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In This Issue

The 2001 meeting of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education was held on the campus of Southern Methodist University, one month after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Robin W. Lovin, then Dean of Perkins School of Theology at SMU, gave an address to the Academy that is as timely now as it was then. He has revised it for publication and I am pleased to include it in this issue of the *Journal*.

Lovin argues that the task facing those of us who teach and practice evangelism is not the criticism of other faiths but critical reflection on our own. Many will claim that the danger underlying the events of September 11 is the ultimacy of *any* religious commitment. Evangelists must be able to address this concern. Lovin shows us a way to do this through clarifying the limits of ethics and politics as well as calling for commitment in light of God's own gracious decision to redeem humanity through Jesus Christ.

Because evangelism has typically been construed as verbal proclamation, and preaching has historically been the prerogative of men, the role of women in evangelism has been seen as marginal. By defining evangelism in more holistic terms, Lacey Warner is able to show a rich diversity of evangelistic activity among women in nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Not only do these women evangelists resonate with more recent understandings of evangelism as holistic, they also provide models for contemporary practice.

When one thinks of evangelism as proclamation, two figures who fit that image well are John Wesley and Francis Asbury. Yet as Scott Jones shows, evangelism for them necessarily encompassed more than preaching due to their common commitment to scriptural holiness. What distinguishes their approaches is the different contexts of their ministry, with Wesley seeking to reach nominal Christians in a state church, and Asbury competing with other denominations to connect with individuals in popular culture. American Methodism was especially suited for this latter task; its subsequent successes and failures can be at least partially understood by which audiences in the culture it sought to reach.

Evangelism may involve much more than preaching, but it must not abandon it. Steve Rankin's article examines five significant books offering advice for evangelistic preaching today. Rankin shows how these authors variously navigate the tensions between a "relevant" and an "intrusive" word, and between reaching seekers and forming disciples. The commonalities among all of these

approaches is as striking as their differences, and sets the way of preaching they advocate apart from earlier styles of evangelistic preaching.

In February of 2002, Robert E. Coleman was installed as Distinguished Professor of Evangelism and Discipleship at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Dr. Coleman has indeed had a distinguished career as a professor of evangelism in a number of institutions, a prolific writer, and past President of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education. This issue of the *Journal* includes his installation address, which challenges us not only to scholarly excellence but reminds us of our deepest commitment as scholars who serve Christ.

Finally, we are pleased to have the second of Donna Hailson's devotionals which she presented to the annual meeting of the Academy in 2001. The first was published in last year's *Journal*. In this one, she issues a powerful call to discipleship in the midst of a consumer culture.

In addition to these fine articles, we have reviews of a large number of significant works on or related to evangelism.

This is my last year as Editor of this *Journal*. I am grateful for the support of many persons in and out of the Academy through their contribution of articles and book reviews, as well as their encouragement and advice. I am especially indebted to Ron Johnson and Derrel Watkins for their faithfulness as Managing Editors, and for the excellent work of Ken Gill as Book Review Editor. This *Journal* is truly a team effort.

I am also thankful for my two predecessors in this role, David Lowes Watson and Richard Stoll Armstrong, who made the *Journal* such valuable resource for the teaching and practice of evangelism. I hope in my six years as Editor I have continued in that tradition.

The *Journal* is the only scholarly publication whose sole focus is evangelism. Within its pages scholars and practitioners mutually inform one another. Like evangelism itself, the *Journal* is interdisciplinary, drawing on theology, history, biblical studies, and a wide range of social sciences in order to understand, teach, and practice evangelism with passion and integrity. The *Journal* makes a unique and essential contribution to both the church and the scholarly academy. I have been honored to serve as its Editor.

Henry H. Knight III

Editorial: Evangelism as Worship

Worship is the most central and most distinctive act of the church. To give God thanks for what God has done in creation and redemption, and to give God praise for who God is, is at the heart of Christianity. Moreover, it is as we give our thanks and praise that the Holy Spirit forms, shapes, and directs the life and witness of the Christian community, and does so in a way directly related to God's own life and mission. Worship is necessary to our actually *being* Christian.

In this sense, evangelism and all other aspects of mission flow out of worship. Many of us have underscored the centrality of worship in our teaching by insisting that worship is never an evangelistic tool, though it has an inescapable evangelistic dimension. This does not mean we ignore issues of cultural relevance or fidelity to tradition; it does mean the integrity of worship as worship must be maintained.

I would not want to diminish this emphasis on the foundational role of worship for mission. What has struck me, however, is how much evangelism is at the heart of outreach in the same way that worship is at the heart of the church. Evangelism is the most central and distinctive aspect of mission. It is the way we most intentionally share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. It makes clear the beliefs, motives, and vision that underlies all other areas of our mission in the world, as well as our life together.

There is, of course, one major distinction between worship and evangelism. Worship is offered by Christians to God, while evangelism involves the sharing of the gospel by Christians with their neighbor. We frequently note, however, that worship is often "overheard" by seekers. Is there a way that evangelism is additionally an act of worship?

Certainly both worship and evangelism involve proclaiming and hearing the word of God. But there is a deeper connection. When we share with another person what God has done for us and our world in Jesus Christ, does this not evoke praise, gratitude, and awe? Can we tell this good news without doxology? Moreover, as we tell the story of God, does not the Holy Spirit shape our own lives even as the Spirit reaches out to those who hear?

We have come to recognize worship not only as what we say but what we do—worship is embodied. Evangelism, many have said, is embodied as well, in the unity of word and deed. We reach our hands up in praise to God, and in God's name reach our hands out to our neighbor. We kneel before our Creator and Redeemer, and,

following our Lord's example, we serve our neighbor in Christ's name.

We do not, of course, worship our neighbor, but we do love our neighbor even as we love God. Worship is an act of love for God, but it also involves loving our neighbor—we bring the needs of the world before God through intercessory prayer. Evangelism is an act of love for our neighbor, but it also involves loving God—we evoke that love whenever we tell and demonstrate how much God has loved us, even unto death on a cross.

Evangelism, like worship, is a distinctively Christian act, centered on Jesus Christ. Through evangelism God's redemptive love is made manifest to the world; for that love we give God unceasing thanks and praise and glory.

Henry H. Knight III

Evangelism, Ethics, and Evil

Robin W. Lovin

Theology After September 11

Since, September 11, 2001, much pastoral energy has been devoted to recovery from the terrorist attacks that brought death and destruction to New York, Washington, and rural Pennsylvania. Churches, chaplains, and church service agencies responded at once to those who were most affected. Pastors preached to churches suddenly filled by people who wanted an interpretation of the events that went beyond television commentary. Public prayers, services of worship, and an unaccustomed reverent silence marked stages of the work that cleared the debris and prepared the sites for future use.

Churches and theologians handled those immediate pastoral tasks well, but the work of theological reflection has barely begun. Theology necessarily follows along some time after events happen. The first things we say are rarely the judgments we settle on in the end, and the first problems we see may not be the ones that trouble us most upon further reflection.

One specific problem that needs further theological reflection is the religious motivation of the terrorists. Pastors and theologians speak of September 11 as a "tragedy" or invoke historical analogies with Pearl Harbor. These ways of speaking provide familiar frameworks within which our suffering and our solidarity can be understood, but they obscure the element of religious violence that makes these attacks uniquely difficult for people of faith to comprehend. If we are going to speak with integrity as people of faith, we must confront the religious motivation of the hijackers in the September 11 attacks and the religious elements in the terrorist network that continues to threaten us.

We must be honest about the dangers that are inherent in faith commitments. Those who believe they are acting for God may not calculate the effects of their actions in secular terms. They may expect apocalyptic results that in their minds justify great costs to themselves and render the loss of other lives irrelevant. A faith that removes mountains can inspire great evil as well as great endurance, and our proclamation of faith must deal with both possibilities.

Robin W. Lovin is Cary M. Maguire University Professor of Ethics at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

Let me be clear that what this requires of Christian preachers and teachers is critical theological reflection on Christian faith, not a Christian critique of other faiths. In the days after September 11, religious and political leaders repeatedly emphasized the difference between mainstream Islamic teaching and the violence espoused by the terrorists. Muslims, Christians, and Americans of other faiths came together to pray for the victims of the attacks and emphasize their shared commitments to peace. More recently, this interfaith consensus has begun to fray, and at least one Christian leader has gained considerable attention with a claim that Muslim clerics have not clearly condemned the terrorists and have not expressed adequate regret for the destructive misuse of Islam.¹

Any Christian attempt to place the blame for September 11 on Islam as a religion certainly suggests the need for a more adequate understanding of Islamic ethics among Christians. There is an important scholarly discussion about *jihad* and Christian ideas of just war, about the relationship between spiritual *jihad* and external, physical struggle, and about whether Islam admits a position that would correspond in some way to Christian pacifism.² The hard questions for Christian theology after September 11, however, are not questions about how to understand Islam. The hard questions are about the risks and dangers inherent in ultimate commitments. The evidence of history is that Christians are every bit as capable as Islamic fundamentalists of absolutizing their positions and identifying what they believe with the reality of God. Christians, too, can reduce other people to objects and instruments, to be used or destroyed in service of Christian commitments. No response to September 11 that overlooks this history can be an adequate theological response.

This should be a matter of particular concern to those who study, teach, and practice evangelism. Skeptics may begin by deploring the violence of Islamic fundamentalism, but they will go on to find violence and intolerance in every religious commitment. Those whose calling is focused on bringing people to Christian commitment should not think they can escape that skepticism by claiming that some *other* faith is more prone to fanaticism or violence. They must be prepared to respond to the question as it is directed to their own Christian commitments.

A theological understanding which addresses this central problem has two parts: The first is ethical, the second evangelical. In this essay, I will attempt to outline both parts, and I will argue that the relationship between them is important. If we are unable to connect ethics and evangelism, we will find that people of other faiths and of no faith will regard Christian calls for repentance and

conversion as a very dangerous way to think about the present situation.

But it is precisely when the ethical task has become clear and urgent that it needs to be understood in the context of faith. Otherwise, moral endeavor is susceptible to the same misuses and distortions that happen when faith is used to justify violence. We need ethics to show that faith is tied securely to the creation of political and social community, but we then need evangelism to proclaim the limits of politics, so that politics does not itself take on the characteristics of the misguided faith that launches terror.

Ethics

Just as theological reflection on momentous events needs time to identify the important questions, first responses in politics and ethics often underestimate the scope of change, even when the pundits keep saying, "Everything has changed." After September 11, the agenda in government and politics shifted immediately to waging a new kind of war against terrorism. Ethical debates focused on the extent of a military response and the legitimacy of possible targets.

This proved a difficult discussion for many churches to enter, since the most extensive recent denominational thinking about war and peace grew out of the debates over nuclear deterrence during the 1980's. These reflections about the use of force in superpower confrontations offered little immediate guidance for a conflict in which the enemy could not even be clearly identified. As political scientist Kenneth Anderson observed, preachers immediately after September 11 often wanted ". . . to maintain the moral purity of pacifism while still sounding relevant to the real world of conflict, sin, and death. They recognized the inevitability of armed retaliation, but elided the question of its legitimacy."³

It is dangerous for a nation to contemplate the use of military force without a framework for a broader, political discussion of the legitimacy and limits of warfare. Fortunately, both moral theologians and a wider spectrum of political and military analysts quickly rediscovered the full framework of just war theory, which includes the "just means" criteria that are most useful precisely when a superpower largely unconstrained by external forces has to make a political determination of what the limits of its response to aggression will be. While U.S. action in Afghanistan led to the mistakes, collateral damage, and civilian casualties that always accompany a strategy of aerial bombardment, the steps that were taken to limit these problems and the quickness of military spokespersons to disclaim any intentional injury to civilians testify

to the continuing political relevance of the principles of proportionate response and protection of non-combatants.⁴

As this essay is written, ethical questions about the future use of military force are centered on a possible invasion of Iraq. Just war considerations continue to be applied to these questions, often with negative conclusions about the legitimacy of a pre-emptive attack.⁵ Increasingly, however, the debate has shifted from questions about whether the U.S. can prove Iraq's involvement in the September 11 attacks to questions about how and whether one nation can demand "regime change" in another.⁶ The issue is less the old just war question of what one nation may do to another in response to aggression than a new question about the limits of sovereignty.

That hardly ends the ethical discussion that had sprung up around just war theory, but it does move it to a more fundamental level. The question now is not just about the legitimate use of force, but about the most basic purposes of the state and political community. If the recurrent themes of political discussion during the 20th century were about the relationships between governments and markets and about government responsibility for social welfare, we find ourselves at the beginning of the 21st century returning to a 17th century question about why we have government in the first place.

John Locke had an answer to that question: People accept the constraints of government in order to enjoy the security that comes with order.⁷ If we take the power to use coercive force away from individuals and give it to a government, the result will be an orderly society in which people will be able to acquire, plan, and even to fight with each other in relative security, according to rules that they can know in advance, with outcomes that they can reasonably predict.

Locke's understanding of the social contract had a powerful influence on the authors of the U.S. constitution and on Western democracy as a whole. The connection between government power and personal security set the basic pattern of life under the modern state. Whatever arguments might arise over government regulation and government responsibility, everyone assumed that the state had the power to maintain the basic conditions of security in which those other decisions could be made.

That world lasted until September 11, 2001. What became all too clear as the towers of the World Trade Center collapsed was that under the conditions of modern commerce and technology, no state can unilaterally guarantee the security which is its most basic function. We are moving into an era when there cannot be any purely "domestic" politics. Governments will begin to assert a legitimate interest in how other governments treat the opposition

forces in their countries. They will begin to say that they have an interest in the life changes of youth in refugee camps or the employment prospects of peasant farmers on other continents, not because of some abstract commitment to human rights, but because of their basic obligation to protect the security of their own people.

Transnational scrutiny of these issues will lead in turn to a reconfiguration of "public" and "private" interests. Not only governments, but also businesses, professional associations, and cultural institutions will be held accountable for the effects their policies have on global security issues. We will have to imagine a whole new set of institutions and agreements through which governments, economic interests, and cultural institutions can be held accountable to the public good, conceived now on a global scale.⁸ This new accountability will also touch religious bodies. Part of the reason for the modern state in the first place was to get control over religious violence. Since we now face the previously unimaginable possibility that the state may fail at that task, we need to begin to imagine ways that religions might themselves take it over, at least in part.

What marks these urgent questions of ethics is that they are questions we have to solve together, quite apart from our diversities of ethnic identity and religious commitment. The questions are universal, not in the sense that there is some universal reason that we can use to resolve them, but in the sense that they are questions that we all must face. Every nation and group that is left out of the discussion becomes a very real threat to whatever conclusions are reached by those who do participate.

Evangelism And The Limits Of Ethics

That is the task for ethics. What, then, becomes of evangelism? Is there a place in this new situation for faith and for a call to commitment? There are skeptical voices who say "No," suggesting that any faith that makes demands or seeks decisions is a part of the problem. They argue that the only kind of belief we can welcome in the world after September 11 is a religion that offers comfort without challenge and accepts identity as it finds it. The acceptable role for religion in the new global reality is as the handmaiden of ethics, aiding in the implementation of new systems of accountability without making divisive demands of its own.

Christian evangelism should respond to this challenge in two ways. First, it must, from its own theological point of view, identify the limits of ethics. The creation of new forms of accountability and new institutions to ensure global security is an essential task, but it is not the ultimate task.⁹ Christian theology has always insisted on

both the importance and the limitations of ethics, and it must do so now with special clarity at a time when the urgency of ethical questions may be confused with their ultimacy.

The task of evangelism, however, is not merely a negative announcement regarding the limits of ethics. The more important, positive task is to proclaim the Christian commitment in its specificity. A general discussion of the moral significance of commitment is beside the point. What matters is the particular decision that the Christian proclamation calls for, and the specific relationship that decision has to the moral task that is now before us.

Moral leadership, particularly when it is expressed in political terms, tends to push the significance of the moral task toward the limits. It stakes its claim to ultimacy in dualistic terms:

Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom – the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time – now depends on us. Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.¹⁰

Political leaders must mobilize their people to face large challenges and motivate them to accept present sacrifice for the sake of future peace and security. To accomplish this, they will cast the challenge in moral terms. That is appropriate, and religious leaders may appropriately support them in it. However, political leaders will also have strong motivations to move from immediate moral objectives to more ultimate ones. The line between proximate justice and God's judgment tends to blur. That is true even in the United States, where historical experience and strong religious traditions work together to maintain the distinction.

Ironically, politics that blurs the distinction between proximate justice and God's judgment loses sight of its own reason for being, which is to provide the systems of justice that enables people to live together despite their conflicts and restrains those who inevitably seek to escape the limits of justice and to impose their will on others. Politics presupposes the continuation of multiple, discrete conflicts, rather than their cumulation into a single conflict between freedom and fear, which will now be settled once and for all. Political leaders may be excused some rhetorical flourishes in this regard, but theology must insist on the distinction, precisely so that politics and ethics may attend to the urgent tasks that are really theirs.

Ethics holds out the hope that if we measure our responses rightly and make our choices well, the world may be a more secure place for human habitation by the middle of the twenty-first century, despite the violent and terrifying events that marked the century's beginning. Ethics does not, however, promise that we will root out evil wherever it exists, and whatever form it takes. Ethics does not even promise that we will eliminate terrorism, though we may be able to restrain the particular network of persons and causes that brought September 11 upon us.

Terrorism is going to be an ongoing problem. Like nuclear weapons, terrorism will not go away, even though we may greatly reduce the threat it poses. Part of the new political and moral world we need to create is a system of controls and interventions that identifies problems that are likely to turn into terrorist threats and redirects their energies before they get beyond the reach of the political restraints that the rest of us live by. We need to devise a system that monitors political discontent and keeps it flowing in political channels – if necessary, by opening the channels which it needs in order to flow. We need to make sure that no one has the means, and if possible to make sure that no one has the motivation, to seize other parts of our complex technical and economic systems and turn them into weapons of mass destruction. It is perhaps somewhat idealistic to think that such a political system could be built, but it is possible.

But we will not end evil, and we will not create a world in which political systems to restrain evil are no longer needed. Ethics and evangelism converge on this task of identifying the limits of ethics. This is largely a matter of identifying which of the conditions of life are changeable, and which are not, so that we do not slip into a political rhetoric that promises an end to evil.

One thing that will not change is that human beings will dream more than they can achieve, and their dreams will lead them to anxieties about what they have achieved, and their anxieties will lead them to make their achievements more important in their own minds than they can possibly be in reality.¹¹ The impulse to realize our dreams by turning other people into mere instruments of our own purposes will always be with us, whether it finds expression in some new kind of terrorism, or in the petty sins of which we find ourselves capable every day. Politics and ethics are about how we live with each other knowing these facts about ourselves. Ethics is not about changing these facts, and a politics that promises that – even indirectly and rhetorically – promises too much.

Evangelism And God's Decision

It is against this background that the specific commitment called for by Christian evangelism should be understood. Evangelism, in establishing the limits of ethics and politics, also proclaims a positive call for decision about God's action. Indeed, it is precisely in that positive proclamation that Christian evangelism sets the limits on ethics and politics.

Christian evangelism must not be understood to proclaim one more of the dualistic choices between good and evil of the sort that ethics and politics proclaim when they overreach themselves. Nor may evangelism's proclamation be reduced to another opportunity to make the world a better place, however real and important those opportunities may be. Calls for religious commitment that are made in those terms are dangerous, and a skeptical, secular world rightly calls them into question in the aftermath of September 11.

Christian evangelism, however, calls for a decision about a decision that God has already made:

In the beginning, before time and space as we know them, before creation, before there was any reality distinct from God which could be the object of the love of God or the setting for His acts of freedom, God anticipated and determined within Himself (in the power of His love and freedom, of His knowing and willing) that the goal and meaning of all His dealings with the as yet non-existent universe should be the fact that in His Son he would be gracious towards man, uniting Himself with him. In the beginning, it was the choice of the Father Himself to establish this covenant with man by giving up His Son for him, that He Himself might become man in the fulfillment of His grace.¹²

It is essential to Christian evangelism that it calls for a decision about this decision that God has already made. However dramatic the preacher and however real the stakes in this choice may be, nothing can erase the fact that God has already decisively chosen to redeem our fallen humanity. The decision is not about whether or not God is going to be gracious. The decision is about whether we will accept God's decision. If the proclamation on which evangelism is based is a proclamation of the Christian Gospel, this is the message, however difficult it may be to get it right and however easy it may be to confuse it with other messages.

There are other decisions to preach about. Dualistic faiths, whether they are gnostic religions or Christian heresies, call for a

decision between good and evil, light and darkness, flesh and spirit – as though the poles of that choice were somehow equal contenders for our allegiance; as though the outcome of the choice were somehow still open. Milder, new age versions of the same proclamation call for a choice between a true self and a false self, between a closed self and an open one – as if our human nature were a matter of our own choice; as if the choice we make about ourselves made all the difference.

The fundamental difference between those choices and the choice proclaimed by Christian evangelism should be clear. People who proclaim the other choices are not for that reason bad people, and they may, in fact, have very good and generous intentions. Christians do not have to think ill of them, or try to prevent other people from hearing what they say, or try to make them stop what they are doing; but if we are committed to the proclamation of the good news in Jesus Christ, we do have to conclude that they are mistaken about the choices that are open to us as human beings.

It is important to remember this specifically Christian choice that we proclaim in times of national and international crisis, because the temptation to confuse it with other kinds of choice grows more intense as political and military conflicts intensify. We will be told that the choice before us is a choice between life and death, good and evil, truth and falsehood, and we will be told that the fate of nations and the fate of humanity as a whole hangs on which choice we make. We will be told that the disaster that befell us on September 11 is actually an opportunity to become a new people and a new kind of society, that the crisis of terrorism allows us to choose for caring and giving and against selfishness and greed; that the economic disaster is in fact a spiritual opportunity, and so on. We will be told these things about our choices by our political leaders, who need to motivate us for the conflict that lies ahead, and we will be told these things about our choices from our pulpits, by well-meaning clergy whose emotional awareness of the seriousness of the moment is greater than their intellectual understanding of it.

A dualistic message that tells us that history is in our hands and that we can become whoever we need to be to meet the challenge of the moment is exactly the message we do not need, if we *are* going to meet the challenge of the moment. The dualistic message promises total victory, even over ourselves. The real challenge of the moment is to recognize the tendency to evil that will not be eradicated from our human nature and on that basis to construct a realistic, limited politics that manages the human reality as well as it can be managed. No one would want to say that a president, or a politician, or a preacher who is trying to rally a democratic society for a difficult struggle is on the same moral level

as the terrorists against whom they speak. Nevertheless, politicians and preachers alike are tempted by the difficulty of their task to offer us choices that we do not really have and to engage us in commitments which, if we really took them seriously, would pitch us into that same war against human nature that the terrorists have undertaken.

