believers only. Or in Wellum's words, “*All those within the ‘new covenant community’ are, by definition, people who presently have experienced regeneration of heart and the full forgiveness of sin.*”¹ So unlike OT Israel, God's people are no longer understood as a mixed entity of believers and unbelievers, but now every covenant member has a saving knowledge of the Lord. Progressive Covenantalists likewise understand the New Testament church as a *heavenly* and *spiritual* entity whose members are “in Christ,” but no spiritually unregenerate person can ever be united to Christ. Therefore, since baptism signifies union with Christ and New Covenant membership, Progressive Covenantalists argue that it should only be applied to those who show evidence of spiritual regeneration—that is, professing believers. You will notice then a significant implication of Progressive Covenantalism: it collapses the traditional distinction between the visible and invisible church—that is, the distinction between the visible community of God's people and those within the community who are eternally elect.²

Now in my opinion, Progressive Covenantalism has three significant problems. First, we cannot baptize individuals on the basis of their status as eternally elect—a status which is unknowable to us. Rather, we could at best only baptize them on the basis of their profession of faith, which may or may not be

¹ *Kingdom through Covenant*, 64f.

² *Ibid.*, 72f, 691.

genuine. This fact alone makes the visible/invisible church distinction inescapable.³ Second, Jeremiah 32:39 declares that the New Covenant is for the good of both Israel and their children after them. The problem, as Jeremiah saw it, was not the presence of children in the covenant, but rather apostates. And third, Progressive Covenantalism cannot adequately account for the existence of covenant breakers within the church, such as we find in the NT warning and apostasy passages. Holding to the Calvinist doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, Progressive Covenantalists teach that it is impossible for those who are spiritually regenerate to lose their salvation. So if the New Covenant community is restricted to only those who are spiritually regenerate, then the New Covenant is by definition unbreakable. And yet Hebrews 6:4-5 says that there are individuals in the church who “have been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,” but who nevertheless fall away. Further, according to Hebrews 10:29, such an apostate has “profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified.” How do Progressive Covenantalists deal with such passages? They say that these verses only present a hypothetical scenario by which the author intends to spur his readers toward perseverance in their faith.⁴ In other words, the threat is merely fictitious. But this sounds like special pleading to me. A natural reading of these warning passages strongly suggests that covenant members can and do fall away. I am convinced that another approach is needed.

The Augustinian View

This brings us to the second view, which may be called Augustinianism, after its most famous defender in church history, Saint Augustine of Hippo. In more recent years, it has been supported by J. Oliver Buswell, Robert Rayburn and our own Dr. Jack Collins. One of the most extensive treatments of this view is found in Joshua Moon’s recent publication, *Jeremiah’s New Covenant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010).

To understand the Augustinian view, one must understand the difference between the objective administration of the covenant and the subjective appropriation of it. “Objective” refers to the various external structures, ceremonies, and sacraments that regulate the community of God’s people.

³ Wellum says that this is “merely a human epistemological problem,” but that we should still do our best to baptize only when we see evidence of regeneration (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 693). But this turns baptism into nothing more than a mark of our best guess, which nullifies any real efficacy to it and any material connection to the covenant (a point which Wellum would probably not deny). In fact, by spiritualizing the church, it undermines any material reality to the covenant whatsoever, even calling into question our ability to call a particular community of professing believers a church. This has the unintended effect of creating a dualistic split, elevating the spiritual at the expense of the physical. Does this really fit the NT picture of the church?

⁴ *Believer’s Baptism*, 3-5.

“Subjective” refers to those individuals within the community who have embraced the covenant from the heart, clinging to its promises by faith—again, think visible and invisible church. Further, the objective side of the covenant may change progressively over time, as we see with the adding of circumcision, then the priesthood, then the monarchy, and so forth. But the subjective side remains the same throughout history; OT saints were saved in the same way that we are today. The Augustinian view teaches that the New Covenant refers to this subjective aspect of the covenant, not the objective aspect. This means that the New Covenant is not a redemptive-historical development of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants. Instead, one could say that Abraham, Moses, and David were themselves members of the New Covenant. And conversely, “old covenant” does not refer to a bygone era in redemptive history, but rather to individuals whose standing in the covenant is merely external. So similar to the Progressive Covenantal view, the Augustinian view also restricts the New Covenant to those who are spiritually regenerate. But the difference is that the Augustinian view still maintains a visible/invisible church distinction. The old and new covenants—faithless fakers and true believers—exist side-by-side within the covenant community throughout all ages, until the Eschaton.

Now with respect to baptism, Augustinians understand it to be an objective ordinance of the visible church. It may signify the spiritual realities of the New Covenant in a sacramental sense, but it does not automatically guarantee one’s status as a regenerate participant of the New Covenant. Therefore, Augustinians have no problem applying the rite of baptism to believers’ children.

Now in my opinion, the Augustinian view has a lot to commend itself, especially with respect to the OT data. First, it accounts for the close literary connection between Jeremiah’s New Covenant prophecy and Israel’s restoration from Babylonian exile. Second, it can take at face value the subjective aspects of Jeremiah’s New Covenant prophecy. And third, the Augustinian view can make sense of the fact that we see New Covenant realities expressed in the lives of certain pre-exilic saints. For example, in Jeremiah 31:33, the Lord prophesies, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” But in Psalm 40:8, King David can also pray to the Lord, “Your law is within my heart.” Similarly, Deuteronomy 30:6 says of the returning Jewish exiles, “The LORD your God will circumcise your heart... so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” But 2 Kings 23:25 says that King Josiah, who reigned before the exile, “turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul.” So it seems hard to deny that subjective aspects of the New Covenant existed well before the Christian era. But the chief weakness of the Augustinian view, as I see it, is its difficulty in handling the NT data.

The Traditional Reformed View

This brings us to the third and final view, which I call the Traditional Reformed view. This position has been described in a number of works, including

Richard Pratt's essay, "Infant Baptism in the New Covenant,"⁵ and *Far as the Curse Is Found* by our own Dr. Mike Williams (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005). According to the Traditional Reformed view, the New Covenant brings with it sweeping changes to the administration of the covenant. In fact, nearly all that distinguishes the NT church from OT Israel may be subsumed under the heading of the New Covenant. The arrival of the Messiah—New Covenant. The outpouring of the Spirit—New Covenant. The institution of baptism and the Lord's Supper—New Covenant. However, for all the changes that the New Covenant brings, certain things remain the same. Just as the children of Israelites were included in the old covenant, so also the children of believers are included in the New Covenant. The New Covenant does not further restrict covenant membership, but rather expands it, so as now to include even the Gentiles. And since baptism is understood to signify membership in the New Covenant, it may also be applied to infant covenant members.

The NT evidence in support of the Traditional Reformed view seems to be pretty substantial. When Christ institutes the Lord's Supper in Luke 22, he calls it the New Covenant in his blood. Now an Augustinian would interpret this statement sacramentally, in the sense that the Lord's Supper is a physical sign of the spiritual reality of regeneration.⁶ Now I agree that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament, but is that all that Christ means in calling it the New Covenant? After all, in the OT, circumcision and the Passover were likewise sacraments, but would we say that they too constituted the New Covenant? In addition, Christ is called the mediator of the New Covenant in Hebrews 8, 9. But he did not assume his mediatorial role until after he had accomplished his work of atonement. Pre-incarnate Christ was not a covenant mediator. So either we have to say that the New Covenant existed unmediated prior to the Incarnation, or we acknowledge that in some sense the New Covenant was inaugurated by the mediation of Christ. The latter sounds more plausible to me.⁷

⁵ In *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003).

⁶ C. John Collins, "The New Covenant and Redemptive History" (unpublished essay, 2012), 16.

⁷ At the same time, proponents of the Traditional Reformed view must still account for the subjective language used in Jeremiah 31 and the parallel restoration prophecies in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel. Taken together, these prophecies form a picture of a people with transformed hearts and an unmediated knowledge of God and of his law. Surely, such language goes well beyond the realities we experience even today in the Christian church. After all, we are still a mixed company of regenerate and unregenerate. And even the most sanctified ones among us still need to hear instruction in God's Word. So how does the Traditional Reformed view deal with this interpretive difficulty? Richard Pratt appeals to the concept of inaugurated eschatology—the tension between the "already" and the "not yet." Many of the New Covenant promises have already come to fulfillment, but many others still await Christ's return. It will not be until the Eschaton that we finally see the complete merger of the visible church and the invisible church. Pratt, 168. See also Williams, 215-216.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it might be helpful to frame this whole discussion in the context of the two Latin theological terms, *ordo salutis* and *historia salutis*. *Ordo salutis*, meaning “order of salvation,” refers to that “golden chain,” the personal experience of salvation that leads an individual from regeneration, to faith, to justification, to sanctification, to glorification. By contrast, *historia salutis*, meaning “history of salvation,” refers to God’s dealings with humanity in general throughout the course of world events. The three views we’ve examined this morning all relate the New Covenant to these two concepts in different ways. The Traditional Reformed view sees the New Covenant as a matter of *historia salutis*; the Augustinian view sees it as a matter of *ordo salutis*; and the Progressive Covenantalists want to have their cake and eat it too.

Now as I said previously, I personally think the truth lies somewhere between the Traditional Reformed view and the Augustinian view. It seems to me that Scripture does not use the term “New Covenant” univocally, with the same meaning in every passage. In some places, such as Jeremiah 31, the emphasis appears to be on the subjective side. But in other places, such as Hebrews 8, 9, the emphasis appears to be on the objective side. I do not think that these emphases are mutually exclusive; rather, they are complementary. The physical signs of the New Covenant administration are meant to point to the spiritual realities of a New Covenant relationship. Now you might ask me if I’m not trying to have my cake and eat it too. My response is yes, but not in the same way as Progressive Covenantalism. I do think that the New Covenant can be understood as both objective-visible-*historia* on the one hand, and as subjective-invisible-*ordo* on the other. But I also think that a distinction between these two categories needs to be maintained, at least until the church militant becomes the church triumphant. So I’m trying to integrate the strengths of each position. This in turn will have very practical implications, not least of which is addressing the question, should believers baptize their children? And in my personal opinion, the answer to that question is yes. If believers’ children are covenant members, and if baptism is for covenant members, then baptism is for believers’ children.

Appendix: Anticipated Objections from the OT to the Augustinian View

While I believe that the OT evidence generally favors an Augustinian reading, there are two potential objections from the OT that need to be addressed. First, I mentioned how Jeremiah's New Covenant prophecy corresponds to the restoration prophecy in Ezekiel 36. In that passage, God promises to put his Spirit within his people, so that they will obey his commands. A similar idea is echoed in the prophecy of Joel 2, where God promises to pour out his Spirit on all flesh, so that men and women will prophesy and have visions. The apostle Peter quotes this very passage in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost, inaugurating a new era in redemptive history. This would then tie the New Covenant to the Christian era. So this objection reasons from Jeremiah 31 to Ezekiel 36 to Joel 2 to Acts 2. The weakest link in this chain is the connection between Ezekiel 36 and Joel 2; they might refer to two different workings of the Spirit, the former being *regeneration* for the purpose of obedience, and the latter being *outpouring* for the purpose of supernatural gifts. This would then exclude Joel 2 from the category of New Covenant prophecy. This appears to be supported by Ezekiel 37, the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones. In v.14, the Lord says, "I will put my Spirit within you... and I will place you in your own land." For Ezekiel, the Spirit's activity is directly connected with the return from exile, not Pentecost.

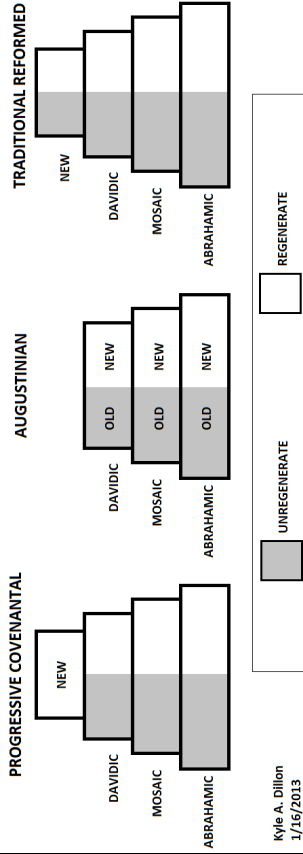
The second possible objection is based on Jeremiah 31:34, where the Lord declares, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." One might see in this statement a reference to the cross, where the true forgiveness of sin was actually accomplished.⁸ After all, the book of Hebrews tells us that the blood of goats and bulls could never take away sins (10:4), and Romans tells us that God had passed over former sins until he put forth his own Son as a propitiatory sacrifice (3:25). In this regard, OT sacrifices were merely "IOU's" or "promissory notes" that had no inherent power to forgive. So if Jeremiah 31 is talking about forgiveness actually accomplished, one may argue that it is a messianic prophecy. However, I think it may help to distinguish between the *subjective* and *objective* conditions for forgiveness. On the subjective side, forgiveness requires repentance. On the objective side, forgiveness requires an atoning sacrifice. It seems to me that Jeremiah's prophecy is concerned with the subjective side.⁹ I don't see in Jeremiah any hint that something was fundamentally wrong with the OT sacrificial system per se. Although in retrospect we as Christians can say that the cross achieved our forgiveness, it is doubtful that that's what Jeremiah had in mind.¹⁰

⁸ So Williams, 216-217.

⁹ Williams acknowledges that the problem as Jeremiah saw it was not the Mosaic Covenant per se, but rather Israel's failure to keep it. *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁰ For both objections, a connection to the Christian era may still be established *typologically*, with the return from exile setting a pattern that finds a heightened fulfillment at Calvary and Pentecost. Such a reading would respect the integrity of the prophecies in their original OT context.

WHO BELONGS IN THE NEW COVENANT? Three Views and Their Implications for Infant Baptism



What does Paul Mean by “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man?”

Caroline Lamberth Scruggs

Contemporary debates surrounding the meaning of Paul’s words in 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man,” abound, both outside and within the evangelical church, among men and women alike. We are driven to engage the topic for reasons both personal and pragmatic. We approach the issue with submissiveness or cynicism, or anything along the vast spectrum in between. We come to it with a variety of presuppositions, theological and cultural, curious as to what Paul actually means by these words. No matter what drives us to the topic nor what we bring to the conversation, the questions at hand are both exegetical and hermeneutical. What does Paul’s prohibition mean? And what are the implications for the church today? The modern egalitarian argument puts parameters on the scope of Paul’s words. Either they merely prohibit women from particular kinds or manners of teaching, or they are specific only to the Ephesian context and not prescriptive for the church today, or both. The traditional complementarian view upholds Paul’s words to be both explicit and prescriptive. Both the content and context of this verse support the latter, upholding that Paul’s words here, which are normative for the church throughout all time, prohibit women from teaching and exercising authority over men in the context of public worship.

Central to the exegetical question is Paul’s use of *διδάσκω*, his definition of *αυθεντέω*, and the relationship of these words to one another. In their analysis of these verses, the scholars Richard and Catherine Kroeger understand *διδάσκω* to be in reference to the false teaching referred to elsewhere in 1 Timothy.¹ Paul’s prohibition then does not exclude women from teaching in the church generally, but merely from the teaching of heresy and false doctrine. This seems reasonable, as Paul’s exhortation to Timothy to deal strongly with those propagating a false doctrine is woven throughout the letter. However, at no other point in the letter does an unqualified form of *διδάσκω* refer to this false teaching. Rather, Paul’s references to and warnings about false teachers are explicit throughout. In 1 Timothy 3:3-4, Paul reminds Timothy that he had urged him to “remain at

¹ Richard Kroeger and Catherine Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 81.

Ephesus, that [he] may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.” The word employed here is not διδάσκω but ετεροδιδασκαλέω, which literally means “to teach contrary to standard instruction or to give divergent instruction.”² The same verb, ετεροδιδασκαλέω is used again in 6:3, when Paul asserts that anyone who “teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness...is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.” The nominal form of διδάσκω does appear in 4:1 in reference to false teaching. However, it is qualified by the genitive, δαιμόνιον, thus making clear that the specific teaching in view in that particular verse is demonic teaching. Considering, the explicit reference to false teaching in these verses, it would seem inconsistent of Paul to state it so implicitly in 2:12 and in reference to women only.

Therefore, we are forced to ask the question, “How *does* Paul use the unqualified form διδάσκω throughout his first epistle to Timothy?” Köstenberger³ argues that other usages of διδάσκω throughout the letter refer explicitly to “the permanent role assigned to Timothy and the overseers of the church,” and thus, should be interpreted likewise here. In 3:2, the verb describes a specific duty of the elder, and in 4:11 and 6:2, it is used in the imperative form as a specific command to Timothy himself. Twice the unqualified nominal form (διδασκαλία) is used in similar ways. In 4:16, Paul exhorts Timothy directly to “keep a close watch on [himself] and on the teaching, and in 5:17, elders who rule well are instructed to be given a double honor, “especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” If Paul’s use of διδάσκω in 2:12 is consistent with his use of it elsewhere in the letter, both verbally and nominally, we must conclude that the same kind of teaching is in view here. We must conclude that the kind of teaching women are excluded from in this passage is the kind of teaching required of and reserved for elders of the church alone.

Αυθεντέω is a *hapax legomena*, appearing only once in the New Testament. Consequently, interpreting its exact meaning in this verse can be difficult. The scholars Kroeger find that lexically “αυθεντέω can have implications of killing, beginning, and copulating.”⁴ Consequently, they adopt the lexical meaning, “to represent oneself as the author, source, or originator of something.” The implications of this meaning then are that Paul prohibits a woman from teaching that she was the creator of man.⁵ Lexical studies show this as an obscure but possible meaning. However, these studies also show that common uses of

² BDAG, ετεροδιδασκαλέω.

³ Andreas Köstenberger, *I Timothy*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised ed., eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 517. Citing I Timothy 3:2, 4:11, and 5:17

⁴ H. Scott Baldwin, “A Difficult Word,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of I Timothy 2:9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 69.

⁵ Kroeger, 103, 109.

ουθεντέω had a range of meaning that were primarily linked to “the root concept of authority,”⁶ and therefore, give weight to the historic translation, “to exercise authority over.”

In addition to understanding the definition of these words, how one interprets relationship of each word to the other directly impacts interpretation. The Kroegers ground their interpretation on a pattern in 1 Timothy in which the verbal form of διδάσκω is consistently “accompanied by another verb.”⁷ They argue that throughout this pattern “each verb in the doublet qualifies and helps to sharpen the focus of the other.”⁸ The resulting interpretation is that Paul prohibits women only from teaching men in an authoritative or domineering way. However, this argument breaks down because the two verbs in questions in this text are joined by the conjunction ουδέ, which is a coordinating rather than a subordinating conjunction.⁹ As a coordinating conjunction, ουδέ joins together parallel terms that are either “both viewed positively or negatively by the writer or speaker.”¹⁰ Because the conjunction cannot be translated adverbially, the two verbs cannot qualify one another, but rather are linked together as similar but distinct concepts.

Concerning the tension between prescriptive norms and situational specificity, much can be said on both sides of the argument regarding the culture of ancient Ephesus, the composition of the Ephesian church, and our contemporary framework. However, the text itself gives significant weight to the argument that Paul’s words, while written with situational specificity, are to be considered normative for the whole church.

Proponents of both sides of the argument employ Paul’s use of επιτρέπω in the present tense to support their view of the temporality of Paul’s words. An egalitarian argument suggests επιτρέπω “speaks to a specific and limited situation rather than a universal one,”¹¹ and that its present tense usage implies “that while he did not presently permit women to teach or exercise authority in the church, he might permit it in the future.”¹² However, Wallace argues this interpretation is not consistent with the grammatical usage of the present tense. He writes, “the normal use of the present tense in didactic literature, especially when introducing an exhortation is not descriptive but a general precept that has gnomic implications.”¹³ Consequently, rather than instituting a temporary guideline for the church in

⁶ For a complete summary of lexical studies see H. Scott Baldwin’s chapter, “A Difficult Word,” in *Women in the Church*.

⁷ Kroeger, 80.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence Structure in I Timothy 2:12,” in *Women in the Church*, 90.

¹⁰ Ibid., 89. On pp. 86-89, Köstenberger provides a pattern of the New Testament use of ουδέ as a coordinating conjunction joining together parallel terms or ideas.

¹¹ John Toews, cited in Kroeger, 83. Kroeger alludes specifically to Toews’ study of επιτρέπω in the Septuagint.

¹² Daniel Doriani, *Women in the Church*, 215.

¹³ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 525.

Ephesus, Paul's use of *ἐπιτρέπω* here is an exercise of his "apostolic authority" in which he sets guidelines to henceforth govern the household of God.

In vv. 13-14, Paul alludes to the roles of Adam and Eve both in creation and in the fall in order to support the prohibition that he has just made in v. 12. The question at hand then is *how* is Paul using this allusion? How one answers this question has a significant impact on whether or not one interprets Paul's words here to be specific for the church in Ephesus or normative for the whole church. One interpretation suggests that Paul is using this allusion merely to illustrate the argument, giving an example of what can happen when women exercise a particular kind of authority over men. There are several difficulties with this interpretation however. First, while focusing on the priority of Eve in the fall, it seems to overlook the priority of Adam in creation altogether. Second, in Genesis and Paul the text does not focus on Eve's authority over her husband, nor does either "suggest that she taught Adam."¹⁴ As Schreiner suggests, the emphasis of both passages is "what transpired in Eve's heart- namely, deception."¹⁵

A second interpretation, also in support of the situational specificity of Paul's prohibition, supported by the scholars Kroeger, interprets vv. 13 and 14 to be a direct refutation of a particular "Gnostic or proto-Gnostic mythology glorifying Eve"¹⁶ that may have been circulating in the Ephesus and even the Ephesian church at the time. However, we have already seen lexically that Paul's prohibition in 2:12 is in reference to teaching in general rather than to false teaching specifically. To then immediately follow with a direct refutation of a specific heresy or mythology would then be inconsistent if not wholly out of place.

In a third interpretation, Paul links the roles of men and women in public worship to the roles of Adam and Eve in creation and the fall to "explain or support"¹⁷ his previous prohibition. Though Paul's words here are likely difficult for many today, Paul "considers his command" as David Gordon writes, "to be the proper application of Adam's priority in creation and Eve's priority in the fall."¹⁸ By grounding his argument in the creation and the fall, both specific events with normative and universal implications, Paul loudly underscores its normative element.

Responsible interpretations must not isolate this verse alone, but consider it within the wider context of this passage specifically and within the even wider context of the entire Pauline corpus. Many scholars, in outlining the flow of thought in 1Timothy, understand that 2:1-3:15 were to be heard and understood as a cohesive unit of Paul's apostolic instruction for the public assembly of the church. This series of instructions is set off in 2:1 by the phrase, "first of all then..." The purpose for these apostolic instructions is provided at the end of the

¹⁴ Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 141.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Kroeger and Kroeger, 117.

¹⁷ D.A. Carson and Gregory K. Beale, *Commentary of New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 894.

¹⁸ T. David Gordon, *Women in the Church*, 63.

passage, in 3:14-15, where Paul notes that he writes these words so that they “may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.” Within the context of this passage, we find the specific context in which Paul’s prohibition in 2:12 applies, namely the public assembly of the church. So while Paul’s words are normative for the whole church in all times, they are not normative for all men and women in all contexts.

When we consider the wider context of the Pauline corpus, we find Paul’s specific prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12 to be expressed alongside affirmations of the dignity and equality of women in the sight of God, and the value of their gifts and roles in the church. Paul writes in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ.” Paul’s words express the unity and equality of those in Christ, and claim the distinctions of worth and value are broken down when one is baptized into his body. When considered alongside this strand of Pauline teaching, Paul’s prohibition in 1 Timothy cannot then be a statement of the value of women in the church, but merely the distinction of their particular roles. Schreiner likens this to the equality of personhood, but diversity in roles between the persons of the Godhead, concluding that “diverse functions” do not “suggest distinctions in worth between men and women.”¹⁹

In addition, throughout Paul’s letters he commends the work of various women and their service to their particular churches. Both Phoebe and Mary are commended in Romans for their ministry to Paul and their hard work for the sake of the church.²⁰ In his concluding remarks to the Philippians, Paul notes how the women “Euodia and Syntyche labored side by side with [him] in the gospel.”²¹ And in his second letter to Timothy, he expresses great regard for the sincerity of faith possessed both by Timothy’s mother and grandmother, with the implication of the importance of their role in teaching and passing it down to him.²² For Paul’s words in 1 Timothy to be consistent with the equality and value he assigns to women and their ministries in other places, they must not be viewed as intending to restrict or exclude women from ministry in the church, but rather to define and describe their God-given role.

We may conclude then, from both the content and context of 1 Timothy 2:12, that at the least, that Paul does not permit women to formally teach or exercise authority over men in the context of public worship, and that the proscription is to be normative for all of God’s church. This passage provides us with the floor, but not the ceiling on the question. If and how far this prohibition should be extended into other areas of the contemporary church and theologically academic life is not explicit in this text. Scholars admit these are gray areas without

¹⁹ Schreiner, *Women in the Church*, 156.

²⁰ Romans 16:1, 6.

²¹ Philippians 4:2-3.

²² 2 Timothy 1:5.

definitive lines or always-comfortable answers, and therefore urge should always be addressed with “prayer and discussion and humility.”²³

²³ Köstenberger, Shreiner, and Baldwin eds., 211.

Union with Christ in the Book of Acts

Kyle A. Keating

Introduction: Does Acts teach union with Christ?

Scholars have often treated Luke's Luke-Acts narrative as second-rate material for discerning New Testament theology in general, and soteriology specifically. Despite the emphasis upon salvation in both Luke's Gospel and Acts, the emphasis tends to be on the "what" of salvation as opposed to the "how". As a result, most theologies of Luke-Acts, while accounting for soteriology, and specifically the application of salvation, are fittingly brief. As F.F. Bruce points out, "How Jesus has procured...salvation for believers is rarely spelled out in Acts."¹

If we grant Bruce's conclusion that Acts is more concerned with the preaching of salvation rather than the "how" of soteriology and its application to the believer, the question remains, can we discern a soteriology of Acts? And for those who regard the New Testament as a unified whole, a second question emerges: can the soteriology of Acts be reconciled with the doctrine of union with Christ that is articulated more explicitly in the writings of John and Paul? Another way of asking this is, to what extent if at all does the book of Acts articulate or corroborate a doctrine of union with Christ? Is this aspect of Luke's soteriology consistent with John's and Paul's?

Contextual Considerations for Recognizing Union with Christ

In order to properly assess this question, we must first consider what can be properly defined as a doctrine of union with Christ in Acts. Recognizing the nature of the text itself, namely that it is narrative and speech driven as opposed to straight didactic reasoning, it is to misunderstand the intent of the text to ask if it "teaches" a given doctrine. Undoubtedly all of Scripture is meant to teach God's people, but we must recognize and take into consideration the genre of Acts in evaluating whether or not Luke articulates or corroborates a doctrine of union with Christ.

Second, we must consider the role that vocabulary plays in the articulation of a given doctrine. Put another way, we must observe the distinction between the language the biblical authors use and the doctrines that the church has developed.

¹ F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts: the English text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 65.

While there is conceptual agreement and often lexical overlap, we must not assume that every “in Christ” necessarily invokes the whole range of the meaning of the doctrine of union with Christ. Thus, the absence of typical union with Christ language (as seen in John or Paul) does not necessarily mean the absence of the concept of union with Christ (and vice versa).

Third, we must consider the relationship between the Book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament, especially the epistles. C.H. Dodd argues for the coherence of the kerygma of Acts and Paul’s epistles:

A comparison with the data of the Pauline epistles makes it certain that at least the substance of [Acts’] kerygma, with its historical core, is as early as the time of Paul, and that it represents the gospel which he declared to be common to him and the original apostles, the tradition which he received and handed on. When we further observe that most of the forms of the kerygma in Acts show in their language a strong Aramaic colouring, we may recognize the high probability that in these passages we are in fairly direct touch with the primitive tradition of the Jesus of history.²

The relevance of Dodd’s argument for our discussion is threefold: 1) the Pauline epistles predate the Book of Acts and therefore Luke would have likely been aware of Pauline theology; 2) Luke’s summaries of Paul’s sermons and ministry ought to be coherent with the theology of his epistles; 3) we must not assume that the absence of a Pauline doctrinal formulation in Acts necessarily means that Luke’s narrative contradicts that doctrine. We must recognize that the descriptive nature of Acts (as a sort of biography of the early church) means that any hints of a concept of union we find will likely reflect shadows of the doctrine that is to be fleshed out in the more didactic teaching of the epistles. Thus, we should not expect Luke in one of his summaries of a Pauline sermon to engage with the degree of intricacy and nuance the concept of union as Paul does in his letters.³

A summary of these concerns could be stated simply that in assessing union with Christ in Acts we must consider genre, purpose, and context. Therefore, the best criteria for assessing whether there is the presence of (or even hint of) a concept of union with Christ in Acts are found in the key themes of Acts itself. By examining a few key themes in Acts, we will be able to reasonably assess whether or not a concept of union is articulated, corroborated or even consistent with the theology of Acts. The themes that we will examine are: 1. The ministry of

² C.H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1938), 73.

³ For a more thorough discussion of the relationship of the Lukan Paul and the Paul of the Epistles, see Jacob Jervell, *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1984), esp. 52-76. Jervell concludes that Luke’s Paul is of both historical and theological value.

the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and beyond; 2. Baptism in the name of Jesus; and 3. The growth and mission of the church.

Articulation, Corroboration, and Consistency

However, before analyzing the themes in detail, we must first consider what it means for a concept of union to be articulated, corroborated, consistent in Acts. These three categories function on a sliding scale from most explicit to least explicit. Therefore, for Acts to articulate a concept of union with Christ requires an explicit discussion of such a concept (with allowances for semantic differences, see above). For example, to meet this standard we would expect a Lukan discussion of baptism in Acts to describe its effect in uniting believers to Christ. It must be said here that the genre of Acts does not lend itself to this “articulation” category for most of its theology. In general, the theology of Acts reveals itself on the more implicit end of the spectrum.

Corroboration follows the spectrum further toward the end of implicitness. No longer should we expect an explicit discussion of the concept. Rather, it is sufficient to see that some of the same conceptual categories are being used and that those concepts are functioning in ways similar to the more explicit articulations of John and Paul. This is to say that for Luke to corroborate John and Paul, it must be clear that Luke lives in a theological world where union with Christ is essential to understanding the Christian faith. In order to measure corroboration, we must consider the conceptual and semantic overlap found in key themes of Acts with Johannine and Pauline theology. For example, does Luke’s narration of baptism accord with Paul’s suggestion that baptism is an incorporation into the body of Christ?

Consistency merely requires that the theology of Acts does not contradict the concept of union with Christ that we find in John and Paul. Here there is no expectation that the same language or concepts will be used or even that ideas will have the same referent. For example, Luke and Paul can be talking about entirely separate concepts when discussing the significance of baptism, but those concepts cannot contradict one another.

A Summary of Union with Christ

Before we move on to a discussion of the key themes in Acts related to union with Christ, we must survey the more explicit concepts of union found in Paul and John which we are measuring Acts against. In order to evaluate whether or not Luke articulates, corroborates, or is consistent with union with Christ, we must have a template for comparison.

In John

In John the most common way that union with Christ is expressed is through statements of mutual indwelling.⁴ The concept of mutual indwelling is found throughout John, but in several places it is explicitly extended to the disciples. For example, just as the Father is in the Son, the Son is in the disciples (17:21). In John 14, the indwelling is reciprocal—just as Jesus is in the disciples, the disciples are in Jesus (14:20).⁵ Mutual indwelling suggests that the perichoretic relationship that exists between the Father and the Son is in some manner extended to the believer. Hans Burger helpfully suggests that mutual indwelling in John is a way of getting at the idea of communion. He goes on to conclude, “Consequently, the communion with Christ and God in a Johannine perspective is a dynamic process in which the believer ‘absorbs’ Jesus more and more, remaining in the thus obtained communion with Christ.”⁶ Union in John is concerned with a mutual indwelling that incorporates concepts of communion and participation.

Secondly, John uses a series of images to describe union with Christ. Christ is the bread (Jn. 6), the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10), and the vine (Jn. 15). The images of the bread and vine have robust Old Testament backgrounds (demonstrating that Jesus is the fulfillment of OT promises) as well as “in” language. All of the images suggest a type of communion and participation. Finally, it is worth noting that the images have a corporate aspect. The images “indicate the collectivity of the persons united with Christ as a people, a flock or as branches of the same vine.”⁷ For John, union with Christ is not merely a personal concept, but a corporate one (cf. Jn. 17:22f).

Finally, in John it can be said that believers participate in Christ by becoming like him. Suffering with him (e.g. Jn.15:18-21), sharing in the benefits of his death and resurrection (e.g. Jn. 14:2-4), and imitating his love and obedience (e.g. Jn. 13:14-15) are all ways that believers become like Christ in John. For John, union with Christ and conformity to Christlikeness go hand in hand.

For John, the concept of union with Christ has to do with the communion of mutual indwelling and participation in the person of Christ.

In Paul

The most obvious demonstration of union with Christ in Paul is found in his grammar. The phrases ἐν Χριστῷ, εἰς Χριστὸν, σὺν Χριστῷ, διὰ Χριστοῦ are all regular occurrences in Paul. While every occurrence does not refer to union with Christ, Constantine Campbell has demonstrated that these phrases can get at

⁴ For a good summary of union with Christ in John (upon which I leaned heavily), see Hans Burger, *Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009).

⁵ For further examples see: Jn. 6:56, 10:14-15, 14:20, 15:9-10, 17:11, 18, 21, 22, 23. Also note John’s use of the verb μένω to describe reciprocal interiority in Jn. 6:56; 15:3, 4, 6, 7 and 1 Jn. 3:6, 24, 4:12.

⁶ Burger, 342.

⁷ Ibid, 368.

concepts of incorporation, union, and participation, among others.⁸ For example, in Romans 6:8 believers are said to have died *σὺν Χριστῷ*, a phrase that James Dunn suggests conveys “participation in the salvation-history effects of Christ’s death as marking and effecting the end of the rule of sin and death.”⁹ Campbell suggests here that a type of spiritual union is in view.¹⁰

Beyond these grammatical constructions, Paul uses a series of metaphors to get at the concept of union with Christ. These include: the church as the body of Christ, the church as the temple of Christ, the relationship between Christ and the church as a marriage union, and Christ as a type of clothing that might be put on by believers.¹¹ Campbell describes the significance of the metaphors well:

Paul’s metaphorical language is one of his most potent tools for elucidating the spiritual reality of union with Christ. The metaphor of the body of Christ depicts the church as an organic being as each member partakes in Christ and is joined one to another... The metaphors of temple and building convey the corporate nature of the church, with the temple depicting the dwelling of God by his Spirit among his people... The metaphor of marriage profoundly depicts the church’s spiritual union with Christ as a personal and exclusive bond as he saves, prepares, and cares for her, while she submits to his headship, the metaphor of clothing depicts the reality of conversion to Christ as well as its attendant ethical implications.¹²

Finally, union with Christ is seen in Paul via the application of salvation by the Spirit. The Spirit applies salvation to individual believers by uniting them to Christ (1 Cor. 12:3) and then is the instrument by which believers experience the benefits of that union such as justification, sanctification, adoption, etc. For Paul, union with Christ and the application of salvation are actually one in the same.

Summary

Given this brief synopsis of union with Christ in John and Paul, we are now prepared to examine Acts itself and discern whether or not Acts is consistent with, corroborates, or articulates a doctrine of union with Christ.

⁸ Constantine Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 199.

⁹ James, D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 402; quoted in Campbell, 220-221.

¹⁰ Campbell, 221.

¹¹ This list is from Campbell, chapter 7.

¹² Campbell, 323.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

From a redemptive-historical perspective, the Pentecost event forms the foundation of the entire book of Acts. Pentecost is the moment at which the ministry of Jesus is passed down to the church as the promised Holy Spirit comes and falls upon the crowds gathered around Peter and the apostles. Luke focuses his discussion of the Holy Spirit in his Gospel on Jesus' birth, though the Spirit also appears in two other significant places. In Luke 11 Jesus argues, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (v.13) Here Luke highlights Jesus' foreshadowing of Pentecost. In chapter 12, Jesus is speaking about acknowledging him before men when he describes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as the only unforgivable sin. He concludes the discussion with the reassurance that the Holy Spirit will guide the disciples in what they ought to say when confronted by rulers and authorities. In this passage the connection between Luke-Acts is evident as Jesus' assurance of the guiding of the Spirit foreshadows the experiences of the apostles in Acts when faced with persecution and opposition by authorities.

Jesus' words to the apostles in the Gospel of John also provide background for the arrival of the Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus says that it is good for him (Jesus) to go that the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) might come (16:7). Ultimately the Spirit will take what is Jesus' and declare it to the disciples (16:15). Post-Pentecost the Spirit will function as the *via media* between Christ and the apostles, taking what is Christ's (namely knowledge and revelation here) and giving it to them. The suggestion is that this is the type of thing that the Spirit does; he functions as a go-between for Christ and the church. While John is speaking Jesus' resurrection and ascension proclaim the dawn of the new creation, the kingdom of God breaking into this world. Pentecost marks the arrival of the Spirit as the agent of this new creation in the life of the church. Peter conveys this in his sermon on Pentecost: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:32-33).

Jesus pours out his Spirit upon his people at Pentecost, fulfilling the Old Testament anticipation of a new covenant that had promised, "I will put my Spirit within you" (Ezek. 36:27). Jesus' giving of the Spirit echoes the language of John 16:15 where the Spirit testifies to the Son. Ultimately, "the Spirit's signs point to Jesus...[who] is extending his dominion on earth through the power of his Spirit."¹³

Peter cites Joel 2 in his Pentecost sermon to explain that the day of Yahweh has come—these are the last days of which Joel spoke. While Luke does not explain this particular aspect of the Pentecost event, it is evident from the rest

¹³ Dennis Johnson, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub., 1997), 63.

of the New Testament provides insight into the significance of the arrival of the Spirit for the salvation of believers in Jesus.¹⁴ Robert Letham explains that one aspect of Pentecost is that “the Spirit would come to indwell believers and unite them to Christ.”¹⁵

Therefore, in redemptive-historical terms the Pentecost event marks the indwelling of the Spirit and the beginning of his ministry uniting people to Christ. While his ministry in Acts is not described in terms of uniting people to Christ, the remainder of the New Testament functions to articulate and explain what is going on “behind the scenes” so to speak in Acts as the Spirit descends upon believers and guides them into Christian discipleship. This “behind the scenes” work of the Spirit is the uniting of believers to Christ, a union that is simultaneously positional and transformational.¹⁶ Thus, Pentecost in Acts 2 functions as the redemptive-historical prerequisite for the the ministry of the Spirit, a ministry which is unpacked in the remainder of the New Testament as consisting chiefly of uniting believers to Jesus.

Summary

Luke does not explain the Pentecost account and ongoing ministry of the Spirit in Acts in terms of union with Christ. What he does, however, is provide the redemptive-historical foundation for such a doctrine while demonstrating what such a union might produce in the lives and witness of believers. What the rest of Acts (and ultimately the rest of the New Testament) supplies is a picture of the Spirit doing his work uniting people to Christ by saving them (as in Acts 11:15) and placing them into a new relationship with the risen Lord Jesus. Thus, it is evident that Luke-Acts’ understanding of the work of the Spirit does not contradict a doctrine of union with Christ, even if it does not articulate it. This leaves the question of whether the Pentecost event ought to be considered corroborative for a doctrine of union with Christ. Given the prevalence of the work of the Spirit in the remainder of the New Testament books (about the post-Pentecost church), it is appropriate to consider Pentecost as the redemptive-historical prerequisite for union with Christ and therefore corroborative of the concept as it is developed in John and especially Paul.

¹⁴ See especially 1 Cor. 12:12 (where believers are said to be “baptized into one body” and “drink of one Spirit”) as well as Rom. 8:9. For texts where the Spirit is seen applying the benefits of salvation (justification, adoption, etc.) see: John 3:8; Acts 11:15; 1 Cor. 6:11, 12:3; Rom. 8:16; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2;

¹⁵ Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: in Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub., 2011), 48.

¹⁶ For an argument supporting union with Christ in terms of both the legal and transformational, see William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008).

Baptism in the Name of Jesus

As the sacrament of incorporation, baptism plays a critical role in any doctrine of union with Christ. In Acts, baptism functions as the mark of entrance into the people of God, a mark which extends to all types of people, Jew and Gentile alike.

At the end of his Pentecost sermon, Peter calls the people to “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). In the call to repent and be baptized we might find the omission of the element of faith surprising. If non-Christians asked us what they must do in light of the gospel, “Repent and believe” would be the more likely candidate for a succinct summary of gospel response. Verse 41 makes it clear that Peter includes faith by implication in between the commands to repent and be baptized. Here it is “those who received his word [that] were baptized.” But Peter purposefully summarizes the gospel response in terms of repentance and baptism. Repentance entails the recognition by the crowd at Pentecost that they themselves rejected Jesus (In v.23: “this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”), while baptism includes faith and functions as a change in allegiance. Whereas before the Jewish crowds were enemies of Jesus, they are now baptized into Jesus. Thus, baptism becomes the mark of covenant membership in the new covenant—it is the sign of incorporation into Jesus and therefore into his people.

Jon Weatherly describes the role of baptism helpfully: “The author of Acts understands baptism in the name of Jesus to be a regular and normative part of Christian conversion. To put it differently, in Acts as in the rest of the New Testament, baptism is done so that one becomes a Christian, not because one is already a Christian.”¹⁷ Weatherly makes the point in service of the argument that Luke is not seeking to answer our contemporary questions, but rather the questions of the early church. His argument parallels the one being made here, namely that we cannot demand that Acts speak of union with Christ in our own systematic-theological terms. Rather, we must recognize Luke’s purpose in writing Acts not as didactic theologizing, but as a missiological narrative. Thus, when Luke speaks of baptism in the name of Jesus, we must be careful of reading too much into the phrase while at the same time recognizing that the purpose of Acts as narrative does not necessarily contradict the more didactic discussion of Paul, say in Romans 6.

Luke does not use any of the typical Pauline “in Christ” language (which often signifies a discussion of union) in Acts. The closest we see to any parallel is in Luke’s discussion of ministry “in the name of Jesus.” As we saw in 2:38, Peter calls the crowd to be baptized “in the name of Jesus.” At least twelve times throughout

¹⁷ Jon Weatherly, “The Writer’s versus the Reader’s Purpose: Interpreting Acts Theologically,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 5, no.1 (2012): 97-98.

Acts, Luke uses the phrase “in the name of Jesus” to refer to the ministry of the apostles, especially in healing and baptism.¹⁸ He uses the prepositions *ἐπι*, *εν*, and *εις* at various times throughout Acts to refer to baptism in Jesus’ name. Craig Keener rightly suggests that the multiplicity of prepositions does not signify different meanings, rather the three prepositions all suggest the same general sense of baptism “in” Jesus’ name.¹⁹

Keener goes on to discuss the significance of the phrase “in the name of Jesus” suggesting that “Baptism ‘in Jesus’s name’ probably simply specifies Christian baptism as distinct from various Jewish immersion rituals...People being baptized ‘in his name’ designated whose followers they would be.”²⁰ From this we can hardly deduce that Luke intended to articulate some concept of union with Christ. However, Keener does make the connection between the Old Testament significance of an activity done “in the name of God” (meaning “by the authority of” or “on account of”) and baptism in Jesus’ name. He further points out that in Acts 2, being baptized in Jesus’ name is the physical manifestation of “calling on the name of the Lord (2:21).”²¹ Thus, in Acts baptism is the physical representation of repentance and faith as well as incorporation into the church as followers of Jesus. “Baptism in Jesus’ name” is not so much a formulation of a doctrine union with Christ as a statement of ownership in baptism. It is as though baptism in Acts declares: “This is Jesus’ baptism and those who are baptized in Jesus’ name are his followers.” Even though the link between baptism and the person of Jesus remains unexplored in Acts, the connection between the two sets the stage for the further explication we find in the remainder of the New Testament.

Luke does not explain the inner working of baptism. Rather, he shows the significance of baptism in the life of the church. His treatment of baptism is primarily descriptive, not theological. That is to say, he shows us what baptism looks like and how it is practiced in the life of the early church, but he does not unpack all of its theological implications, including its connection to union with Christ.

¹⁸ Acts 2:38; 3:6, 16; 4:18; 5:40; 8:16; 9:27; 10:48; 16:18; 19:5; 21:13; 26:9.