That is why the Christian call to decision is especially important at this point in our history, and why it is important to help people understand that proclamation and to preach it as clearly and powerfully as they can: We are called to a decision about a decision that God has already made. The outcome of history is not in doubt. Only our place in it is open to question.

We can decide to accept God's choice of us, gladly acknowledging our fallen human nature and living in ways that are appropriate to repentant sinners. Or we can decide that being chosen by God is not good enough for us, and that we will remake ourselves and our world until we are fit for the choice that *we* want to make. The temptation toward the latter choice is understandable. It is, in fact, part of that fallen human nature that God has chosen nonetheless. Just for that reason, we need a clear and constant proclamation of what the real choice is. If ethics and politics are to serve their human purposes in the world we face after September 11, they will need a genuinely Christian evangelism that announces the limits of all politics at the same time that it proclaims the good news of a choice that is not ours to make.

NOTES

¹"Evangelist says Muslims haven't adequately apologized for Sept. 11 attacks," *New York Times* (August 15, 2002).

²See John Kelsay, *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993).

³Kenneth Anderson, "Language, Law, and Terror," *Times Literary Supplement*, No. 5138 (September 21, 2001), p. 13.

⁴See Joseph L. Allen, *War: A Primer for Christians* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2001), pp. 43-47.

⁵See, for example, George Hunsinger, "Iraq: Don't Go There," *Christian Century* 119 (August 14-27, 2002), 10-11.

⁶See James A. Baker III, "The Right Way to Change a Regime," *New York Times* (August 25, 2002).

⁷John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: New American Library, 1965), pp. 366-69.

⁸I have explored these changes at greater length in Robin Lovin, "Church and State in an Age of Globalization," *DePaul Law Review* 52 (Fall, 2002), 1-18.

⁹Cf. Bonhoeffer's distinction between the *ultimate* and the *penultimate* in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 125-33.

¹⁰George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, September 20, 2001 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>).

¹¹Reinhold Niebuhr identified this anxiety as the root cause of the sin which makes coercive power a perennial necessity in political life. See Reinhold Niebuhr, "Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist," in Robert McAfee Brown, ed., *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 108.

¹²Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of God; Church Dogmatics*, II/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), p. 101.

Saving Women: Re-visioning Contemporary Concepts of Evangelism

Lacey Warner

In a context of increasing secularization and religious pluralism, the study of evangelism is a vital resource for the church.¹ However, most studies related to the theology and practice of evangelism have yet to give substantial attention to a group that forms over half the church's constituency.² Although women historically comprise the majority of church members and active participants in evangelistic ministries, their contributions are only beginning to be studied. One significant reason women are absent from categories of discourse related to evangelism stems from an understanding of evangelism as verbal proclamation, most often in the form of preaching—a practice to which women have had only limited access.³

This examination of selected women invites the re-visioning of concepts of evangelism related to preaching that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and remain influential today. The essay focuses primarily upon women connected to Wesleyan traditions in eighteenth-century Britain and nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Drawing on the nature of evangelistic ministries of women during this formative period, this essay challenges an understanding of evangelism as merely verbal proclamation. In the ministries of these women, a profound synthesis of verbal proclamation and evangelistic practices embodied the gospel message.

The essay first demonstrates the narrow use of the language of evangelism—predominantly confined to preaching—in the historiography of women's ministries and in contemporary sources, which leads interpreters to miss the integrated nature of women's evangelism. Verbal proclamation of the gospel message is an essential scripturally-grounded component of evangelistic practice. However, a brief survey of contemporary sources reveals an emphasis on verbal proclamation to the exclusion of compassion for physical or material well-being. This contrasts with New Testament gospel foundations (as well as canonical themes) that tie spiritual formation to the care of whole persons.

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Second, the essay explores the particularity of women's historical practices of evangelism, which, although linked when possible with preaching, have been associated more often with ministries of compassion, with the aim of initiating disciples of Jesus Christ into the reign of God. The complexity of women's evangelistic practices closely resembles those ministries embodied and commissioned by Jesus Christ in the gospels. I am not arguing for an understanding of evangelism that neglects verbal proclamation. Rather, women's practices of evangelism include ministries of compassion, which when introduced to the discourse of evangelistic theology and practice, broadens contemporary conceptualizations of evangelistic ministry. In this study women's evangelistic witness emerges as an integrally connected web of practices that provides a multifaceted paradigm beyond the simplified concept of evangelism as solely verbal proclamation.

Women, Proclamation, and Evangelism

Practices of evangelistic ministry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended to focus on personal holiness as a means to social holiness. During the First Great Awakening in Britain and America, women began to serve as domestic visitors and Christian educators. Women offered Christian witness in the homes of the spiritually and physically impoverished through ministries such as prayer, encouragement, health and employment consultation, and the provision of clothing, food, and medication. Connected with communities of faith, they offered Christian instruction to seekers of all ages. As women's local associations organized into vast networks during the nineteenth century, their evangelistic ministries also developed into complex programs at home and abroad, training and supporting male and female missionaries as physicians, nurses, and educators in hospitals, schools, and urban mission facilities.

The focus on the primacy of personal holiness within North American Protestantism was followed by a separation of social reform from evangelistic ministries as the social gospel and fundamentalist movements grew more estranged from one another. This increasing separation culminated in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the early twentieth century. As Jean Miller Schmidt has argued, women's ministries during this period exemplified greater wholeness in evangelistic social reform in contrast to the general trend of fragmentation.⁴ Donald Dayton's research also points toward the balance of evangelical piety and social reform within Wesleyan holiness traditions, particularly among the ministries of women.⁵ Shaped by a strong evangelical faith, women's evangelistic ministries in the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries took seriously the implications of systemic evil in their efforts to improve the plight of the disenfranchised—the imprisoned, the mentally ill, the immigrant poor, and the enslaved and later segregated African Americans.

William Abraham argues that the contemporary Protestant church in North America has inherited the sixteenth-century reformers' emphasis on proclamation. This emphasis has further encouraged the church to limit its concept of evangelism to verbal proclamation of the gospel as a practice distinct from social reform and works of justice.⁶ As the exegetical and theological reflections of recent scholars have shown, evangelism relies significantly upon verbal proclamation, but it is also closely related to other ministries that sustain the process of the initiation of persons into the reign of God.⁷ Thus an understanding of evangelism focused solely on preaching can be richly expanded in light of recent scholarship and models based upon women's evangelistic ministry from the eighteenth and nineteenth century Wesleyan tradition.⁸

Most women who were appointed to or bravely assumed the role of preacher in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries engaged in a complex web of evangelistic practices that complemented their verbal proclamation of the gospel. The number of women who confronted the challenges of eighteenth and nineteenth century church and society to fulfill their vocation to preach was relatively small. Women preachers were more prevalent in splinter groups because of the relatively permissive ethos with regard to female preaching often associated with congregational autonomy and/or intense pneumatology. As smaller movements, such as Methodism in Britain and America, grew in numbers and resources during the First Great Awakening they moved away from the less respectable practice of female preaching.⁹ Strong resistance to women's preaching, based on biblical as well as constitutional arguments, began to mount. In Britain support for female preaching, among other innovations encouraged by John Wesley, quickly waned following Wesley's death in 1791.¹⁰ For example, the 1803 Wesleyan Conference disallowed female preaching (after the relative openness of Wesley's leadership of the movement) as a result of opposition within the denomination and a growing sufficiency in the number of male preachers. Not until over a century later in 1910, were women allowed to preach to other women. Then in 1911, women were allowed to preach to a consenting gathering of men and women.¹¹ In America, some Wesleyan traditions afforded women ordination and the right to preach during the nineteenth century. The Methodist Episcopal Church granted local preacher's licenses in some districts beginning in 1869; seventy or more women received them during the 1870s. However, the licenses were rescinded by the

1880 General Conference in the midst of petitions for women's ordination, which were flatly denied. Women were not granted preaching licenses in the Methodist Episcopal Church until 1920.¹² In an ecclesial context in which evangelism was synonymous with verbal proclamation, this almost fully excluded women from engaging in traditionally recognized evangelistic ministries.

Scholars writing about the historical contributions of women to religion, following the example of eighteenth and nineteenth century practitioners such as John Wesley and Charles Finney, have tended to use language related to the term evangelism to describe the ministries of verbal proclamation assumed by these female preachers. According to James Logan, "Wesley never employed the term 'evangelism' itself. This noun was simply not in currency in his day, though he did speak of his itinerant preachers as 'evangelists,' denoting their sole responsibility to preach."¹³ Charles Finney used the language of evangelism similarly, adding a subtle nuance by claiming that reform lectures were a corollary to evangelism.¹⁴ Thus the language assumed by Bettye Collier-Thomas in her text on preaching women in the African American tradition, and by Nancy Hardesty in her study of the reform work of evangelical women, uses the terms "evangelism" or "evangelists" synonymously with "preaching" or "lay preachers," usually as distinct from those holding ordination.¹⁵ Alternative terms such as mission, outreach, and reform then represent practices other than preaching. Catherine Brekus demonstrates that connotations of female evangelism merely as preaching too narrowly construe the contributions of women and hinder the implications of women's examples for contemporary evangelistic theology and practice.

A Mother in Israel or Sister in Christ was not a crusading evangelist who traveled from town to town preaching the gospel, but a Sunday school teacher, a temperance reformer, or an antislavery activist who deferred to the authority of her local pastor.¹⁶

Jean Miller Schmidt acknowledges the significance of activities in addition to preaching for Christian witness in her description of Phoebe Palmer's encouragement of urban mission work at the Five Points Mission in New York City. According to Schmidt, Palmer "was convinced that something more than evangelism was required."¹⁷

A small but significant number of women within the First Great Awakening's early Methodist movement were afforded the privilege of preaching by John Wesley. Women and men who pursued the office of preacher were not simply admitted to the role.

Wesley undertook a process of strict discernment to determine the presence of an extraordinary call and the demonstration of fruits. As a result of the movement's considerable pneumatology and less developed ecclesiology, women were given some opportunity to preach. As Paul Chilcote argues, the roles of women in early British Methodism expanded in a logical and natural progression leading to a small number of Methodist women preachers in the 1760s.¹⁸

When we look at the work of women preachers a richer picture emerges. Sarah Crosby (1729-1804), the first woman informally authorized by Wesley to preach within the Methodist movement, and Mary Bosanquet (1739-1815), the writer of most likely the earliest defense of women's preaching within Methodism, not only served as preachers within the movement but also established an orphanage and provided care for the impoverished. In 1763 Bosanquet and Sarah Ryan, later joined by Crosby, organized a home at Leytonstone, near London in Essex, similar to the home in Christopher Alley where these women began their work among London's poor in the late 1750s. Over the course of five years, thirty-five children and thirty-four adults at Leytonstone received shelter and care for their physical needs as well as formation as disciples in the Christian faith.¹⁹ The ministry of this community of women was significantly expanded with the move in 1768 to Cross Hall, near Leeds in Yorkshire, a vital area of the Methodist movement. At Cross Hall the home established by Bosanquet, Ryan, Crosby, with the addition of Ann Tripp continued its ministries of compassion for both bodies and souls while developing into a center for corporate prayer and worship. It is difficult to determine their understanding of the relationship between word and deed, specifically whether they perceived them as united. Despite this ambiguity, their intentional community of faith created a fertile ground for the cultivation of women preachers and provided a context for the formation and initiation of disciples into the reign of God.²⁰

As mentioned earlier, opportunities for women preachers in British Methodism declined sharply after John Wesley's death in 1791, as the movement transitioned toward denominational institution. As a result, many preaching women within British Methodism left that connection for less institutional traditions such as the Quakers, Primitive Methodists, and Bible Christians. However, most of the women who remained within the Methodist connection continued their ministries of evangelism, persisting in practices considered appropriate for women of the time.

Preaching women within nineteenth century American Wesleyan traditions, particularly the holiness movement, are well known for their participation in international evangelistic campaigns.

With the powerful ministries of proclamation also existed ministries of compassion. The impetus for this multivalent ministry was the recognition of the transformative power of ministries of compassion and social justice related to conversion. Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), through her preaching and visitation, interacted with the poor living in the slum area of Five Points in New York City. With her encouragement, the Ladies' Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church began a mission there in 1854 that eventually included a place of employment for five hundred, a day school, and various social programs.²¹ Church members had been visiting the poor and sick and holding Bible classes, Sunday schools, and prayer meetings in the area since 1843.²² As a result of Palmer's encounters with the poor through door-to-door visitation Five Points House of Industry was established to minister to the poor. The mission grew out of the empowerment Palmer received from her experience of holiness or entire sanctification.²³ The mission work at Five Points eventually concentrated on children—saving them from street gangs, educating them, and providing day care and adoption services.²⁴ In addition to establishing a school, the Five Points Mission also contained a chapel and twenty apartments to accommodate impoverished families.²⁵ Use of the language of evangelism as verbal proclamation, mentioned earlier, is consistent with contemporary conceptualizations of evangelism. However, such missions in their multifaceted work ministered to physical needs as an integral part of proclaiming the gospel. A more complex understanding of evangelism emerges as recipients of compassion began to participate and assume membership in local communities of faith, thus demonstrating the integration of compassion and verbal proclamation in evangelism. Palmer, as with Bosanquet and her intentional community, persevered in cultivating opportunities to preach while at the same time participating in numerous evangelistic ministries including ministries of compassion that cared for the bodies and souls of persons.

Saving Women: Moving Beyond Preaching in Evangelistic Practice

Women's practices of evangelism in eighteenth and nineteenth century Wesleyan traditions built upon ministries of verbal proclamation with ministries of compassion and social reform in their roles as missionaries, deaconesses, and leaders in temperance, abolition, and other reform movements. Ecclesial hierarchies did not consistently allow women to preach in the larger, more institutionalized and "respectable" denominations of the day. These other, complementary ministries were pursued in part because they were considered appropriately feminine for middle-class, (most

often) European American churchwomen. Women's ministries of compassion and reform have significant contributions to make to the discourse and practice of evangelism. The following sections explore the evangelistic ministries of women within Wesleyan traditions demonstrating the array of activities pursued with the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Women in Early Methodism

The majority of participants within early British and American Methodism were women.²⁶ Women assumed a large portion of leadership roles within the movement, most often as visitors of the sick or as band or class leaders.²⁷ Methodism, particularly in eighteenth century Britain, provided an unique opportunity for leadership by those of low socio-economic status—namely the uneducated, the impoverished, and women.²⁸ Although John Wesley never affirmed a general policy in support of women preachers, he did, as mentioned earlier, encourage gifted women of spiritual maturity to assume leadership within the movement, leadership that often included preaching. Women's roles in the Methodist movement, while varied, had an evangelistic character that involved a web of practices related to both verbal proclamation and ministries of compassion.

Numerous women engaged in evangelistic work within the British Methodist movement.²⁹ One in particular bears mentioning to demonstrate the interrelatedness of activities that contributed to evangelism. Dorothy Ripley (1769-1831) was born in Whitby, England. Her father was a Methodist preacher and well known for his hospitality to strangers and compassion for the poor and outcast. After his death, Ripley described her father's ministry that so strongly influenced her own, "Believing it his duty, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and so increased his treasure above winning souls to God by the merchandise of his wisdom."³⁰ Like her father, Ripley embodied a ministry of evangelism that did not sunder care for souls and bodies. In 1801, Ripley received a special call to minister among the slaves in the new world, where Charleston, South Carolina was her base.³¹ Ripley understood the gospel to include the ceasing of oppression particularly in relation to the Africans in the American colonies. Ripley wrote, "And it sufficeth me to believe that he [God] will soon cause the oppressors to cease their oppression and reward with peace such who travail in spirit for the spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."³²

Ripley's vocation to minister to the disenfranchised addressed a union of spiritual and material brokenness. For example, on July 2, 1802, Ripley included in a written account a

description of "five or six little wretched children, naked, from the age of two years up to nine."³³ According to Ripley's account, many questioned her response of shock and affection to the children's plight. "Why do I? Because a gracious God leads me to feel for them—weep for them—and pray in faith also for them that they may be blessed with the same blessings which are poured down upon my head and others, who groan in spirit with me for their redemption from sin and thralldom of the oppressors."³⁴ Ripley ministered to slaves and slave-owners, including her hearing the promise of many youth, to free their parents slaves upon inheritance so "that they might free themselves from the curse of their fathers."³⁵ Although Ripley did not consistently undertake the ministry of preaching, her verbal proclamation of the gospel and its relationship to practices of compassion provide an example of the interrelatedness of care for the spiritual and physical well-being in women's evangelistic ministries in early Methodism.

Missionaries

Women participated in evangelistic ministries as wives of foreign missionaries from the early nineteenth century. Eventually, the role of single women as foreign missionaries was recognized and supported, first in the Methodist Episcopal Church with the founding of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in 1869. The WFMS, the second such society to organize in North America (following Congregationalist women),³⁶ described its missiology as "Woman's Work for Woman." The aim of the work was evangelism—the invitation of indigenous women to Christianity in the context of communities of faith. Because of the limitations on ministry roles available to women, their evangelistic impulse was most often embodied in a variety of practices considered appropriate for women of the time, such as teaching and nursing. An important aspect of the "Woman's Work for Woman" missiology was the argument that preaching (a primarily male practice) should not be valued over teaching (a primarily female one), as had been proposed by the male leadership of the modern missionary movement.³⁷ Implicit in this argument was an awareness of the complex web of practices necessary for effective evangelism. The missiological assertion proposed by the WFMS articulated value for women's contributions to evangelistic ministries that complemented the practice of preaching.

"Woman's Work for Woman" comprised three areas of ministry—education, medical care, and evangelization (preaching)—each directed toward the empowerment of women in foreign mission contexts.³⁸ The women considered their work essential to the overall

missionary movement; indeed, they considered all three areas of ministry to be evangelistic.³⁹ However, public support for women evangelists lagged behind that for women teachers and doctors, since the title evangelist, because of its limited definition related to preaching, required explicit approval for women.⁴⁰ Still, women's preaching was more accepted in foreign mission contexts than in domestic ones. Brekus describes the greater acceptance of women as preachers in foreign contexts.

As missionaries, both women [Sarah Thornton, a Freewill Baptist, and Eliza Barnes, a Methodist] continued to preach informally, but instead of facing questions about their morality or femininity, they earned wide praise for their self-sacrificing devotion to the "heathen."⁴¹

Because of the urgent needs confronting mission efforts in foreign contexts, the assumption of preaching roles by women was typically less contested.

In addition to verbal proclamation, which remained central to the evangelistic impulse of the WFMS, missionaries such as Isabella Thoburn (1840-1901) and Clara Swain (1834-1910), the first single women supported by the WFMS beginning in 1869, made significant contributions to the education and medical care of indigenous women. Thoburn worked diligently in India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to establish boarding schools for girls and higher education for young women. For Thoburn and the WFMS, the preparation of indigenous women for leadership in evangelism was a missiological goal in itself.⁴² Female missionaries aspired to equip these women with knowledge as well as practical skills. Clara Swain, the first female medical doctor to serve as a foreign missionary, not only practiced medicine among Indian women of all classes but also trained women in medicine and established a hospital. Swain's evangelistic ministry reached beyond medical mission work to include teaching Sunday school, training women to teach the Bible, preach, provide medical care, and witness to upper caste zenana women who needed medical assistance.⁴³ For Thoburn, Swain, and the WFMS, a multitude of ministries—from teaching to practicing medicine to preaching—were evangelistic. "Woman's Work for Woman," although subject to currents of cultural imperialism not discussed in detail here, represented a missiology that valued the interwovenness of evangelistic practices available to women in foreign mission contexts. These practices worked together, offering ministries of wholeness to bodies, minds, and souls as individuals were initiated into the reign of God and local communities of faith.

Deaconesses

The role of deaconess emerged within the Protestant Church in the first half of the nineteenth century, beginning in Germany in 1836 when Theodore Fleidner, a Lutheran pastor, with his wife Frederika, established a home for released female prisoners at Kaiserswerth. The role of deaconess at Kaiserswerth expanded into both teaching and nursing, each including strong evangelistic components. The role of deaconess soon spread across the European continent and to North America, beginning with the Lutheran Church. In Great Britain deaconesses and sisterhoods initially emerged in the Church of England, followed by Nonconformist traditions. In North America before the end of the nineteenth century, women were encouraged to serve as deaconesses by the Episcopal Church, followed by the Methodists and Baptists.

Deaconess homes and training schools often provided for women's ministry in three areas, similar to those addressed by female foreign missionaries—education, medical care, and evangelism (practiced most often through visitation rather than preaching). However, deaconess ministries generally embodied a significant interplay of each of these areas in response to particular needs. In addition to leading class meetings for adults and teaching Sunday school for children, deaconesses trained youth in industrial schools, preparing them for employment in various trades. Their ministries in both education and medical care represented holistic practices of evangelism that combined verbal proclamation with ministries of compassion.

Deaconesses were usually organized into two relatively distinct roles—nurse and visitor. In the Methodist Episcopal tradition deaconess nurses and visitors shared an evangelistic impetus while their training diverged to allow specialization in the distinct areas. Deaconess nurses began their ministry in the homes of those unable to afford medical care. With the development of financial resources and the training of women as nurses, an impressive number of deaconess hospitals were established in the late nineteenth century. The Methodist Episcopal deaconess movement founded each of the sixteen Methodist hospitals established between 1887 and 1900, a number that is striking in comparison with the two Methodist hospitals founded between 1880 and 1890.⁴⁴ The ministries of deaconess nurses, although most obviously focused on physical need, did not ignore the spiritual need for Christian formation through prayer, Bible reading, spiritual counsel, and teaching. According to Florence Parker, a Methodist Episcopal deaconess nurse, the motto of the deaconess nurse was

"Help for Perishing Bodies—and Souls," an important complement to the work of the deaconess visitor, whose motto was "Help for Perishing Souls—and Bodies."⁴⁵ Deaconess visitors often organized into deaconess homes or affiliated with local churches. Under the supervision of clergymen, they engaged in domestic visitation, usually to the impoverished, often immigrant women and children concentrated in urban areas. The visits established a means to provide other ministries of compassion such as nursing, always with an evangelistic purpose that included the verbal proclamation of the gospel.

Deaconesses in the late nineteenth century worked under the auspices of clergymen, usually in individual local church appointments. They served in clearly supervised roles with little autonomy, roles that remained consistent with the dominant ideologies of femininity of the time. Confined by ideologies of domesticity and femininity often espoused by denominational leaders, deaconesses, particularly in the Methodist Episcopal Church, seldom had opportunity to preach. Such opportunity was slightly more common in other denominational traditions—typically, the less structured and less affluent traditions that had critical shortages of male preachers. These opportunities often arose in more remote settings. The language and tasks related to deaconess movements, tended to follow the Victorian ideals related to the roles of mother and sister. Implicit in these ideals were the responsibilities of mothers for the formation of children as moral and religious citizens. As celibate women, deaconesses assumed the roles of mothers and sisters to the lost and broken. Although deaconesses were limited by these essentialist interpretations of gender-appropriate roles, the maternal and sisterly character of their roles did afford opportunities for spiritual nurture and evangelism beyond the domestic setting.

Frances Willard and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union

Protestant women engaged in numerous efforts for reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from temperance and women's ecclesial rights to racial justice. Many of these efforts, together with the many women who championed them, demonstrate the complexity of ministry practices that often emerge from an evangelistic impetus. This section will focus on the work of Frances Willard (1839-1898) within the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as an example of the evangelistic impetus of late nineteenth century reform: her leadership within the temperance movement and her contributions to the movement for ecclesial rights for women in the late nineteenth century.

Frances Elisabeth Caroline Willard attended Northwestern Female College and joined First Methodist Episcopal Church in Evanston, Illinois as a full member in 1861; she was described as "an active worker, seeking to lead others to Christ."⁴⁶ The ministry of Phoebe Palmer and her spouse facilitated an experience of holiness or entire sanctification received by Willard in 1866.⁴⁷ Willard claimed to have lost the purity associated with her experience of holiness.⁴⁸ Willard served as an educator and administrator within educational institutions⁴⁹ before joining the temperance crusade that commenced in earnest in Ohio during the winter of 1873-74.

Under Willard's leadership the WCTU, already the largest women's organization in the United States and presumably one of the largest in the world, increased the effectiveness of the women called to organize their work for moral reform. Willard's personal vocation and the significance she attributed to reform influenced her leadership within the temperance movement, first as secretary (1874-1879) and then as president (1879-98). Willard struggled with a call to ministry, which she discerned to include a call to preach and receive ordination. Such roles were not easily accessible to women in the Methodist Episcopal Church at the time. Willard expressed her vision for the church in a letter written to Mrs. D. L. Moody in 1877, in which she supported women as evangelists. Willard alluded to the role of preaching to be assumed by women evangelists, while indicating the expansion of this role "such that most people have not dreamed."

I firmly believe God has a work for them [women] to do as evangelists, as bearers of Christ's message to the ungopeled, to the prayer meeting, to the church generally and the world at large, such that most people have not dreamed. It is therefore my dearest wish to help break down the barriers of prejudice that keep them silent.⁵⁰

In her first presidential address to the W.C.T.U., Willard described women as two-thirds of Christ's church, whose voices are "a reinforcement quite indispensable to the evangelizing agencies of the more helpful future."⁵¹ Willard referred to Charles Finney's statement, "The church that silences the women is shorn of half its power."⁵² The goal of Willard's evangelistic vision was "the Christianizing of society,"⁵³ revealing relatively early glimpses of the American social gospel as well as a multi-valenced conceptualization of evangelistic ministry.

As early as 1874, the W.C.T.U. sponsored gospel temperance meetings where local unions offered the gospel cure for

intemperance in religious services modeled on revival meetings culminating in a conversion to the cause demonstrated by signing the pledge.⁵⁴ By 1877, these gospel temperance meetings mingled salvation from intemperance, "tens of thousands have been saved and redeemed from the appetite of rum," with salvation to Jesus Christ. For example, "Connected with Friendly Inns in Cleveland are chapels, in which evangelistic services are held."⁵⁵ In 1877, 50,000 attended these evangelistic services, in which 200 professed conversion to Christianity, "multitudes who came only for the bread and meat stayed to pray and were saved."⁵⁶ While working for temperance reform, these women cared for the spiritual and temporal needs of persons.

As the ministries of the W.C.T.U. expanded under Willard's leadership, so did the women's participation in a variety of compassionate ministries that emerged as inseparable from the saving of souls. As mentioned earlier, the goal of Frances Willard's evangelistic vision was "the Christianizing of society". The complexity of the W.C.T.U.'s evangelistic reform can be seen in the ministries sponsored by its Chicago chapter: two day nurseries, two Sunday schools, an industrial school, a mission that sheltered four thousand destitute or homeless women each year, a lodging for men, and a low cost restaurant. Similar ministries were represented in the forty departments of the national organization.⁵⁷ Willard's presidency ended with her death in 1898. In the first decade of her leadership, the WCTU quadrupled its membership as well as carving space for women to practice holistic ministries of evangelism.

Conclusions

This essay begins with the premise that women's contributions have yet to be included in the categories of discourse related to the study of evangelism. This circumstance arises at least in part because conceptions of evangelism have been too narrowly associated with verbal proclamation of the gospel. By integrating the contributions of selected women from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this essay suggests a more complex and nuanced concept of evangelism that resonates with contemporary themes in the academic study of evangelism. Based on their evangelistic practices, these women proclaimed the message of salvation through the fullness of their ministries that reached beyond the role of preacher. Such a conception of evangelism recognizes the intricate web of ministries and roles that contribute to the care of whole persons and their initiation into the reign of God.

NOTES

¹This research was made possible through the Lilly Theological Research Grants program.

²Ann Braude, "Women's History Is American Religious History," *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 88-92.

³See Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), Introduction, specifically page 20.

⁴See Jean Miller Schmidt, "Reexamining the Public/Private Split: Reforming the Continent and Spreading Scriptural Holiness," in *Perspectives on American Methodism*, eds. Russell Richey et. al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

⁵Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976), chapters 8-10. See also Doug Strong's nuanced argument building on Dayton and others in "The Crusade for Women's Rights and the Formative Antecedents of the Holiness Movement," in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Volume 27 (1992).

⁶William Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 92. Walter Klaiber, for example, argues for an understanding of evangelism that emphasizes the kerygma as distinct from ministries of diakonia or koinonia in his text *Call and Response* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 26.

⁷See Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*, 13; Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson, *The Great Commission* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992); David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991); Walter Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); Orlando Costas, *Liberating News*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Darrell Guder, ed., *Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Scott Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, forthcoming); Ronald Sider, *One-Sided Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993).

⁸Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 409. According to Bosch, terms related to evangelism fell into almost complete disuse during the Middle Ages. Even today they are seldom used in English Bible translations; alternatives include "good news," "gospel," and "preach the gospel." Since the early nineteenth century the verb "evangelize" and its derivatives "evangelism" and "evangelization" have been rehabilitated in church and mission circles. They became particularly prominent around the turn of the century because of the slogan "The evangelization of the world in this generation."

⁹Catherine Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 284.

¹⁰Richard Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 312-13.

¹¹Deborah Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 92; Dorothy Graham, "Chosen by God" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1986), chapter 3.

¹²Kenneth Rowe, "The Ordination of Women," in *Perspectives on American Methodism*, eds. Russell Richey et. al. (Nashville: Kingswood, 1993), 298-308; *Journal of the General Conference*, MEC (1920): 517.

¹³James Logan, "Offering Christ: Wesleyan Evangelism Today," in *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, ed. Randy Maddox (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 118.

¹⁴Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 84.

¹⁵For example, see Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1998), 21; and Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 82, 85.

¹⁶Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 294. See also Catherine Brekus, "Female Evangelism in the Early Methodist Movement, 1784-1845," in *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture*, eds. Nathan Hatch and John Wigger (Nashville: Kingswood, 2001), chapter 4.

¹⁷Jean Miller Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 142.

¹⁸Paul Chilcote, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1991), 117.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 119, 126-128.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 129-131.

²¹Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*, 142.

²²Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 112.

²³Susie Stanley, "Empowered Foremothers: Wesleyan/Holiness Women Speak to Today's Christian Feminists," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* Volume 24 (1989), 104, 106, 108.

²⁴Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 113.

²⁵Stanley, "Empowered Foremothers: Wesleyan/Holiness Women Speak to Today's Christian Feminists," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 108.

²⁶Chilcote, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, 48; Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*, 52-53. See also John Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2001), chapter 7.

²⁷Chilcote, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, 68.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 69.

²⁹See Earl Kent Brown *Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983), for one of the earliest and comprehensive studies of women in early British Methodism. Brown examines the overlapping roles of 65 women. Paul Chilcote's most recent text continues his research on early Methodist women reflecting upon their writings, which shed light on their evangelistic ministries. See also Paul Chilcote, *Her Own Story: Autobiographical Portraits of Early Methodist Women* (Nashville: Kingswood, 2001).

³⁰Chilcote, *Her Own Story* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), 132.

³¹*Ibid.*, 130-4.

³²*Ibid.*, 134.

³³*Ibid.*, 141.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*, 142.

³⁶Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 129.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 132.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 133.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 134.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 167. "The first money raised by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society for direct evangelistic work in 1869 was given to a native Bible woman, not to a western missionary with the title of 'evangelist.'"

⁴¹Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 299.

⁴²Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 162.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 164.

⁴⁴"Deaconesses and Methodist Hospitals," *The Message and Deaconess Advocate* (May 1900), 8.

⁴⁵Florence Parker, "History of Nurses' Class," *The Message* (June 1891), 5.

⁴⁶Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 4; Hardesty quotes Stephen Olin Garrison, ed., *Forty Witnesses* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1888; rpt Freeport, Pa.: Fountain Press, 1955), 69-71.

⁴⁷Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 4.

⁴⁸However, Susie Stanley argues that Willard perceived the Woman's Crusade against alcohol as a modern Pentecost with such language permeating the W.C.T.U.'s rhetoric. Stanley, "Empowered Foremothers: Wesleyan/Holiness Women Speak to Today's Christian Feminists," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 105, 108-109.

⁴⁹Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 4-5. Willard was invited to serve as president of the newly founded Evanston College for Ladies. In 1871 she became the first woman college president in America to confer degrees.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 8, quoting Frances Willard, *Glimpses of Fifty Years: the Autobiography of an American Woman* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publication Association, H. J. Smith, 1889), 360; letter to Mrs. D. L. Moody, 5 September 1877.

⁵¹Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 10, quoting the NWCTU, Minutes (1880) and Willard, *Glimpses of Fifty Years: the Autobiography of an American Woman*, 370.

⁵²Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 10.

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴W.C.T.U. minutes, 1874, 27.

⁵⁵W.C.T.U. minutes 1877, 143.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness*, 11.

Wesley and Asbury as Evangelists

Scott J. Jones

What I am proposing in this paper has the character of an hypothesis about how best to interpret the history of Methodism. I freely admit that I do not have the detailed evidence to support this reading of Methodism's history. Over the next several years I hope to test the hypothesis by examining the relevant sources and looking at similar interpretive frameworks for either confirmation or rejection of this basic idea. The basic insight which I want to test is that Methodism both in eighteenth century England and in the early national period in America formed one way in which Christianity adapted to modernity by embracing a particular form of individualism, community by free association, and a free-market style of competitive denominationalism.

Russell Richey's seminal work, *Early American Methodism* "agonizes" over the issues of continuity and change from Methodism's English beginnings to the church it became in the new republic.¹ He resists the notion that the most important change was at the 1784 Christmas Conference. He says, "While the significance of that foundational, organizational event is acknowledged, the volume argues strenuously for important continuities between the first and subsequent decades of Methodist experience."² He then argues for many significant changes which occurred in the early decades of the nineteenth century which contributed to the direction of the church during that period.

Richey's work, along with that of Nathan Hatch, John Wigger, Gregory Schneider, Dee Andrews, Christine Heyrman and other scholars of the period have greatly enriched our understanding of early Methodism. What I am about to say in this essay is not intended to contradict their conclusions. Indeed, I am deeply indebted to their new evidence and interpretative perspectives. Instead, I propose to ask about continuity and change somewhat more broadly than did Richey, by focusing on similarities and difference in the evangelistic practice of Wesley and Asbury. By focusing on evangelistic practice, I am deliberately using a contemporary debate about the definition of "evangelism" to highlight implicit tensions in the practices of both of these early Methodist leaders.

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I hope the contribution of this paper is to show one aspect of continuity and one of change that are often underemphasized.

The key area of continuity is that both Wesley and Asbury understood their mission to be the same. They shared an understanding of the gospel that each summarized as "scriptural holiness" and they used the Methodist forms developed between 1738 and 1750 to accomplish that mission.

The key area of change is the context in which Asbury pursued this mission. Nathan Hatch has pointed to this in his *Democratization of American Christianity*. He said, "The democratic orientation of American Christianity, audience centered, intellectually open to all, organizationally fragmented, and popularly led, meant that the church prospered in this vast expanse of land, even as loud and competing preachers stormed America's once-hallowed sanctuary. With exuberance and novelty, in word and song, they reshaped Christianity's solemn message in idioms that people cherished as their own."³ Hatch's "sovereign audience" is an important indicator of the change in context.

The change can be seen in two corresponding versions of how Methodism's mission was viewed. In the large minutes of British Methodism, the mission was stated, "Q. 3. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists? A. Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."⁴ In the 1785 Discipline, it says, "To reform the Continent, and to spread scriptural Holiness over these Lands."⁵

The use of "scriptural holiness" in both versions underscores the continuity of mission between the English Methodists and the newly formed American Methodist Episcopal Church. The use of "continent" rather than "nation" may indicate that the Americans saw their mission as including Canada and not just the new country.

However, the crucial difference is that they made no reference to the Church. In part, this is due to the formation of episcopal Methodism as a separate church. But it also underscores the fact that there was no nationally established church in need of reform. Some states had established churches, but the practice of religious freedom even prior to the passage of the Bill of Rights had allowed for varieties of religious expression. For example, when John Adams moved from Massachusetts to Philadelphia as a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1774, he had many religious options. His biographer, David McCullough writes, "With numerous denominations to choose from (everything except Congregational), he tried nearly all—the Anglican Christ Church, the meetinghouses of the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, the German Moravians—and passed judgment on them all,

both their music and the comparative quality of their preaching."⁶ While different denominations had differing relationships with the colonial governments and different levels of strength in different regions of the country, the way in which the colonies were settled and governed led to a denominational pattern of religion which was then sealed by the Bill of Rights. The implications for this change on the future of Methodism were enormous. These will be explored when considering Asbury as evangelist.

Two aspects of the contemporary scholarship about evangelism will provide help in shaping the interpretive framework for the study of early Methodism. The first is to consider the question, "what is evangelism." A great deal of theological debate has helped to shape a deeper understanding of how best to conceive of this ministry of the church. Two options capture the crucial difference dividing the various definitions. According to the first, evangelism should be construed as a ministry that aims at helping persons progress through the whole of the Christian life. Thus, everything that the church does is a ministry of the gospel, the *euangelion*, and thus is evangelism. A second alternative suggests that it is more useful to use the term only for those ministries which seek to help persons who are not Christians enter into the Christian life. While a variety of such definitions have been offered by scholars in the field of evangelism, I have argued for the usefulness of the following definition: "Evangelism is that set of loving, intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating persons into Christian discipleship in response to the reign of God."⁷

Clearly this understanding of evangelism presumes that the persons being evangelized are not Christian disciples, and that the ministries undertaken by the church have the goal of helping them be transformed into Christian disciples. Such a definition thus presupposes an understanding of who is and who is not a Christian. Once again, a variety of definitions abound, but two groups might be helpful.

On the one hand are definitions based on group identity, often backed up by doctrines emphasizing the efficacy of the sacraments. If we label this a Christendom model, one presumes that one is born a Christian because one's family is Christian and one has participated in the necessary rites—usually baptism as an infant—that incorporate one into the Church and make one a Christian. On this understanding, the vast majority of the non-Jewish residents of England in the year 1500 were Christians. By birth into a Christian family and by the sacrament of baptism, they were made Christian disciples. To have suggested to such a person that they were anything other than Christian would have been nonsensical. One of the most significant changes associated with the

rise of modernity and individualism is the breakdown of this understanding. Nevertheless, there are still cultural groups in the world where this mind set still prevails. In 1994 I was part of a delegation visiting with the sacristan of the Armenian patriarchate in Jerusalem. One of the leaders of my Methodist group asked "How many of your people are Christian?" He responded with a puzzled look, as if we had just asked a very stupid question, "Why, all of them, of course." Someone then followed up by asking, "How many of them practice their faith?" He then understood the point and said, "About forty percent." For him, to be Armenian is to be Christian. In another context, I asked an Hispanic protestant pastor what would happen if he went up to a Mexican immigrant in Texas and said, "Are you a Christian?" He said that in response to such a question, the Mexican would say, "What do you think I am, a dog? Of course I'm a Christian. I'm a human being." Some Roman Catholic leaders have said to me that, in their view, the sacrament of baptism makes a person a Christian regardless of anything else that happens or anything that they choose during the rest of their lives.

A second range of answers to who is a Christian rests on an understanding of individual decision and commitment to follow a path of discipleship. Thus, those persons are Christians who faithfully accept God's offer of salvation and respond by participating in the life of the church, by affirming certain beliefs, by seeking to live a moral life, by sharing their faith with others, by having a conversion experience, by being baptized, by serving the poor, and by participating in the spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, Bible study, worship and eucharist. Thus, one can suggest that persons who follow in the pathway of discipleship are Christians, and those who completely ignore such practices are not Christians.

The second aspect of the discussion of evangelism that is helpful here is the question of enculturating the gospel. The missiological work of the last two centuries has examined in some detail the necessity of finding culturally appropriate forms in which the gospel can be shared with new persons. As missionary efforts from Europe and America expanded during the nineteenth century, it eventually became clear that too often conversion to Christianity was linked to Western cultural practices such as dress, language, and music. During the twentieth century, missiologists and scholars in evangelism have become convinced that the gospel must be enculturated. This means that while there is only one Christian gospel, it should take on many different forms and expressions. Indigenous theologies, worship styles, musical expressions and other forms of Christian life have developed as indigenous leaders

have taken control of Christian churches in Asia, South America and Africa.

This drive to enculturation of the gospel has two motivations. First, Christianity has believed in incarnation because of its founding events. The New Testament teaches that God took on human form, became flesh, and thus that God chose to express God's self within the limitations of a Jewish man from first-century Palestine. This incarnational motif is central to the Christian message. Within a few decades the Christian community extended the logic of incarnation to allow the inclusion of the Gentiles without requiring of them onerous cultural changes. Thus, Gentiles could join the community without circumcision or observing the dietary laws of first-century Judaism. This drive to incarnate the gospel in new cultures has led to the missionary expansion of Christianity and its adopting a variety of forms. David Bosch, using Hans Küng's description of six paradigms in Christian history, has argued that our understanding of ecclesiology and missiology has undergone significant transformation in each successive enculturation.

The second motivation for enculturating the gospel is love for people. John 3:16 may summarize this motivation best: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."⁸ As a motivation for evangelism, a concern for lost persons and their salvation ranks high on the list. Loving persons, however, means understanding them and adapting to their circumstances in order to reach them for the Gospel. This means that some changes in how the gospel is expressed must be made if new groups of persons are to be evangelized.

This motivation of loving persons and adapting to their cultural circumstances in order to evangelize them is one of the sources for Nathan Hatch's articulation of the sovereign audience. If one's mission is to spread scriptural holiness, then one must do so by enculturating the gospel among a particular people in a particular time and place. How one evaluates the success of such an enculturation is always a controversial and difficult business. Because Christianity has never appeared in a pure form but has always been expressed in one cultural form or another, there is the temptation to presume that a particular cultural form is normative for all others. Such rigidity has often prevented Christianity's spread where it might have gone farther. At the same time, others argue that a too-ready willingness to compromise with new cultures has compromised the gospel and diluted its witness unnecessarily. Leaders of Christian churches and missionaries in the field have always been faced with difficult decisions about what is essential to

the gospel and what must not be compromised in order to protect its integrity.

From this perspective, can we offer any insights into what exactly Wesley was doing evangelistically in eighteenth-century England? Wesley's efforts should best be understood as seeking the salvation of nominal Christians. By the phrase "scriptural holiness" he understands the way of salvation that lies at the heart of the Bible's teaching.⁹ In his spiritual and theological crisis of 1738-39 he came to understand that he was a Christian in name only. To be a real Christian required saving faith and the spiritual journey through the steps of repentance, justification and sanctification which the Bible taught when considered as a whole. This system of salvation constituted the general tenor of Scripture as well as the heart of Christian doctrine. Wesley's chief concern was how to save his own soul and those of persons who heard him. The crucial judgment that he was making was that nominal Christianity, based in the sacrament of baptism, occasional worship, and identification with the Church, was no Christianity. His sermons before the University of Oxford between 1738 and 1744 made it clear that scriptural Christianity was something different from the version normally practiced at the University. His surveys of the state of religion in the world hardly gave England and Europe a better status than heathen Africa or the Islamic countries.

During the next ten years, Wesley employed seven key methods of achieving this goal. These are societies, itinerancy, class meetings, conference, publication, field preaching, and lay preachers. In a series of lectures I would treat these chronologically, showing the ways in which borrowed the ideas others or stumbled upon the method and found it useful for his purposes. For example, his father's association with various religious societies, his experiences with various groups at Oxford and in Georgia, and his association with the Moravians in the Fetter Lane Society made the formation of societies a natural method. More serendipitously, the development of the class meeting, first to raise money to pay for the New Room and then later to "watch over one another in love," fit his purposes as well. Five of his seven methods—societies, itinerancy, class meetings, conference, and publication—were activities which came easily to Wesley as the revival progressed. They were not difficult for him to embrace.

Two of his key methods, however, were quite difficult for him to adopt. Field preaching was something which did not come naturally. George Whitefield preached in the open air in Bristol when he was denied the use of a pulpit there. He asked Wesley to come and take his place because Whitefield was leaving for America. On March 31, 1739 Wesley arrived in Bristol and watched

Whitefield. He says, "I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this *strange way* of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday, having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls *almost a sin* if it had not been done *in a church*."¹⁰ Wesley's Journal entry underscores the reluctance that he felt in adopting this new method. Yet, by the end of his ministry he was so committed to field preaching that he told Methodists to continue the practice, even when they had chapels in which they normally worshipped. Wesley was driven by his mission to reach the population where he would be received and where he could accomplish his goal. The problem in adopting this method was its violation of the normal practice of the Church of England. It was at root a problem in ecclesiology.