¹⁹ Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2012), 984.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 983.

²¹ *Ibid.*

The Growth and Mission of the Early Church

The Recapitulation of Jesus' Story in the Life of the Church

In considering the growth and mission of the early church in Acts, it is instructive to consider the context of Luke-Acts as a whole. Thus, Johnson notes that one of the interpretive keys of Acts is the Gospel of Luke.²² Luke and Acts contain a number of significant parallels which draw important connections between the story of Jesus and the story of the early church.²³ The most meaningful connection for our purposes in evaluating the presence of union with Christ in Acts is the manner after which the story of the early church is in many ways a recapitulation of the story of Jesus told in the Gospel of Luke.

There are several structural markers which suggest that the Jesus-church parallel is part of Luke's literary intent. In his study of Type and History in Acts, M.D. Goulder notes the parallel between Jesus and the apostolic church at the start of each of Luke's volumes:

(a) anointing by the Spirit; (b) sermon explaining the anointing; (c) effective ministry in the power of the Spirit; leading to (d) opposition/persecution by Judaism's leadership.²⁴ On a more macro scale, he sees both volumes as dividing into four main parts where Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is paralleled by the expansion of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts.²⁵

Others have observed how a literary structure centered on the geographic emphases of Luke-Acts yields a sort of chiasm with Jerusalem at its center. Thus, as Jesus ministry moves inexorably toward Jerusalem in Luke's Gospel, it expands away from Jerusalem in Acts.

Others too have seen structural parallels between the ministry of Jesus and the main characters of Acts. David P. Moessner suggests that at various points Jesus is paralleled with Peter, Stephen, and Paul in Acts.²⁶ He argues that the connection centers on their roles as "Deuteronomistic rejected prophets whose sending to Israel ends in persecution and even death. It is this fundamental view of Israel's continued disobedience that is the linchpin of cohesion of the Jesus-Peter/Stephen/Paul parallels."²⁷ The parallels include Stephen's dying words which echo Christ's passion, and Paul's final journey where he is "resolved" to return to

²² Johnson, *Message*, 7.

²³ These connections were seen as early as 1845 with F.C. Baur's analysis in *Paulus, Der Apostel Jesu Christi, Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre*, 2d ed.; (Leipzig: 1866-67); reprinted, (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1968), 1. 104-5, 116-17, 179, 218-20, 245-47, etc.

²⁴ Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: S.P.C.K., 1964), 54-55. I'm indebted here to Dennis Johnson's observation of this connection in his *The Message of Acts*, 61 n.20, as well as in personal correspondence.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 141-142.

²⁶ David P. Moessner, "'The Christ Must Suffer': New Light on the Jesus—Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Luke-Acts," *Novum Testamentum* 28, no.3 (1986): 220-56.

²⁷ Moessner, 227.

Jerusalem for a third time just as Jesus.²⁸ While Moessner is primarily concerned with the manner in which the main characters of Acts follow Jesus in fulfilling the role of the Deuteronomistic rejected prophet, we can see how the apostles' participation in the suffering of Christ is meant to extend to every believer. The epistles make this extension explicit.²⁹

But is this actual participation or merely parallelism? Put another way, do we have here two separate tracks in the snow that run perfectly parallel from one destination to another, or rather one set of tracks that has been walked in multiple times? The strongest argument for the latter is found in Paul's conversion account in Acts 9 where Jesus identifies the suffering church with himself. Further discussion of specifics of that passage will have to wait, but it is clear that Jesus saw the suffering of the church as his suffering, not merely as suffering similar to his own.

What is does this participation entail for a concept of union with Christ? It suggests that the church participates in the story of Jesus in its discipleship and mission. That is, the recapitulation of the Jesus story in the life of the early church points to the story of the church as a type of union with Christ via *κοινωνία*. This participation is not an exact parallel—we must be clear that such a participation does not diminish or negate the exclusive nature of the work of Christ—but rather it provides one picture of what it means to be united to Christ. To put it another way, to be united to Christ is to share in his death and resurrection, his suffering and his glory. This is not explicitly stated in Acts as it is in the epistles, but it is explicitly enacted in Acts as the church grows and engages in mission. Isaiah's Servant Songs

Another parallel in Luke-Acts that points us toward a concept of union with Christ is Luke's use of the Isaianic servant songs in both volumes. In the Gospel the servant songs are alluded to with reference to Jesus, while in Acts they are quoted with reference to the church as the messengers of God.³⁰

²⁸ Moessner, 249.

Moessner's comparison of the participation in suffering in more detail (256):

-Jesus is the "Christ" as the suffering prophet like Moses who is "raised up" from his violent death to bring the new life ("glory") of the Exodus salvation to Israel and the nations (Luke 24:26, 45-47; Acts 26:22-23).

-Peter (repenting Israel) suffers rejection by the leaders of the nation before the monolithic rejection of the salvation of the prophet like Moses forms once again (Acts 4:5-31; 5:17-41; 12:1-17).

-Stephen suffers rejection and violent death as a transition figure between the opposition of the leaders and the consolidating monolith of the people as a whole (Acts 7:54-8:4).

-Paul suffers rejection of the people as a whole as the "glory of Israel" is extended to "all peoples" (Acts 19:21-28:31; Luke 2:31-32).

²⁹ Peter does so in 1 Peter 4:13 ("rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ"); Paul does so in Romans 8:17 ("if indeed we share in his sufferings that we might also share in his glory").

³⁰ Again I am indebted to Dennis Johnson for this connection.

First, Simeon greets the infant Jesus as “a light for revelation to the Gentiles,” alluding to Isa. 49:6.³¹ In Acts 13:47, Paul and Barnabas appeal to the same passage in Isaiah as a command for themselves as messengers of the gospel: “For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’” In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is the light for the Gentiles, but in Acts the church becomes the extension of that light to the Gentiles to the ends of the earth. Thus, the mission and purpose of the church is wrapped up in its relationship to the Son.

Second, the programmatic verse of Acts alludes the servant songs in a manner that suggests further connections between Jesus and his people. Whereas Simeon’s quotation of Isaiah 49:6 omits the final phrase “that my salvation may reach the end of the earth,” Luke picks up the quote in the beginning of Acts in Jesus’ commissioning of his disciples: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Johnson describes the connection: “The most explicit allusion to the servant songs is the expression, “to the last part of the earth” (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς), which is verbally identical to the LXX reading of Isa 49:6.”³² Thus, Luke’s use of this quotation in Acts 1:8 extends the mission of Jesus through his church in Acts. In Luke’s Gospel Jesus is the light to the Gentiles; in Acts the church takes that light to the ends of the earth.

Luke suggests that both Jesus and his people fulfill Isaiah’s picture of the suffering servant. The church fulfills the picture insofar as it continues to participate in the story of Jesus by embodying both his death and his resurrection in its own ministry. As above, we must affirm the uniqueness of the manner in which Jesus is the suffering servant—only Jesus’ suffering is the ransom for sin. However, as God’s people suffer in the pursuit of his calling, they participate in his story, a participation which Paul will later suggest means more than merely “following in the footsteps of Jesus” but actually sharing in his sufferings that we might also share in his glory (Rom. 8:17).

Paul’s Conversion

Many commentators have identified significant connections between Paul’s conversion (especially as recounted in Acts 9) and the theology of his letters.³³ It is clear that Paul’s autobiography plays a explicit role in his theological thinking.³⁴ However, beyond explicit references to his own conversion, there are several other places where one can draw a fairly straight line from his theological conclusions in a given epistle back to his conversion account in Acts 9.

³¹ The phrase “light to the nations” in Isa. 49:6 hearkens back to Gen. 12:3 and Yahweh’s promise to bless the nations through Abraham.

³² Johnson, “Jesus Against the Idols: The Use of Isaianic Servant Songs in the Missiology of Acts,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 52, no.2 (1990): 346.

³³ See Seyoon Kim’s *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1981) which builds upon J.G. Machen’s earlier *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1921).

³⁴ For instance see: Rom. 11:1-6, Phil. 3:1-11, 1 Tim 1:12-16.

In Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus is traveling to Damascus to extend his persecution of Christians beyond the borders of Judea. While en route, he is struck blind as he encounters a theophany of the living God. “Who are you Lord?” Paul asks. It is none other than Jesus himself. The dialogue in verses 4-5 is critical to identifying the roots a concept of union with Christ: “And falling to the ground [Saul] heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And he said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’”

The key here is found in Jesus’ self-identification. First, he identifies himself as the God of the theophany.³⁵ The implication is that Jesus is claiming the authority and even identity of Yahweh. Second, Jesus identifies himself with the infant church. In one sense, Jesus’ claim that Saul is persecuting him seems odd— isn’t Jesus ascended? It would be easy to make sense of the claim by suggesting that Jesus is referring to his emotional connection with the church. Thus, Saul’s persecution of Christians feels to Jesus as though he himself is being persecuted because of his emotional identification with them. However, such an interpretation does not bear the weight of the question τί με διώκεις. This is no mere analogy. Jesus takes issue with Saul not because it is “as though” Saul is persecuting Jesus, but because he actually is persecuting him. Thus, the question becomes, what is the nature of Jesus’ identification with the church?

Augustine understood the question as an issue of Christology. If Jesus is ascended, how can he simultaneously be said to be down here being persecuted? Augustine puts it vividly:

Had Paul climbed up to heaven then? Had Paul even thrown a stone at heaven? It was Christians he was persecuting...To him the Lord said, “Saul, Saul.” Where is he crying out from? Heaven. So he’s up above. “Why are you persecuting me?” So he’s down below.³⁶

Augustine concludes that in some sense Jesus must be said to be yet on earth. Clearly this implies more than an emotional identification. It suggests a real spiritual presence of Christ in the world through his people by virtue of both his role as head of the body (a later Pauline image) and his union with his followers (suggested by Paul’s use of “in Christ” in his letters). Constantine Campbell rightly concludes, “Paul’s persecution of Christians is regarded as persecution of Christ, which reveals a strong sense of identification between Jesus and his followers.”³⁷

Seyoon Kim argues that this verse provides the foundation for the concept of the church as the body of Christ saying, “For the remarkable

³⁵ Note here how the theophany of Acts 9 contains many characteristics of OT theophanies associated with Yahweh (e.g. Ex. 3:1-6, 1 Sam 3:1-21) as well as some of the language of the commissioning of prophets (e.g. Jer. 1:9-10).

³⁶ The Works of Saint Augustine 4:242, quoted in *Acts, The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 103.

³⁷ Campbell, 420.

conversation...must have led Paul to recognize the unity of Christ with his people: to persecute the followers of Jesus is to persecute him.”³⁸ If this is the case, then it is not difficult to see how Paul’s conversation with Jesus on the road to Damascus shaped his theology of union with Christ. The source of a concept of union for Paul is not the appropriation of contemporary religious ideas so much as the very revelation of Jesus. The relationship between Acts and a Pauline doctrine of union with Christ can be seen as analogous to the relationship Kim describes between Paul’s experience on the Damascus road and his later theology:

The real experience of the Damascus revelation led Paul to use all those religionsgeschichtlichen [religious-historical] materials as interpretative categories and concepts for his Christian theology...without the real experience of the Damascus revelation Paul could not have had his gospel at all, not to mention his unshakable and lively conviction in it.³⁹

If we grant Kim’s conclusion about the origins of Paul’s theology, then it follows that the material we have in Acts 9 forms the existential raw material for Paul’s later concept of union with Christ. As Campbell puts it, “In fact, the original catalyst for the development of Paul’s theology of union with Christ may be seen as Jesus’ words to Paul on the Damascus Road.”⁴⁰ It would be too much to say that in Acts 9 Luke is articulating a concept of union with Christ. However, it is not too much to say that Luke’s recounting of Paul’s conversion corroborates a doctrine of union with Christ by providing a picture of Jesus’ self-identification with his people that would be expanded and explained by Paul’s use of the concept and imagery of union.

Summary

Examining the growth and mission of the church, a major theme in the book of Acts, leads to the conclusion that the ministry of the church is deeply connected to the ministry of Jesus. The followers of Jesus recapitulate the story of Jesus, sharing in his suffering and glory. They also embody the Isaianic suffering servant in a manner parallel, though not identical, to Christ. Finally, Paul’s conversion, especially the revelation he receives from Jesus as well as Jesus’ question: “Why are you persecuting me?”, forms the foundation for Paul’s later development of his doctrine of union with Christ. Thus, we conclude that the growth and mission of the church demonstrates consistency with and

³⁸ Kim, 253. Kim also notes that this type of identification is unique in the New Testament, where the closest parallel is 1 Cor. 8:12.

³⁹ Ibid, 334.

⁴⁰ Campbell, 420.

corroboration for a doctrine of union with Christ, though not an articulation of the doctrine.

Conclusion

In Acts, union with Christ is not an explicitly stated doctrine, nor are the inner workings of salvation explored. Rather, Acts seeks to document the spread of the kingdom of God (from Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth) through the gospel of Jesus. As people repent and believe in Jesus they are baptized and given the Holy Spirit, actions that were part of the warp and woof of the early church, but not explained in Acts.

Thus, when considering union with Christ in Acts it is appropriate to say that Acts provides the redemptive-historical foundation for union with Christ (Pentecost), demonstrates the reality of union with Christ enacted in the life of the church (in baptism, through the Spirit, in participation in the story of Jesus), and hints at the further formation of a concept of union with Christ through identification (especially in Paul's conversion), but does not explicitly define or explain the doctrine. Rather, Acts shows us union with Christ acted out in the missiological stage, giving us glimpses of the implications of that union, without explicitly recognizing it. In Acts, union with Christ is the backdrop, the subtext, for all the events that occur—a subtext that becomes explicit in the rest of the New Testament canon. Thus, to ask “Does Acts teach a doctrine of union with Christ?” is to ask the wrong question. When we consider the main themes of Acts in light of its genre (as speech-act narrative), purpose (to describe the growth of church), and context (within Luke-Acts and the rest of the NT canon), we find union with Christ not taught or articulated, but rather corroboratively enacted on the missional stage. Thus, the better question would be “Does Acts provide any corroboration for a doctrine of union with Christ?” Based on our analysis here, the conclusion must be affirmative.

If this is true, it has significant implications for how we read Acts and apply it to the life of the church today. If Acts is a picture of union with Christ embodied in the life of the early church, then we have in Acts a set of clues as to what the life of the church today ought to be like as we live in union with Christ.⁴¹ For example, we should consider suffering, especially persecution, as a type of participation in Christ, a manner by which we are united with him. Thus, suffering is not to be eschewed (nor excessively sought after), but rather understood as part and parcel of what it means to be a Christian.

A second example is found in baptism. If baptism in Jesus' name is actually an incorporation into him, then we must not merely think of it as a human activity whereby we express our faith and allegiance to Lord Jesus. Rather, it should be seen as a sacrament where the Spirit is actually uniting the individual to Christ,

⁴¹ Mutatis mutandis with reference to redemptive-historical and cultural differences.

really and spiritually. Baptism then takes on the simultaneous role of being a declaration and an incorporation, as it was in Acts.

Luke's account of the early church in Acts, then, rather than contradicting the theological emphases of the rest of the New Testament, actually corroborates them by embodying and demonstrating them in the context of the people of God as they are united to Christ and indwelt by his Spirit.

Gracious God, Grateful Man: A Reappraisal of Calvin's Anthropology

David Richmon

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.”¹ 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.”² 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

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.1.1.

² B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 41.

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.

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."³ 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."⁴ 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.⁵

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."⁶ In this way, he makes

³ Calvin, 3.2.6.

⁴ B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism* (1956; repr., Philadelphia: P&R Pub. Co., 1980), 169.

⁵ Calvin, 1.2.2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.1.1.

himself known, “lispering” in a language appropriate to our condition. Accordingly, God “renders himself near and familiar to us and in some manner communicates himself [to us].”⁷ 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.”⁸ 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.”⁹ 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.”¹⁰ 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?”¹¹ 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

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.5.10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.1.1.

⁹ Gerrish, 24.

¹⁰ Calvin, 1.14.2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.5.5.

clearly seen in Calvin's 1542 Geneva Catechism. Q&A 1, 2, and 7 are particularly instructive:

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."¹² 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."¹³ 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

¹² Gerrish, 43.

¹³ T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1957), 71.

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 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."¹⁴

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."¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

¹⁴ J. Calvin, *Commentaries*, at Gen. 2:9.

¹⁵ Calvin, 1.14.22.

¹⁶ Torrance, 71.

¹⁷ Calvin, 2.1.1.

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 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!¹⁸

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."¹⁹ 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?"²⁰ 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."²¹ Keeping covenant with man, God gave his Son as a gift in

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.1.4.

¹⁹ Gerrish, 46.

²⁰ Calvin, 3.19.8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.12.4.

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:

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.²²

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.

²² Ibid., 2.16.3.

Jonathan Edwards's Doctrine of Assurance

Scott Cress

Certain that Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections* was the greatest work on the distinction between saving faith and hypocrisy ever written, biographer Sereno Edwards Dwight wrote, "The trial, to which the mind of the honest, attentive, and prayerful reader of its pages is subjected, is the very trial of the final day. He who can endure the trial of the 'Treatise on the Affections,' will stand unhurt amidst a dissolving universe; and he who cannot will assuredly perish in its ruins."¹ Edwards himself began this work by writing, "There is no question whatsoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this, what are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favor with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards?"² According to Edwards, every Christian is to be concerned with the marks of true religion and the proper foundations for the assurance of salvation. If Dwight was correct, then no person was more capable of communicating this crucial information than Jonathan Edwards. Yet Edwards's legacy on the issue of assurance is not as clear as Dwight would have us think. As one Edwards scholar has indicated, Edwards's personal assurance has been questioned by scholars for decades, and Edwards's followers have often struggled to find assurance for themselves.³ It is clear from these conflicting accounts that careful analysis needs to be offered in this crucial area of Edwards's thought. In this essay, I will seek to place Edwards's doctrine of assurance in appropriate context. I will then suggest that for Edwards assurance of salvation was grounded in his view of the Holy Spirit's role in soteriology, evidenced by Christian practice, and attainable for the Christian.

Edwards's Doctrine in Context

To properly understand Jonathan Edwards's doctrine of assurance, his work must be placed within a larger framework, operating at various levels. The

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- 1 Quoted in John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Powhatan, VA: Berea Publications, 1993), 3:350.
 - 2 Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, edited by John E. Smith, *WJE* 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 84.
 - 3 Gerald McDermott, review of *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, ed. Kinnach, Minkema, and Sweeney, accessed at are.as.wvu.edu/mcderm.htm, 9 August 2012.

four levels of context which should be acknowledged are Reformed tradition, American Puritan theological dispute, revivalism and its problems, and personal experience. His doctrine will become clearer when viewed against these backgrounds.

Reformed tradition. Edwards must still be seen within the context of the Reformation and post-Reformation conflict with Rome. According to the Council of Trent, the kind of confidence espoused by Protestants was to be rejected, instead positing that no Christian could have absolute assurance but by means of special revelation.⁴ In his *Religious Affections*, Edwards addresses those theological opponents of revival who claim “there is no such thing to be expected in the church of God, as a full and absolute assurance of hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary circumstances; as in the case of martyrdom.” Edwards views this position as “contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most celebrated writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plainest Scripture evidence.”⁵ Here Edwards not only maintains the Protestant position on assurance but also the Protestant position of *sola scriptura*.

Yet Edwards's thought did not only reflect the views of the sixteenth century but of post-Reformation theological developments. Joel Beeke lists several distinctives of Puritan thought which were “nearly unanimous” among the divines of the Westminster Assembly of the 1640s: the distinguishing of saving faith and developed assurance; the particular relationship of assurance with the work of the Holy Spirit; the basis of assurance in the covenant of grace and the work of Christ; and the need for Christians to diligently seek assurance through use of the means of grace.⁶ Beeke refers to the *Westminster Confession* as “the most definitive doctrinal statement of post-Reformation Puritanism on personal assurance of faith.”⁷ Chapter 18.2 of the *Confession* provides three foundations for assurance: the promises of salvation, the inward evidences of graces, and the witness of the Spirit. The various themes of the *Confession* and the intellectual background which made it possible should be considered when thinking about Edwards's doctrine of assurance.

American Puritan theological dispute. It was once fashionable to view Edwards as a pioneer of Lockean empiricism over against intellectually crumbling orthodoxies. Sean Michael Lucas makes the case, however, that the best context by which to understand Edwards is not the work of John Locke but the colonial Puritan experience. One of the key starting places for understanding *Religious Affections* is the Antinomian Controversy of 1636 to 1638. This controversy centered around the heterodoxy of Anne Hutchinson as countered by a leading group of colonial leaders. Though Hutchinson was eventually exiled from

4 Robert Peterson, “Christian Assurance: Its Possibility and Foundations,” *Presbyterian* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 10-12.

5 Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 167.

6 Joel R. Beeke, “Personal Assurance of Faith: The Puritans and Chapter 18.2 of the *Westminster Confession*,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 55, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 4-10.

7 *Ibid.*, 3.

Massachusetts Bay for her views, the controversy called into question the orthodox teaching of her pastor at First Church in Boston, John Cotton. Cotton emphasized the absolute promises of the Covenant of Grace over against the conditional promises of the Covenant of Works. For Cotton all of the divine promises had been made to Christ and extended to all who trust in him by means of union. The foundation of assurance was discerning union with Christ. To look to practice for anything but a secondary role was to go backwards to the Covenant of Works. Cotton, and Edwards in the next century, spoke of the key role of Spiritual light and the Spiritual sight of Christ.⁸

Cotton's main theological opponent during the controversy was Thomas Shepard. Shepard emphasized the conditional promises of the Covenant of Grace as a means of gaining assurance. Practice according to covenantal conditions evidenced the work of the Spirit in the believer's life. Though both Cotton and Shepard stood within the tradition of Puritan orthodoxy, different emphases led them to different views of Christian assurance. Lucas writes, "Cotton believed assurance came when the light of God's Spirit caused the saint to see his soul's union with Christ; Shepard held that assurance was a gradual and arduous process, gained through the consistent application of the means of grace and the regular inspection of the soul."⁹

According to Lucas, Edwards developed a synthesis of these two positions. On one hand, he emphasized the essence of regeneration as a "new sense of the heart," a new principle infused into the believer by the Holy Spirit which allowed him to "feel, perceive, and think in different ways" then what was possible prior to conversion. This new sense was a Spiritual light which allowed the believer to perceive divine excellency, opening the way to a truly disinterested love to God. On the other hand, this spiritual sense was not discerned by appeal to union with Christ. Instead, it necessarily led to and was demonstrated by renewed Christian practice. By holding these two emphases in view, Edwards's preserved strength from both traditions which were made apparent in the Antinomian Controversy of the previous century.¹⁰ When Edwards preached on "A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul," he honored the tradition of Cotton and raised the ire of opponents such as Charles Chauncy. Yet he also honored the tradition of Shepard by stating in the application of this sermon,

8 Sean Michael Lucas, "What is the Nature of 'True Religion?' *Religious Affections and its American Puritan Context*," in *All for Jesus: A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Covenant Theological Seminary*, ed. Robert A. Peterson and Sean Michael Lucas (Ross-Shire, UK: Mentor, 2006), 117-136 Drawing on the work of Janice Knight, Lucas identifies the tradition of Cotton as that of the "Spiritual Brothers," a group who emphasized absolute promises and included Richard Sibbes. Cotton's sparring partner was Thomas Shepard, identified as part of a different group referred to by Knight as the "Intellectual Fathers." This group emphasized the conditional promises and included Thomas Hooker.

9 Ibid., 126.

10 Ibid., 128-133.

But this light, as it reaches the bottom of the heart, and changes the nature, so it will effectually dispose to an universal obedience. It shows God's worthiness to be obeyed and served. It draws forth the heart in a sincere love to God, which is the only principle of a true, gracious and universal obedience. And it convinces of the reality of those glorious rewards that God has promised to them that obey him.¹¹

Revivalism and its problems. Edwards's own experience of soul care in the aftermath of awakening and revival also functions as another layer of context to be considered. Edwards remained a lifelong proponent of revival. He was personally involved in revival in his Northampton congregation in 1734 and 1735 and then again in the Great Awakening of the early 1740s. Yet he began to see the problem of hypocrisy and false conversion. Many who professed faith at one point fell away. Others affected by revival radicalized and began claiming absolute assurance on the basis of intuition and immediate experience. Yet in many such persons, no true fruit of the Christian life was present. Edwards recognized the antinomian and heretical tendencies developing; therefore he was led to not only defend revival but polemically engage those who had proliferated dissension and false doctrine in the name of revival. Edwards retained his view of "experimental religion," yet he also recognized the continuing problem of self-deception in the life of believers and unbelievers alike.¹²

Ava Chamberlain describes the shift in Edwards's thought: "By engaging this new opponent Edwards's own theological posture acquired an increased complexity and depth...his religious psychology was not sufficiently sophisticated to alert him to [antinomianism's] flaws. Confronting the extravagant behavior of the radical New Lights helped Edwards's understanding of human nature to mature."¹³ Edwards's "religious psychology" no doubt developed through a deeper engagement with the works of writers such as Thomas Shepard. Edwards's eleventh negative sign (meaning that it is a sign incapable of demonstrating godly affections and true religion) is the presence of assurance itself. Shepard had described two kinds of hypocrisy: legal hypocrites ("legalists") and evangelical hypocrites ("enthusiasts"). Evangelical hypocrites in Edwards's context were those radicals who relied on experiences and claimed immediate intuition of full assurance. Yet for such persons, Edwards concluded, the belief in one's own belief had a poor foundation.¹⁴

11 Jonathan Edwards, "A Divine and Supernatural Light," in *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, eds. Kinnach, Minkema, & Sweeney (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 140.

12 Ava Chamberlain, "Self-Deception as a Theological Problem in Jonathan Edwards's 'Treatise Concerning Religious Affections,'" *Church History* 63, no. 4 (1994): 541-556.

13 *Ibid.*, 542.

14 Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 167-181. Edward's exposition of this negative sign provides

Personal experience. The last level of context to be considered is Edwards's own struggle with assurance in the environment in which he was raised. Edwards's father Timothy was a locally influential pastor in East Windsor, Connecticut who periodically oversaw periods of awakening in his congregation. The young Edwards lived through two such periods of awakening which deeply affected him but did not result in his conversion. When Edwards departed for Yale in 1716 at the age of thirteen he was in a state of deep spiritual distress. Edwards did not identify his actual conversion until 1721. In this year powerful intellectual and spiritual stumbling-blocks fell away and Edwards was the recipient of a series of intense religious experiences. Yet even after this time Edwards continued to struggle with assurance, even undergoing a profound time of spiritual depression while he served as a tutor at Yale.

Timothy Edwards, like many other ministers of the era, believed that testing the truthfulness of conversions was a science, in which distinct steps could be identified. A conversion could be demonstrated as genuine when each of the preparatory stages had been completed. The evidence available seems to suggest that Edwards always struggled to understand his experiences against the grid propounded by his father. It is possible that a period of contention between parents and son in 1723 when Edwards was again living at home after briefly serving as a pastor in New York revolved around the matter of his conversion or lack thereof. There is no available record that Edwards was a communicant member at this period, and there is actually no evidence about this matter whatsoever.¹⁵ Biographer George Marsden succinctly writes, "Out of his disconcerting religious struggles – which were by no means over – arose one of the major agendas of his later career."¹⁶ Michael McClymond demonstrates in his study of Edwards's *Personal Narrative* that Edwards did not present his conversion according to the received tradition and that he "soon stopped trying to fit experience to doctrine and instead altered his doctrine." Moreover, McClymond writes, "*Personal Narrative* implicitly, and *Religious Affections* explicitly,¹⁷ repudiated the old morphology [of conversion] by making the *nature* of one's spiritual experiences rather than their *order* the discriminating factor in determining whether or not they

confirmation of Lucas's "synthesis" thesis. Chamberlain concludes her analysis by stating that Edwards's emphasis on Christian practice was not a simple return to traditional Puritan descriptions of sanctification. Instead Edwards emphasized practice growing out of powerful Christian experience and made room for the revival tradition. The synthesis which Chamberlain develops shares much in common with the synthesis explored by Lucas. Chamberlain, "Self-Deception," 556.

15 The biographical material and the analysis concerning the summer of 1723 is derived from George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 25-113.

16 *Ibid.*, 58.

17 Edwards explicitly rejects the traditional "morphology of conversion" in a passage such as is found in *Religious Affections*, 416-418.

were gracious.”¹⁸ Further analysis of Edwards's doctrine demonstrates that Edwards was more concerned with ongoing and developing signs of grace than with preparatory steps.

Rooted in the Work of the Spirit

The soteriological role of the Spirit in Edwards's theology is a broader issue than assurance; yet it must be observed that what Edwards's taught about the work of the Spirit had an important bearing on the doctrine of assurance as he presented it. In his “Treatise on Grace” from the early 1740s Edwards presented an argument that might be simplified as follows: there is a distinction between common grace and saving grace in as much as saving grace includes a divine principle in the heart that cannot be had by the unregenerate; this gracious principle is best understood as love, which sums up all Christian duty; the divine principle of love dwells in the heart of the regenerate through means of the communication of the Holy Spirit, who is the personal love of God. The distinction then between common grace and saving grace is, therefore, participation in the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Edwards summarized the argument as follows,

So that that holy, divine principle which we have observed does radically and essentially consist in divine love, is no other than a communication and participation of that same infinite divine love, which is God, and in which the Godhead is eternally breathed forth and subsists in the third person in the blessed Trinity. So that true saving grace is no other than that very love of God; that is, God, in one of the persons of the Trinity, uniting himself to the soul of a creature as a vital principle, dwelling there and exerting himself by the faculties of the soul of man, in his own proper nature, after the manner of a principle of nature.²⁰

The general argument of “Treatise on Grace” is conveyed in the above passage, even if not all questions are answered. For example, what does it mean for the Holy Spirit to unite himself to the regenerate and exert himself “after the manner of a principle of nature”? Sean Lucas indicates that *principle of nature* is but one way that Edwards refers to a concept which is also addressed as *sense of the heart*, *inclination*, and *habit*. This principle/habit/sense is a tendency to respond in a particular way when confronted with a particular sensation - “...the *affections are the exercises of habit or disposition that have been moved to act by sensation*. That definition,

18 Michael J. McClymond, *Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 42. Italics in original.

19 Jonathan Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” in *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, Vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 153-197.

20 *Ibid.*, 194.

rightly understood is key for grasping what Edwards was saying about the Christian life.”²¹ This definition is helpful yet it calls us to take a further step and define *affection*. For Edwards, an affection is a “vigorous and sensible exercise” of the faculty often referred to as the will. The understanding is the human faculty which provides for perception and speculation. The will is that faculty that moves towards or away from that which is perceived. An affection is a lively exercise of this faculty (love, hate, joy, disgust, etc.). A habit/sense/principle is then the tendency of affections of the will to develop according to the perception of some sensible stimulus.²²

To condense the Edwardsean perspective significantly: a gracious, saving principle is a tendency for the regenerate person to respond with the affection of disinterested love when perceiving the beauty, excellency, and grandeur of God. Edwards wrote, “Divine love, as it has God for its object, may be thus described: 'tis the soul's relish of the supreme excellency of the divine nature, inclining the heart to God as the chief good.”²³ God and his excellency are perceived by the Christian, and the affection of love, moving towards God and relishing him, is thereby made possible because of the principle at work which inclines the believer to respond with such an affection at the perception of such a stimulus. The burden of my argument is that this principle is the work of the Spirit. It is the Spirit uniting himself to the believer who makes it possible for the Christian to be inclined to respond to God in love. For this reason Conrad Cherry writes concerning Edwards, “God's illuminating Spirit creates the possibility of the human agent's acting as fully responsive man in faith.”²⁴ True faith, therefore, requires the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. No hypocrite, evangelical or otherwise, knows the indwelling of the Spirit. Edwards's view of the work of the Spirit necessarily informed his doctrine of assurance and placed it within a God-centered framework, in which “God is the beginning and end of man's salvation.”²⁵

Evidenced by Christian Practice

Spirit-wrought love for God necessarily turns our eyes off of ourselves. Therefore, Edwards's doctrine of assurance was God-centered and in opposition to an overly self-oriented view of salvation. Yet how can the Christian gain assurance of true love for God through union with the Spirit? Edwards rejected the view that intuition or powerful immediate experience could somehow give absolute assurance, thereby excluding radicalized New Lights. It is true that Edwards taught the “new sense of the heart” and the necessity of holy affections, in which the

21 Sean Michael Lucas, *God's Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 92-93. Italics in original.

22 Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 96-99.

23 Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” 173.

24 Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 27.

25 *Ibid.*, 25.

saint perceived and responded to the excellency of divine things. Yet it would be inappropriate to rest on a spiritual experience alone. As Ava Chamberlain writes, “The problem with this interpretation of the new spiritual sense is that it fails to recognize the continuing presence of sin in the saint even after justification.”²⁶

It is more accurate, according to Edwards, to look to practice over time.²⁷ As Lucas comments, “If God the Holy Spirit truly indwells the individual, if there is actually a new disposition or new sense of the heart, then there will inevitably be new practices of holiness as a result.”²⁸ Edwards communicated this point clearly:

If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will shew that he is a God, by the efficacy of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a saint, as in a sepulcher, or as a dead saviour, that does nothing; but as in his temple, and as one that is alive from the dead. For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life, that he received at his resurrection.²⁹

Edwards used two pictures in *Religious Affections* to illustrate the necessity of Christian practice as a means to gaining assurance. First, Edwards wrote of a man who is informed that he is to be a recipient of a great treasure on the condition that he goes to recover it. It is possible, Edwards commented, that the man might be assured of his valuation of the treasure upon first hearing the news of it and perceive himself as willing to make the journey; “yet, this don't hinder but that his actual going for it is the highest and most proper evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself.”³⁰ Second, Edwards described a man who had heard that he was to be made the heir of the king in “a distant land.” Upon hearing the news, the man forsakes everything that he has in order to journey to the land. Yet the man cannot be said to “venture himself upon it” if he but sits still and ponders the news of his reward. It is right for such news to prompt a venturing of everything upon the offer.³¹

It is clear from both illustrations that Edwards was interested in the testing of the supposed value given to the object presented to the perception of

26 Chamberlain, “Self-Deception,” 552.

27 Edwards does suggest that the difference between experience and practice, however, can be overdone. The “acts of the soul” are what is primarily considered in Christian practice, not the action of a body alone but a body driven by inward elements. “To speak of Christian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely distinct, is to make a distinction without consideration or reason. Indeed all Christian experience is not properly called practice; but all Christian practice is properly experience.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 450-451.

28 Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 99.

29 Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 392.

30 *Ibid.*, 443.

31 *Ibid.*, 447.

the men. Was the treasure really worth retrieving to the first man? Did the second man so want the kingdom that he would give up everything for it? Likewise for Edwards, spiritual affections, such as the apprehension of divine beauty prompting love, were tested at times to be determined if they were truly genuine. Edwards wrote,

For that experience which is in these exercises of grace, that are found, and prove effectual, at the very point of trial, wherein God proves which we will actually cleave to, whether Christ or our lusts, are as has been shown already, the proper *experiment* of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy, in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found by experience. This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual *experience* and *trial*, whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ or no. As that is called experimental philosophy, which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact; so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions to the test.³²

Ava Chamberlain ably demonstrates that Edwards used the language of *experiment* in its properly scientific sense. It involved the testing and proving of religious hypotheses. Moreover, assurance could not be gained by a single experiment but by repeated experimentation revealing an established pattern.³³ Edwards's focus on ongoing and proven faithfulness as a means to assurance is also confirmed by John Gerstner's observation that perseverance is a crucial factor in Edwards's definition of saving faith.³⁴

It is important to show at this point, however, that the turn towards practice as a means of gaining assurance is not antithetical to the God-centered nature of Edwards's thought. The Christian does not act in a genuinely Christian manner through natural power but through communion with the Holy Spirit:

And no man has an habit of grace dwelling in him any otherwise than as he has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him as his temple, and acting in union with his natural faculties after the manner of a vital principle. So that when they act grace, 'tis in the language of the Apostle, 'not they, but Christ living in them.' Indeed, the Spirit of God, united to human faculties, acts very much after the manner of a natural principle or habit, so that one act makes

32 Ibid., 452. Italics in original.

33 Chamberlain, "Self-Deception," 553-555.

34 Gerstner, *Rational Biblical Theology*, 3:329-331.

way for another, and as it were settles the soul in a disposition to holy acts; but that it does so is by grace and covenant, and not from any natural necessity.³⁵

Richard Olmstead correctly recognizes the assuring capacity of this concept found in Edwards's work. For in this perspective, the freedom and fullness of grace continuously at work in the Christian life is upheld, while also providing the foundation for a life of continual growth. Moreover, perceiving the work of the Spirit in one's life transforms the evaluation of practice into but one more means of "staking all on faith's object."³⁶ I might look at my own life, but I do so only to encounter afresh the God in whom I place my trust.

Attainable for the Christian

It should be finally noted that Edwards taught that assurance of salvation was in fact attainable for the Christian. Even though practice is the best demonstration of saving faith and sin continues to be a problem, there is a place for a robust confidence in salvation. In his sermon entitled "I Know My Redeemer Lives" (1740), Edwards expounded upon Job's words in Job 19:25 as a statement of Job's assurance of salvation, upholding him in the midst of changing circumstances.³⁷ In his application, Edwards counseled those who "hope that they have an interest in Christ" to pursue that kind of assurance which Job had. Edwards included five reasons for seeking such assurance: (1) not having assurance robs the believer of the comfort of assurance; (2) assurance provides more comfort than temporal goods; (3) assurance is profitable in that it provides strength to go through temptation and persist in sufferings; (4) many saints have in fact obtained this assurance;³⁸ and (5) assurance is something which through "the use of proper means might ordinarily be obtained by the saints."³⁹ Assurance was to be gained by (1) casting out sin; (2) growing in the Christian graces such as humility and love to Christ; (3) displaying works of charity and self-denial; and (4) being diligent in self-examination.⁴⁰

In the eleventh negative sign in *Religious Affections*, Edwards demonstrated that possessing assurance is in and of itself no sure sign of holy affections. Yet this

35 Edwards, "Treatise on Grace," 196-197.

36 Richard H. Olmstead, "Staking All on Faith's Object: The Art of Christian Assurance According to Martin Luther and Karl Barth," *Pro Ecclesia* 10, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 149-151.

37 Jonathan Edwards, "I Know My Redeemer Lives," in *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, 141-160.

38 It should be noted that Sarah Edwards, Jonathan's wife, had a robust, experiential spiritual life and enjoyed at times what she described as "the riches of full assurance." Gerstner, *Rational Biblical Theology*, 3:345-348.

39 Edwards "I Know My Redeemer," 152-156.

40 *Ibid.*, 156-160.

did not mean that Edwards believed that assurance was not to be sought. Instead, Edwards declared, “It is manifest that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history, or particular account of in Scripture, to be assured.”⁴¹ It is in the very constitution of the covenant of grace that God has provided means for Christian assurance.⁴² Of course, someone not demonstrating Christian graces should not take comfort in God's provision for assurance. It is foolish to construe faith as holding on to the belief that one believes when in a sinful estate. Faith and assurance are distinct, and it is not the nature of faith to function in such a way.⁴³ When saints sink into times of sin, they are guided back to restraint not by confidence in God's love but through fear. Yet as fear drives them to watchfulness, love again grows in their heart and drives out fear, thereby providing a greater restraint against sin. God has so constituted things that love and fear increase and decrease as if they were on different sides of a scale. Assurance is connected to the experience of God's love: “Fear is cast out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love: nor is it ever maintained by his Spirit, when love is asleep. At such a time, in vain is all the saint's self-examinations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace and get assurance. For it is contrary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have assurance at such a time.”⁴⁴ Moreover, “mere improving experiences as evidences of an interest in a glorious Redeemer” are of a very different nature than self-righteous clinging to one's works and experiences.⁴⁵

Though Edwards asserts that assurance can be attained, his emphasis on practice has led to some confusion at exactly this point. If saints must constantly struggle with their sin and guard against self-deception, how can they ever have true assurance? W. Ross Hastings portrays Edwards's doctrine of assurance as ultimately ambivalent. Though Edwards claimed that assurance was attainable and there are reasons to think that assurance would be robust according to Edwards's larger theological project, he ultimately failed to achieve this because of his overemphasis on “pneumatic” as opposed to “incarnational theosis.” Instead of emphasizing objective union with Christ in his incarnation as did Karl Barth, Edwards focused on “realised pneumatological experience” which necessarily led to overly subjective self-analysis.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Edwards threatened to annul justification by faith through an overemphasis on sanctification. It is Hastings's conclusion that Edwards had little to offer the troubled soul but the question: “Does the person see enough evidence of the Spirit being at work in his soul, and

41 Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 167.

42 *Ibid.*, 169.

43 *Ibid.*, 178.

44 *Ibid.*, 179-180.

45 *Ibid.*, 181.

46 W. Ross Hastings, “Discerning the Spirit: Ambivalent Assurance in the Soteriology of Jonathan Edwards and Barthian Correctives,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63, no. 4 (2010): 448.

in his relationships?”⁴⁷ It is important to note that, while Hastings's criticism should be taken seriously, it cannot be forgotten that Edwards himself believed that assurance was possible and something to be enjoyed. There will be more opportunity to agree or disagree with Hastings momentarily.

Conclusion

Edwards's doctrine of assurance has proven to be something of a battleground. Though many attest to the brilliance of *Religious Affections* and the thought of Edwards in general, many do not find comfort in Edwards's presentation of the doctrine. Uncertainty and ambivalence remain. In this essay, I have attempted to place Edwards's doctrine in context. Furthermore, I have suggested three key elements of Edwardsean assurance; namely, the work of the Spirit, exhibition in practice, and attainability for the Christian. It is, of course, the last point that requires more consideration. It seems fit to conclude this essay by offering a few reflections on the attainability of assurance according to Jonathan Edwards.

A deeper certainty. Conrad Cherry suggests that Edwards's understanding of the Puritan practical syllogism [“whoever believes shall be saved; there are practical evidences (viz., my sanctified life) that I believe; therefore I shall be saved”] allows for a deeper and stronger kind of certainty that leaves room for personal doubt. According to Cherry, the nature of faith is only displayed in the first premise and the second premise in light of the conclusion. The second premise in and of itself does not partake of the nature of faith because it rests not on the Word of God but individual experience. Edwards's doctrine works against moralism because it exalts the saving promises of God and only considers human action in light of divine promise.⁴⁸ As stated by Cherry, “One may doubt of his own condition and still adhere in faith to God's testimony in the Word.”⁴⁹ If a person takes seriously the promises of the Gospel and looks however imperfectly at the object of faith, is it possible that she can long cling to a sinful estate?

The reality of sin. Sin is a terrible reality which never fits in God's world. Edwards must certainly be reflecting a Biblical theme when he suggests that assurance should not persist in the presence of sin. As 1 John 3:6 states, “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him” (ESV). Of course, Christians do sin but there is something inconsistent and improper in this state of affairs. D. A. Carson notes that “although both our experience and our location between the 'already' and the 'not yet' teach us that we do sin and we will sin, yet every single instance of sin is shocking, inexcusable, forbidden, appalling, out of line with what we are as Christians.”⁵⁰

47 Ibid., 451-452.

48 Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 151-156.

49 Ibid., 150.

50 D. A. Carson, “Reflections on Christian Assurance,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 12.

The love of God. If the last two reflections seem to affirm Edwards, the next two provide criticism. Edwards stated in *Religious Affections* that love and fear stand together as in a scale; one decreases as the other increases. When a saint falls into sin, fear drives them back to sanctification. Yet does the Bible present fear as such a consistent motivating force? Does the love of Christ have nothing to say to someone struggling with sin? As Peter writes, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18a, ESV; cf. Romans 2:4; 5:8). Christ died for sinners in an act of love, and we must still believe that God extends his love to sinful men and women.

The trouble with “seeing.” Edwards's language is full of “visual” perception – beauty, excellency, harmony, light, spiritual sight. He emphasized the power of Spirit-wrought perception of divine truth. When one is captured by the vision of God, holy affections are stirred which issue forth in gracious practice. Yet what about the believer who struggles with doubt, and for a multitude of complex reasons struggles to “sense” divine things? For all of his insight and wisdom, pastoral sensitivity suggests that some Christians should avoid Edwards. Instead, they would be better directed to Luther, who once wrote, “A Christian...is not guided by what he sees or feels; he follows what he does not see or feel. He remains with the testimony of Christ; he listens to Christ's words and follows Him into the darkness.”⁵¹ At times in our Christian life, we can not wait for “light”; we must cling to the naked, unadorned Word, trusting that God and he only can save.