Wesley's second issue has to do with the use of lay preachers. John Cennick was one of the earliest lay persons to begin preaching. Heitzenrater notes that he cast lots to find out God's will in the matter and spoke with boldness to the people under a sycamore tree.¹¹ Thomas Maxfield forced the issue when he began preaching at the Foundery in Wesley's absence. Wesley was opposed to this, and Susanna is reported to have said to him, "Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach, as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself." Henry Moore reports that Wesley "bowed before the force of truth, and could only say, 'It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.'"¹² Once again, what bothered Wesley was the irregularity of the method. It violated the order of the Church of England, and resonated with the kind of anti-ecclesiastical practices associated with the English Civil War and the enthusiasm of the Interregnum.

For both field preaching and lay preaching, what convinced Wesley was the fruitfulness of the activity. Field preaching gathered large crowds of potential converts, and lay preaching multiplied the laborers in the fields. As Wesley's opportunities for preaching multiplied, he clearly needed assistants. At first these lay men covered his home bases of Bristol and London while he traveled. Later, they would become itinerants, traveling around the country as did their leader.

The root problem inhibiting Wesley's revival was his attachment to the Church of England. This became apparent in the 1750's as the question of separating from the church heated up. Wesley, partly out of his personal conviction but also with pressure from Charles, vowed never to separate from the church unless he was prohibited from forming societies and preaching out of doors. Barring such a prohibition, he would remain in the church. Indeed,

he took pains to prevent Methodist preaching from competing with services in local parishes and even suggested that where Methodist societies were formed, attendance at the local parish usually increased.

Given Wesley's doctrine of scriptural holiness and his various methods of transforming persons' lives to experience salvation in this way, was Wesley an evangelist? Part of what is going on with eighteenth-century Methodism is Wesley's analysis that the persons who live in England are, generally speaking, not Christians. If the definition of evangelism rests upon loving, intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating persons into Christian discipleship, Wesley was clearly an evangelist because he regarded the vast majority of baptized, nominally Christian inhabitants of England to be non-Christians.

At the same time, he regarded the Church of England as the "most scriptural national Church in the world." Yet this Church in all of its practices presumed that England was a Christian country whose inhabitants were Christians. The presence of Jews had long been an anomaly to this understanding. More recently, the formation of dissenting churches and the Act of Toleration had introduced a very new element into the society. However, the Church of England remained established, and its social and political connections gave great force to the theological image of a single nation with a single church united in common prayer through a common liturgy with a single hierarchy of which the king was both political sovereign and religious governor of the Church. Richard Hooker's metaphor of church and state being two sides of the same coin may have been challenged by John Locke's views on toleration, but the ecclesial reality in eighteenth-century England bore a greater resemblance to the 16th century than to the 21st century.

In looking at Asbury's situation in America, Richey is right in raising the questions of continuity and change.

My hypothesis is that the greatest continuity in Methodism is the continuity in mission. Asbury and the American Methodists continued to see their task as spreading scriptural holiness. They kept the same doctrine as Wesley, whatever one thinks they meant by the restrictive rules of the 1808 General Conference and whatever was their relationship to Wesley's sermons and notes as doctrinal standards. While the formal question is perhaps beyond our certainty, the substantive point is clear—American Methodism was in substantial agreement with Wesley's doctrine.

Furthermore, many of Wesley's methods were replicated in the new world. Field preaching, class meetings, itinerancy, conference, and publication all were continued. They underwent further development. Societies became congregations, field

preaching became camp meetings, itinerancy followed the frontier, conferences were multiplied and then became general and were finally delegated, and the range of publications extended to newspapers as well as books and tracts.

Richey argues that 1784 has been overemphasized as the point of change. In many ways he is right. Many of the changes began before that year, and many of the similarities continued long after that point. Given the variety of specific practices which he examines, the Christmas Conference is not the cataclysmic transition that many have supposed.

Nevertheless, I am proposing that the most important change in Methodism does in fact happen at the Christmas Conference. Methodism's relationship to the Church of England in the colonies had been complex, and the tensions were already evident by the time of the 1779 Fluvanna Conference and the abortive self-ordinations there. However, the real change of the Christmas Conference was to decisively set Methodism free from any entanglement with the Church of England and its successor Protestant Episcopal Church. The mission no longer said that part of Methodism's purpose was to "reform . . . particularly the Church." Their goal was to be the church.

Moreover the emerging pattern of religion in the new nation offered Methodism the opportunity to be a particular kind of church. While some denominations remained established in particular colonies well into the 19th century, the practice of religious freedom gave Methodism, along with the Baptists, black denominations, Church of Christ, Mormons and other groups the opportunity to compete. The shape of the religious landscape had just changed.

Specifically, the American churches had to combine the denominational form, invented during the 16th century European reformation, and combine it with the justification for denominationalism invented at the Westminster Assembly in the 17th century, and place that in a context where a predominantly Christian country would have no established church while that political unit was rapidly expanding geographically and numerically. Never before in Christian history had such a situation occurred. Christendom was dead. An unparalleled missionary opportunity that did not involve crossing political boundaries was being offered.

The resulting opportunity was exploited by these five groups to the detriment of Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Congregationalists who were used to more stable situations and the establishment of religion. They were not prepared to cope with rapid geographic expansion nor were they ready for genuinely open competition between denominations.

I believe Nathan Hatch has offered the most important component of this new situation with his phrase "the sovereign audience." He makes the argument through his *Democratization of American Christianity* that the balance of power has now shifted from religious elites to the shapers of popular culture. Churches that are going to be successful in this new situation are those that can interact with popular culture to maximize their numerical strength and thereby shape the expression of Christianity. Hatch points to vernacular preaching, the use of inexpensive print media, and gospel music in the context of the camp meeting as ways in which these groups captured the religious life of the American people during the Second Great Awakening. Other denominations began to adapt. The struggle within the Presbyterian Church over Finney's New Methods was precisely the struggle about how to adjust to this new situation.

Methodism's approach was greatly suited to this new context. Its itinerancy, its leadership development, its interest in publication and commitment to hymnody, and its doctrine stressing experience, conversion and small groups for discipleship were all uniquely suited to make the most of this opportunity. My larger thesis will argue that America in 1800 is the most modern nation in the world. By "modern" I mean that it is characterized by the following: distrust of tradition, focus on individual more than the group, pluralism of religious expression within a nation, personal value earned by merit and function rather than birth, epistemological empiricism, technological advances made possible by scientific discoveries, and immigration patterns characterized by individuals and families rather than tribes. Democratic political theory and capitalist economic theory, both expressions of individual liberty, are the guiding principles of this new way of life. Please understand that by "modern" I do not mean to place a positive value judgment on all of its aspects. Rather, this is an attempt to describe a set of cultural patterns that have largely characterized the United States, and increasingly of Western Europe as well. The cultural revolution that some call post-modernism may be a reaction against these trends and the formation of a new culture. I suspect it is actually better described as hyper-modernism, a further increase in the sovereignty of the individual and the loss of group influence.

Two points of continuity with Wesley make American Methodism's adaptation to modernity possible. First was Wesley's conviction that people do not become Christian by birth into a Christian nation or by the sacrament of baptism as infants. Wesley's conviction that England was a non-Christian nation that needed the gospel was much more true of a nation where there was no established church. I am not speaking here about statistics of church

attendance. I am arguing that the conception of Christendom, if ever present in some of the colonies (one might argue for 17th century Massachusetts, for example) was not present in the national period. No one would say to Asbury "But we are all Christians already, there is no need of your preaching here" in the way that this was said to Wesley. Wesley had already made the shift to a modern understanding of Christian identity being shaped by individual faith and practice rather than group identity. Asbury simply applied that to a singularly ripe situation.

The other point has to do with the clarity both men had about their mission. They were in the business of saving souls, understood as spreading scriptural holiness. Asbury's purpose in going to America was clearly stated in his Journal for September 12, 1771:

I will set down a few things that lie on my mind. Whether am I going? To the New World. What do to? to gain honour? No, if I know my own heart. To get money? No: I am going to live to God, and to bring others so to do. In America there has been a work of God: some moving first amongst the Friends, but in time it declined. Likewise by the Presbyterians, but amongst them also it declined. The people God owns in England, are the Methodists. The doctrines they preach, and the discipline they enforce, are, I believe, the purest of any people now in the world. The Lord has greatly blessed these doctrines and this discipline in the three kingdoms: they must therefore be pleasing to him. If God does not acknowledge me in America, I will soon return to England. I know my views are upright now; may they never be otherwise.¹³

Near the end of Asbury's life, I believe one can argue that his resolution of 1771 was kept. His valedictory to McKendree, given at the Genessee Annual Conference in August of 1813 summarizes his concerns. His concerns with Methodist polity are always functions of his conviction that the mission comes first, and the Methodist way of being church was the best way of accomplishing the mission. He says,

You know, my brother, that the present ministerial cant is that we cannot now, as in former apostolical days, have such doctrines, such discipline, such convictions, such conversions, such witnesses of

sanctification, and such holy men. But I say that we can; I say we must; yea, I say we have. And can men claim the rights and privileges of apostles if they are imposters and not true ministers of the holy sanctuary? Instead of going to preach, they stay to preach. Hence it is that schools, colleges, and universities undertake to make men ministers that the Lord Jesus Christ never commanded to be made. The present Episcopal Churches are greatly independent of each other. All the numerous orders of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists are also local. If we wish to see pure and unadulterated Church history, let us go to the Acts of the Apostles and mark the characters of those ministers in the time of persecution—such as Paul, Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, Archippus, Trophimus, Artemas, Luke, Epaphroditus, etc.—men who did honor to themselves as ministers of Christ. But there are too many the opposite of these, whom we can view in no other light, at present, than as men going into the ministry by their learning, sent by their parents or moved by pride, the love of ease, money or honor. Are not such moved by Satan more than by the Holy Ghost to assume the sacred office of the holy ministry?

. . . . You will say if our Church were as pure as the primitive Church, will it not, may it not, like other modern, decline? I answer, We live in a purer age and in a free country. If discipline be maintained, men that carry sand instead of salt for the sheep will be constrained soon to leave us, to join some more honorable, but perhaps fallen, Church where they can have more ease and greater emoluments. We have lived to see the end of such persons who left us and set up for themselves—witness Hammett and O'Kelly.¹⁴

I suggest that the most helpful interpretive framework for understanding early American Methodism is to focus on a deep understanding of their sense of mission and a rigorous evaluation of their new context in which that missionary effort was undertaken.

What explanatory power does this analysis have for enriching our understanding of early American Methodism? I suggest that more emphasis needs to be placed on the intention and sense of mission that drove Asbury, and the changing context that

shaped how his mission was carried out. The most important factor in the new context was the denominational pattern of Christianity that introduced a new relationship between the people being evangelized and the leaders of the churches. Two examples might indicate how this view would re-shape one's understanding of Methodism's early history.

Such a perspective would make a difference, for example, in how Methodism's relationship to slavery is analyzed. On the one hand, the great moral evil of slavery was recognized by John Wesley and many early Methodists had a strong witness against it. Freeborn Garrettson understood that becoming a Christian among the Methodists required manumitting his slaves. The famous line in the General Rules required slaveholders to set their slaves free, and John Wigger has pointed out evidence from many Quarterly Conferences where this rule was enforced.¹⁵

So why then did the Church relax its teaching? The answer lies in a clear mission compromised by a sovereign audience. In order to save souls, they could not attack slavery in the south. Churches that sought to insist on their own standards in this matter could never get a hearing in those states where slavery was increasingly the basis for the economy. The mission of saving souls applied in part to the white slaveholders. They needed to hear the gospel and experience salvation. Even from the perspective of battling slavery, the evangelistic efforts among southern slaveholding whites would have made the condition of slaves better where the Methodists preached the gospel.

More importantly, the evangelistic ministry in the South was understood to be saving the eternal souls of the slaves themselves. As Asbury saw the matter, to insist on battling the institution of slavery would have doomed thousands of blacks to hell because they would not have heard the message and responded with faith and the spiritual disciplines taught by the Methodists.

The second issue is why did Methodism begin to decline? Dee Andrews helps us to see that what is going on here is a choice of which audience is going to be sovereign. She says, provocatively, "Nineteenth-century Methodism's momentum toward gentility may in many respects be seen as an effort not to draw rich men into the church but to keep them there."¹⁶ She continues,

The more "American" many Methodists became after 1800, finally, the more they clung to the conservative prerogatives of American life: the power of men within the ministry, the privatization of the household, the respectability of the rising middle class, and the protected position of slaveholders

within the church. Herein lay the greatest of Methodist challenges: how to remain true to the radical vision of John Wesley's Primitive Christianity while wielding the influence suitable to an institution of its size and public authority.¹⁷

In many ways this history of nineteenth century Methodism is how the leadership of the church juggled the issues which Andrews has identified with mixed levels of success. On the whole, however, by the 1920's the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, opted for middle-class respectability with all of the liturgical, educational and doctrinal adjustments necessary to reaching that group. The radical, counter-cultural days described by Andrews, Hatch, Wigger and Heyrman are gone. Methodism reaches its peak of market share and the long decline of influence begins.

Asbury's attempt to deal with the issues of slavery and class was a matter of riding in a cart pulled by several galloping horses, where each horse has its own mind and yet is somewhat responsive to the reins. In 1816 one of the horses broke off, and in 1824 and 1830 so did others. In 1844 the two lead horses decided to part company, and the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church split as well. In part this was a division over how best to characterize the mission of the church, but in every case they were missionary differences shaped by the question of which audience was going to be sovereign.

NOTES

¹Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), xi.

²Ibid.

³Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 209.

⁴John Wesley, "Large Minutes," in Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley, A.M.* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; reprinted by Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1858-59), 8:299.

⁵*Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., The Rev. Francis Asbury and others... Composing a Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers and other Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (Philadelphia: Charles Cist., 1785), 4.

⁶David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 83.

⁷Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor: A Theology of Witness and Discipleship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

⁸John 3:16, NRSV.

⁹For a discussion of Wesley's use of the analogy of faith, see Scott J. Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995).

¹⁰John Wesley, *Journal*, March 31, 1739, in Frank Baker, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 19 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 46.

¹¹Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 114.

¹²*Ibid.*, 115.

¹³Francis Asbury, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts, and Jacob S. Payton, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1958), 1:4-5.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 3:476, 479.

¹⁵John Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford, 1998).

¹⁶Dee E. Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000), 242.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 243.

On Teaching Evangelistic Preaching: A Bibliographic Essay

Stephen W. Rankin

To paraphrase an old adage, of the writing of books on preaching there seems to be no end. The writing of books on evangelistic preaching, however, is another matter. What does an evangelism professor do if she or he is looking for a way to help students consider the role of preaching in evangelism? This essay offers a sampling of books that may help to answer this question. All are of readable length and of sufficient utility. All are worthy of serious consideration for a class. As one might imagine, each has notable qualities that give a professor, seeking resources, a few options.

The first book combines cultural analysis with biblical exegesis and sermon organization. Robert G. Duffett's, *A Relevant Word: Communicating the Gospel to Seekers*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), considers how American culture has changed since World War II and comments on how best to preach to seekers embedded in this culture. The first three chapters provide the cultural analysis, quoting frequently from the works of Peter Berger. To make the analysis concrete, Duffett describes a fictitious though recognizable family (the "Betz" family). It is a familiar story, with the parents representing the "I Love Lucy" generation. Retired, they have lived in the same home in the suburbs their entire marriage; the husband has worked the same job and the wife has been a "stay-at-home mom" rearing their three children. They attend the same denominational ("ancestral" or "immigrant" as Duffett puts it) church of their ancestors. Their adult children, on the other hand, typify the rootlessness and alienation of postmodern culture. The parents are pained and confused by their children's lifestyles. They do not understand the multiple job and geography changes. Divorce has rent the family fabric. The children all dropped out of church, but are attempting to find their way back.

The Betz family offers the paradigm preachers need to keep in mind as they prepare sermons, says Duffett. How does one preach the gospel to them? He devotes one chapter to what might be considered a refresher course in biblical interpretation. His narrative

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convictions are demonstrated by the ready attention he pays to genre. He then moves to the main feature of his exegetical method, called "crisscross interpretation:" "What is important in crisscross interpretation is focus and movement. The focus is always on contemporary concerns. The starting point may be either then or now, but at some point the two must 'crisscross,'" (pp. 55-56). This is a helpful reminder for a preacher (at least one who enjoys exegesis) who can get trapped explaining her or his discoveries and fail to get to the contemporary situation, thus never preaching the *relevant* word. Duffett emphasizes this "back-and-forth" between text and our context in order for the preacher constantly to look for ways to connect with seeker-hearers.

Duffett then turns to explicit homiletical advice. The preacher should pinpoint a theme (one to two words) and a message statement (six to eight words) to focus the message.¹ Duffett expounds on what he calls the "move pattern," to how the content of the sermon body is sequenced. Here the preacher is encouraged to vary the approach (see pp. 107-111).² The move pattern as Duffett describes it keeps the preacher working at bridging the gap between the scriptural word and today's hearers.

The author scatters lists of points to remember and practices to avoid throughout this section of the book. For example, one can find one for organizing the sermon (p. 99) and one for what to avoid (p. 125). In this section Duffett goes against conventional wisdom in arguing for the judicious use of the preacher's own personal life, first to help the preacher develop the sermon's emotional tone (i.e. the "emotional memory" so important if one is to connect with seekers—see p. 119), then to help illustrate its points. The preacher risks being more self-revealing in order to connect—to bridge the gap—with largely secularized hearers. The goal of a relevant word is constantly kept in mind.

From Duffett's relevant word we move to William Willimon's intrusive word (*The Intrusive Word: Preaching to the Unbaptized*, [Eerdmans, 1994]). Here one finds vintage Willimon. The book is in effect a collection of essays that reflect theologically on evangelistic preaching. No explicit practical advice emerges here, no overt "how to," but clearly Willimon wants the preacher to avoid certain things. To reinforce those points, he includes a sample sermon at the end of each chapter. Like Duffett, his narrative approach is pronounced and persistent and, for a person interested in the structure and impact of sermon delivery, it is a pleasure to watch the master work.

To preach evangelistically, says Willimon, we need sound theology rather than acute social analysis.³ If we downplay the intrusiveness of the gospel in order to bridge cultural gaps, we

pander instead of preach. Theology based on the death and resurrection of Jesus is absolutely necessary: "If God did not triumph over Caesar and all the legions of death on Easter, then God will never triumph on Sunday in my church over *The Wall Street Journal* and Leo Buscaglia" (p. 25).

Willimon is doggedly critical of the church-growth oriented inductive approach that purports to cross the gap between today's culture and the gospel. (Given this fact, he likely would criticize certain of Duffett's assumptions about how to connect with one's hearers.) Willimon wants to go in precisely the opposite direction, arguing that evangelism actually happens *within* that gap: "I would like to plead for another way, a way that sees the prime evangelistic moment, not in resolution and solution, but in the gap, the gap between us and God, as well as the peculiar way in which God deals with that gap in Jesus Christ," (p. 61). He names the problem he wishes to correct: "We preachers often try to get too close to our listeners, to bridge the gap, to make it all sound easy. There is something to be said for making it sound too difficult," (p. 62).

Certainly, Willimon gives sage warning to people who uncritically employ the methods he derides. In fairness to those who would bridge the gap, however, one should note that the kind of gap to which Willimon refers is not the gap that Duffett seeks to bridge. In Duffett's work we have what might be called, for lack of a better term, a translation gap. It is the age-old missiological challenge of contextualizing the gospel so that it might be understood by the host culture (in this case postmodern western culture). Willimon's gap, on the other hand, seems to define the ontological—the chasm between God and humans—which fits the aim of his book. At the same time, such a distinction should not be overplayed precisely because, Willimon argues, we worldlings *do not* understand because we *will not* understand.

The sermons in *The Intrusive Word* illustrate an internal tension that Willimon feels about the nature of evangelistic preaching. All the sermons took place in Duke Chapel to the regular chapel crowd. Willimon knows this and reflects on the make-up of the congregation. Many of them are baptized Christians. Some are baptized, but unsure about what they believe or think. A few no doubt are from among that group of "seekers" that evangelistic preaching targets. But, what purpose do these sermons serve? To be sure, the gospel consistently appears, but again, for whom, and to what end? In this regard, Willimon tellingly ends with the statement, "I have not been able, in this book finally to decide whether or not we are most concerned with preaching to the baptized or with preaching to the unbaptized," (135). His comment begs an

important question: just what constitutes evangelistic preaching? And how does one teach such preaching?

One response comes from one close to Willimon's narrative convictions, but who seems more willing than Willimon to utilize inductive approaches. In this regard the author stands somewhere between Duffett and Willimon. We turn now to a pair of books from the same author, Craig Loscalzo,⁴ the first entitled *Evangelistic Preaching that Connects: Guidance in Shaping Fresh and Appealing Sermons*, (InterVarsity Press, 1995). Although Loscalzo criticizes (like Willimon) the market-driven approach of some "seeker-friendly" preaching, he also argues (like Duffett), "Hearers can react to the gospel only when they understand what they hear," (p. 24). Using Romans 10:14 ("How shall they hear without a preacher?") he introduces a foundation for evangelistic preaching that seeks to be both biblically and theologically sound and culturally sensitive, neither pandering to the felt needs of seekers nor refusing to communicate in language understandable to the world.

In so doing Loscalzo critically appropriates the *kerygma* - *didache* distinction made well known by C.H. Dodd.⁵ Loscalzo likes Dodd's general description, but extends Dodd's point to argue that evangelistic preaching involves more than proclaiming the death and resurrection of Jesus (*kerygma*). It includes introducing people to the attitudes and behaviors demonstrative of the reign of God (*didache*) and calling them to repent and to be formed (which takes time) by such teaching.

The remainder of the book is spent showing how the inductive method, shaping both exegesis and sermon structure, is superior to what used to pass for evangelistic preaching. Indeed, he goes to some length in one chapter ("It Sure Doesn't Look Like an Evangelistic Sermon") to explain how induction—though on the surface perhaps unrecognizable as evangelistic—more effectively reaches postmodern skeptics.⁶ He follows with chapters on preaching from the Old and New Testaments to show how the inductive approach actually works for evangelistic preaching. For the Old Testament, he takes texts from each of the traditional divisions both to demonstrate his approach and to remind preachers how pervasively the good news is found there. He does a parallel description of New Testament genres and offers sermon ideas. Given his inductive approach, he resembles Duffett's crisscross method, linking the core idea of a text with a common experience or condition of people in the world.