51 Quoted in Donald Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority and Method in Theology*, Christian Foundations (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 97.

Infant Baptism in the First-Century Presupposition Pool¹

Steven A. Nicoletti

Cambridge professor C.F.D. Moule said of Joachim Jeremias' 1958 book *Infant Baptism* that it contained “*at least*” all the evidence in favor of the apostolic origin of infant baptism.² And indeed, in the last fifty years we have not stumbled upon any new direct evidence of the apostolic practice in this period. However, in his 2004 paper “Did the Apostolic Church Baptise Babies?: A Seismological Approach,” Anthony N. S. Lane proposed an alternative to what he called the tendency “to torture the early evidence in order to make it say more than the authors intended, to read between the lines of first-century documents.” Instead of examining data (or lack thereof) from the church in the first century, he examined the data from the church in the early patristic period, and its relationship to the apostolic church. From this examination he drew his conclusions on what “must have happened in apostolic times” to explain the later practices.³

Rather than look at the direct data, which is scant, Lane looked at data from a related time and place, and drew conclusions from it to the apostolic period. This paper will seek to follow that same approach, but in a different direction, thus supplementing Lane's work.

Our goal here will be to examine how the apostolic church's silence on the topic of infant baptism should be interpreted in light of the presuppositions of the New Testament's original audiences: particularly new converts to the church coming out of first-century Judaism or Greco-Roman religion. What we will find is that the practice that best fits with this data is that the apostolic church fully initiated the infants of Christians into the church, through baptism.

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² David F. Wright, “Out, In, Out: Jesus' Blessing of the Children and Infant Baptism,” in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 192.

³ Anthony N. S. Lane, “Did the Apostolic Church Baptise Babies?: A Seismological Approach,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 55, no. 1 (2004): 109-110.

I. Presupposition Pools in Meaning, Silence, and Infant Baptism

A. Presupposition Pools and Meaning

In a 1975 essay, Theo Vennemann argued that in discourse, presuppositions are carried not in the structure of the discourse itself, but in a “presupposition pool.” He explained that “the information contained in this pool is constituted from general knowledge, from the situative context of the discourse, and from the completed part of the discourse itself.”⁴ Peter Cotterell and Max Turner have elaborated on this concept to show that the true meaning of a piece of discourse can vary greatly depending on our understanding of its presupposition pool.⁵

B. Presupposition Pools and Silence

In their discussions of presupposition pools, neither Vennemann nor Cotterell and Turner directly address how silence on a relevant topic should be interpreted within the context of a presupposition pool, but Vennemann does give us the concepts to begin considering the question. Vennemann explains that a participant’s presupposition pool

can be characterized as the set of all assumptions relevant to the discourse which he believes are shared by all the participants. At least this is so in a normal, honest discourse. A discourse can continue undisturbed as long as the assumption of the shared presupposition pool can be entertained. As soon as the participants notice that this assumption is wrong, the discourse – or a particular portion of the discourse – ends, and a discussion of the discrepant presuppositions begins...during which no participant entertains the discrepant presuppositions as presuppositions.⁶

If author and audience share a presupposition relevant to their discourse, there is essentially no need to discuss it explicitly. It is only when the author and audience find a discrepancy in their presuppositions that the issues they presupposed must be taken out of the unspoken presupposition pool and discussed explicitly as topics themselves.

⁴ Theo Vennemann, “Topics, Sentence Accent, Ellipsis: A Proposal for Their Formal Treatment,” in *Formal Semantics of Natural Language: Papers from a Colloquium Sponsored by the King’s College Research Center, Cambridge*, ed. Edward L. Keenan (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 314.

⁵ Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 90-97.

⁶ Vennemann, 314.

An example may be helpful. The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America nowhere explicitly mentions the topic of the enslaved Africans in the U.S. That fact by itself may initially lead someone to say that the document is unclear on its position regarding slavery. Moreover, by looking at the document itself, some may see statements that, though they do not explicitly mention slavery, appear to a twenty-first-century American reader to imply opposition to the institution. This would include statements like “all men are created equal,” and that such men have rights to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” And yet, one would be wrong in drawing the conclusion from this passage that the document opposes the institution of slavery. The document’s actual views on slavery are learned not from the document itself, but from the original presupposition pool within which it was written and read. Once we realize that the document was originally sent from colonies in which slavery was legal, to a country in which slavery was legal, and that its primary author himself owned over 185 slaves at the time of writing,⁷ we see that in its original role as a piece of discourse, the statement that “all men are created equal” was not originally intended to contradict the practice of racially based slavery. Again, this realization is only reached by a historical knowledge of the presupposition pool – and cannot be deduced from the discourse itself.

There are two key concepts seen in this example. The first is that because the author and audience share presuppositions about race-based slavery in their presupposition pool, the topic itself need not explicitly come up, even when topics relevant to it (such as equality and freedom) are being discussed. The second key concept is that the position of the author and audience on the relevant topic is neither found in nor deduced from the discourse itself, but from a historical investigation of the presupposition pool of the discourse.

C. The Silence On Infant Baptism in the New Testament and Other Early Documents

For the sake of this paper we will grant that neither the New Testament nor any other Christian document from the first two centuries *explicitly* deals with the topic of infant baptism. The question is what conclusions we can or should draw from this silence.

We must first be very wary of any interpretation of this silence that simplistically jumps to a conclusion that the first century church must not have practiced infant baptism. Such arguments may point to New Testament statements about baptism that we do not imagine could apply to an infant. But to adopt that line of argument too hastily would make us like the young student, arguing with his history teacher that Thomas Jefferson could not have owned slaves because of the words he penned in the Declaration of Independence. Such a student reads an old

⁷ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 4.

document with his twenty-first-century presupposition pool. We must beware not to do the same.

A better interpretive step would be to consider that the silence indicates that there was no disagreement about the place of infants born to Christians within the church. The authors of the New Testament exhibit little interest in explicitly discussing the topic of infant initiation into the faith, whether addressing churches consisting of converts from a Jewish background or from a Greco-Roman background. The book of Acts records no open discussion of the topic of what to do with the infants of believers, either when large numbers of Jews (e.g. Acts 2) or large numbers of Gentiles (e.g. Acts 10) were converted and joined the faith. The same is true of documents that have survived from the second century. All appear to be silent.

And yet the early church had to have done *something* with the infants of Christians and new converts. Whether they baptized and fully initiated them, treated them as outsiders until they matured, or did something in between, from the day of Pentecost on,⁸ the church had to do *something* with these infants. And so rather than telling us what exactly the church did with their infants, the New Testament's silence and the silence of the church in the first two centuries instead indicates a lack of a *dispute* over what to do with the infants of Christians. This lack of a dispute, and the lack of explicit instruction, suggests that the authors of these documents believed they shared presuppositions with their audience about how infants related to their parents' religion, whether their audience was coming out of a Jewish or a Greco-Roman background.

And so the fact that the topic of an infant's place in the religion did not surface explicitly most likely indicates shared and undisputed presuppositions on the topic between the Christian authors and the world around them, for whom they were writing. If that is true, then one constructive way to begin to discern the author's views and the practices of the early church regarding infants, is to investigate the presuppositions of the Jewish and the Greco-Roman world around the church, regarding the religious standing of infants. From there, we can infer the most likely meaning of the fact that the New Testament authors do not dispute those views, but leave them silently submerged in the presupposition pool of their audience.

II. Baptism and Initiation: Moving from Form to Function

Before we begin our historical investigation, we must do one more thing. One issue that has hampered studies of infant baptism has been a fixation on the form of water baptism rather than its function. Often the discussion on the context and history of Christian baptism is limited to Jewish and Greco-Roman water rites, rather than focusing on Jewish and Greco-Roman rites that performed a similar function in their contexts, as baptism performed within the church.

⁸ Lane, 111.

While the New Testament speaks of baptism in many ways,⁹ we will focus on baptism as that which initiates an individual into 1) the Christian church, and 2) the Christian life. In other words, we will focus on baptism's function as a rite that moves one from outside the church community to inside the church as a full member, and that marked the formal beginning of an individual's life as a Christian, as one "in Christ." Baptism may be more than just an initiation rite, but it certainly is not less. For our purposes, we will focus on this initiatory function.

Within the apostolic ministry, as described by the New Testament, baptism and Christian initiation are synonymous. Wayne A. Meeks points out the church made baptism "bear the whole function of initiation," which was "the decisive point of entry into an exclusive community."¹⁰ Adela Yarbro Collins,¹¹ Maxwell E. Johnson,¹² and Aidan Kavanagh¹³ have similarly argued that in the early church, water baptism served as a rite of initiation into the Christian faith and community. The book of Acts puts forward a similar picture. Whatever variation occurs in Acts regarding how the Church initiates people into the community and its faith, one of the consistent aspects (when that ritual process is described in any detail) is that they are baptized.¹⁴ The form of Christian baptism accomplished the function of Christian initiation.

For the rest of this paper, we will focus on this function rather than the details of the form. This will allow us to more accurately compare practices between religions, focusing not on what they look like, but what function they perform within the religion. With that view in mind, we will examine the first-century presuppositions regarding infant initiation in both Judaism and Greco-Roman religions, and then we will consider their implications for the practices of the first-century church.

⁹ Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 37-39.

¹⁰ Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 152-153.

¹¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Origin of Christian Baptism," in *Living Water Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 51-53.

¹² Johnson, 23.

¹³ Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 20-23, quoted in Johnson, 36-37.

¹⁴ E.g.: Acts 2:37-41; 8:12; 8:35-39; 9:17-19; 10:46-48; 16:13-15; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7; 22:12-16.

III. First-Century Presuppositions Regarding Infant Initiation into Religion

A. Infant Initiation in First-Century Judaism

Initiation at Eight Days

In the Jewish Scriptures, initiation into the covenant of Abraham and the promises it entailed, was accomplished by circumcision of all males (Gen 17), upon conversion for those born outside of the community (Exod 12:48), or on the eighth day after birth for those born within the community (Gen 17:12; 21:14; Lev 12:1–3). Circumcision made one like a “native of the land” within Israel, and therefore eligible to participate in the religious life of the community (Exod 12:43–49). There is no additional initiation rite or process given in the Jewish Scriptures. Instead, full initiation is accomplished when an infant is only eight days old. For females in the community, no rite is given at eight days, but neither is there a later rite. Since there is a clear demarcation between women in the community and women outside the community (e.g.: Deut 7:3; Neh 10:30; 13:25), the assumption seems to be that women born within the community are considered full initiated members at birth, without such a rite. The New Testament records the circumcision of John the Baptist on the eighth day after his birth, in Luke 1:59, suggesting that infant initiation through circumcision continued to be normative in the first century.

First-Century Bar Mitzvahs?

While the celebration of Bar Mitzvah has become popular in modern times, there is no evidence that this Jewish rite for males crossing from boyhood to adulthood (at age 13) occurred in the first century. Instead, the term is not used to describe such a ceremonial occasion until the 15th century C.E. Though before this period (even as early as the second century C.E.) we do see concepts of male adulthood beginning at age 13, this change was primarily a legal one, in which the individual was responsible for his own actions (rather than his father being responsible) and in which one was able to make legally binding vows. It did not represent a change in the individual’s religious participation, and it was not at this time accompanied by any type of rite.¹⁵

Infant Participation in Jewish Religious Life in the First Century

The Mishna gives us a further glimpse into Jewish thought on infant initiation in the early centuries C.E. While the *Mishna* was compiled in its current

¹⁵ Norman Baumel Joseph, “Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum (New York: Thomson Gale, 2007), 3:164-167.

form ca. 200 C.E.,¹⁶ much work has been done to try to determine which portions of the text originated in which rabbinic period. We will draw below on such efforts by Jacob Neusner.

What we find in the *Mishna* is that infants were considered fully initiated into the Jewish religion from infancy, and were only hindered from participating in the religious life of the community to the extent that they were physically unable to do so. Hagigah 1:1 discusses at what age a boy was *obligated* to travel to Jerusalem to take part in the three annual feasts. After indicating that a child is not obligated to appear at the temple for the festivals, the text asks “Who is deemed a child?” It goes on to answer, “Any that cannot ride on his father’s shoulders and go up from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount. So the School of Shammai. And the School of Hillel say: Any that cannot hold his father’s hand and go up [on his feet] from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount.”¹⁷ We will first consider the implications of the text itself, and then its dating.

There are two important things to note from this text. First is that there appears to be no further initiation before these boys could participate in the full religious life of Israel. Second, the discussion is not about who is *permitted* to participate in the annual feasts in Jerusalem, but who is *required* to participate. There is no minimum age for participation here, but (at the least) all boys old enough to walk well were *required* to take part in the feasts in Jerusalem. It seems to be assumed that anyone fully initiated into the Jewish faith (usually from the eighth day after birth) was permitted to participate in these feasts (assuming they met the requirements for ceremonial cleanness).¹⁸ The Jews who compiled this portion of the *Mishna* considered children to be initiated from infancy, participating as they were able. But when was this text compiled?

There are multiple reasons to conclude that this passage from Hagigah 1:1 reflects *first-century* Jewish views and practices. We can begin with a simple surface level reading of the text itself. The text purports to record the views of two houses, the Houses of Hillel and Shammai. These two schools of Jewish theology and rabbinic interpretation existed from the end of the first century B.C.E. until

¹⁶ Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature: An Essential Guide* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 19.

¹⁷ Hagigah 1:1, *The Mishna*, trans. Herbert Danby (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), 211.

¹⁸ This has relevance for modern debates about paedocommunion. Jews at the time when the Eucharist was instituted expected all boys old enough to walk to be required to participate in the Passover and other annual feasts. This information stands against assertions by some that participation in the Passover was limited to an “age of digression” at 20 or 13 (e.g.: Cornelis P. Venema, *Children at the Lord’s Table?* [Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009], 67). As a result, any position that claims that (with no direct writing on the subject) the apostolic church barred all children not old enough to make a “credible profession of faith” from the Eucharist faces an uphill battle when the institution of the Eucharist is considered in its own historical context rather than ours. Barring young children from participating in such a meal would be a foreign concept to a first-century Jew.

the beginning of the second century C.E., but their debates primarily occurred during the last two to three generations of the Second Temple period.¹⁹ In addition to that, this text appears to presuppose the existence of the temple, which was destroyed in 70 C.E. With this surface level reading, we would assume that the text provides a window into the dominant rabbinic views within the Jewish community at the time of the apostolic church.

Of course we must make a somewhat more rigorous evaluation of the origin of this text, and consider that it could be a later set of views attributed to earlier rabbinic schools. Following the methodology of Jacob Neusner we will find that Hagigah 1:1 most likely comes from the Yavneh period of the formation of the *Mishna*, which is the earliest layer of compiling, and the most likely to represent an accurate view of first-century Judaism.

Yavneh became the center of Jewish self-government and religious learning after 70 C.E., and it continued to fill this role until ca. 135 C.E.²⁰ Yavneh maintained a higher level of continuity with pre-70 C.E. Judaism, while the real break in rabbinic thought came in 140 C.E., after the Bar Kokhba revolt was put down by Rome.²¹ Therefore, according to Neusner, verifying that a text is from the Yavneh period is extremely important in estimating the traditions of the Pharisees by the end of the first century.²² Hagigah 1:1 can best be dated to the early Yavneh period because of its form, external verifications, style, and the nature of its question.

First, Hagigah 1:1 most likely dates to the early Yavneh period because of its form, in which the opinions of the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel are placed side by side, on equal footing. Neusner argues that texts in this form come from a period when the two Houses were of roughly equal strength, a situation only found in the early Yavneh period.²³

The second factor in dating this passage is its external verification. Based on parallel or similar passages in *Mekhilta de Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai* and *Sifre to Deuteronomy*, Neusner concludes that Hagigah 1:1 likely reached its current form during the Yavneh period.²⁴

The third factor in dating is style. Based on assigning a terser, formulaic style aimed at memorization to the early Yavneh texts, Neusner assigns our text dealing with children making pilgrimage to the House-traditions that were known by ca. 100-120 C.E.²⁵

¹⁹ Shmuel Safrai, "Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum (New York: Thomson Gale, 2007), 3:530.

²⁰ H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 2.

²¹ Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1971) 3:283; Strack and Stemberger, 5.

²² Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*, 3:224.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3:315.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:223-225.

Finally, an early date can be attributed to Hagigah 1:1 because its question is ultimately priestly and not rabbinic. Temple regulations before 70 C.E. could be found out, authoritatively, by simply asking any temple priest. Since the temple regulations in the *Mishna* do not seem to communicate an underlying theme,²⁶ it is likely that rather than being an actual dispute, our text simply contains two different ways in which the Houses recorded temple regulations as given by the priests.²⁷ This would give the content of the pericope a root in the first century. All of the above factors support the idea that Hagigah 1:1 describes first-century practices and views.

A corresponding text in the *Tosefta* (a supplement to the *Mishna* compiled closer to 300 C.E.)²⁸ lends support to our interpretation of Hagigah 1:1 of the *Mishna*. Hagigah 1:2 of the *Tosefta* discusses the religious obligations of children, stating “[If] he knows how to shake [an object], he is liable to observe the commandment of the *lulab*. / [If] he knows how to cloak himself, he is liable for the commandment of fringes.”²⁹ The text goes on to elaborate a system where a child becomes obligated to certain religious practices at the stage where he is physically able to participate. As with the *Mishna*, the underlying principle is that a child is fully initiated as a newborn and takes on religious responsibilities as he is able – not in a later rite of initiation.³⁰ This would be the presupposition of those coming out of Judaism and into the early church.

B. Infant Initiation in First-Century Greco-Roman Religions

We have seen that first-century Jews would have assumed full initiation of infants, with no further initiation rites to follow for religious participation. However the early church quickly saw a large influx of Gentiles into its ranks. What presuppositions would these Gentiles have brought with them about infant participation in religion?

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:228.

²⁷ That our text appears to present a dispute between the Houses on this matter may seem to undercut this claim. But Neusner elsewhere points out that the dispute form is just that – a form. Neusner assumes that the individual Houses kept records of their opinions by themselves and not in juxtaposition to another House. It was only later when the Shammai-Hillel-Houses-corpora was assembled that it was all put into the form of the dispute – whether a real disagreement existed or not (Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*, 3:317).

²⁸ Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature: An Essential Guide*, 31.

²⁹ Hagigah 1:1, *Tosefta*, trans. Jacob Neusner (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 1:663-664.

³⁰ While Hagigah 1:3 of the *Tosefta* offers puberty as the time by which males and females are “liable to observe all of the commandments which are stated in the Torah,” this passage marks the end of the progressive ability-based participation in religious life, not the beginning. A Jewish child was not initiated into religious life *at* puberty, but their progressive participation in religious life must be completed *by* puberty.

Dies Lustricus

An important ceremony in the life of a Greco-Roman infant was the *dies lustricus*. This ceremony focused on ritually purifying the infant, naming it, and formally admitting and welcoming it into the family.³¹ It was through this rite that infants entered into social life. They were only recognized by the state after this rite, and in a sense, they did not exist in society until this rite was performed. This ceremony, in a very real way, was the infant's "social birth." The ceremony occurred on the ninth day after birth for boys and the eighth day after birth for girls.³² Scholars vary in their assessment of how well we can reconstruct this rite. According to Véronique Dasen, the main things we can know are that the *dies lustricus* events included sacrifices, purifications, and a family gathering.³³ Christian Laes, on the other hand, gives a fuller reconstruction of the events, drawing from a wider range of sources:³⁴

On the eve of the feast, an *amphidromia* was held around the home. Three men would keep watch. One would hold a rammer in the name of Pilumnus, with which he would stamp the ground around the house. A second man, wielding an axe, symbolized Intercidona. The third represented Deverra: he would use a broom to clear all evil spirits from the home. After the nocturnal ritual, the house and its surroundings would be rid of the evil spirit Silvanus, so that the infant could be carried out safely. The uncle on the mother's side (*avunculus*) would appear at the house in the morning and give the child its first name or *praenomen*. He would make some offerings to the gods and express the best wishes for the infant. The child's aunt on its mother's side would engage in a symbolic struggle with the dark forces by circling around the house three times with a broom in

³¹ Beryl Rawson, "Adult-Child Relationships in Roman Society," in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 14; Marja-Leena Hänninen, "From Womb to Family: Rituals and Social Conventions Connected to Roman Birth," in *Hoping for Continuity: Childhood, Education and Death in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Katariina Mustakallio, Jussi Hanska, Hanna-Leena Sainio and Ville Vuolanto. Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 33 (Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, 2005), 57; Peter Garnsey, "Child Rearing in Ancient Italy," in *The Family in Italy: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 53.

³² Christian Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 65-66.

³³ Véronique Dasen, "Roman Birth Rites of Passage Revisited," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 22 (2009): 207.

³⁴ Laes seems to draw in part on ritual descriptions provided by St. Augustine, on the basis of Varro (Augustine, *City of God*, VI.9), though she does not cite Augustine. It should be noted that it is uncertain how old the rites described by Augustine really are (Hänninen, 56).

hand. Subsequently, she would open the eyes and lungs of the infant by applying some saliva to its forehead and lips. This first exposure to the outside air also symbolized the initial presentation to Jupiter, the god of the heaven....The ceremony was concluded with a ritual involving bread, symbol for the child's participation in the Roman state: the baby would be covered in the bread and the aunt would eat from it. This was probably followed by a banquet.³⁵

The *dies lustricus* involved a driving out of evil spirits, protection for the initiate, naming, victory over dark forces, participation in the state and apparently welcoming into the family. It was also when the infant received the garment of childhood (worn until adulthood) and the *bulla* of childhood (a leather pouch of protective amulets worn around the neck until adulthood).³⁶

Scholars identify the *dies lustricus* as a practice of Roman antiquity.³⁷ Primary source references to it are scattered, and range in specificity. Laes gives a variety of primary source references, spanning a period from the fourth century B.C.E to the fourth century C.E., and spread across a geography including Rome, Greece, and Africa.³⁸ (A chart of those primary sources is provided in the appendix.)

A few things should be noted here. First, since both the state and the family were cultic and religious, the *dies lustricus* cannot be thought of as merely a secular-social initiation, but it is a religious initiation as well. Second, to students of late patristic and medieval baptismal liturgy, the above description should be striking. Over time, Christian baptismal liturgy for infants was elaborated to include ceremonial exorcisms, a naming, an opening of the ears and nostrils (not far from the eyes and lungs described above) and an immediate Eucharistic celebration. Is it possible that these extra-biblical ceremonial elaborations were influenced by the ceremonies involved in the *dies lustricus*? This is a topic worth pursuing, but beyond the scope of this paper.