Loscalzo's more recent work, *Apologetic Preaching: Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World*, (Inter Varsity Press, 2000), takes 1 Peter 3:15 as its theme: "Sanctify Christ as Lord in

your hearts, always being ready to give a defense [*apologia*] for the hope that lies within you, yet with gentleness and reverence." The last phrase qualifies and guides his notion of apologetic preaching. Skeptics want an accounting from Christians, but they understandably resist the haranguing and brow-beating often associated with evangelistic preaching. This book tackles the apologetic task. Like his other book and Willimon's *Intrusive Word*, this volume contains sermons that illustrate each of his major themes.

After a brief summary of the postmodern world, Loscalzo considers—chapter by chapter—each of the major issues described in the introduction. Postmoderns are bombarded with information but hungry for mystery. Christians proclaim the mystery of the death and resurrection of the Son of God (chapter 2). Postmoderns are jaded and bereft of hope. Christians proclaim hope (chapter 3). Postmoderns are filled with doubt. Christians offer humble confidence (chapter 4). Postmoderns are convinced that all truth is relative. Christians proclaim absolute truth in a truth-starved world (chapter 5). The penultimate chapter focuses on Christology and the final chapter gives Loscalzo's practical suggestions for how to preach apologetically. In all cases he emphasizes the need for gentleness and reverence in dealing with skeptics and seekers.

One finds no probing analysis or original insight in this work, but a solid and straightforward commendation of the refreshed relevance of apologetic preaching. Again he stresses the importance of the inductive method. In the chapter on mystery, he makes use of the common practice of Christmas and Easter worshippers and suggests that these holidays are great days to speak directly to the un-churched. His sermon example (for Easter) begins with the statement, "I'm glad you're here," then turns to the common experience of hunger for mystery. When he deals with skepticism, he roots the present age's attitude in the upheavals of the sixties. A society numbed by repeated disappointments with institutions (including the church) needs hope. An example of a Pentecost sermon begins with the skepticism people feel when they see someone trying to "sell religion." Loscalzo the preacher candidly acknowledges the church's own sins, then describes the experience (Acts 2) of the disciples on that day. He concludes with, "Rather than salespeople trying to sell their religion, we see witnesses who draw a crowd by the content of their message," (60). This last move illustrates a major sub-theme in *Apologetic Preaching*. The evangelistic word must be coupled with the authentic, vulnerable witness of the Christian community (see pp. 76, ff. for example). The same sort of movement follows in the chapters dealing with confidence and truth. Each has a sermon or two to demonstrate Loscalzo's points.

In the chapter on Christology ("Proclaiming Jesus Christ to a Postmodern World"), Loscalzo reminds the reader of a simple yet critical point: if one wishes to preach to the skeptical, the jaded, the despairing, one needs to see Jesus (as much as one can) through the eyes of those on the other side of the pulpit. That vision should guide the sermon-making process. To help the preacher in this task, Loscalzo borrows a device from the theater: the "illusion of the first time" (pp. 105 ff.). Having memorized the script and rehearsed many times, actors know everything that is coming, but *act as if* they're seeing and hearing it for the first time. Loscalzo argues that apologetic preachers should do the same with Jesus. When we read the gospel descriptions, we would do well temporarily to bracket (as best we can) our previous study and experience with the texts and consciously attempt to experience the narratives as if coming to them fresh. Then, drawing on the reflections gained from this effort, we build apologetic sermons that more readily connect with the listeners.

The book closes with some questions worthy of consideration for anyone who preaches: "if un-churched people heard my sermons, would they be better informed about the truth claims of Christianity?" "Would seekers know what Christians believe?" "Would un-churched people understand why Christians believe what they believe?" "Would detractors of the faith have had their objections addressed?" "Did my preaching offer an accounting for the hope that is in me?" (124)

Thus in Loscalzo's work one finds accessible practical guidance from a thoughtful practitioner who earnestly seeks to reach people with the gospel.⁷ A reader seeking practical advice will be pleased. One seeking analysis of the contemporary context might be a little disappointed. One is tempted, for example, to quibble with some of Loscalzo's generalizations about postmodernism, likewise with Duffett's (from the first work mentioned in this essay). Somewhat like urban legends, descriptions of postmodernism pass from book to pulpit to church community. Driven by the need to be relevant, communicators of the gospel run the risk of stereotyping the very people we seek to reach.

This is not the case with the last of the works to be reviewed in this essay. Frank Honeycutt invited fourteen self-professed agnostics and atheists to listen to eight of his sermons, to which they would respond (in writing). They could offer any critique they wished; the more candid the better. He promised them that there would be no follow-up from him or anyone in his church, no bait-and-switch to manipulate them into joining. He also invited eight people who had recently returned to church (and had become members of his congregation) to hear another set of four sermons

and, in similar fashion, to offer their responses. We are the happy recipients of his findings in a book entitled, *Preaching to Skeptics and Seekers* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001). "Skeptics," as one might imagine, refer to the first group. "Seekers" refers to the recently-returned. The reader should note, therefore that Honeycutt uses the term 'seeker' differently than the conventional usage within evangelism and church growth circles.

In the introduction, Honeycutt states that he sees the sermon as "a bridge (like Duffett) between street and pew for many secular people, now drawn back to some sort of spirituality, but with a lack of clarity as to what that might mean," (16). A good reminder for preachers: if a secular person is trying to connect or reconnect with the Christian faith, her or his first step will most likely be to attend a worship service. If we truly want to reach these folk, we should know what they actually think. A very strong point of the book, then, is its concreteness and specificity when talking about postmodern skeptics and seekers, in contrast to the somewhat facile and abstract generalizations of books already mentioned.⁸ Honeycutt likes these skeptics and he lets them speak (anonymity protected) without sanding any rough edges on their input.

The book has two sections. Both parts follow the pattern of introductory reflection, then a sermon, then an encapsulation of critiques, followed in turn by Honeycutt's own responses to their comments. Among the significant things he discovers is that skeptics (not surprisingly) like the teachings of Jesus and admire Jesus the man (see, for example, p 48), but they did not care for the authority that Christians give to Jesus, which they linked with the authority that church members confer on preachers (p. 52). They did not understand (and gave a strongly negative reaction to) Honeycutt's descriptions of sin and grace offered in a Reformation Sunday sermon. He reports "an almost across the board resistance to the concept of unconditional grace," (61). Not only did these reactions prompt him to consider what preachers might do to avoid unnecessary confusion or offense, it also gave him pause to acknowledge the great and non-negotiable gospel truths that are stumbling blocks and foolishness to the world. In this one is reminded of Willimon's conviction that through the stumbling block and foolishness comes the gospel.

In the final chapter of this section ("Learning to Preach from a Pew of Agnostics"), he summarizes what he learned: (1) clarify confusion about the biblical narrative, (2) raise doubts about doubt (i.e. remind secular people how much they trust their own "doubts" about organized religion), (3) strive for pastoral vulnerability, (4) avoid pulpit preachments, (5) deal head-on with the reality of suffering, and (6) find common (experiential) ground.

In the second part of the book Honeycutt turns toward the seekers, those recently returned to a conscious faith in Christ and to church membership. His method differed significantly from that used with the first group in one respect: he included these hearers in a weekly lectionary study, making the construction of his sermon a team effort. Otherwise everything else about the task was the same. As one might expect from this group, the issues of departure and return surfaced (pp. 107-108), as Honeycutt listened to their stories and pondered their grappling with the scriptures. These themes arise clearly within the four sermons included in the work.⁹

From the interaction with seekers Honeycutt draws the following conclusions: (1) Clarify in-house theological jargon. (2) Provide imaginative room for the Holy Spirit (i.e. don't over explain, but allow time for hearers' imaginations to work, to draw inferences.) (3) Allow listeners to "finish" the sermon. Here Honeycutt talks of the "elliptical shape" of a sermon the "dot-dot-dot feel that is to be completed in the minds and hearts of the people," (p. 153). (He is quick to add that this idea does not imply that "anything goes" in the beliefs and practices of the Christian life.) (4) Make connections with God who "colors outside the lines," (p. 155). Although Honeycutt is no pluralist, he does suggest that we not put overly-strict limits on how God works in a person's life to woo that one toward God. Therefore preachers should not concern themselves unnecessarily with correcting wayward ideas among seekers. In other words, don't look anxiously anti-pluralist. In time misguided ideas will face challenge from the sustained presentation of the gospel. (5) Preach between font and table, between the watery death of baptism and feast of the crucified and resurrected Christ, (p. 157). Honeycutt's sacramental and narrative leanings show clearly here. He, like Willimon, emphasizes the radical nature of conversion and church membership. (6) Finally, trust the power of the church year. Don't hurry sermon ideas or force them. Let the church year (through the lections) bring up illustrations of the human condition. Conversion is a slow and lifelong process (pp. 159-160).

Laying the conclusions of our four authors (five books) side by side, we find a number of similarities: (1) obviously, all agree on the crucial importance of preaching evangelistically. As a sub-point, all likewise have been formed by a narrative approach to theology and preaching.¹⁰ (2) All emphasize real respect for secularists, skeptics and seekers and that this respect must not be feigned. They also say that the same respect demands that we speak the truth as well. (3) All acknowledge, in one form or other, that the best evangelistic preaching requires openness and vulnerability (not to be read as weakness or lack of conviction) on the part of the preacher.

This posture reflects a necessary counterbalance to the stereotypical imperiousness and authoritarianism of the hellfire-and-damnation evangelist. (4) Most importantly, while all readily accept the religiously pluralistic world we inhabit and (back to number 1) plead for gentleness and openness, they all call for an unabashed proclamation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the heart of the gospel. This great and mysterious central claim cannot and should not be avoided in the search for an effective means to communicate with people outside the faith.

For those who preach and who like reading and thinking about preaching, the sermons contained in these works are pure pleasure, but one should take care. The differences of opinion among the authors (the "gaps," if I may co-opt Willimon's notion for a moment) evoke basic and bracing questions. For starters, what, exactly, constitutes evangelistic preaching? What makes an evangelistic sermon qualitatively different from any Sunday homily in which, according to all we learned in preaching class, the good news should have central focus? This question is made more acute when we take to heart another fact that all our authors mention: many long-time pew sitters share questions, doubts, fears and unbelief with the self-professed skeptics.¹¹ What does knowing that do to preaching? If preachers who climb the pulpit every Sunday were to assume that every Sunday service calls for them to preach evangelistically, what would change in their preparation and delivery?

Three opposing answers come to mind. First, one might return to the *kerygma-didache* distinction of C.H. Dodd mentioned by Craig Loscalzo. It does have the advantage of clear definition which corresponds to a clear focus for the sermon. Taking this way suggests that a clear boundary exists between church and world. Church members (though certainly continuing to suffer periodic temptation or doubt) are those who have stepped on to the narrow way of discipleship in Christ, for whom sermons need to be doctrinal and practical. "Feed my sheep," Jesus says. That's the pastor's teaching role.

The clarity holds for evangelistic preaching as well. An evangelistic sermon clearly has in mind people not yet in the fold and it clearly focuses on announcing the good news in Jesus' death and resurrection. The *kind* of response anticipated from this sermon is clear: turn and receive God's grace given in Christ and be initiated into the reign of God.

But what about the way churches actually are today, filled with people ignorant of basic gospel claims, even among long-time church members? One might conclude, in view of this fact that, in the end, evangelistic preaching is really no different than any other

kind of preaching, given the characteristics of the postmodern world we inhabit. Such a conclusion suggests dropping the idea of an "evangelistic preaching" class or an "evangelistic preaching" segment in a regular preaching class. It also might help to explain the relatively few books that speak directly to evangelistic preaching. It furthermore suggests why the sermon examples in the books reviewed seemed to slip back and forth between so-called outsiders and insiders. Finally, this conclusion lengthens the list of books worthy of consideration, especially since no female or ethnic authors appear in the present review. Does not Barbara Brown Taylor, to take one well-known example, have something to say that sheds light on preaching evangelistically?

Of course, the answer is yes. But as soon as one starts down this broadening path, one remembers another adage: if a word can mean anything, it means nothing. If all preaching is evangelistic, then none is. As hard as it may be to define and recognize evangelistic preaching, it is equally as necessary to try. In this light Craig Loscalzo's *Apologetic Preaching* bears a second look, in tandem with Frank Honeycutt's. They both remind us that a line, a difference, a gap remains between the church and the world, between surrendered faith and proud alienation. We may disagree about how to describe that gap, but *that* some kind a gap exists brooks no dispute. Books like the ones reviewed in this essay¹² call us to focus once again on evangelistic preaching. Perhaps especially for those of us who teach in so-called mainline schools, this call is especially compelling.

NOTES

¹How often do harried pastors, working late into the week, skip this step?

²His list of suggestions include narrative, problem-centered, ideal/actual, teaching pattern, question/answer pattern, not this/but that pattern, ambiguity to clarity pattern.

³Willimon, of course, is quite aware of cultural trends, but he does not want our awareness of those trends to render the gospel powerless by distorting it into something manageable by postmoderns.

⁴One of the humorous (and stereotype-shattering) ironies discovered in reading the books for this article is how a United Methodist (Willimon) and a Southern Baptist (Loscalzo) can agree so closely on theological and methodological matters. Loscalzo often quotes Willimon approvingly.

⁵Loscalzo here refers to C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*.

⁶Loscalzo argues that the traditional evangelistic sermon is almost always deductive and that, since postmoderns don't share Christian assumptions,

it is rather futile to organize a sermon as if they did. See *Evangelistic Preaching*, pp. 55-73.

⁷According to the back cover of *Apologetic Preaching*, Loscalzo has left his professorship at the Southern Baptist seminary in Louisville and has returned to full-time pastoral ministry.

⁸He states, "I wanted honest feedback from those who intentionally rejected Christianity for very specific reasons," (p. 34). He lists and reflects on those specific reasons.

⁹One can infer a little bit of the theme and approach from the sermon titles: "Payback Time," (Gen. 50:15), "The Cosmic Choir," (Ps. 96:1), "Going Home to God," (Isa. 40:6a) and "Between Old and New," (1 Sam. 3:15).

¹⁰Given the similarity in method, it is interesting to note the denominational diversity: two Southern Baptists, one United Methodist and one Evangelical Lutheran.

¹¹A serious ecclesiological issue arises here regarding the nature of the church and church membership.

¹²Three other books deserve mention, though they fall outside the limits of this paper. Richard W. Chilson, C.S.P., has written a book entitled, *Evangelization Homily Hints: A Resources for Catholic Preachers*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2000). It follows the Catholic lectionary and gives sermon starters and ideas for encouraging church members to evangelize as a part of their daily lives. David W. Henderson's *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), provides what the titles suggests, a sustained description of how culture has changed and what communicators need to remember as they ply their craft. It is not a preaching book per se, but worth a look. Finally, David J. Lose has published a version of his doctoral dissertation in *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern Word*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). This is a systematic and technical analysis of the preaching task in light of communication theory, social analysis and philosophical and theological (narrative) reflection.

"Educated Fools"

Robert E. Coleman

After graduation from college, an opportunity came to pursue an interest in oil painting. For two weeks, I was permitted to join a class of aspiring art students. One day the teacher, trying to help me see an object critically, picked up an old skull lying on the shelf, and placing it on an open, dusty textbook, told me to paint what I saw. As I sat there looking intently at that replica of someone's life, resting on that emblem of human learning, it helped put my education in perspective. That is why that painting, though no work of art, across the years has hung on the wall of my office between academic degrees.

Students sometimes notice the painting, and ask its meaning. I tell them to read the first three chapters of Paul's First Letter to the church at Corinth, pondering especially verses 18 and 19 of chapter three, where it is written:

Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a 'fool' so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight

The apostle's exhortation to the sophisticated Corinthians seems to me strangely appropriate on this occasion. Paul is not depreciating the pursuit of knowledge, of course. In this admonition, the best educated Christian of his day, the most gifted theologian the church has ever known, simply makes the point that what God esteems wisdom stands in contradiction to the learning of this present age, so much so that true ministers of Christ invariably become *fools* in the eyes of the world. As he enlarges upon this position in the early chapters of the letter, several aspects of this difference of perspective are emphasized.

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I

For one thing, the Gospel of the cross appears foolish. It's alright to talk about Jesus's great ethical teachings, and even to exalt his exemplary life, but insistence upon the necessity of his vicarious death is more than the egocentric mind of this world can stand. It jerks off the mask of our self-righteousness, and shows how far we have sunk in degradation and shame. Yet God, in his infinite love, is seen willing to bear the wrath of his own law by taking upon himself the just due of us all.

This revelation comes as a jolt to those who expect to earn God's favor through human virtues. No wonder the moralistic Jews rejected it. As we read this morning the cross was a "stumbling block" to their religion of good works. And to the philosophic Greeks who worshiped the noble aspirations of humanity, it was held in no less contempt (1 Cor. 1:23). These worldings, in their lofty idealism, could not conceive of God becoming involved in the dirty affairs of his creation; even if he did, it would not be in humiliation and shame.

But to the broken and contrite who bow before the crucified Saviour in repentance and faith, the very thing that makes the cross distasteful to human wisdom makes it "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). Indeed, the blood-drenched hill of calvary becomes the eternal witness of God's saving grace.

The late Dr. Charles Berry once told of the inadequate Gospel he preached at the beginning of his ministry. Like many other young men with a liberal theological training, in his early years he minimized the atoning nature of Christ's works, and looked upon Christianity essentially as being a good person.

During his first pastorate in England, late one night while sitting in his study, he heard a knock. When he opened the door, there was a Lancashire girl standing, with a shawl over her head and clogs on her feet. "Are you a minister?" she asked. Getting a affirmative answer, she went on anxiously, "You must come with me quickly; I want you to get my mother in."

Imagining that it was a case of some drunken woman out on the streets, Berry said, "Why, you must go and get a policeman." "No," said the girl, "my mother is dying, and you must come with me to get her in—to heaven."

The young minister dressed, and followed her through lonely streets on a journey of a mile. Led into the woman's room, he knelt beside her, and began to describe the kindness of Jesus, explaining that he had come to show us how to live unselfishly.

Suddenly, the desperate woman cut him off. "Mister," she cried, "that's no use for the likes of me. I'm a sinner. I've lived my

life. Can't you tell of someone who can have *mercy* on me, and save my poor soul?"

"I stood there," said Dr. Berry, "in the presence of a dying woman, and I had nothing to tell her. In the midst of sin and death, I had no message. In order to bring something to that dying woman, I leaped back to my mother's knee, to my cradle faith, and told her the story of the cross, and the Christ who was able to save unto the uttermost."

Tears began running over the cheeks of the eager woman. "Now you are getting at it," she said. "Now you are helping me." And the famed preacher, concluding his story, said, "If you want to know, I got her in, and blessed be to God, I got in myself."

Isn't that beautiful! A penitent old woman and a contrite young preacher going into the Kingdom together through the cross. Though it will not meet the approval of the worldly wise, preach the blood—the all sufficient Gospel that God so loved us all that he gave his one and only son to bear our judgment that whoever believes on him shall not perish but have eternal life.

II

Recognize, however, that more than this message will be held in disdain by this age. Paul goes on to say that *its manner of presentation through common people is treated with the same contempt*. "Foolishness of preaching" is his way of expressing it (1 Cor. 1:21), a folly even more pronounced when the spokesman is not highly endowed with media gifts.

Have you noticed, what the apostle also observed, that not many wise according to worldly standards, not many in positions of power, not many born of noble parents, are called." Rather, he said, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; even what the world counts poor and insignificant, God has chosen to do his work" (1 Cor. 1:27, 28). Incredible! Obviously our Lord has not paid much attention to the world's expectations in calling his servants.

Look around you, and see what God has on his hands. Not the kind of crowd which one might expect to shake the gates of hell. Let's be honest. If the world had set the standards, how many of us would have passed the review committee for the ministry? For that matter, how many of the original disciples would have made it? Why, I expect if we could really get down to where we have come from, this assortment of people here today would make one think that God is no respecter of persons, and can use anyone for his purpose.

This is what Paul is saying to the church. You do not have to be a super-star to do the Lord's work. And, dare I say here in this distinguished assembly, a seminary degree is no assurance that we will get the job done either. In fact, most people that are out there around the world working for God today have never seen the inside of a theological school. Worldings would describe them much as they did the early apostles, "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts 4:13).

The natural person just cannot fathom the Spirit of God making ordinary people into ambassadors of heaven. Yet our effectiveness as church leaders will be directly related to the way we help every believer understand their priesthood, and equip them for the ministry which we share together. If it is ever imagined that the ministry excludes anyone who comes to Christ, however unpromising the person may appear to be, you can be certain that the notion does not reflect the wisdom that comes from above.

Paul does not say that all of the learned and influential miss God's calling; he only notes that "not many" respond (1 Cor. 1:26). Clearly some of the most astute and erudite people in society are found within the ranks of the church, being wonderfully used by God. Still in all honesty, why are there so few.

The answer comes quickly: "That no flesh should glory" in the presence of God (1 Cor. 1:29). Since the redeemed have no boast except in Christ, who "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification," he alone should be glorified (1 Cor. 30, 31; cf. 3:21). Any good thing that does not ascribe its being to him becomes a detriment to the purpose for which it was given by God. Let us not think for one moment that because of our honored position in seminary we are immune to this danger.

III

But again, as noted in the Scripture, *what finally appears so foolish to the world is the dedication expected of those who bear the Gospel message*. It is when believers take *seriously* the lifestyle of the cross, denying ourselves in obedience to Christ, that the world brands us fools.

This challenge may not seem so remote anymore, in light of 9/11, and the dedication we have seen of the al Qaeda terrorists to their diabolical cause. Certainly, if the church is to meet their demonic commitment, we must be willing to follow our Lord with even more resolve—to out love, out live, and out die our adversaries. Jesus has sent us as his witnesses—martyrs—to bring the Gospel of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth, whatever the cost.

That's the mandate by which Paul ordered his life. Yes, he knew that he was a "spectacle" to the world (1 Cor. 4:9). Be that as it may, he wanted it clear that he was a fool for Christ's sake.

The stigma of following his Lord, thus, became a characterization which he accepted with dignity. Reproach, deprivation, rejection by the world only made him exclaim, "I delight in hardships, in difficulties, for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10; cf. 1 Cor. 4:11-13). What can you do with a person like that? At most, you can only kill him. But Paul already reckoned himself crucified with Christ; the grave had lost its sting. He said the life he now lived was not his own; he belonged to Jesus, and nothing could separate him from his love. Whether he lived, he lived unto the Lord; whether he died, he died unto the Lord; therefore, whether he lived or died, what difference did it make, he was the Lord's. That is the kind of dedication which has always confounded this world.