Véronique Dasen has pointed out that many questions remain about the *dies lustricus*. One is whether non-Roman citizens, such as slaves, would have also performed this rite for their infants. At this point the answer is uncertain, though Dasen believes there are hints that they may have.³⁹ Further research is clearly

³⁵ Laes, 66-67.

³⁶ Jens-Uwe Krause, "Children in the Roman Family and Beyond," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 627.

³⁷ E.g.: Laes, 66-67; Rawson, 16; Krause, 627; W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Augustus* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1971), 28; W. A. Strange, *Children in the Early Church: Children in the Ancient World, the New Testament and the Early Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 3.

³⁸ Laes, 66.

³⁹ Dasen, 208.

needed, but as the data stands it seems most likely that some form of the *dies lustricus* was performed for all infants accepted into their families.

What is important to note here is that this ceremony, intended to be performed on newborns in the Greco-Roman world, was religious in nature and had the intention of initiating the infant into family and state life (both of which were themselves cultic and religious). Additionally, the ceremony seems to carry other meanings which baptism also carried in the early church (such as purification and victory over evil forces).⁴⁰

Further Initiation?

If the *dies lustricus* was a rite of religious initiation, was it the only initiatory rite or were there other standard initiation rites in the life of a child growing to adulthood? While the end of infancy was seen as coming at age seven, there was no rite of passage or initiation at this age.⁴¹ A boy's transition into manhood was marked by a special ceremony in wealthy families, where the garb of childhood was exchanged for the garb of manhood,⁴² but this ceremony did not seem to carry a function of religious initiation or added religious privileges or responsibilities.

As such, the *dies lustricus* appears to have functioned in Roman life as the sole rite of initiation into the state and family, as well as the cultic life associated with both. No further initiation seems to have been carried out, at least in any standardized way.

Child Participation in Roman Religions

The Greco-Roman world had not one religion but many cultic societies that overlapped. Those societies fit into three major categories which we will examine below: 1) the civic and imperial cult, 2) the family cult, and 3) voluntary associations and cults.⁴³

The Civic & Imperial Cult

It is important to remember that religion was a state affair. As such, each city (and often even neighborhoods within a city) had a civic religion – a specific set of gods that made up the pantheon of that particular city. Additionally, the empire

⁴⁰ Contra. Dasen, 212. While it would be a mistake to overstate the similarities between Christian baptism and the *dies lustricus*, Dasen's argument for how they differed is unconvincing.

⁴¹ Laes, 84.

⁴² Rawson, 28, 59; Laes 279-280; Krause, 629.

⁴³ John Scheid, "Graeco-Roman Cultic Societies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 535-547.

also had its own cult that spread to everywhere its power went, and included worship of the emperor.⁴⁴

The evidence suggests that young children participated in these civic cults. Young boys (not yet of age) would assist the priests in cultic worship, serving as acolytes and participating in the sacrifices.⁴⁵ Children sang in religious state festivals,⁴⁶ and at times girls assisted in rituals of expiation.⁴⁷ Dionysius describes some public ceremonies which men were forbidden to celebrate and which only women and children could participate in. Children's assistance in the rituals of the civic cults was apparently seen as analogous to their assistance in the family cult (see below).⁴⁸ I.C. Mantle also points to several pieces of art from outside of Rome that provide visual evidence of children assisting in the worship of the civic and imperial cults.⁴⁹

It therefore appears that young children participated in the civic and imperial cults, which would have been an inherent aspect of being part of the Roman state. Their official recognition as members of the state was achieved at their *dies lustricus*, and the religious acts associated with membership were taken up in ways appropriate to the child's age, as they developed.

The Family Cult

Each family also had its own unique family religion, which was created by their ancestors and included all members of the family.⁵⁰ Religious rites were a core part of family life, and those rites had specific responsibilities for children.⁵¹ Young children had special roles in which they assisted in family ceremonies, such as throwing grain or slices of honeycomb into the sacrificial fire.⁵² As with the civic and imperial cult, it appears that children participated in the family cult, with no further initiation. As the *dies lustricus* gave the child a name and socially "birthed" them into the family, that "birth" would have also initiated them into the family cult.

⁴⁴ Scheid, 537-541.

⁴⁵ Scheid, 538; O. M. Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 49-50; I. C. Mantle, "The Roles of Children in Roman Religion," in *Greece & Rome* 49, no. 1 (April 2002), 91-99.

⁴⁶ Thomas Wiedmann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 182; Mantle, "The Roles of Children in Roman Religion," 86-91.

⁴⁷ Mantle, "The Roles of Children in Roman Religion," 89.

⁴⁸ Wiedmann, 183-184.

⁴⁹ I. C. Mantle, "Addendum: The Religious Roles of Children in the Provinces," in *Greece & Rome* 57, no. 1 (2010), 117-118.

⁵⁰ Scheid, 541-542.

⁵¹ Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens, *Let the Little Children Come to Me: Childhood and Children in Early Christianity* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 33; Mantle, "The Roles of Children in Roman Religion," 100-102.

⁵² Wiedmann, 181.

Voluntary Assemblies and Cults

The role of children in voluntary religious assemblies is less clear than it is in civic and family cults, but examples of child participation certainly exist. Henrichs describes the cultic practices around Dionysus (the god of wine), and portrays children as being very involved, with young boys participating in festivals and being admitted into the mystery cult.⁵³ Wiedmann also argues that there are references to children participating in the Eleusinian Mysteries, but it is less clear how often they were viewed as fully equal devotees with adults.⁵⁴ Children's toys have frequently been found as votive offering in ancient sanctuaries, which Horn and Martens interpret as an indication that they were used as gifts given by young boys and girls at their initiatory rituals.⁵⁵ Though writing much later, Salvian the Presbyter⁵⁶ and Prudentius⁵⁷ also recorded infant initiation and participation in African and Roman cults in the fifth century C.E.⁵⁸

From this we can see that children and even infants were clearly initiated into and active participants in some voluntary assemblies and cults. On the other hand, as some of these cults were also associated with various trades, it seems unlikely that all voluntary religious assemblies initiated infants. Which practice was more common is at this point unclear.

Insights on the Place of Children by Considering Greco-Roman Parenting

It is also helpful to think of the Greco-Roman view of childrearing. The goal in raising children was to instill an ethic that "was, quite openly, one of obedience and docility."⁵⁹ In light of this it seems unlikely that, without specific instructions, converts to the church from the Greco-Roman world would have

⁵³ Albert Henrichs, "Changing Dionysaid Identities," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds. Ben F Meyer and E. P Sanders (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983) 3:140, 141, 148-150.

⁵⁴ Weidmann, 186.

⁵⁵ Horn and Martens, 187-188. The above is a selection of evidence from secondary sources (often uninterested in the topic of child participation). We would be well served by a more thorough examination of initiation and child participation in voluntary assemblies and cults. Unfortunately that is beyond the scope of this particular paper.

⁵⁶ Salvian, *The Presbyter*, *The Governance of God*, VIII.2, in *The Writings of Salvian, the Presbyter*, trans. Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1977), 226-227.

⁵⁷ Prudentius, *A Reply to Address of Symmachus*, I.199-214, in *Prudentius*, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 364-7.

⁵⁸ Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan, "Introduction," in *The Writings of Salvian, the Presbyter*, trans. Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1977), 7; H. J. Thomson, "Introduction," in *Prudentius*, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), x-xii.

⁵⁹ Aline Rouselle, *Pornea: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*, trans. Felicia Pheasant (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 54.

placed a high value on a child's "choice" of religion (and hold Christian initiation off until then) rather than valuing their submission to the family religion.⁶⁰

What Kind of Religion was the Church?

Having considered the three major categories of religions in the Greco-Roman world (civic/imperial, family, voluntary associations), we now must ask which category a Greco-Roman convert would have put the Christian church in. This will help us determine which set of presuppositions a convert would have carried with him into the church.

N. T. Wright makes a convincing argument that the Apostle Paul's gospel was aimed at the imperial cult of Caesar and placed itself in the same category, as its rival. Paul's use of the word "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) would have been associated with the birth of a new emperor, and in the context of the Roman Empire it would have been heard as a summons to another king, of which Paul claimed be an ambassador. Paul's identifying Jesus as lord (κύριό) would have been seen as a challenge *not* primarily to private mystery religions, but to the lordship of Caesar. In Philippians 3, Wright argues that by giving Jesus the titles he does, and by casting the Philippian church as an outpost of heaven instead of Philippi as an outpost of Rome, Paul is arguing that Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not. Wright concludes that "religion" is too restrictive a category for Paul's message, but that it is a joining of religion and politics, in the same category as the Caesar Cult.⁶¹ This would help explain why Celsus later criticized the early church for being a religious group that behaves like a nation.⁶²

It is important to remember that one reason the early church faced persecution was their refusal to participate in the state religion and the imperial cult. Such a reason is given by Pliny the Younger (appointed governor of Bithynia in 111 C.E.) and in Polycarp's martyrdom, but other emperors persecuted the church as early as 64 C.E. It appears that emperors saw Christianity as a threat to the integrity of the state.⁶³ All of this would support the idea that Christianity did

⁶⁰ Cf. Mark Searle, "Infant Baptism Reconsidered," in *Living Water Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 367.

⁶¹ N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation; Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 160-183. For a more amusing presentation of a similar argument, see Peter J. Leithart, *Against Christianity* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 11-40.

⁶² R. Joseph Hoffman, "General Introduction," in *Celsus On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians*, trans. R. Joseph Hoffman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 34.

⁶³ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Early Church to the Reformation*, Revised and Updated (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 43-58.

not primarily fit in the category of a family cult or a voluntary assembly, but rather it was a rival imperial cult, and was treated by the state as such.⁶⁴

IV. Conclusions

This paper, though technically a historical study, has in reality been about exegesis. Having acknowledged that taken by themselves, the texts of the New Testament are ambiguous regarding the baptism of infants, most debates have either ended in stalemates there, or have continued to spin their wheels in the mud, ratcheting up the RPMs, but finding no new points of traction. Others have left the New Testament text itself and have repositioned the debate within systematic or pastoral theology. The failure of these methods is that they interpret the silence of the New Testament in a vacuum. The text is treated as if it lacked an original presupposition pool, or far worse, it is read within our twenty-first-century, Western presupposition pool.

This study is essentially an attempt to force the question of infant baptism back to the New Testament text by providing a cultural context for the text in which its silence can be accurately interpreted. What we have found is that within its historical context, the silence of the New Testament regarding infant baptism points strongly in favor of a normative practice of baptizing and fully initiating the infants of Christians into the church and the faith.

In both the Jewish and the Greco-Roman cultures surrounding the apostolic church we have found a consistent presupposition of the full initiation of infants based on the religious status of their parents. If our interpretation of the above data is correct, then all new converts entering the Christian church, whether from a Jewish or a Greco-Roman background, would have expected their infants to be initiated into their religion within the first weeks of life. Yet in the New Testament and in the surviving documents from the first two centuries of the church, we do not see this presupposition opposed, challenged or even taken up from the presupposition pool to be discussed. The church's silence on the issue of infant initiation within such a context makes the possibility that the early church either did not initiate infants or only partially initiated infants highly unlikely. Such

⁶⁴ Against this, Joel B. Green has focused on the family-centered nature of early Christianity (like the family cult) and Philip A. Harland and Richard S. Ascough have argued for similarities between early Christianity and voluntary associations. Their arguments are ultimately not as convincing as N.T. Wright's. Though they are deserving of more interaction, it is beyond the scope of this particular paper (Joel B. Green, "She and Her Household were Baptized [Acts 16:15]: Household Baptism in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross [London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 72-90; Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003], 29, 31, 40-41; Richard S. Ascough, "The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association," in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 119, no. 2 [Summer, 2000], 311-328).

a practice would have been in opposition to the presuppositions of all new converts to the church. That there would be no surviving discussion, instruction or debate if the church barred infants from initiation is difficult to believe.

Anyone arguing that the apostolic church did not baptize infants would have to make some difficult historical claims. They would need to claim that the apostolic church did something foreign to the presuppositions of all its new converts, but that this very unique practice was introduced and implemented without any surviving record of discussion, debate, confusion or instruction. Additionally, they would need to say that the apostolic church developed (unique from other surrounding religions) a catechetical pattern and a process of baptismal admission for children of Christians as they grew up, but without any record of that process, or debate about a minimum age for baptism, surviving. Such a case becomes challenging to believe.

This paper makes no claim of solving the question of infant baptism in the early church. It is instead intended to be a step in the overall process. Yet from this study we can say that the scenario that best fits with the presupposition pool within which the New Testament was written and read, is that the early church did fully initiate the infants of Christians through baptism.

Appendix: Some Primary Source References to the *dies lustricus*⁸

Date	Author	Location	Citation	Content
4 th Century BCE	Aristotle	Greece	<i>Historia Animalium</i> 588a ⁵	Regarding babies: "Most deaths occur before the seventh day, which is why they give them their names then, on the grounds that they have more confidence by then in their survival."
1 st Century BCE ^c	Verrius / Festus ^d	Republican Rome and Italy ^e	<i>De Verborum Significatu</i> ^f	Latin: "Lustrici dies infantium appellantiur, puellarum octavus, puerorum nonus, quia his lustrantur atque eis nomina imponuntur." Loose English Translation: "These days are called the infants' Purification Days (the eighth day for the girls, the ninth day for the boys), because on these days they are purified by sacrifice and names are given to them." ⁶
96 ^b – 127 CE	Plutarch	Greece, Discussing Roman Customs ^g	<i>Moralia : Quaestiones Romanae</i> 288c-e. ^h	He speculates possible answers to the question "Why do they name boys when they are nine days old, but girls when they are eight days old?"
Early 3 rd Century CE	Tertullian	North Africa	<i>De Idololatria</i> 16 ⁱ	He lists "ceremonies [...] of private and social solemnities", including "of namegivings." He also talks of how these ceremonies have been mixed with idolatry.
Late 4 th Century CE ^m	Disputed ⁿ	Discussing Roman Practice ^o	<i>The Scriptores Historiae Augustae, The Life of Clodius Albinus</i> 5:8 ^p	Refers to an omen in the life of Albinus "on the seventh day after his birth, at the very hour of a banquet in honour of the bestowal of his name."
Late 4 th to Late 5 th Century CE ^q	Marcobius	Ancient Greek and Roman Cultural Sources ^r	<i>Saturnalia</i> 1.16.36 ^s	"The Romans also have a goddess Nundina, named from the ninth day [<i>nonus dies</i>] after the baby's birth: that is the lustral day, when infants are purified and named (it's the ninth day for males, but the eighth for females)."

Notes for the Chart: Some Primary Source References to the *dies Iustitias*

- ¹ Sources cited by Christian Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 66.
- ² Aristide, *Historia Antiqua*, 588a5, ed. and trans. D. M. Halton, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 3472-475.
- ³ On the Lexikon: "what survives can by and large be attributed more to the great output of antiquarian scholarship of the last century BC than to archaizing interests of the second century AD. Thus the assumption of the paper is that the majority of the material in the Lexikon, as well as the order in which it appears, by and large derives from that of Verrius Flaccus' monumental work." Fay Glinister, "Constructing the Past," in *Ferrus, Fastus & Pauli Lexicography, Scholarship, & Society* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2007), 12.
- ⁴ Glinister, 11-12.
- ⁵ Fay Glinister, John Noyrn, and Clare Woods, "Introduction," in *Ferrus, Fastus, & Pauli Lexicography, Scholarship, & Society* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2007), 1.
- ⁶ Scott Pompei Testi, *De Ferorum Significata*, ed. Wallace M. Lindsay (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1913), 107-108.
- ⁷ I am indebted to my fellow student Peter Joslyn for providing this translation. Peter Joslyn, e-mail message to author, August 20, 2012.
- ⁸ Frank Cole Babbitt, "The Roman Questions: Introduction," in *Plutarch's Moralia*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 15-5.
- ⁹ Jan Opsomer, "Plutarch of Chaeronea," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald M. Boncher, 2nd ed. (New York: Gale Cengage Learning, 2006), 7647. / Babbitt, 2.
- ¹⁰ Plutarch, *Moralia: Quaestiones Romanae* 288c-e, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 152-155.
- ¹¹ Tertullian, *De Idolatria* 16, trans. S. Threlwall, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), 3-71.
- ¹² David Magie, "Introduction: The Authorship and Date of the *Historia Augusta*," in *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, trans. David Magie, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 2:xxxvi.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, vii-xxxvi.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*: Claudius Aelianus V.8, trans. David Magie, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 1470-471.
- ¹⁶ Robert A. Kaster, "Introduction" in Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, trans. Robert A. Kaster, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), xi-xxiv.
- ¹⁷ Kaster, xiv-xvi.
- ¹⁸ Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.6.36, trans. Robert A. Kaster, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 203.

Faculty Paper Titles

Imitatio Christi

Dr. Jimmy Agan

Exploring the Huguenot Legacy in South Carolina: How an Exiled French Acadian Family Made Baptist and Textile History

Dr. David Jones

Covenant Epistemology: Restoring Love, Wonder, and Wisdom to Scholarship and Seminary

Dr. Esther Meek, Plenary Speaker, Assoc. Prof. of Phil. at Geneva College

Sin and Atonement: What the Pentateuch Teaches Us

Dr. Jay Sklar

Joy in the Theology of Adolf Schlatter

Dr. Bob Yarbrough

Student Titles & Abstracts¹

All Things to Those Who Believe: A Critical Examination of David Crump's Position

James C. Abney

In several passages in the synoptic gospels, Jesus appears to teach that believing prayer gets whatever it asks. For example, in response to Peter's inquiry about the withered fig tree Jesus says, "whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mk. 11:24). What Jesus meant by the statements and how the synoptic authors expected their audience to apply these statements is an important but neglected area of NT scholarship. In this paper I offer a critique of David Crump's analysis of these passages found in his book *Knocking on Heaven's Door*. Crump's work is one of the broadest scholarly works on this topic available and therefore a good place to start asking questions. In this critique, I do not attempt to provide answers to these questions; rather I suggest further areas for study required before firm conclusions can be made about Jesus' meaning and how it applies to the church.

Calvin on Repentance

Andrew Allen

In this interaction with Calvin's theology of repentance, I aim to reform the reader's response to the realities of the kingdom of heaven. The proclamation of the in-breaking of the kingdom and the need for repentance appear in the opening chapters of all three Synoptic Gospels. Surely, it was the nearness of the kingdom and not the call to repentance that created a stir. John the Baptist's proclamation had "all of Judea and all of Jerusalem" confessing their sin and submitting to a baptism of repentance. Reading Calvin, one might wonder if the church has grown too comfortable with the divine drama of the kingdom and indifferent to the call to repentance. Calvin taught that repentance was a true and continual turning of one's life to God, consisting of daily mortification and vivification of the flesh. Calvin interpreted repentance as regeneration (in the broad sense) with the sole end of restoring the image of God in us. For Calvin the key to taking hold of so great a salvation was the earnest and lifelong race of repentance. There is no room for indifference because the kingdom of God is at hand, and the sinner must continually turn their life toward God.

¹ All students attend or have graduated from Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, unless otherwise indicated.

A Total (Covenantal) Eclipse of the Heart: A Lunar Reading of Hebrews 8:13

Jarad M. Corzine

The nature of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments is a much-debated topic. What happened to the Old Covenant (the Mosaic as a subsidiary of the Abrahamic) as a result of the inauguration of the New Covenant by Jesus? Hebrews 8:13 states, *“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”* I claim that the use of “obsolete” (palaios) in this verse does not refer to a devaluation of the Old Covenant, but rather an eclipse of the Old Covenant by the New Covenant. My work preserves the Christology of Hebrews, argues against a low view of the Old Covenant, contends for the fundamental continuity that exists between the Old and New Covenants, and provides imagery that depicts the New Covenant eclipsing the Old Covenant as that of a bright moon eclipsing a star and thus obscuring it from view. I provide evidence that encourages people to hold onto an appreciation for the Old Covenant while they are under the New Covenant of Jesus.

Jonathan Edwards’ Doctrine of Assurance

Scott Cress

Jonathan Edwards, arguably America's greatest theologian, has long been recognized as a significant voice in questions concerning saving faith and assurance of salvation. Yet some contend that Edwards's doctrine of assurance is without clarity or comfort. In this essay, I seek to better understand Edward's doctrine by placing him within his historical context. I suggest that, for Edwards, assurance is grounded in the work of the Spirit, evidenced by Christian practice, and attainable for the Christian.

Who Belongs in the New Covenant? Three Views and their Implications for Infant Baptism

Kyle Dillon

Within the Calvinistic tradition, there are three popular ways of relating the New Covenant, baptism, and believers' children. Progressive Covenantalism connects baptism with New Covenant membership but excludes believers' children from the covenant community. Augustinianism understands the New Covenant in terms of the subjective, spiritual regeneration but still includes believers' children within the broader covenant community and applies the rite of baptism to them. The Traditional Reformed view includes believers' children within the New Covenant

and applies baptism to them as a sign of New Covenant membership. Of these three views, the first rejects infant baptism while the second two affirm it. The truth is probably somewhere between the Augustinian and Traditional Reformed views.

Conceptual Metaphor as a Tool for the Scriptural and Creedal Interpretation of “Abide with Me.”

Ruth McDonnell, Assistant Director of MA Programs, PhD student Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

In this paper I explore the highly metaphorical nature of this hymn text and present an argument that those who feel that it conveys a disembodied eschatology are incorrect. The metaphorical structures of the hymn mimic the metaphors in Scripture in the way that they talk about death and life after death. Although there is a particular verse in the hymn which may “sound like Plato’s Cave” (to quote N. T. Wright) more than it does orthodox creedal Christianity, an interpretation of the entire hymn text according to the Cave’s metaphorical structure is untenable. I demonstrate that using the biblical metaphors of “A Lifetime is a Day” and the related metaphor, “Death is Sleep,” one can achieve an interpretation with a rich and “full-bodied” eschatological outlook.

The Transfiguration in Mk. 9:2-8 - A Bayerian View of Discipleship

Sean Duncan

In this paper, I argue that the Transfiguration of Jesus in Mark 9:2-8 serves as a physical representation of the Bayernian view of Jesus’ call to discipleship, which is the double crisis of self-perception and God-perception. The Bayernian view of Jesus’ discipleship involves the presentation of His radical personhood in order for His followers to be confronted with two questions: “Who do I perceive God to be?” and “Who do I perceive myself to be?” The resolution of these foundational questions form the essence of Jesus’ discipleship. The gospel of Mark gives three phenomenological markers within the pericope to draw the reader to this conclusion: 1. the radiance of Jesus’ countenance; 2. the appearance of Moses and Elijah; 3. the voice from the cloud.

Resurrection and Discipleship in Mark 12:18-27

Frank Harrell

Narrating Christian History in a Postmodern World

Blake Hartung

Claude Pajon and Contemporary Reformed on Conversion

Jonathan D. Hoglund, Wheaton College Graduate School

French Calvinist Claude Pajon (d. 1685) presented a unique doctrine of conversion. Although he subscribed officially to the standards of Dort, his views were judged inconsistent with the Canons because of his denial of an unmediated regenerating act of the Holy Spirit in conversion (i.e., immediate grace). I judge that Pajon is open to the charge of intellectualizing faith because of an unnuanced explanation of communication and persuasion. Several contemporary theologians have similarly suggested that Dort's language of "infusing new habits" in regeneration is unfortunate. In seeking to propose an alternative, Kevin Vanhoozer has been accused of repeating the errors of Claude Pajon. Specifically, I argue that Vanhoozer's communicative approach can answer the intellectualist objection against Pajon, and I further outline a modified Pajonism.

Union with Christ in the Book of Acts

Kyle Keating

In this paper I seek to address the question, "Does the book of Acts teach a doctrine of union with Christ?" In order to answer the question, I offer a three-tiered distinction of what it means for a book to "teach" a doctrine, ranging from consistency, to corroboration, to articulation. After a brief review of the doctrine of union with Christ in the Johanine and Pauline canon, I examine the extent to which Acts is consistent with, corroborates, or articulates that doctrine by looking at the key themes of the book of Acts. I conclude that for the most part, Luke is both consistent with, and corroborates a doctrine of union with Christ, with one possible instance (Acts 9) of articulation.

Nietzsche for the Christian Thinker

Arthur J. Keefer, Theological Fellowship Secretary

When Christians hear "Nietzsche," they may cower or clench their fists. He is commonly known as a vehement anti-Christian who prophesied our twenty-first-century philosophical fallout. For scholars, he is a puzzling resource. They cull his enigmatic writing and apply it across academic disciplines. In this paper, I demonstrate that Christians should not read Friedrich Nietzsche only as an intellectual adversary, but also as an advantageous resource for their thinking and communication. I first survey his popular reception among Christians. I then suggest that he was fundamentally opposed not to Christianity, but to anything that sickens life in reality. Furthermore, the Christian thinker can join his fight against non-historical "truth"-based Christianity and fight for true humanity - though our visions of humanity may differ. His literary canon and style support our endeavors towards creative forms of theology and cultural communication. Finally, his promotion of art as an epistemic instrument supports and cautions Christians who explore knowledge through art forms. In short, the Christian can glean from his

fight for humanity, literary style, and esteem for art. Each of these becomes amicable with our endeavors to think and communicate as Christians in both scholarly discussions and broader cultural trends. Nietzsche benefits Christian thinkers and at times partners with them. He is not only an adversary to be hexed, but a human to befriend.

Genesis 16:1-16

Staci King

Samson Goes to Rehab

Soren Kornegay

Infant Baptism in the First-Century Presupposition Pool

Steven A. Nicoletti, Awarded by Central States SBL, 2013

The question of infant baptism in the apostolic church has been an ongoing debate, classically captured in the exchanges between Joachim Jeremias and Kurt Aland. Most of these debates have focused on “reading between the lines” of first-century Christian texts and have yielded little resolution of the New Testament’s silence. Such studies often fail to address the significance of the silence itself, within its original context. In this paper I examine the practices of first-century Judaism and Greco-Roman religions regarding infant initiation and participation in their parents’ religion, including the Greco-Roman practice of the *dies lustricus* and the involvement of children in Greco-Roman worship. Using Theo Vennemann’s concept of presupposition pools, I will ask how the early church’s silence on infant initiation should be interpreted in light of the original audience’s presuppositions. I will argue that since the New Testament and other surviving works of the early church do not address their audiences’ presupposition that their infants would be initiated into their religion, it indicates that they shared rather than challenged this widely held assumption. The New Testament’s silence is therefore best interpreted as indicating the practice of infant baptism.

Our Triune God: A Fourth-Century Invention or a New Testament Proclamation?

Susanne Osborne, Wheaton College Graduate School

In an age where we are inundated with information, we have developed a habit of skipping quickly to the heart of what we seek. We are prone to fast-forward a movie’s opening credits, skim articles for highlights, and read excerpts rather than entire works. The art of *lingering* is in need of revival — the books of Scripture particularly require such lingering. The biblical authors developed their message as a composer builds a song: with conceptual rhythms, crescendos and diminuendoes. The *introduction* of each biblical epistle plays the key role of introducing us to the

notes that are to be echoed throughout. It is therefore remarkable that Paul, Peter and John chose to introduce their epistles with decidedly triadic statements about the nature and work of God. It is my contention that the New Testament portrays an expanded view of God as Father, Son and Spirit *within* the context of monotheism and in continuity with the Yahwistic revelation of the Old Testament. Rather than being a marginal issue for the biblical authors or a fourth-century invention, the prominence of the triunity of God is witnessed in the introductory greetings and proclamations of Paul, Peter and John. Let us listen and attend.

Gracious God, Grateful Man: A Reappraisal of Calvin's Anthropology

David Richmon

Is Inerrancy Modernistic? Biblical Epistemology of Testimony and the Prophetic Office

Daniel Robbins, Theological Fellowship Co-Founder and Co-Chair

In this essay I argue that testimony is the best model for thinking about the nature of Scripture. I demonstrate that, biblically, testimony and witness terminology are parallel to and connected with the prophetic office and with the Scriptures' self-presentation as the product of the prophetic activity. I argue that prophetic testimony provides knowledge that is personally mediated and yet holds ultimate authority. Tracing out some of the epistemological characteristics of this type of knowledge, I argue that our understanding of Scripture ought to follow this same description. I offer this in opposition to some construals of inerrancy which are rightly termed "Modernistic" since they offer a truncated view of God, knowledge and Scripture. Testimony provides a helpful way of describing inerrancy in a fuller covenantal epistemology without sacrificing historical accuracy. Furthermore, conceiving of Scripture as testimony refocuses God's own witness to the reader, and rightly locates the guarantee of the truthfulness of Scripture in God Himself. It also promises helpful implications for many other areas such as the relationship between the inspiration and production of the Scriptures and the function of the Scripture.

(G)race Matters: The Ethics of Christian Racial Segregation

Justin Ross

In this paper, I look at the contemporary issue of racial segregation among Christian churches. This phenomenon I have labeled as Christian Racial Segregation. I interpret this issue through the classic four ethical questions and apply Scripture to each question. Following this, I use John Frame's *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* as an example of common justifications for the segregated state of Christian churches. This treatment involves both praise and critique of Frame's systematic theology. Finally, I conclude by raising the idea that racially integrated

families constitute a solution to racially segregated churches. Namely, that a family which integrates racial complexities serves as the central model for the church to do the same. These three steps together highlight: 1) the ethical and biblical nature of the churches segregation problem, 2) common objections and critical responses, and 3) a practical solution and way forward for the church.

Justification by Pronouns and Prepositions: An Analysis of Paul's Use of Pronouns and Prepositions in Gal. 3:10-14

Philip Ryan, Theological Fellowship Co-Chair

In this paper I argue that in Galatians 3:10-14 there are a number of factors being addressed that the NPP has not appreciated: first, the nature and weight of ὅσοι at the beginning of verse 10; second, Paul's use of pronouns; and third, and most important, the nature and importance of ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν in Gal. 3:13. These factors together will show that Paul is addressing both Jew and Gentile, that Christ died for both Jew and Gentile, and that his death was in our place.

What Did Paul Mean by "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man?"

Caroline Lamberth Scruggs

Paul's prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12 is a source of much conversation and much controversy both in the church and in the broader culture today. The questions at hand are both exegetical and hermeneutical. What do Paul's words mean, and what are their implications for the church today? As a woman pursuing a theological degree in a conservative denomination, I find myself involved in conversations over these questions quite often. In seeking to answer these questions, in this paper, I examine the linguistic, grammatical, and contextual elements of Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:12, their connection to the surrounding verses, and their interpretation based on their place in the broader context of the Pastoral and Pauline Epistles. In addition, I compare how these elements are interpreted and applied from a traditional, complementarian view, held by the church for centuries, and from a modern egalitarian view, particularly as presented by the scholars Richard and Catherine Kroeger. Finally, I comment generally on how Paul's words here ought to be applied in our contemporary contexts based on these exegetical findings.

Mining for a Nicene Christian Ethical Praxis in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses* and John Cassian's *Conferences*

Mike Tsuchlis, St. Louis University

Troping and Tempting: Paul's Metaphorical Battle Against Prostitutional-sex in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

A Response to Stanley Porter

Aaron White, Trinity College, Bristol, Theological Fellowship Co-Founder

Metaphor continues to capture the imagination of biblical scholars even amidst the hegemony of a rationally-minded, historical-critical landscape that is current in biblical studies. Regretfully, however, metaphor can often be misapplied as an interpretive tool of Scripture. One such example is found in Stanley Porter's 1991 *ETL* article, "How Should KOLLWMENOS in 1 Cor 6,16.17 Be Translated?" where he challenges as "anticlimactic" the conventional rendering of *κολλώμενος*, "to join," in Paul's appeal to Genesis 2:24 in 1 Cor. 6:16-17. Appealing to the broader pericope of 1 Cor. 6:12-20, Porter contends that an economic subordination metaphor, "to obligate," for *κολλώμενος* best fits Paul's rhetorical aims. However, Porter's brief study is actually logically inconsistent with Paul's use of metaphor. Therefore, I seek to take another look at 1 Cor. 6:12-20 in response to Porter's conclusions.

I will contend in this study that to best understand Paul's 1 Cor 6:12-20 paraenesis, one must first understand there are many types of metaphors that each achieve distinct rhetorical goals. Thus, this study will observe that Paul enlists the aid of three distinctly functioning metaphors, namely, two personification metaphors (6:15; 6:19-20), and an instance of an ontological-container metaphor (6:16-18); each metaphor doing a separate job from the other, though mounting one argument. Accordingly, this study will conclude that such observations make Porter's definition of "to obligate" for *κολλώμενος* untenable in view of Paul's logical progression in 6:12-20, since to come to such a definition Porter cross-pollinates two distinctly functioning rhetorical units by defining terms in the second metaphor with the third metaphor. Therefore, I propose in this study that "to obligate" be rejected for the conventional rendering of *κολλώμενος* in order to best understand Paul's overall rhetorical strategy in 1 Cor 6:12-20.

The Marriage of Martin and Katarina Luther

Ruth Whiteford, Concordia Seminary Ph.D. Student

Before the Protestant Reformation, it was unthinkable for clergy to get married. As such, Martin Luther, a former monk and one of the lead Reformers, drew large amounts of positive and negative attention when he suddenly wed Katarina von Bora, a former nun. The Catholics naturally were scandalized, as they commonly believed that the union of a monk and nun would produce an Antichrist, and even some of Luther's strongest supporters initially worried that he would be distracted from the work of the Reformation. However, the Luther marital union came to represent the standard for Protestant family life and to demonstrate that marriage could facilitate and not simply hinder ministry. Katarina von Bora took care of the household and enabled her husband to concentrate on writing, teaching, and

ministering, but she also participated in dinner table theological conversations and took notes on key events in the Reformation for her husband. Luther's attitudes towards marriage and women shifted as a result of von Bora, and, as a result, he treated women as equal partners with men for the most part and acknowledged their intrinsic worth apart from bearing children. As Luther said, marriage is an excellent "school of character."

If Heaven Got a Ghetto: Hip Hop and Eschatological Possibility

Stephen Yates

Over its 40 year history, hip hop has developed from a musical genre to a cross-cultural force, wielding massive ideological, moral, economic, and even political power, despite the dismissal and vilification it has endured by Christian and non-Christian alike. In "If Heaven Got a Ghetto," named for the late Tupac Shakur, I discuss how cultural movements cannot be effectively engaged solely through efforts at contextualization or appropriation, but by identifying the theological aspects of their ideological systems, which can then be brought into dialogue with various theological perspectives. 'If Heaven Got a Ghetto' identifies the eschatological perspectives of hip hop culture - celebratory, activist, memorial, and entrepreneurial - and discusses the connections and tensions these views have with biblical theology, engaging black liberation theology, globalization, gender formation, and colonial theory, in the hope that the conversation will foster the development of new ministry perspectives and the development of theological leaders from within 'the hip hop generation.'

Book Reviews

Paul's Way of Knowing: Story, Experience and the Spirit, by **Ian W. Scott**. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009. Pp. 287. Originally published in 2006 by Mohr Siebeck as *Implicit Epistemology in the Letters of Paul*. ISBN-10: 0801036097; ISBN-13: 978-0801036095

There has been a recent upsurge in epistemological research in biblical studies; *The Bible and Epistemology* edited by Mary Healy and Robin Parry (Paternoster, 2007), *The Epistemological Basis for Belief According to John's Gospel* by David A. Redelings (Pickwick, 2011), *Loving to Know: Covenant Epistemology* by Esther L. Meek (Cascade Books, 2011) and most recently *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* by Yoram Hazony (Cambridge University Press, 2012). Scott's dissertation predates all of these and has a lasting contribution to the corpus. While not as far reaching as the still profound *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* by John Frame (P&R, 1989), the limit of his work simply helps to better acquaint us with Paul.

Scott explores the nature and structure of Paul's logic in the hopes of uncovering some of his underlying epistemological assumptions (4, 9, 11). This, he hopes, will give us trajectories to trace the way in which “the story as a whole could be grounded or justified” (10).

He begins with Paul's explicit statements about reason in Rom 1:18-32 (15-23), and 1 Cor 1:17-2:16 (23-48). He concludes that it is not the faculty of reason itself which is at issue, but reason perverted by a morally debased will, resistant to the Spirit of God and his truth (19). This morally vicious will refuses what is apprehended through natural revelation and is not able to understand the further revelation given by the Spirit, (44-45) since it attempts to do so on its own autonomous criteria (29). “Rational deliberation,” (55) is the main mode of teaching and interaction in Paul's letters. Even conversion is the result of “an intellectual process,” (59-60) overseen and superintended by the Spirit. Scott asserts that the Spirit “renews the convert's intellect and facilitates a new kind of reasoning by removing the veil which stifles the mind” (59, cf. 48). Much of this is familiar to Reformed thinking in the tradition of Calvin and, more recently, Van Til and Frame.

From here Scott sketches the structure of Paul's knowledge and logic. Scott sees four levels of knowledge at work in Paul: mundane, theological, ethical and relational-personal. Mundane knowledge includes observable events, patterns of events, and internal states (93).¹ Likewise, testimony about “events (plausibly

1 Namely “those ordinary realities which belong to the world of immediate and public observation,” which people from “widely different worldviews” (91) would all agree on the fact itself, as well as the method of fact-checking.

from a reliable source) constitutes a basis for claiming knowledge about that event,” such as 1 Cor. 15:3, 5-6 (93). Indeed, “much of Paul’s mundane knowledge is based on testimony” (93). All of this Scott takes to be far removed from Plato’s skepticism concerning the reliability of the senses, since Paul is will “to grant the status of knowledge, γνῶσις, to these observations” (94). He is right to note that Paul’s language of knowing these mundane realities suggest that he was not concerned with the “absolute certainty and timelessness” (94) which finds as the ideal in classical (and modern) epistemological discussions.

The second kind of knowledge is theological, consisting in “actions and events which were both causally and temporally related, and which [are] all governed by the overarching plot of God’s rescue of his creation” (118). Paul’s meta-narrative is often alluded to by mention of “its individual episodes” (109). Yet, “Paul clearly did not think that the Gospel story [*dianoia*, 110] was of any value apart from the particular events [*mythos*, 110] which it narrated” (113).² Paul’s theology is the story of God’s work played out in the mundane.

Ethical knowledge occurs at the intersection of the mundane with the theological (127). Paul locates his readers and himself with “certain roles in the theological narrative,” (123) showing them the difference between good roles (124) and the “role of the ‘wicked’” (128). Paul’s ethical teaching emphasizes “proper knowledge of the theological story” so that his readers can make “accurate judgments about how to play a role which leads to salvation” (130). Moreover, it is “one’s identification with Christ” which compels holiness (131).

The last category of knowledge is relational-personal knowledge of God. Scott sees the knowledge of Christ, for Paul, as “living Christ’s life along with him” (154). This is understood against the OT background of knowing as a lovingly obedient response within a relationship (153). The categories of knowledge described above all point beyond themselves to this relational knowledge (155).

Scott, in the third section, moves on to show how Paul’s logic functioned in his letter to the Galatians. Using Iser’s phenomenology of reading, Scott explores the way in which unfolding chapters in a narrative “change our expectations about the shape of the whole story” (175). These new events exert a “retrospective effect on what has already been read” (175).³ It is within the traditional reading of the story of Israel that Paul is confronted by the risen Messiah. Jesus was the “crucified messianic pretender” (170) to Paul, until confronted with the risen Jesus. His theological story and the role he played in it were shown to be at odds with a true public event. Thus, the cross of Christ served

2 Scott uses Northrop Frye’s terms as perspectives on a single narrative. “The *mythos* of a tale is the simple sequence of events as they are narrated, the story as it is told” “*Dianoia* ... encompasses what we often mean by the ‘theme’ of a narrative.” It is my understanding that his use of the *mythos* is not to take a stance on the historicity of the events but merely how those events function within the narrative.

3 Scott points to something similar in John D. Moores who recognizes the cross as a sign which “must be interpreted by Paul *in terms of a prior code*.” Once rightly interpreted, however, “it exerts a reflexive interpretive force on the code itself” (84).

as an *aporia* for his thinking (193-194). In order to come to terms with God's vindication and resurrection of the once dead and defeated Jesus, Paul would need to rethink "the whole of the prior story" resulting in a novel reading which nonetheless was coherent with the old *mythos* as well as the new event (194). Yet, it is that old story which allows Paul to meet Christ "not as mysterious manifestation of the 'numinous,' but as another chapter in this same story and hence as Israel's Messiah" (177).

It is precisely this reinterpretation of the theological story which Paul's opponents in Galatia miss. Paul marshals two interpretive 'gaps' to demonstrate this: 1) the Galatians' reception of the Spirit apart from the Law (173) and 2) the cross of Christ as the basis for justification (215). They have received the Spirit "*without taking on any of the observance of Torah which was usually understood to define the boundary between God's people and the rest of humanity*" (196).⁴ This reception of the Spirit exercises counter-pressure toward a "re-evaluation of the whole prior story" (173), imbuing it with new meaning (161, 163, 171). Thus, Paul calls the Galatians fools "because they have not exercised the interpretive insight to see what are...the obvious implications of the their own experience" (198). Indeed, so long as they continue to play out a role which doesn't recognize God's grace apart from the Law they are in danger of jeopardizing their participation in the Spirit (197).

Second, Scott understands Paul's move from the cross in Gal 2:21 to his use of OT texts as "an entirely different construal of Israel's story" and not an argument from first principles or on the basis of common assumptions (229). Paul's argument in Galatians 3 does not rest on indubitable premise. Paul's opponents would reject his premises as novel and thin readings of these texts (205, 207). One such premise would be that "all fail in their observance of Torah." Scott sees this to be a "position so atypical of Second Temple Jewish thought that it would need some sort of justification" (212). Instead of presenting indubitable premises, Paul presents a coherent reconfiguration of the whole story. He argues from "solution to plight," in that he begins with the public event of Jesus' cross and resurrection and works out the implications for the whole story (215).⁵ The cross can only be integrated if it is recognized that the law was a "dead end, from which Christ had to deliver Israel" (215).

Scott finishes his section on Galatians working out the implications of identification with Christ for Jew and Gentile alike (236). Mutual love wrought by the Spirit is the center of his ethics; the demand to love constitutes the law of Christ (266).

4 Italics original. Scott understands this salvific presence of the Spirit apart from the works of the Law in the context of concurrent use of the phrase in Qumran documents as referring to obedience to the whole of the Law (182).

5 Rather than a break in the story's packaging (as E.P. Sanders suggests) Scott envisions a re-casting of the whole. The 'solution' is itself a problem within the traditional reading and thus, once integrated, reveals a deeper problem in our "employment." As we appropriate the full significance of the cross, we begin to come into fuller contact with the degree of our sin. There was a crucial element missing which is now brought to light.

Overall, this book is to be commended for its thoughtful investigation of Paul's argumentation, providing more rigor to the discussions of narrative in Paul's thought. Indeed, there are only a few things to which I take exception. While some fair criticism might be offered concerning Scott's construal of Second Temple Judaism and his understanding of Paul's evaluation of life under the new covenant (227), these are not my main concern.

Scott is helpful in moving us away from a foundationalist approach to Christian epistemology, noting that Paul does not seek to provide 'proper' justification in terms of elite Greco-Roman reasonableness (284). Yet, in affirming that Paul's argumentation is largely coherentist he does not do much to provide a corrective to the dangers of coherentism. Describing the "rational process involved in conversion" (283) in terms of Kuhnian concepts about paradigm shifts is fine so long as we can also deal with the intractable pitfall of incommensurability between these various paradigms. Scott sees this as part of the Spirit's work making it possible "to adopt the Gospel paradigm" (283). While Kuhnian coherentism is helpful in describing the process of coming to know something, it stops short of providing a framework to evaluate the truth of the thing "known," a ground for belief. That is to say, it relativizes all paradigms and does not answer the question of its truth. On the other hand, Scott is right to see foundationalism as even less helpful given its search for a *πῶς στω*, a "neutral vantage point unsullied by prior beliefs and commitments" (284). Neither of these accurately describe knowledge or fully justify the way we come to believe.