Many of us remember the account of those five missionaries who were killed some years ago while they were seeking to make contact with the Auca Indians in Ecuador. What most gripped me about the incident was an interview a reporter had with the widowed wives. "Why would God permit this to happen," he asked. "After all, were not the men on an errand of mercy?"

One of the wives, turning to the incredulous man, quietly replied: "Sir, God delivered my husband from the possibility of disobedience."

Such confidence in the face of death startles this postmodern, do-as-you-please age of self-indulgence. It's so unlike the accepted norm. Interestingly, one of the leading religious magazines in America, in an editorial on the martyrdom of those missionaries, commented that it was a "needless" blunder, inferring that better training and direction would have averted their untimely deaths. How like the thinking of this world! They missed the point completely. The call of Christ is not to comfort, but to sacrifice. Only in giving ourselves for his sake can we find that life which knows no fear, that life which flows with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Jim Elliot, one of the five missionaries, expressed it well while in college, when one day he wrote in his journal: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

Not long before he left on that fateful mission which ended in death, he had discussed with his wife the possibility of his not returning. "If God wants it that way, darling," he explained, "I am ready to die for the salvation of the Aucas."

But that is too reckless, too dangerous, one might say. Yes, it may be. Nevertheless, it is what made the apostolic Christians more than conquerors. Throwing caution to the wind, they lived like

those who considered themselves to be dead—dead to sin, dead to the world, but alive unto God. A peculiar breed indeed! Sainly stalwarts who laughed at limits, rather, did not see them, would not heed them if they did.

Would that this kind of foolish abandonment to Christ would characterize more my life—and, perhaps, also yours.

What we avow in dedication, of course, applies to our intellectual discipline. That is why there is no place in seminary for shoddy academic work. I believe all of us realize that the privilege of teaching and studying in this renowned center of learning brings with it an awesome responsibility to hold ourselves to the highest standards of excellence in scholarship.

But you will understand why I do not pray that we will go from this place to receive the world's recognition of wisdom. The church already has ample leaders who are smart; many who are brilliant; but, oh, how we need more fools—educated fools for Christ's sake.

Remember the Word of God: "Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a fool so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight."

Being and Obeying: Discipling Out of Who You Are and Whose You Are

Donna F.G. Hailson

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul.*

*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil for thou art with me.
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.
Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Author Evelyn Underhill once observed that most of us spend our lives “conjugating three verbs: to Want, to Have and to Do. Craving, clutching, and fussing on the material, political, social, emotional, intellectual – even on the religious plane, we are kept in perpetual unrest.”¹ And the scriptures are insistent that we will not find rest for our souls and we will be rudderless, directionless, until we look to and find rest in the Lord.

The first call to the evangelist then is *not* to want, to have or to do and certainly not to crave, to clutch, or to fuss. The first call to the evangelist is to *be*. We are called to *be* disciples of Christ.

Richard Foster once suggested that, “Perhaps the greatest malady in the Church today is converts to Christ who are not disciples of Christ.”² And this nondiscipleship, Dallas Willard noted, “costs abiding peace, a life penetrated through by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, and power to do what is right and to withstand the forces of evil. In short, it costs exactly that abundance of life Jesus said He came to bring.”³

To counter this sad state of affairs – this discipleless Christianity – the evangelist must commit himself or herself not only to the conveyance of the message of salvation but to the intentional being of that which it is we pray the Lord will reproduce in others through our ministries. We must *be* disciples in order to *make* disciples. We are calling people not only to be saved but to live

under the Lordship of Christ. We are calling people into a relationship, into a way of being.

Too much of our evangelism has almost seemed to revolve around “a bait and switch” message. We begin, as Alan Nelson has observed, by saying: “Let us meet your felt needs: more meaning, joy, and family bonding. But, after you’ve been here a while, we ask you to pursue self-denial, sacrificial giving, and serious commitment.”⁴ We’re so afraid of losing people or never “getting” people that we’re not always honest up front about the cost of discipleship. As Nelson has rightly noted, “The self-help society sees Christianity as a side dish, not the entrée.”⁵ Our consumer culture assumes God is into serving us, and the church exists to meet our wants. We speak about finding a church where we can be fed. We’ve commodified the church and, in so doing, we’ve commodified God.

We might want to ask ourselves whether we’ve been luring people into “virtual-Christian showrooms, providing misleading glimpses of what the real experience”⁶ of worship and the life of faith is all about.

Studies conducted by the Barna Research Group indicated that “a majority of people who made a first-time decision for Christ were no longer connected to a Christian church within eight weeks of having made such a decision.”⁷

There’s a disconnect somewhere and we have to ask ourselves where that disconnect is occurring.

Now I’m not suggesting that we stop trying to meet people’s felt needs; I’m saying we have to be careful not to leave people in feed-me mode. And I’m not saying that we load people down as they’re coming to faith by telling them they’ll have to live out in the desert, eat locusts and wear rough camel-hair clothing. But, in all fairness and in all faithfulness to the gospel, we need to present a full gospel: Salvation through Christ *and* a life under the Lordship of Christ. And we ourselves have to practice what we preach. Discipleship is costly. Nondiscipleship is even more costly.

In Luke 14:27, the words of the Lord are recorded: “Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” In the verses that follow, Jesus urges his hearers to count the cost of discipleship. In Luke 14:33, we read: “Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” Jesus does not want to be simply an addition to our lives.

C. S. Lewis reads it this way: “Christ says, ‘Give me all. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the

whole tree down. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked – the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours.”⁸

I don't know about you but I'm afraid I've yielded all too much to myself. I'm still trying to have it my own way. I still find myself trying to keep a toe in two worlds. But I feel the call to surrender all and I feel the Lord is calling me to count the cost of following him. He's also calling me to count the cost of not following him.

I relate to the Paul who wrote: “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do.” Still warring against my soul are sinful desires. And I want to be in experience what I already am in position – dead to sin and alive to God.

And because I also relate to the Paul who had confidence in the One who “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,” I also believe that God's power is made perfect in my weakness. And so I pray that there may indeed be less of me and more of Christ. But I need the Lord's help in yielding myself.

Paraphrasing C.S. Lewis, here I am hoping all the time that when all the demands have been met, my poor natural self will still have some chance, and some time to get on with its own life and do what it likes. I still have personal happiness as my great aim. I'm still centered on pleasure. But I do hear a voice calling me out, calling me to something far greater.

Perhaps you are as I am – standing on the verge of the Promised Land – counting the giants to be defeated and yet yearning for a taste of that milk and honey. I don't want to spend the next 40 years wandering in the desert. I want to enter the Promised Land. I want to see a revival like we've never seen. I want to see hoards of people come to Christ. I want to be a laborer in that harvest.

I really don't believe that I am the only Christian still trying to keep a toehold in two worlds. And we wonder why revival tarries. I believe it is time for all of us to count the cost: the cost of following Jesus, the cost of not following Jesus.

It is said that today we live in an experience-seeking culture, that we've moved from an industrial economy to an experience economy.

Everyday Americans pay people to provide us with experiences. We expect to be entertained, amused. We seek sensual experiences. We want to feel and to feel alive.

Even Christians have bought into this experience economy.

One example of this is found in Orlando, Florida where Mickey Mouse and the Terminator now have new neighbors: the recreated denizens of Bible-era Jerusalem.

The Holy Land Experience – a \$16 million, 15-acre “living Biblical museum” located between Walt Disney World and Universal Studios – opened with a first-week draw of nearly 20,000 visitors.

The theme park is described in a press kit as an educational and entertainment facility recreating the city of Jerusalem between the years 1450 BC and 66 AD.

Via replicated landscapes and architecture, dramatic reenactments, multi-media presentations and more, visitors are transported to a bustling first-century Jerusalem street market; a wilderness tabernacle replete with “the Shekinah glory effect;” the sun-scorched Qumran caves; the Via Dolorosa (the street that Jesus trod on his way to Calvary); and the tranquil garden tomb wherein Jesus was buried.

Off a Plaza of the Nations is a six-story-high Temple of the Great King, where – in the “Theater of Life” – guests view a film (“The Seed of Promise”) which depicts everything from the Creation to the Second Coming of Christ. From there, it's on to the world's largest indoor model of first-century Jerusalem and then, perhaps, to the 120-seat buffeteria, the Oasis Palms Café, where you can order a Goliath burger.

The stated purpose of the park is to provide a place where “Christians can come to be encouraged and reinforced in their faith; to create a total immersion experience that offers historical proof of the Bible and dynamically demonstrates that the Bible is God's word to humankind; and to lovingly share the message of the grace of God for sinful human beings, as demonstrated in the death, burial and resurrection of His Son.”

Now the arguments can go at least a couple of ways: do we have here a creative idea for evangelism “using modern technology to describe the Bible to people who haven't experienced it or want to experience it again?” as the promotional materials claim. Are we looking at something that may inspire people to think about God – something that might stimulate them to worship God?

Or, on the other hand, are we seeing a trivialization of the Word, a dangerous feel-good diversion? Situated in a playground, will the Holy Land Experience (and the Bible which it seeks to promote) be viewed as just another bit of make-believe? Is the Christian faith in this being treated as just another adjunct of entertainment?

We are left in this debate with a bottom line question: how should we use the tools we have at hand to present the gospel?

We find parallels in Jesus' day. Many came to see the miracles, to be fed, to be entertained. And on more than one occasion, Jesus challenged these "experience seekers" to commit themselves to something more substantial.

I have to say I wonder sometimes if we struggle so with calling people to more – to the depths – because we are ourselves are just paddling around on the surface. Sometimes I wonder if we don't water down the gospel, because the cost would be too great for ourselves if we were to do otherwise. We might actually have to practice what we preach.

George Barna points out that Americans are more devoted to seeking spiritual enlightenment today than they were at any time in the 20th century. Yet, "at this moment of optimum opportunity, Christianity is having less impact on people's perspectives and behaviors than ever. Why is that? Because a growing majority of people have dismissed the Christian faith as weak, outdated, and irrelevant. Interestingly, the stumbling block for the Church is not its theology but its failure to apply what it believes in compelling ways." Barna says "the downfall of the Church has not been the content of the message but its failure to practice those truths. Christians have been their own worst enemies when it comes to showing the world what authentic, biblical Christianity looks like."⁹

Donald Posterski, in his book *Reinventing Evangelism*, suggests that "the tragedy of the contemporary church is that Jesus' strategy for penetrating the culture with the good news of the gospel has been reversed. Instead of being in the world but not of the world, too many of God's people are *of* the world but not *in* the world. They have been both captured and intimidated by the culture. They have been seduced by the world and have adopted the world's ways as their own – they are *of* the world and they have succumbed to social segregation – they are not *in* the world."¹⁰

James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, authors of *The Experience Economy* say they believe the experience economy will eventually give way to the Transformation Economy, that when the marketplace is filled with experiences, people will begin to pay for demonstrated outcomes. Then you're in the transformation business.

They argue that one result of the Experience Economy is likely to be a longing for authenticity and that further – to the extent that the church stages worldly experiences – it will lose its effectiveness. Somewhere deep within, people long for an authentic encounter with, an experience of God. Religious simulation doesn't cut it.¹¹

But right now, all around us, media moguls, advertising execs, and trendsetters are telling us to have it our way. We deserve

a break today. We're worth it. We're looking out for number one. Each day we find promoted the puffed-up and the hyperscheduled. We are encouraged to adopt an entitlement mentality, to be superficial, to desire immediate gratification, to be entertained, to experience. All of these are part and parcel of what we might term, self-religion. Self in the place where God ought to be. Self in the center.

And I am loathe to say that many of us – who confess Jesus as Savior – have been spending altogether too much time uncritically mucking around in that self-centered culture. And we've gotten it all over ourselves. If the church is only a group of people "seeking to be fed," trying to have our needs met, if the church is only about marketing and religious consumerism – then God is a God who exists merely in terms of the desires he satisfies. When we remain in feed-me mode, we wind up with me-focused religion. We engage in self-worship.

If this is the personal and church culture you know, it is time to take stock. It's not about having it our way; it's about having it God's way.

But we cannot free ourselves from world-centered and self-centered binds simply by exerting our will. As Richard Foster would remind us, to think this is possible is to worship the will and this is idolatry. Only God can make us new. So all our efforts to achieve perfection in spirit (or in body and mind, for that matter) – all that we do that is based solely on human effort – will have no lasting effect because perfection -- righteousness -- is a gift of God to be graciously received.

Knowing this, however, doesn't let us off the hook because God has chosen to effect change through a process of sanctification that calls us to the disciplines of the spiritual life. We are to undertake the general pattern of life he undertook. Our lives then will also be marked by discipline and by the disciplines.

The spiritual disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that *he* can transform us. Those disciplines include prayer, meditation, fasting and study; submission, solitude, simplicity and service; confession, worship, guidance and celebration (Foster).

We are called to be people of prayer, people of the Word, people of commitment, people who fast and study, people who have submitted themselves to the Lord and have determined to serve him only. We must confess our sins and seek the guidance of the Spirit and we must be certain our worship is genuinely worship of God and not just exercises in self-entertainment, dabbings in warm fuzzies.

And let us remember who is in charge. You *and I* are not going to transform anyone. You *and I* are not going to renew

anyone. Rather – if the Lord wills and if you and I yield ourselves and are obedient, God may use us as instruments in whom and through whom *he* will effect transformation and renewal.

God calls us to a path of disciplined grace but it is not the path that produces change; it is only the place where change can occur. On that path, we are called to offer up our natural selves in service to righteousness leading to holiness. We are to hand our whole selves over to Christ. We are to buck the trend and resist what is probably the strongest impulse in humankind: self-preservation.

We are called to take up the cross (to lose ourselves to find ourselves). We are called to holiness, to being set apart for God. We are called to come alongside where God is at work and to be used as his instruments. We are called to go and make disciples.

Each day we are to yield ourselves fully to Jesus so that we may live wisely and respond graciously to others about the One who gives us the assurance of eternal life.

God's goal for the lives of believers is recorded in Romans 8:29: conformity to the image of his Son: Christlikeness.

In closing, let us prayerfully approach some questions:

Have you really counted the cost of discipleship? Of nondiscipleship? Of following Jesus? Or not following Jesus?

Have you been seduced by the experience economy? Have you adopted the world's ways as your own? What would it mean for you to truly be in the world but not of it in the sense of not supporting those things that work in opposition to God and God's will? What truly matters to you most -- The praise of human beings or the praise of God? Are you willing to do whatever it takes -- whatever God requires of you to live out the call placed upon your life? Is your "self" in the way of discipleship?

Can you labor for years and perhaps not see a huge harvest? We till in hard soil just now in the United States -- some will be digging into hard ground, others will water, others will reap the harvest. We may see another great awakening in this country or revival may tarry. Will you do whatever the Lord requires?

Have you truly handed yourself over to Christ, being and obeying, living out of who you are and whose you are or have you traded all of this for a self-seeking sham?

Will you humble yourself before God, pray and seek the face of God and turn from wicked ways? If you will, the Lord promises to hear, forgive and heal.

Is the Lord truly *your* Lord? Is the Good Shepherd truly *your* shepherd?

NOTES

¹Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual Life* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, n.d.), 20.

²Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith, eds. *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups* (New York: HarperCollins, HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 18.

³*Ibid.*, 16.

⁴Alan Nelson, "Redirecting the Self-Seeking," *Leadership Journal*, Summer 2001, Vol. 23, No. 3, 47.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Word, 1998), 2.

⁸Foster and Smith, 8.

⁹*Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰Donald C. Posterski, *Reinventing Evangelism: New Strategies for Presenting Christ in Today's World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), 28.

¹¹See B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

BOOK REVIEWS

The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis.

By Ray S. Anderson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001. 342 pp.

Ray Anderson has written a marvelous book on practical theology that addresses the important role of praxis when focusing on contemporary culture through theological lenses. He formulates an exciting approach to practical theology that he calls "Christopraxis." He draws our attention to traditional approaches to theology and then constructs what I believe to be a more excellent way by making a case for theological praxis when addressing the theology of ministry.

The resurrection of Jesus is the hermeneutical criterion for Christopraxis. His chapter on the praxis of the Spirit and a theology of liberation is especially insightful. In the chapter "The Church and Its Ministry: The Latria of Christ" Anderson provides a positive and fresh foundation for evangelism in, by, and through the Church. His chapters on the ethics of Karl Barth; "Sociocultural Implications of a Christian Perception of Humanity;" and especially his treatment of "The Humanity of God and The Soul of the City: Where Is the Church?" are foundational for a comprehensive approach to evangelism and church growth in the 21st century.

In the final section of the book he applies the Christopraxis process to practical theology as paraclesis. His fresh look at "theological ethics and pastoral care" warrants close study by theology students who are preparing for ministry with hurting people. "The Kingdom of God as therapeutic context" speaks specifically to pastoral counseling. "The family in a postmodern culture" is useful in developing a Christ-centered comprehensive ministry where so many are seeking a clear word from God about the things that trouble them most. He also takes a very insightful look at the theological issues surrounding homosexuality from a Christopraxis point of view.

He posits a hypothesis that clergy burnout is directly related to theological anemia. Christopraxis also addresses one of the most important life-long issues facing most individuals and families: forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing. Most clergypersons are regularly faced with the question, "Where is God when we suffer?" Anderson provides a process by which we might address the topic

theologically and practically. He concludes the book with a challenge to theological educators.

Anderson, in this book, has given us a significant gift. He has called us to remember who Jesus is to every generation and the role of the incarnate Christ in shaping our belief systems. He reminds us that culture does not shape our faith, but that our faith is shaped in the crucible of culture by the incarnate, resurrected, living Savior. We, as the church, have the ultimate responsibility to live our everyday-lived-lives as the embodiment of this living Savior. Thus we will be Christ's witnesses in every generation. The church is not the Savior but it is given the responsibility carry the good news of the crucified, resurrected, living Savior to humanity in every culture and in every part of the world.

This book should be required reading by students in pastoral ministry and pastoral care courses. While this book is not about evangelism in the traditional sense, every section has something to say to persons studying and preparing for evangelism in a postmodern world. Courses that focus on theological foundations of evangelism will benefit from requiring this book of its serious students. Faculty might also benefit from this intense and tightly written volume. It is best suited for graduate level students although upper level undergraduate students might benefit as well.

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Reforming Pastoral Ministry: Challenges for Ministry in Postmodern Times.

By John H. Armstrong, editor. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.

Although the subtitle of the book speaks of "postmodern times," no effort is made to explain postmodernism. It is assumed that the reader is already familiar with the term. Armstrong, in the first of fourteen articles by different authors, sets the tone of the book by assuming that there is a pastoral role in modern reformation and that the Protestant tradition is *semper reformanda* (always reforming). He concludes that this reformation "must always be by *sola Scriptura*, by Scripture alone.

Mark Coppenger refutes the secular concept of the professionalization of the pastor's role. He rejects the image of an

always gentle, meek, and mild Jesus. His article is insightful and he presents a subtle apologetic for an authoritarian or autocratic pastoral leadership style. It seems to me that in order to correct a misinterpretation of Jesus as the gentle, meek, and mild model for pastoral ministry he opens the gate for another misinterpretation, i.e., that Jesus was always confrontive with those who dared to disagree with him about anything. Jesus always spoke with authority but he was only confrontive in the face of hypocrisy, deception, and injustice.

R. Kent Hughes' article on expository preaching stresses the *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* in the preaching and ministry of the pastor. He makes excellent points about the value of expository preaching. As I reflect on the preaching of Jesus, Paul, and the other disciples, however, I don't think they would fit his model. His emphasis on "Ministerial Ethos and Pathos" is very good and needs to be heeded by all. Thomas N. Smith adds an "Amen" to Hughes and emphasizes the fact that the focus of reformatory preaching is, "Keeping The Main Thing The Main Thing: Preaching Christ as the Focus of All Reformation." Wilbur C. Ellsworth's article, "From Faith to Faith: What Makes Preaching So Vital for Reformation" adds another important dimension to the importance of the preaching role of the pastor.

Prayer and other forms of worship, including the place of the sacraments, underscore other vital parts of reformatory ministry. Jerry Marcellino, Arturo Azurdia, and T. M. More stress the importance of these foundational functions in their articles.

Several of the authors stress the necessity of an ethical and Godly life of pastoral ministers. Joel R. Beeke highlights this point in his article, "The Utter Necessity of a Godly Life: The Foundation of Pastoral Ministry." Joseph Flatt broadens this emphasis to include the necessity of dealing with sin in the total church. His article, "How Shall I Respond To Sin In The Church? A Plea to Restore the Third Mark of the Church" calls on evangelical Christianity to take the concept of sin seriously and to practice "church discipline."

Pastoral care, in a generic form, is emphasized by Jim Elliff in his article, "The Cure of Souls: the Pastor Serving the Flock." He emphasizes the caring role that does not see the role of the pastor as a hireling, but as a shepherd of the flock. Following in a similar vein is the article by David W. Hegg, "All Things in Common: The Pastoral Role in Building Real Fellowship."

The last two chapters are of particular importance to professors and students of evangelism. Mark E. Dever alerts us to the fact that the evangelistic ministry of pastors is a receding

horizon. Phil A. Newton, in the article on "The Pastor and Church Growth," sounds an alarm regarding the problem of pragmatism.

This book could be useful in college and seminary courses on pastoral ministry. It might be useful as a secondary reader in courses on evangelism and church growth. While the strongly conservative evangelical position of some of the authors is very evident, the general tone of the book is a valuable addition to contemporary literature on revival and revitalization of evangelical churches and denominations.

Derrel R. Watkins

The Spiritual Society: What Lurks Beyond Postmodernism?

By Frederic W. Baue. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2001. 192 pp.

In *The Spiritual Society*, Frederic Baue argues that postmodern culture is now giving way to new cultural forces (p. 15). Known as "The Therian Age," Baue explains that this new cultural shift is religious in outlook but hostile to Christianity (p. 16). Throughout, the author paints a bleak picture of what this major cultural change means for the church of Jesus Christ.

Baue begins his study with an analysis of the centrality of evangelism for the life of the church. He then proceeds to highlight the importance of secular philosophies for understanding the framework of modernity. Important for Baue in this vein is the work of Pitirim A. Sorokin, a Russian sociologist who coins the concept of Senate and Ideational periods of culture. Baue uses Sorokin's framework to test the hypothesis that Western culture is moving into a new Ideational or Therian Age (p. 44). The rest of the book deals with the ways in which the Senate and Ideational become woven into the fabric of history in the West, especially the church's history.