Scott's work does not see the way in which God himself and his authoritative revelation in the Scriptures move us beyond these dueling systems and thus misses an opportunity to make a lasting mark. For instance, how can one tell which events are miraculous and divine, and which messengers are deluded and false messiahs? How can one test the spirits? Scott notes the role of eyewitnesses and testimony (282) but neglects to develop these as a helpful corrective providing authoritative interpretations of events. He goes so far as to imagine further events in Christian history forcing "a reconfiguration of the narrative" at any point. "There is, of course no sure way of knowing, according to this Pauline logic, when the theological story needs to be reconfigured or, when it does, which new reading of the narrative is best" (286). This neglects Paul's clear understanding of orthodox belief, "the standard of teaching to which you were committed" (Rom 6:17). While he certainly has developed a normative role for the "story" of God's activity and redemption on behalf of his people, his portrait is lacking insofar as it does not tie this directly to the canon, the written scriptures. This is one major area which could use filling out. While it might be that the Scriptures are certainly "storied," this meta-narrative can never be disconnected from the actual writings which communicate that story and the prophetic and apostolic offices which imbue them with their divine inspiration and ultimate authority.

I am not sure that dividing knowledge into a hierarchy of four levels is altogether helpful beyond providing a concise description. It might be better to flip this hierarchy on its head, seeing relational knowledge as fundamental to the rest,

providing an interpretive framework.⁶ It's not that unbelievers do not have relational knowledge of God, but that their relationship is characterized by their enmity and antagonism to the benevolent Father. It might be helpful to show the way in which our allegiance, our loving response, that fourth category of knowledge in Paul, actually colors and interprets the other three. In that sense, then, those who love God will see correctly in the previous three categories of knowledge. There are some implications of his work which ought to be tidied up, but overall he moves us in the right direction.

Daniel Robbins

Proverbs in Social and Theological Context, by **Katharine J. Dell**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. x + 225. ISBN-10: 052112106X; ISBN-13: 978-0521121064

Katharine Dell is a Senior Lecturer in the faculty of divinity at the University of Cambridge. She has published on Israel's Wisdom Literature and particularly on Job and Proverbs. Dell's current book revolves around three aspects of Proverbs: its social context, theological character, and relation to the Old Testament. All of these augment her thesis to fully integrate Proverbs into the mainstream of OT study. She discusses the social context of Proverbs in three chapters: (1) Prov. 1-9 (2) Prov. 10:1-22:16 (3) Prov. 22:17-31:31 divided into its typical subdivisions. She handles historical and current views regarding the social contexts of wisdom, in particular the family/folk/tribe, educational, class of "sages," and the courts. Furthermore, she continually accounts for Ancient Near Eastern parallels. Chapters 1-3 provide concise historical information and expose a vast secondary literature on the wisdom genre. Dell concludes these chapters by proposing two social contexts: "The first," that is Prov. 1-9; 22:17-24:22; 30:1-14; 31, she claims, "is more educational, with possible links to school life, taking considerable inspiration from Egyptian circles" (88). The remainder, Prov. 10:1-22:16; 24:23-34; 25-9; 30:15-33, "is the more homegrown Israelite maxim-making from family/folk/tribal settings" (88). She also concludes that the court context of 31:1-9 has been underplayed in scholarly discussion. For those interested in the emergence of Proverbs, chapters 1-3 provide a generous evaluation of scholarly literature and Proverbs itself.

The second half of Dell's work turns to Proverbs' theological content and OT integration. Chapter four recalls the textual subdivisions and locates Yahweh within each. Rather than the late redaction that some propose, Dell concludes that "there is no reason why the religious element and mention of Yahweh were not part of the original oral context" (124). In chapter five she articulates a theological context, where God's role as creator and orderer of the

6 Esther Meek's work, *Loving to Know*, does this.

universe become central to the ethics of Proverbs and its integration with the OT. Her final chapter concludes with OT echoes. Dell underscores prophetic elements within Prov. 1-9, especially in the woman of Wisdom. Deuteronomy influences the instruction passages of Prov. 1-9 and finally, psalmic and cultic texts echo throughout 10:1-22:16. The date these influences emerged remains open to question. For readers who may think that Proverbs frailly connects to the OT theologically or literarily, chapters 4-6 will force them to reevaluate. While this section depends less upon secondary literature, it augments the theological interpretation of Proverbs. Chapters 4-6 can be read independently and are valuable for both scholars and pastors.

One strength of Dell's book is how her discussion of theological themes illuminates our reading of individual proverbs. Dell contrasts the early twentieth century emphasis on historical redemption with a renewed academic interest in creation that provides an interpretive framework: "The world-view of Proverbs is to see God as creator, which includes the role of orderer, according to knowable lines that can be learned through experience" (144). From here she demonstrates the extent of God's role and illuminates our reading of moral instruction. Considering Prov. 17:5 and 22:2, Dell claims that some find

no "order" being defended here. However, I would argue that we are here being given an insight into a social order that is being defended. The issue is the oppression of someone weaker than oneself, which God condemns. This is a violation of the social order grounded in God's righteous ordering of the created world (145).

By locating creation texts - Genesis and Psalms - within Proverbs Dell expands our view of the Creator. Her conclusions resound with prominent biblical themes, such as God's lordship over all of life, that enrich our interpretation of wisdom. In her terms, these proverbs along with many more, are "a reference to God's ordering of everything in human life, which parallels his creative ordering in past and present" (145).

Dell's secondary goal is a boon for current biblical studies. Not only does she search for synthesis in context, theology, and text, but she aims her work at a legacy of scholarship in need of reform. She claims,

The pre-exilic period has all but faded away in the minds of some recent scholars, who focus on the post-exilic period in which texts were redacted (and some say created). This study is in part a reaction against this tendency...I wish to affirm the important place that the wisdom enterprise and its thought had in the early formation of Israelite belief, while not denying its essential role in the shaping of texts and post-exilic thought (16-17).

She does not detract from “higher criticism,” yet does not write ignorant of it. Dell attempts to rescue wisdom literature in the very environment that has been hostile to it by questioning piecemeal redaction criticism and answering with integration. I commend her for this goal, yet at the same time such a task in such an environment creates difficulties, one of which I will underscore.

Dell respects both oral transmission and the holistic final form of the text. Sometimes this dual loyalty creates tensions that become frustrating. An example appears in her discussion of Knut Heim’s work. He demonstrated the coherence of small groups of proverbs through word links and thematic coherence. Dell draws on Heim’s strengths, but her respect for oral transmission history seems to restrain her from capitalizing on Heim’s argument. Dell concludes: “much of the proverbial material had oral roots...However, there must also have been a time of writing down...Heim’s cluster theory might well point to an interim stage” (64). Such dubious conclusions arise throughout the book regarding the oral/written issue. In my judgment, this demonstrates the tenuous relationship between oral transmission and the final form of the text. In Dell’s case, maintaining their relationship prevents her from making conclusions about the structure of Proverbs that may propel her argument.

While Dell features Proverbs, her work assists other wisdom literature. She opens vistas for Ecclesiastes and Job that she suspects fruitful for further research. Dell also strengthens wisdom’s relation to the OT. Current scholars may build upon these thematic and textual relationships and further explore the integration of wisdom within the canon. Furthermore, by restricting her study to the OT, Dell constructs a platform on which scholars may stand and reach into the New Testament. How might the illuminated social context of Proverbs inform James’ use of the OT wisdom tradition? Do Dell’s theological discoveries inform our Christology and even eschatology? How can we account for redemption within the renewed emphasis of creation in Proverbs? And how does this inform ethics? Dell covers a breadth of history, scholarship, and interpretive issues surrounding Proverbs. She provides scholars and pastors a resource for study and theological interpretation. Most of all, Dell shows that Proverbs should not remain “off into a side-path” of the OT, but integrates wisdom literature with the canon in which it belongs (6).

Arthur J. Keefer

Story, Text, and Scripture: Literary Interests in Biblical Narrative, by **Wesley A. Kort**. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988. Pp. xii + 159. ISBN-10: 0271006102; ISBN-13: 978-0271006109

Wesley Kort teaches in the Department of Religion at Duke University and has previously published on narrative and theology. He consistently places literary matters at the center of religious studies and in this work argues for what he calls, “a new doctrine of scripture.” He claims that scholars have neglected narrative and reduced it to a vehicle for facts or ideas. Thus, Kort bids scholars to recognize the Bible as both narrative and text. He formerly defined narrative in *Narrative Elements and Religious Meanings* (1975) as character, plot, atmosphere, and tone. He summarizes this in the current work and demonstrates each element within a biblical book: Exodus (plot), Judges (character), Jonah (atmosphere), and the Gospel of Mark (tone). His aim is not decisive interpretation but to clarify his framework; he does so successfully.

In chapter three, Kort underscores the limits of other narrative methods, arguing that each prioritize one of the four elements: myth criticism and plot (N. Frye); structuralism and character (Greimas, Propp); critical hermeneutics and atmosphere (Gadamer, Ricoeur); composition criticism and tone (Sternberg, Alter). He argues that scholars ought to “subject the methods to narrative rather than the narrative to method” (51). The listed methods, he claims, also inadequately do justice to textuality. Theology must account for not only narrative but text as well.

Kort then discusses the bible as text - as a material product and more. Textuality grounds narrative in reality and relates its readers to the past and future; they listen to it in a world shaped by it. Texts “decenter” readers by challenging their identity and views of the world’s continuity and coherence. In chapter five, Kort proposes that all communities create texts (writings) and select a standard group of them (canon). He places scripture in the middle of these concepts, where it works to center and decenter its adherents. Kort concludes by demonstrating that neglect for the narrative and textual quality of the Bible affects theology and identifies three examples that “assume that the standing of the biblical texts is derived from something else, the events behind them or a system of doctrine that they yield” (143).

Kort’s greatest strength is developing categories for literary disciplines. He introduces terms and orders a framework for understanding and evaluating narratives and texts. Because he introduces new terms and develops his ideas sequentially, the reader is restricted from selecting a single chapter. However, reading Kort from cover to cover will provide a structure for evaluating literature and expose the reader to literary scholarship. His critique of literary methods in chapter three is thorough and valuable for a biblical scholar with literary interests. Furthermore, he explains how his framework relates to community, tradition, and worldview.

Kort’s thesis struggles at two points. First, on the genesis of narrative he writes, “rather than arising from language, narrative is either coexistent with the

origination of language or, in some way or other, even itself the originator of language” (9). Kort does not clarify the relationship between language and the origin of narrative. This begs larger questions regarding the creation of the world and the personal nature of narratives and texts, as well as clarification on how narrative relates to reality. Second, Kort’s esteem for narrative affects interpretation in questionable ways. He correctly challenges those who reduce narrative to a vehicle for history and ideas. However, he accuses theologians who “focus on the attitudes or ideas of the authors” (140). This discussion of authorial intent needs further explanation. His comments reveal that when narrative is ultimate, the author is secondary (140-144). Kort argues against those who favor one aspect of narrative over the others, yet by championing narrative over other aspects of interpretation and communication, he may fall by his own critique. I would propose that ideas, history, and authors are inseparable from the narrative they produce and that interpretation requires each of these.

Despite the epistemological and interpretive questions, I commend Kort’s book for those interested in literary and religious disciplines. Our current context buzzes with words like “narrative” and “story.” What do these terms mean and how do we approach them? Furthermore, how does the Bible rank with other texts? Kort addresses these questions with biblical awareness and literary sensitivity. He also informs scholars of the prominent methods of literary theory that affect biblical studies. Overall, Kort provides a clean and extensive framework for understanding narratives and textuality.

Arthur J. Keefer

New Testament Theology in Light of the Church’s Mission: Essays in Honor of I. Howard Marshall, edited by **Jon C. Laansma**, **Grant Osborne**, and **Ray Van Neste**. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011. Pp. 395. ISBN 978-1-61097-530-8. \$46.

In the past century, few men have made the impact in the area of the New Testament as I. Howard Marshall has made. It is also most certainly true that few have been honored with two festschrifts. But here in *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church’s Mission* the editors give Marshall this distinct honor.

Among many distinguished positions of honor held in his career, Marshall was Chair of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research and Chair of the NT Study group prior to the previously mentioned position, and Editor of the *Evangelical Quarterly*. But in his career perhaps the most telling of his abilities and impact is the fact that he “was for decades a primary destination for postgraduate study for evangelical students from around the world,” with the result that, “Aberdeen has come to mean ‘conservative, evangelical biblical scholarship’” (1, 5). Thus, “mission” is an apropos theme the editors have chosen for this compilation.

As for the work at hand, the second festschrift that honors such a career, the collection of those who honor him is truly astounding. It makes the reviewer's job exciting yet difficult to do justice to the work that is here reviewed. Without giving an entire table of contents that can be accessed elsewhere, some contributions salient to the reviewer include James Dunn on "Methodology of Evangelism in the NT"; the late R. T. France on "The Son of Man in Hebrews 2:6"; Darrell Bock with a pastoral entry on the gospel preached in the narrative speeches in Acts, namely "The Gospels before the Gospels"; Mark Strauss "The Purpose of Luke-Acts: Reaching a Consensus"; Brian Rosner on "The Missionary Character of 1 Corinthians"; Anthony Thiselton on "Paul's Missionary Preaching in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16"; Robert Yarbrough on "Schlatter on the Pastorals"; and Eckhard J. Schnabel on "Early Christian Mission and Christian Identity in the Context of the Ethic, Social, and Political Affiliations in Revelation." Other contributors include Craig Blomberg, Philip Towner, Esther Yue L. Ng, Gary Burge, Joel Green, Gene Green, Andrew Clarke, Maureen Yeung, Roy Ciampa, Alistair Wilson, Greg Couser, Paul Ellingworth, Jon Laansma, and Grant Osborne. Each of these names demonstrates clearly the total effect and influence Marshall has had in the vast field of NT studies, and each topic Marshall's influence in the mission of the church.

I would like to highlight two entries in particular because of the honor they do Marshall. The first, by Darrell Bock, bears witness to Marshall's legacy as a scholar who can reach a broad audience. The second is by Robert Yarbrough, on a German theologian, Adolf Schlatter, who in his own time had a similar and far-reaching influence in the German speaking world as Marshall has had in the English speaking world through his career.

Marshall once said of F. F. Bruce's ability to write to the masses that, "to write at a popular level is not inconsistent with a truly scholarly approach, and it may be argued that one test of a person's scholarship is the ability to express arguments and conclusion in a manner that is generally intelligible." This too is a legacy of Marshall. In a similar spirit Darrell Bock's chapter "The Gospels before the Gospels: The Preached Core Narrative" is, as Bock says, not intended "as a technical scholarly piece, but as a piece of reflection for those in the church" (97).

In his chapter, Bock seeks to correct the commonality within evangelical churches today to "present the gospel in very Pauline terms," exclusively. He does this by exploring salvation via multiple images in the Lucan narrative of Acts. Bock briefly discusses each respective speech in Acts 2, 3-5, 10, 13, and 17. In this brief study he asks of each pericope, "how is the gospel presented?", namely "what does the speaker say and not say in their gospel proclamation" and finally, though by implication, "how does our gospel presentation be it in a sermon or otherwise square with those in Acts?" Bock concludes that "the stress in the evangelistic message [in these speeches] is not so much how Jesus accomplishes this as much as who offers it, what is offered, and how God stands behind the attestation of these claims through the vindication and exaltation of Jesus to share in God's very presence" (100). Bock highlights that, according to the evangelistic speeches in

Acts, we are not proclaiming “an idea” but rather “a person,” because it is “forgiveness and new life in God’s Spirit” that is offered and highlighted in the proclamation of the gospel. Though not a “scholarly piece” Bock’s study will be one to follow in its development in the future, since, as one reviewer has already noted, it seems to be much in line with the studies being presently contributed by such NT theologians as N. T. Wright and Scot McKnight.

Next, Robert Yarbrough’s contribution draws a similarity between I. H. Marshall and Adolf Schlatter’s effect on world Christianity by the implication observed in their respective interpretations of the Pastorals. Yarbrough characterizes both men as examples who went “beyond being a missionary enabler,” and themselves becoming “practitioners” (293).

Yarbrough says of Schlatter, “While an aim of many post-Enlightenment biblical scholars has been to disabuse students of historic Christian faith and a high view of Scripture’s veracity, Schlatter stands out as a brilliant exegete who overall defended the bible’s accuracy” (295-6). Following this theme, Yarbrough chooses Ulrich Wilkens, a prolific German scholar from the mid-20th century, as a conversation partner. I found Yarbrough’s method of a conversation partner when studying Schlatter’s exegesis of the pastorals to be more helpful in drawing out the full flavor and importance of Schlatter’s conclusions. Being unfamiliar with the study of the Pastorals, it remains a bit unclear on why Wilkens was chosen, besides shared nationality and both working in the area of the Pastorals within 50 years of each other. Nevertheless, Yarbrough concludes that Wilken’s study of the Pastorals, in contrast to Schlatter’s interpretation, is hazy and hypothetical. Schlatter, however, according to Yarbrough, roots his study in how Paul’s ministry characterizes him. Yarbrough clarifies, “while the historical Paul is a shadowy background figure for Wilkens’s PE exposition...for Schlatter not only Paul but even Jesus plays a significant role, perhaps not surprising since the PE are replete with references to Jesus” (309).

Yarbrough concludes the spirit of Schlatter’s interpretation of the Pastoral by applying his study to the current world church:

“in the larger world church setting where the Bible is receiving fresh attention and respect, and groups affirming a more historic high regard for the Bible are seeing meteoric growth...there is reason to rethink traditional academic animus toward close association between Jesus seen as Savior in fulfillment of OT promises, a Paul who actually encountered him in a life and world-transforming way, and the PE seen as authentic Pauline writings” (315).

After reading this compilation of contributions by well-known experts in a wide spectrum of New Testament scholarship, the celebration for I. H. Marshall’s career is evident. Though for a paperback, the price is a bit prohibitive for many, this book is highly recommended by the reviewer for its depth and example of erudite scholarship. It is an outstanding sampling of current scholarship across the NT field of study. On a personal note the example goes beyond sturdy scholarship, it moves to discipleship. I am one who has sat at the feet of nearly a half-dozen men who are either published in this work or were advised by Marshall

in their post-graduate research. I sense a legacy, and I pray that myself and others in my generation will be the “faithful men” to Professor Marshall’s “Paul,” as we seek to keep the legacy alive through the “others” (2 Tim. 2:2).

Aaron W. White

Theological Fellowship Covenant Group

This year we had the opportunity to read and hear from many talented scholars. 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 2012 - Epistemology: Our fall was spent studying epistemology and its relationship to inerrancy. We often take for granted our ability to know things. As Christians we believe that God has made himself known to us through his word. When it comes to discussing inerrancy, a lot of time and effort has been put into textual and historical study. However, there is more to understanding inerrancy than textual and historical study. Our reading this semester focused more on the philosophical contributions to inerrancy. With that in mind we were very grateful to have read many chapters of Dr. Esther Meek's *Loving to Know*. She was also the plenary speaker at our 2nd Annual Theological Conference. Her lecture was titled, "Covenant Epistemology: Restoring Love, Wonder, and Wisdom to Scholarship and Seminary."

September 5th – Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 1.

September 12th – "The Need for Epistemological Therapy," by Esther Meek, *Loving to Know*.

September 19th – "What Covenant Epistemology Offers," by Esther Meek, *Loving to Know*.

September 26th – "Knowing as Stewardship: conversation with John Frame," by Esther Meek, *Loving to Know*.

October 3rd – "Witness and Tradition," by John Goldingay, *Models For Scripture*.

October 10th – "The Factuality Involved in Witness," by John Goldingay, *Models For Scripture*.

October 17th – "'Incline Your Ear So that You May Live:' Principles of Biblical Epistemology," by Murray Rae, in *The Bible and Epistemology*.

October 31st – "Kevin Vanhoozer on Inerrancy," by Norman Geisler and William Roach, *Defending Inerrancy* 2011 edition.

November 7th – “Inerrancy’s Complexities: Grounds For Grace in the Debate,” by Robert Yarbrough, in *Did God Really Say?*

November 14th – “Evangelical Self-identity and the Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy,” by John D. Woodbridge.

November 21st – “Memory and Boundary: Epistemology in Deuteronomy,” by Ryan P. O’Dowd, in *The Bible and Epistemology*.

November 28th – “Contours of Covenant Epistemology,” by Esther Meek, *Loving to Know*.

Spring 2013 - Jonathan Edwards: Our spring semester we studied Jonathan Edwards, the greatest theologian America has produced. He wrote on a wide variety of topics from biblical studies and theology to a very scientific study of the habits of “flying spiders.” We were excited to read several of his sermons and several chapters of the award winning *Theology of Jonathan Edwards* by Michael McClymond and Gerald McDermott. We also invited author Dr. Michael McClymond (SLU) to be our Spring Bantam Lecturer. He lectured from his chapter “The Question of Development,” in *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

February 6th – “Love is the Sum of All Virtues – 1 Cor. 13:1-3” by Jonathan Edwards.

February 13th – Michael Bird Q&A – we were honored that Michael Bird took some time to speak with us while at Covenant as the Jones Lecturer.

February 20th – “Edwards’ Spirituality,” by McClymond and McDermott *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

February 27th – “Revelation: Scripture, Reason, and Tradition,” by McClymond and McDermott *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

March 6th – “Charity Disposes Us Meekly to Bear the Injuries Received From Others – 1 Cor. 13:4” by Jonathan Edwards.

March 13th – “Biblical Exegesis,” by McClymond and McDermott *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

March 27th – “The Spirit of Charity is an Humble Spirit – 1 Cor. 13:4, 5” by Jonathan Edwards.

April 3rd – “Charity, or A Christian Spirit, Willing to Undergo All Sufferings In the Way of Duty – 1 Cor. 13:7” by Jonathan Edwards.

April 10th – “The Question of Development,” by McClymond and McDermott *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

April 17th – “Aesthetics and Beauty,” by McClymond and McDermott *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

April 24th – “The True Excellency of a Gospel Minister” by Jonathan Edwards.

May 1st – “Apologetics,” by McClymond and McDermott *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

May 8th – “Heaven is a World of Love” by Jonathan Edwards.

Ministry Lunches: The purpose of these lunches is for faculty and students to have discussions regarding academic ministry, pursuing PhD studies, and all the joys and troubles of the academic-church life.

We are very thankful for Drs. Daniel Kim, Brad Matthews, and Hans Bayer for speaking at our Fall ministry lunches. We also thank the faculty who spoke at our Spring ministry lunches: Dr. Brian Aucker and Dr. Bob Yarbrough. We were especially honored and delighted to have Dr. Michael Bird (Ridley) speak with us during his visit for the Jones Lecture.

Philip M. Ryan, Theological Fellowship Co-Chair