Key to Baue's analysis in his book is the importance of the early church's history in dealing with internal conflicts (e.g., Gnosticism, Pelagianism), and the external threat posed by Islam (e.g., world expansion). Baue goes on to argue that the Middle Ages mark a high-point in the Ideational phase of Western culture, with the Modern Era regressing into the Senate (p. 117). With the development of postmodernity, however, the cultural scene is now ripe for The Therian Age to emerge--an age characterized by a hosts of new spiritual and religious movements and groups (Chapter 8).

Baue's work poses interesting questions for the field of evangelism. The question of how the church deals with new

spiritual and religious movements is on the front burner. Baue's book rightly questions the secularist thesis that North American society is completely secular. For persons in evangelism the present work will help to raise questions as to how the church will want to share the gospel in such a pluralistic setting. It will also help to remind the church of the need to retrieve those practices and confessions unique to the church's missionary purpose in the world (p. 178).

But there are several flaws to Baue's book which cannot be overlooked. First, it is obvious that Baue is writing to and for a Missouri-Synod Lutheran audience. The range of thought utilizing the insights of theologians and philosophers on the issues of postmodernity is limited (e.g., names like Bauman, Baudrillard, and Lyons on the one hand and Knight, Jenson, and Reno on the other are conspicuously absent). Second, the privileging of Luther as the norm for the Christian life is not helpful (p. 119). Reducing the content of the gospel to an individualistic interpretation of justification by faith simply leads to a dead end. The history of division within Protestantism makes this point amply well (a point teachers of evangelism need to come to grips with, if they have not done so already). The canonical heritage of the church offers an array of resources for spiritual direction and evangelism (Abraham). The communal nature of the church necessitates this move and proffers such hope for unity (Radner).

But the issue runs deeper: Throughout the book, Baue sprays buckshot in various directions. First, the characterization of Islam as the Church's greatest threat leaves the reader wondering about the nature of Islam itself and whether or not Baue is giving an accurate appraisal of Islamic faith and practice. Comments regarding the legalism within Islam [e.g., that Islam is "eminently doable" (p. 88)], or that the African slave trade was "generated by Muslim slavers working the interior of Africa" (p. 89)--cry out for substantiation. Second, the privileging of a Missouri-Synod Lutheran Protestantism at the expense of other expressions of the Christian faith does more harm than good. Comments putting the blame for the Catholic/Protestant split at the feet of the pope (p. 164), or that the Catholic Church will absorb and amalgamate all religious strains within a supreme Roman Church (p. 173), or that the worship of St. Mary is "encoded paganism" (p. 172)--leaves readers wondering when the author will turn to spray buckshot at them! Did not Luther attack the Anabaptists? Is this what The Thierian Age is about? Baue ends his book with notes on "siege warfare." I now can see why.

This is unfortunate, for in the last chapter Baue makes an important contribution to the work of evangelism by suggesting that

the church focus on the theology of the Incarnation (p. 175). The use of the creeds, confessions, and scriptures to clarify the unique message of the gospel is helpful to move the Church toward a unifying mission rather than an ark-under-siege mentality (p. 178). Professors and students in evangelism will want to note these aspects of Baue's work and decide how they will want to move into the age Baue describes. In faith or in fear?

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World of the Spirits: A Christian Perspective on Traditional and Folk Religions

By David Burnett. London, UK: Monarch Books, 2000. Pp.287.

Anyone familiar with David Burnett's writing has come to expect thorough scholarship along with practical pointers for ministry. This work is no exception. Presently, Burnett is the Director of Studies at All Nations Christian College in England but has served as a missionary in India.

Though this is a revised edition of his earlier book, *Unearthly Powers* (Monarch, 1988), it is vastly expanded and updated which dictated having a new title. In 12 years the world's traditional societies have drastically changed, primarily because of "the relentless penetration of materialism and globalization" (p.8). The author clearly states the threefold purpose of this edition: 1) building respect for all societies by explaining what they believe and do, 2) exhorting Christians to recognize their assumptions in understanding other religions, and 3) showing that the "world of spirits" is still significant to millions from traditional societies though they may have moved geographically to the urban slums from the jungles, or changed allegiance to a world religion.

The 16 chapters in this volume could easily be divided into four sections. In the first two chapters, the author reviews how the Western thinking of traditional societies has changed in the last 200 years. These largely positive changes have influenced those engaged in Christian mission. In chapters three to thirteen, Burnett wrestles with many uncommon themes to most people in the West--Ghosts, ancestor worship, taboos, divination, witchcraft, sorcery, black magic, spirit possession, shamanism, exorcism, etc. With the use of numerous case studies from several continents the author helps the reader understand the definitions, distinctions and relationships of

concepts, practices and patterns that are dominant in traditional religions.

The reviewer sees chapter 13 focusing on religious conversion as the bridge from the second section to the final three chapters. Being a qualified anthropologist, Burnett attempts to anthropologically explore the reasons why traditional societies are responsive to the major missionary religions like Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. The three types of conversion changes provided by African scholar, Emeffie Ikenga-Metuh are helpful in many mission contexts. 1) Adhesion (change of affiliation without change of conviction, e.g. a "mixed" Islam or Christianity), 2) Conversion I (change of affiliation with change of conviction, e.g. from traditional religion to fervent Islam or Christianity), and 3) Conversion II (change of conviction without change of affiliation, e.g. from "mixed" Islam or Christianity to fervent Islam or Christianity).

The last section (chapters 14-16) describes two resultant processes within traditional societies because of the impact of dominant missionary religions. One common but unfortunate result is syncretism. Often what happens is that "the new religion is crafted in various ways to make it immediately relevant to the specific local needs" (p.226). Burnett further contends that many of the former ideas and rituals of the traditional religions may remain and become incorporated in the new religion.

The second and somewhat optimistic result of rapid change and/or cultural dislocation caused by the impact of a world religion is revitalization. Such revitalization could launch renewal movements within all religious groups including the traditional ones. The momentum of such movements begins with the emergence of a new leader "who epitomizes the crisis of the culture and proposes a new way forward" (p.256). That dynamic flourishes and attracts many others to shape a new religious culture.

The extensive bibliography included in the book reflects the breadth of quality research undergirding the book. The conclusions drawn from the diverse interactions with the findings and conclusions of numerous scholars including eminent Western and non-Western behavioral scientists and historians demonstrate the multi-disciplinary approach Burnett has taken. In most chapters the reader is treated to a Christian response or evaluation of the issue(s). Typical of many British authors from the academy, the author is logical in argumentation, systematic in presentation and generous in documentation.

The reviewer wishes some of the helpful diagrams and figures of the original volume were retained in this edition. Also missing is the glossary of terms that aids a novice to this subject.

The Index of subjects and authors is not complete as could be. These deficiencies in no way disqualify this volume from being a textbook in anthropology or missiology. Anyone engaged in evangelism of First Nations communities or the non-Christian immigrant populations could glean much insight from it.

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Nine Marks of a Healthy Church.

By Mark Dever. Wheaton IL: Crossway Books, 2000. 233 pp.

Most readers of JAETE will know immediately from Mark Dever's nine topics whether this is a book they wish to read or could use in the classroom, so I will list them to give the reader a sense of the book's flavor: 1. Expository preaching. 2. Biblical theology. 3. The Gospel. 4. A Biblical understanding of conversion. 5. A Biblical understanding of evangelism. 6. A Biblical understanding of church membership. 7. Church discipline. 8. A concern for discipleship and growth. 9. Biblical church leadership.

Dever's concern is that the church today is unhealthy because it neglects God-given essentials for church life and leadership. Instead, the church is too often concerned to be user-friendly (his parody of a seeker-sensitive pastor in chapter one is quite amusing). Dever urges us to remember what Scripture says God is like, not what we wish he were like. He reminds us that the Gospel is not to make us feel good and merely confirm us in our sin. He encourages all Christians to be involved in evangelism, and not leave it to "the professionals." He wants to raise the bar on what church membership means, to reinstate biblical church discipline, to see discipleship become a central concern of the church, and for church leaders to be holy more than to be merely good managers.

There are many concerns here that urgently need to be addressed in the contemporary church, and we should be grateful to Dever for his sober warnings. In the opinion of this reviewer, however, the news about this book is not all good. I have a stylistic complaint, and then a more substantive criticism.

My stylistic complaint has to do with this being a book based on a sermon series (as Dever states, 18). Most people's sermons need significant editing before they should be published in book form, and unfortunately more is needed here. Thus, for example, a section on "Repentance" (76-77) urges the importance of repentance, yet the definition of repentance does not come until the

end of the following section on "Belief" (77-78). Or again: Dever frequently sets up anonymous straw men: "some say this" (66), "it is thought" (87), "others believe" (91). Particularly difficult to believe was Dever's statement, "Many say that conversion is merely mental acceptance?" (89) Really? I don't know about you, but I cannot think of even one evangelical who would say such a foolish thing. Maybe one can get away with this kind of thing in a sermon, but this is not a model of writing, or indeed of thinking, which I want my students to follow. (If I am honest, I do not want them to preach like this either.)

But on to the substantive criticism. If one divides writers on church health and evangelism into two groups—those who think church health comes from Biblical faithfulness and ignoring the vagaries of culture (Barth, Willimon) and those who think the church must adapt to culture (Hybels, Warren, McLaren), Dever is clearly in the former camp, even though he might be uncomfortable with some of his bed-fellows.

Part of my problem with the church-against-culture school is that it seems to me naïve to think that there is such a thing as a "purely biblical" and culture-free church. God has made us cultural beings and we are influenced by culture, whether we acknowledge it or not. Indeed, I confess I am nervous when I see the word "Biblical" used in the way Dever uses it, because it tends to signal a lack of self-critical awareness about this crucial issue.

I would prefer to say that Christians have been, and are daily, shaped by our culture. Our responsibility is to seek to bring our cultural ways captive to Christ, retain whatever glorifies God, and submit to his mind whatever does not. We will never get it completely right, so let us be humble, listen to the Spirit in the Word, and aim to be "semper reformanda."

Dever, it seems to me, far from being purely "biblical", is in fact a classic modernist--rationalistic, propositional, authoritarian, and inclined to turn cultural realities into timeless absolutes. A prime example: I am all for "expositional preaching" as a good and necessary discipline. (I was deeply shaped by the teaching of John Stott, and love to expound scripture myself.) Yet I acknowledge that this kind of preaching has become important since the time of the Reformation, and is not to be found anywhere in Scripture itself! In other words, "expositional preaching" is a cultural construct, and must itself be subject to the Word of God, and not elevated into a timeless "biblical" absolute. I cannot think the work of the Gospel, or indeed the health of the church, is furthered when we confuse the two in this way.

The same is true of my response to many of Dever's points. It is not that I believe he is wrong. Rather, I would like to see his

points nuanced by a little more cultural self-awareness, a little more capacity for self-criticism, a little more allowance for the possibility that others may have an equally "biblical" understanding of these things, and yet disagree with him.

As a result, for people who think this way already, this book will serve as a reinforcement. For those who do not, Dever is hardly likely to convince them.

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Reaching Generation Next: Effective Evangelism in Today's Culture.
By Lewis A. Drummond. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. 202 pp.

In the preface of the book, Drummond states, "this book has a practical as well as a theological purpose." To a great extent he accomplishes that goal. Many have been concerned that evangelism and church growth specialists seem to be unaware of the realities of a postmodern world. He assuages those anxieties. Not only does he acknowledge the existence of postmodernism he enables readers to understand many of its implications for contemporary evangelism.

The book pulls together many of the theological issues facing church evangelism and integrates the author's commitment to enabling readers to understand contemporary cultural shifts with practical suggestions for engaging the whole church in evangelism among postmoderns. Drummond skillfully weaves the issues of church-centered evangelism with an epistemological base for answering questions postmoderns are asking. He emphasizes the necessity of constructing a worldview that bridges the gap between moderns and postmoderns and links it to fresh new ways of communicating the Gospel. Drummond restates his basic theology of evangelism and highlights obstacles that must be overcome if we are to be successful evangelists with today's generations. He provides insightful and practical strategies for equipping church leaders, lay and clergy alike, for the task of proclaiming the Good News to today's world. In his final chapter he underscores the necessity of recognizing and surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit in order to do the work. Three appendices are included: Evangelism and People with Disabilities; A Diagnostic Church Survey; and How to Discover Your Gifts.

If I were teaching a course on basic evangelism or contemporary evangelism I would seriously consider using this book as required reading, if not the primary text. The book would be useful for both Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry courses/seminars.

Derrel R. Watkins

Effective Church Growth Strategies.

By Gene Getz and Joe Wall. Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000.

Gene Getz and Joe Wall write from strong theological and practical positions. Getz was a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary for twenty years before leaving to pastor Fellowship Bible Church in the early 1970s. As of the writing of this book Getz was pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in North Plano, TX, one of nearly a dozen daughter churches started by the original Fellowship Bible Church in Dallas. He is the author of over forty books including the popular *Measure of a Man* and *Measure of a Woman*.

After receiving his doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary, Wall pastored churches in Houston, TX for fifteen years. Wall has served as academic vice-president of Dallas Bible College, president of Western Bible College (now Colorado Christian University) in Lakewood, CO, and developed training schools for church planters and pastors in Russian and Central Asia with Campus Crusade for Christ. As of the writing of this book he was pastoring in Houston, TX.

While the writers believe strongly in church growth, they feel that many church leaders slide into the trap of seeking growth due to flawed motives. From their perspective pastors often desire church growth simply to raise their own self-esteem. Other church leaders want church growth just to build their denomination. Even parachurch leaders hope church growth will build their organizations. To the authors the way to change such poor motives for church growth is clear. It is their premise that "Solid theological thinking, rooted in biblical concepts, is the best corrective for these and other unhealthy concepts about church growth."

Flowing from the author's premise, it is not surprising that the strength of *Effective Church Growth Strategies* is its adherence to a sound biblical basis for church growth. Chapters such as, "Thinking Biblically About Church Growth" and "Biblical Priorities in Measuring Church Growth" offer solid evidence that God wants his Church to grow. "The primary focus of church growth,"

according to Getz and Wall, "should always be kingdom growth." Therefore, church growth should always involve Kingdom service by being open to creative approaches for doing church, cooperating with other churches to evangelize entire cities, praying for other churches, rejoicing when other churches grow, and planting new churches to evangelize unreached people more effectively. Even though this book does not speak to all biblical and theological issues surrounding church growth, it will be a welcome addition to the literature of due to its clear presentation of a biblical and theological rationale for church growth.

Unfortunately, the book does not make good on its promise of providing effective church growth strategies. Readers familiar with the broad range of literature on evangelism and church growth will find the principles and procedures presented do not add much to what has been previously written. The weakest aspect is the extended overview of Christian Schwartz's *Natural Church Development*. Anyone familiar with Schwartz's work will find the reading of chapter eight tedious due to its rehash of the NCD principles. Based on the title of the book, as well as the background of the authors, one would expect to find some original strategies, rather than a rehearsing of those found in a book already familiar to those interested in this field of study. The chapter on "Church Growth By Multiplication" was excellent, as well as the testing instrument on "Evaluating the Three Vital Experiences in a Church" (Learning, Relating, Witnessing).

Effective Church Growth Strategies is a good beginning text on church growth for those just developing an interest in this important subject. However, for those already familiar with the writings of the Church Growth Movement, the book will provide some helpful thoughts on biblical and theological issues, but be largely disappointing in its weak presentation of strategic ideas.

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Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context.

By Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 298 pp.

Theological method is not a subject distinct from and prior to theology itself. How we do theology is as much a reflection of our theology as it is a means to it. Grenz and Franke, in offering their

definition of the theological task, are well aware of this and seek to take it into account.

They argue that theology is a contextual discipline. It is "second-order" discourse "that engages in critical and constructive reflection on the faith, life, and practices of the Christian community" to enable the community to live faithfully in their "social-historical context" (16). Hence theology is always a work in progress, a "pilgrimage," because persons and contexts are continually changing.

The context within which theology is being done today is postmodernism. This term "implies the rejection of certain central features of the modern project, such as its quest for certain, objective, universal knowledge, along with its dualism and its assumption of the inherent goodness of knowledge" (21-22). What Grenz and Franke offer is an approach to theology that engages this context without becoming captive to it. Their method is in contrast to conservative and liberal theologies that continue to assume a universal rational or experiential foundationalism as well as those theologies that have capitulated to relativism. They argue instead that all theology is local and contextual, but from its particular perspective nonetheless makes public, universal truth claims.

If theology is contextual, it is inevitably diverse. What, then, makes it Christian? The authors contend that "the encounter with God in Christ is an identity-producing event," constituting us personally and corporately as believers who "share a common vision" (48). Unlike liberal theology, "Experience does not precede interpretation" (49); rather it is the Christian interpretation of the world, grounded in the narrative of God's act in Christ that makes Christian experience possible. The task of theology is missional: the development of a coherent, integrated web of Christian belief, informed by scripture, to interpret the world in the contemporary context (50).

The distinctively Christian character of postmodern theology is marked as well by its sources and motifs. Developing the agenda in Grenz's earlier *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*, the authors argue that Christian theology is an ongoing conversation that draws upon three sources and is shaped by three focal motifs.

The three sources are scripture, tradition, and culture. Scripture is the "norming norm" because it is used by the Holy Spirit to address the church throughout history and in all contexts. Through the text the Spirit constructs a world which "is nothing less than a new creation centered in Jesus Christ," consisting "of a new community comprised of renewed persons" (78). In this way the Spirit enables hearers to enter the world mediated by scripture and

provides interpretative categories for understanding one's life and all of reality.

Tradition is the story of the ongoing work of theology to faithfully interpret scripture and other first order languages and practices for various historical and cultural contexts. It gives theology its "hermeneutical trajectory." Culture is the contemporary context which theology addresses. The authors propose an interactive model of mutually informing, ongoing conversation between gospel and culture, listening for the Spirit in both while upholding the primacy of scripture as the normative locus for hearing the Spirit.

It is the three focal motifs of Trinity, community, and eschatology that characterize the content of all Christian theologies, whatever the context. The Trinity is the Christian answer to "who is God?" and provides the necessary structure to theology. The authors understand God to be "a relational fellowship of love," a description that marks "our human calling as the *imago dei*" as communal (202).

Community, then, is the integrative motif that structures systematic theology. Eschatology orients Christian theology because it is the goal of God's redemptive activity in the biblical narrative, thus shaping the community. Theology anticipates the glorious future new creation even as it celebrates the inbreaking of that future into the present through the Holy Spirit.

The depth of analysis and richness of insight in this book can only be suggested by a brief review. It examines central issues concerning the relation of theology and postmodern culture. While it does not directly address evangelism, it provides important insights into the nature of conversion and Christian identity, contextualization, and the shaping of the gospel message that has clear implications for our practice of evangelism today.

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A Confessing Theology for Postmodern Times.

Edited by Michael S. Horton (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2000), 256 pp.

Confessional movements are emerging across evangelical and mainline churches and denominations. A return to the classical confessions and doctrines of the church, particularly the early church and Protestant Reformation, are making headlines as church leaders discern how they will move into the future. New magazines

and theological journals (e.g., *Pro Ecclesia* and *Modern Reformation*), along with a renewed interest in the spiritual and theological resources of Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Magisterial Protestantism, are converging to form new lines of ecumenical thought and practice.

In *A Confessing Theology for Postmodern Times*, Michael Horton, Director of the Alliance for Confessing Evangelicals, assembles essays from Baptist, Reformed, and Lutheran (Missouri Synod) theologians and biblical scholars. The essays are the product of a conference held in the summer of 1998, where participants dedicated themselves to the recovery of systematic theology in a postmodern context (p. 10). Critiquing "modern" ecumenism as "hopelessly pluralistic," Horton states that the new emerging ecumenism can be "hopefully confessional" (p. 10). Reaching this confessional consensus does not mean sacrificing the distinctives of particular ecclesiastical communities; rather, it means providing the substance of the gospel.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One deals with the resources of the church's confessional heritage, particularly as it relates to church dogma (Reformed and Lutheran) and biblical theology. Part Two takes a critical look at the challenges posed by postmodernity. Special emphasis is placed on reactions to Edgar McKnight's article on "reader oriented criticism" and postmodern literary theory (p. 68ff). Part Three proposes opportunities for confessional theology, analyzing how postliberalism, dogmatics, Reformation theology, biblical studies, and evangelicalism may work toward a more integrated future in the life of the church.

This book offers much for theological reflection, especially as it pertains to the practice of evangelism. First, it raises questions about the content of the gospel. What does it mean to stand within the tradition of historic-classical Christianity? What does it mean to be a part of the catholic tradition that does not fall into rampant sectarianism and endless schism? What does it mean for the church to have theologically informed practices with respect to biblical exegesis and preaching? The book offers readers helpful guidance in these areas.

Second, with respect to ecumenism, how can confessional Christians (regardless of denomination) address the concerns of Christians within non-confessional branches of the church without also falling prey to a hyper-confessionalism that may appear in other branches? These two extremes pose questions as to how unity will be expressed, but also how evangelism will be practiced. The authors certainly see a new ecumenism coming to the fore. But the question remains: How will the pitfalls of disunity be addressed and avoided in a postmodern context?

And third, in relation to American culture, this volume raises questions about the role of tradition in shaping theological reflection and practice. How shall the church offer Christ to a "vinyl culture" (Chapter 5)? How can the church offer the substance of the gospel without becoming absorbed into the other narratives of postmodern life? The questions of form and content will not go away.

Professors may want to use this book as a way to prompt questions about the role confession plays in the renewal of the church. Clergy and laity will also want to share in dialogue about the importance of the rule of faith for the life of faith. What are the connections?

One aside about the book: With respect to recent church history, there is little to nothing mentioned about the role of the Confessing Church in Germany. The book certainly had other purposes, but one wonders how the book could have been strengthened by noting the importance of *status confessionis*.

It has been said that if modernity did away with tradition, postmodernity will not give it back! Unfortunately, the whole attitude of being anti-tradition is itself a tradition! This book will help in bringing to the surface issues that the church will be forced to confront in a postmodern world as it confesses Christ.

Andrew D. Kinsey

Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Postmodern Age

By Brad J. Kallenberg. (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002).
138 pp.

To show the implications of postmodern philosophy for the practice of evangelism is an important scholarly contribution. To do so with clarity, insight, passion, and wit, as Kallenberg has done here, provides us with a book that is not only useful but a pleasure to read. There is a happy combination of solid argumentation and creative communication that runs through this text.

Kallenberg begins by describing three major postmodern trends. The first is from understanding community as only a collection of individuals to seeing community as more than the sum of its parts, influencing those who belong to it. The second is from understanding language as simply depicting a world to also constituting the world. The third is understanding beliefs as social as well as rational, so interrelated that to change one major belief necessarily leads to changing them all at once (a paradigm shift).

All of this has serious consequences for how we understand conversion. Seen "through a postcritical lens, conversion can be understood as entailing the change of one's social identity, the acquisition of a new conceptual language, and the shifting of one's paradigm" (32). This in turn has implications for how we do evangelism. Kallenberg argues that the gospel story—and what we mean by terms like sin and redemption—must be embodied in the life of the community rather than translated into the language of non-Christians (This reminds me of Lesslie Newbigin's claim that the congregation is the hermeneutic of the gospel). Second, we must engage nonbelievers by using our own conceptual language, analogous to teaching someone a foreign language. Third, we must involve nonbelievers not only in conversation but in communal practices, because immersion in the community over time enables something like a paradigm shift or Gestalt Switch to occur (that is, conversion, which happens not one belief at a time but all of them at once).

This brief summary does not do justice to Kallenberg's careful argumentation and even less to his helpful illustrations. He sprinkles throughout his text stories and images that helpfully aid our understanding. Moreover, he devotes two chapters to five stories of various ways persons actually undergo conversion in a postmodern world, both in terms of learning the Christian language and living out Christian beliefs. For many students, these stories and the accompanying analysis may be the most helpful portion of the book.

Kallenberg concludes with a series of comparisons. Evangelism, he says, is "more like sailing than proofreading" (123), "more like acting kindly than like cobbling" (124), "more like medicine than like parallel parking" (125). You will have to read the book to see how he works out these and other comparisons. But there is much wisdom there as he describes evangelism not as utilizing a technique but as a way of living.

This would be an excellent book for any course on evangelism.

Henry H. Knight III

The Faith: A History of Christianity.

By Brian Moynahan. Doubleday, 2002. 806 pp.

The Faith is a fairly exhaustive history of Christianity. It has a global perspective that includes parts of the world thus far neglected

in most such studies. The book has an air of objectivity that is brutally honest—perhaps to a fault. At some points it reads more like an exposé that had me blushing at David's uplifted skirt as he danced before the people. Admittedly it is important to describe our failures as well as our successes—after all if we do not understand our weaknesses no one will believe our strengths—yet at times I felt that more was going out of the bucket than was going into the bucket. Here is the question I kept asking, "Do I have a right to expect such a work to encourage me or is it OK to finish the book wondering whether or not Christianity wins out in the end."

With that in mind I still found the book well written, well researched and for the most part well conceived. Although I would not hand the book to someone as an evangelistic tool I would recommend the book to someone who needed to understand the history of Christianity from the perspective of someone who lives and works—for the most part—outside the theological academy.

In spite of the fact that I found myself somewhat embarrassed by being reminded so poignantly of our less attractive underbelly this book could bring some readers to conclude—to use the words of Thomas Paine—"If we don't learn to love each other they're going to hang us one by one."

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Radically Unchurched: Who They Are & How To Reach Them
By Alvin L. Reid. Grand Rapids MI: Kregel Publications, 2002.
219pp.

This volume by Alvin L. Reid, Professor of Evangelism at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary is the result of years of scholarly research, classroom teaching, itinerant ministry, field observation, culture watching and obeying God. The twin themes of the author's life and ministry—evangelism, and spiritual awakening, permeates almost every page in a passionate preacher's tone and it crescendos with the concluding question to the reader, "What is Your Passion?"

This is a valuable book for the student and the practitioner because its content is quite balanced between diagnosis and prescription. It is neatly divided into two parts with five chapters each. Part I examines the causes of the loss of American's Christian identity and provides a profile of the radically unchurched. In Part II an implementation plan to reach the unchurched is laid out.

In chapter one, Reid defines the radically unchurched as "people who have no clear personal understanding of the message of the gospel, and who have had little or no contact with a Bible-teaching, Christ-honoring church" (p.21). This definition is similar to George Hunter's term "secular people" in his book, *Church for the Unchurched* (Abingdon, 1996) and it does not mean "irreligious".

Using Charles Arn's 1997 statistics the author concludes: "New Testament, genuine believers comprise 29 percent of the US population; the nominally churched, 30 percent; the radically unchurched, 41 percent" (p.22). The radically unchurched is analogous to the first-century Gentiles whom the early church aggressively evangelized. With less than one percent conversion growth the radically unchurched is hardly being reached with the gospel today. With the waning of the church's influence it is fast becoming an irrelevant institution in Western culture. This state of emergency explains why Alvin Reid joins a host of other writers in the last decade to passionately appeal for the church to change radically.

In chapter two, Reid borrows from Steve Sjogren's *Conspiracy of Kindness* (Servant, 1993) the three ways the church typically relates to culture: evasion, pervasion and invasion. These are similar to the categories of Richard Niebuhr in his classic work, *Christ and Culture* (Harper Colophon, 1975) of half a century ago. By evasion, the church avoids the culture and isolates itself from the world for fear of compromise and worldliness. Through pervasion, the church seeks "to overpower the culture by might, be it political, social or economic" (p.38).

The reviewer endorses Reid's conclusion that the best way for the church to relate to culture is through invasion. Jesus modeled it for us through his invasion of this world through the Incarnation. The church can then be distinct from culture and yet not distant from culture so that it can influence and impact it. Reid repeatedly calls the church to assault the kingdom of darkness with the gospel of light, which forces out the darkness of sin. The power to accomplish this is through the Holy Spirit, the fire to harness this is through prayer and the vessel God uses is a holy life.

Increasing numbers of the radically unchurched are largely the result of the shift from modernism to postmodernism in a vortex of seismic culture change during the past four decades. The church has failed to keep pace and be engaged with changing culture. Alvin's three groups of the unchurched are helpful to create informed strategies of evangelism: (1) The "Devoutly Religious Unchurched" include the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, New Agers, cultists (2) The "Open and Searching Unchurched" are those who

are searching for spiritual ministry but are ignorant about the Gospel and (3) The *Up and Out Unchurched* are similar to people profiled in Lee Strobel's book *Inside the Mind of the Unchreached Harry and Mary* (Zondervan, 1993). This is a small but significant group of unchurched adults who are intellectually resistant to the Gospel, well-educated, financially successful, upwardly mobile, and too busy or too content without reaching for or needing God.

The author introduces "the power of one" in chapter three. Illustrating with contemporary examples, he shows how of one individual has the power of influencing positively or negatively. Therefore, each Christian has a significant role to play. A life abandoned to the purpose of God and filled with his Spirit can change his/her world radically because the lost are seeking to connect with people who are real. Reid also believes in "the power of one people of God" with a united purpose. That could make a huge impact on our culture. The author is convinced that the Millennial/Bridger generation is poised for God to use it in a revival movement to reach the radically unchurched.

The author's prescription to reach the radically unchurched are spelled out in the last five chapters of the book. (1) Communicate the biblical truth uncompromisingly with compassion, clarity and conviction (2) Share propositional truth through narratives and personal testimonies in relational contexts (3) Invite the unchurched to meaningful corporate worship where the transcendence and intimacy of God can be experienced (4) Employ creative ways at all levels to communicate Christ and (5) plant churches focused intentionally on reaching the unchurched.

With many stories from public media and personal contacts, Reid helps the reader to understand the state of the church, exegete postmodern culture and identify the keys that radically living Christians can use to reach the radically unchurched. The subject and scripture indices only prod one to further reading and study.

T.V. Thomas

Gospel Handles: Find New Connections in Biblical Tests
By Francis C. Rossow. St. Louis MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2001. 351pp.

Itinerant evangelistic ministry has several interesting dimensions. One is to be an unofficial counselor to pastors. There is one quiet confession of pastors, that itinerant evangelists including this reviewer, hears often. Pastors readily admit to their failure to

prepare and present evangelistic messages even periodically in their churches. This predicament is quite understandable. In all their theological training most pastors were not equipped to proclaim the gospel to the unsaved. Long time Professor of Homiletics at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, Francis Rossow, has come to their rescue.

Rossow's unique contribution is a wonderful reference toolbox for all preachers. It showcases the Gospel-handle technique which the author has taught seminary students for quarter of a century. With the enthusiastic response and encouragement of his students, Rossow has made it available for a wider audience through this volume.

The author offers a formal definition of a gospel handle: "A gospel handle involves the selection from a biblical sermon text of an excerpt that contains absolutely no Gospel whatsoever. The preacher then uses this excerpt as an approach, bridge or handle to an account of the Gospel somewhere else in the Bible" (p.11).

To help the reader grasp the technique the author as a seasoned teacher, gives several examples. One example, Psalm 121:1, says, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." Exegetically, that verse contains no Gospel at all. It simply means that the God who created and sustains the hills can help the believer. Using the Gospel-handle technique one can make a bridge between the word "hills" and the hill of Golgotha in John 19:7. The author believes this is in the best hermeneutical tradition of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor 2:13). To illustrate the homiletical use of Gospel handles, the author supplies the reader with an Appendix of three sample sermons that he preached at seminary chapels.

The advantages of using the Gospel-handle technique include: (1) provides an additional and attractive Gospel to preach (2) strikes the hearer as creative (3) reinforces the unity of the scriptures for the hearer, and (4) creates a Gospel mindset for the preacher.

The author is candid about the three dangers he recognizes with the technique. First, a preacher may assume he has done the exegesis of the original text of the message because he is using a Gospel handle. Secondly, there is a risk of falling into the trap of allegorizing. Thirdly, the temptation of wanting to use Gospel handles every time one preaches. The antidotes for the dangers are the sanctified life of the preacher, responsible exegesis of scripture and tempered creativity in application.

The bulk of the book is divided into the four Gospels with each constituting one chapter. Texts for all Sundays and major church festivals have been chosen from each Gospel based on the

lectionary. For ease of reference the biblical texts are sequenced as they appear in the Scripture. The author unabashedly declares and defends why he loves and uses the texts from the King James Version. The reviewer is convinced that this volume would have served users better if the full scripture passage was provided under each biblical reference, even in a smaller print.

Below each biblical reference is the "Gospel in the Text" entry that could prove helpful for sermon preparation regardless what Bible translation one uses. The "Bonus Gospel via Gospel Handle" section that follows the "Gospel in the Text" are at various stages of development -- from idea stage to ready for transfer-to-sermon stage. The non-users of the King James Version may discover periodically that the degree of transferability of the Gospel handle varies.

Though this is a homiletic reference book, it can also be read for great profit for personal and family devotions. The reviewer wonders whether the author will attempt something similar for other portions of scripture.

T.V. Thomas

The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth.
By John R. Schneider. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002. x + 233 pp.

How are Christians to live responsibly when they are immersed in the economy and culture of modern capitalism? Further, can affluent Christians meet their moral obligations to the poor of the world without incurring an impossible burden of guilt? Schneider has written a controversial book that faces these questions head on by challenging many traditional assessments of wealth and capitalism.

Schneider is convinced that social theorists like Karl Marx and Max Weber and Christian ethicists like Ron Sider and Stanley Hauerwas are predisposed to a negative assessment of wealth. The former must now be read in light of new evidence and new forms of capitalism; the latter must be challenged by a new theological interpretation of scripture's teaching on material affluence. The author makes a case that material prosperity "is a fundamental biblical theme" and that affluence "(rightly understood) is the condition that God envisions for all human beings."

The structure of the book develops the thesis of the author in a logical and cumulative way while keeping the larger picture and argument clear with frequent and helpful summaries. The author

begins with an overview of the "new" culture of capitalism. This is a helpful introduction to the contemporary debate among theologians and ethicists over the character of capitalism. Schneider presents a fascinating array of statistics and historical examples to show the differences between premodern and contemporary habits of acquisition. He is not so much defending capitalism as he is showing the necessity of a coherent theology of affluence to guide Christians who want to live with integrity within the culture of capitalism.

Chapters two through eight develop the author's theology of affluence by exploring the canonical shape of scripture's account of material prosperity and human flourishing. Three chapters investigate the Old Testament narratives of creation, exodus, and exile. Here he makes the provocative claim that affluence in scriptural perspective is "not merely a circumstantial or relative good, but a cosmic good." Chapters five and six examine the social and economic world of Jesus and his disciples, showing how an oversimplified view of Jesus' identification with the poor causes "serious distortions and misjudgments" in Christian ethics. In addition to examining the historical elements of first century economics, Schneider raises serious theological questions about the redeeming scope of the Incarnation in relation to human economic culture as well as human nature.

In chapter seven Schneider challenges the predominant view that Jesus' teaching on wealth is negative by examining four parables in Luke's Gospel which indicate Luke's "special interest in rich Christians." He grounds Jesus' view of wealth in the prophetic typology of Luke's narratives. This chapter and the following one on "Narratives of Wealth in the Early Church" reveal Schneider to be fully conversant with the exegetical literature on wealth and possessions in the New Testament. The author provides an excellent bibliography and significant summaries of key books on the topic. The book ends with an epilogue in which the author sketches out the moral obligations of affluent Christians in an age of globalization.

This book is well organized and would make an excellent classroom text providing ethical analysis, exegetical evidence, and a helpful framework for fruitful debate. Particularly in classes on social ethics, mission and evangelism, and contextual theology, this author would prompt students to think beyond simplistic assumptions about capitalism, wealth, and the confrontation between Christ and culture. The book would also be helpful to congregations trying to provide spiritual and moral guidance to business and professional people looking to the church for a distinctively Christian understanding of living within the structures of capitalism.

Schneider maintains a "running debate" throughout the book with Ronald J. Sider, author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. His critique of Sider (and Hauerwas, Breuggeman, and others) is a model of careful exegetical and theological argument pursued with rigor and fairness. One significant aspect of this debate is Schneider's hermeneutical analysis of how to apply the words of the biblical prophets to the contemporary experience of affluence. Attention to this approach might help take the hot air out of a great many "prophetic" announcements in congregational and denominational politics.

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Free Indeed: Heroes of Black Christian History.

By Mark Sidwell, Bob Jones University Press, 2001. 154 pp.

I must admit that I was curious to see how a man from Bob Jones University would write about black heroes. If that sounds a bit judgmental let me hasten to add that I found the book both inspirational and informative. Mark Sidwell speaks of his black heroes as men (I was a bit surprised that he did not include any women) of faith and courage. These men represent over 100 years of ministry in nineteenth and twentieth centuries America. They were preachers, composers, teachers, theologians. Together they represent what God was doing among a race of people that were moving from freedom to freedom—Sidwell reminds us that black ministry is all about freedom from sin and freedom from those who would oppress the people.

I was especially interested to find the references to Oberlin College. As many of you know Oberlin was the center of abolitionism. Charles Finney insisted that those who did not vote correctly quenched the Spirit. Here is a book that is at once sympathetic and understanding of the black experience from someone who seems to know what he is talking about. I liked especially his willingness to explore at least some of the deep seated spirituality that seemed to be common to all of his heroes.

If this were a review at the pre-publishing stage my only suggestion would be to narrow the title a bit so that my expectations are not looking for the broader sweep and to be a bit more sensitive to gender specific nouns and pronouns. It really is important not to use the English language as if he is ignoring half the human race.

Nevertheless, it is a well written piece that would be profitable for classes in church history, preaching, and even evangelism.

Robert G. Tuttle, Jr.

God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism.

By Bruce A. Ware, Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2000. 240 pp.

Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness.

By Clark H. Pinnock. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 202 pp.

Even within the church it will surprise many that a discussion about God can generate much controversy. This is especially true when persons on both sides are solid trinitarians who believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the unique and only Lord and Savior of the world. Yet the issues in the debate over the "openness" of God are profoundly important.

These two books are well-written, reliable guides to the openness debate. Both authors seek to be irenic in spirit and fairly represent and genuinely engage the other side. Yet they use strong words as well. Each believes nothing less than the character of God is at stake, and Ware in particular expresses his profound alarm at openness statements. "We have here," he concludes, "a fundamentally different god, not merely a different version of God. For the sake of the glory that is God's alone we have no choice but to reject the openness model" (Ware, 230).

What is it about the openness position that elicits such dismay? In part, it's the fear that if God does not control everything, then the world is out of control. Openness theologians believe God created a world in which humans have genuine freedom to be in relationship with God and one another. This is seen as necessary for humans to truly love. But it also means God entertains the risk that we will thwart God's purposes—that is, sin—in order to have the possibility that we will love in freedom. God, then, does not control everything that occurs. At the same time, God "is endlessly resourceful" in achieving divine goals, sometimes working alone, sometimes inviting our participation, and at yet other times reacting to our decisions, "adapting his own plans to fit changing situations." (Pinnock, 4)

Openness theology redefines classical attributes of God in light of this model. God is immutable in character but can change plans; God is omnipotent but chooses to limit power to make room for human freedom; God is not impassible if that means God cannot

be affected by suffering in the world. It should be noted that God is affected because God chooses to be, consistent with God's love—openness theologians deny any ontological overlap between God and the world as is found in process theology.

Most radically—and for Ware the heart of the problem—is the openness redefinition of omniscience. God can know everything that can be known, including our hearts; God knows all possible outcomes, and God knows God's own plans. But God does not know our decisions in advance, for they do not yet exist to be known. Hence, in contrast to other Arminians, they deny divine foreknowledge of those events whose cause is tied to human agency.

Ware begins his critique with a fair and accurate rendering of the openness position (which Pinnock acknowledges in his book, p. 5). Then he exegetically examines the openness denial of exhaustive divine foreknowledge, both by challenging their interpretation of passages and drawing attention to other passages that affirm divine foreknowledge. With the former Ware argues that passages which with a straightforward reading seem to indicate limited divine knowledge can actually be better interpreted otherwise; moreover to apply the openness hermeneutic consistently would lead to denying God's exhaustive knowledge of past and present events as well. He then shows a large selection of passages which he believes teach exhaustive foreknowledge—"the scriptural evidence for this position," he says, "simply put, is overwhelming" (Ware, 100). This is, in my judgement, where Ware makes his strongest case.

He then proceeds to develop the implications of the openness view for faith and life. He believes openness theologians overemphasize God's immanence in order to elevate humanity—"God becomes more like us," a view which contradicts God's "great and glorious sovereignty" (144). Ultimately, the result is a diminished confidence in God's wisdom. Ware speaks again and again of the openness God taking "enormous" risks, of God waiting "to see how it all comes out" (49), of God "trying within his significant limitations to work things out for the good of his own" (194). While these depictions would be seen by openness proponents as parodies, from Ware's perspective they accurately depict a God shorn of exhaustive foreknowledge and meticulous providence.

Ware concludes with chapters on prayer, guidance, and suffering. He agrees that classical theism does need to be modified to account for divine/human relationship (a task to which he has contributed), but denies its outright rejection. He counters the openness claim that petitionary prayer affects God's decision; moreover he argues that our prayer for others is actually undermined

by openness claims because for God to work "decisively" in another's heart would deny their freedom (174). With regard to theodicy he is far more persuasive in his critique of openness claims of a loving God which (unlike the process God) could prevent suffering but chooses not to (208) than he is in arguing that God "ordains" and "uses" evil in order to accomplish good purposes but that God never "does" evil (212). Ware insists scripture teaches God indeed "ordains and governs" all "pain, suffering, disease, hardship, and death" (203), though always for good—a more comforting view, he believes, than saying God cannot prevent suffering, or worse, could prevent it but does not.

What is ultimately at stake for Ware is this: the open future of open theism brings with it "doubt, worry, mistrust, fear, and ultimately, loss of faith" (160). Yet Pinnock would see these same effects as all too often the result of classical theism, especially of a strict Calvinist variety. The claim that nothing occurs that is not ordained by God has sadly led persons away from faith, all the more tragic given that this is not the God of the Bible. It is this the openness view seeks to correct.

After an introduction which rehearses some of the controversy, Pinnock develops his argument in four chapters, based on his 2001 Didsbury lectures. In the first he shows the scriptural foundations for the openness view. The God he finds in scripture grieves, interacts, weeps, cries out, and responds to prayer (Pinnock, 63). We must, he insists, let scripture itself define the attributes of God. The reason classical theism consistently reinterprets what scripture so clearly says is because it has adopted a "pagan inheritance" which prevents our hearing the word of God.

Overcoming this pagan inheritance is the subject of his second chapter. After criticizing the Greek philosophical inheritance received through Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and evangelical theology Pinnock offers an alternative vision of a God who is personal, loving, and communal (trinitarian). Instead of immutability Pinnock speaks of God's "changeable faithfulness," holding "that *who God is* does not change but *what God experiences* changes" (85). Because God is love, God relates to the world such that God suffers with and for people. God is indeed sovereign Lord, but as such has chosen to give the world relative freedom. God's self-limitation makes room for genuine freedom in creation. God therefore experiences time, and does "not know the future in complete detail" (100). God's wisdom and resourcefulness is shown precisely in God's "governing a world with free creatures in it who have to be responded to moment by moment..." (102).

In his third chapter Pinnock outlines a "biblical philosophy," in contrast to both Hellenistic and process philosophies. Among the

ten areas he examines are the importance of revelation, "that the world exists by grace, not by necessity" (125), the intrinsic relation of love and freedom, the Holy Spirit in relation to the problem of evil, and the nature of God's faithfulness. He also provides a helpful comparison and critique of process philosophy.

The final chapter examines the practical implications of openness theology. The open view upholds genuine freedom (divine and human), understands our lives as meaningful, describes God as relational and non-coercive, and makes better sense of both sanctification and the call to discipleship. With regard to the latter, Pinnock argues that what we do makes a difference—God calls us to missional responsibility as covenant partners. Prayer is a genuine dialogue, and intercession may well make a difference in God's action. The scriptural evidence that God is influenced by prayer is for Pinnock overwhelming. God provides guidance and brings good out of evil, but God does not ordain evils such as the Holocaust. While God is "not the cause of our suffering, God is always alongside, helping us through it" (176), and, in response especially to expectant faith, may intervene (125).

These books raise fundamental issues for the practice of evangelism. Who is the God we proclaim, and what is the nature of the faith we share? How does God work in the world and what does it mean to be in relationship with God? And—although the truth of their arguments must be ultimately tested by revelation—which view of God would bring comfort and hope to those who suffer or grieve, or who seek meaning and direction in life? Finally, when faced with someone who has rejected God, which God is it that they have rejected?

It may be that the immediate benefit of these books for evangelism is not so much their persuading us that one view is right and the other wrong, but in the issues they force us to face. Because the questions they raise are the very questions with which both seekers and Christians struggle in their own lives, attending to this controversy can enable us to be more sensitive and insightful in our own teaching and evangelism.

Henry H. Knight III

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