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The Pacific Journal of Theological Research (PJTR) is an open-access online journal which aims to provide an international vehicle for scholarly theological research with a special focus on the Pacific region. However, topics are not limited to the Pacific region, and all subject matter potentially of significance for theological scholarship and ecclesial communities will be considered. PJTR is especially interested in interdisciplinary biblical, theological, and historical research that intersects with other scholarly disciplines and knowledge sources. PJTR is published twice-yearly in May and November. Articles are blind peer-reviewed, with submissions sent to international scholars in the appropriate fields for critical review before being accepted for publication. The editors will provide a style guide on enquiry. All manuscript submissions should be addressed to Myk Habets at: MHabets@laidlaw.ac.nz.

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EDITORIAL:

Andy Goodliff, Stephen Holmes, and Simon Woodman

There are not many opportunities for British Baptists engaged in theological and biblical research to collaborate or disseminate their work. This observation stimulated the three of us to host the first *Theology Live!* in December 2017. Inspired by BMS World Mission, who in recent years have been hosting day conferences comprising short talks from a range of speakers under the banner *Catalyst Live!*, we organised a day for thirteen Baptist theologians and scholars, who are or have been recently engaged in postgraduate theological and biblical work. In addition to the participants, a further 60 or so people attended to hear the presentations and join the conversation.

Our first objective was to provide a platform for the participants to share their work, both with one another and with a wider group. Our hope is that this creates a community of Baptists who are taking theology seriously, and who can join their voices together to speak into the wider Baptist Context.

Secondly, we are hoping to stimulate a network of Baptist researchers, both as a means of support, but also as a generator of future collaborative projects. We recognise that post-graduate study can sometimes be a lonely journey, with the majority of Baptists undertaking this whilst remaining in local pastorate. Juggling church ministry alongside carving out space to read and write can be difficult, and encouragement hard to find.

We are grateful to the interest shown by the editors of the *Pacific Journal of Theological Research* in this project, and for offering this special edition of papers from the first *Theology Live!*. We hosted a second day in January 2019 and a third is planned for January 2020.

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF BAPTIST THEOLOGY

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What do we mean when we say ‘Baptist theology’? Let me attempt a typology, with examples drawn from the last couple of generations of British Baptist scholars, and with some annotations. I do not do this to make normative judgements—all of the forms of work (and every one of the specific examples) I discuss below seems to me to be worthwhile and appropriate—but to offer some distinctions that might help those of us who do such work to reflect more consciously on our own practices and methodological choices. For this reason, I will suggest that various pieces of my own earlier work fit within every position in this typology. I am acutely conscious of the risk of appearing immodest in referencing things, most of them very minor, that I have written; the goal of insisting that there is no right place to land in this typology seems sufficiently important to run that risk, however.

In all that follows I use ‘theology’ in the broad sense, encompassing Biblical studies, church history, pastoral theology, &c., not just systematic theology. The extent to which there are differences between the subdisciplines will be a matter for discussion, but will not change my basic proposals in this paper. I also here assume the broad account of Baptist theology that I have given before, which I have termed a ‘middle ground’ approach: Baptists are differentiated from other Christians only by questions of ecclesiology, but our particular account of ecclesiology is surprisingly far-reaching.¹ I distinguish this from a ‘minimalist’ approach, which holds Baptists to be just generic evangelicals with a different practice of baptism and church government, and from a ‘maximilist’ approach, which holds Baptists to be the only true Christians, and so fundamentally different from all other groups. In a sense, the typology I offer here is a justification of that middle way: the reality of the earlier positions in the typology is evidence against the maximilist approach, but the possibility of the later positions suggests that the minimalist approach is inadequate.²

My typology might be compared with the three-point typology of Baptist theology offered by Curtis Freeman some years ago.³ Freeman’s three types might be described as ‘academic theology’; ‘ecclesial theology’; and ‘baptist theology’. The first type is distinguished from the other two by its inattentiveness to worshipping communities, except perhaps as curious objects of investigation; the third type is distinguished

¹ See Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 7-8 for my first statement of this thesis, and idem., “Beyond a Bath and a Book: Baptist Theological Commitments,” *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 9 (2014): 11-24, particularly pages 12-18, where I more carefully locate my approach as a ‘modified minimalism’ (p. 17).

²² William John Lyons offers an interesting reflection, as an Anglican, to a volume describing the possibilities of Baptist hermeneutics, lamenting that “Baptist churchmen and women as I have encountered them are too often little more than members of panevangelical churches.” Lyons, “In Appreciation of ‘Reluctant’ Prophets,” in *The “Plainly Revealed” Word of God? Baptist Hermeneutics in Theory and Practice*, eds. Helen Dare and Simon Woodman (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011), 294-301, p. 297. Lyons, that is, hears Baptist scholars as assuming and expounding something akin to my ‘middle ground’ approach, but sees lived Baptist practice, at least in the UK, as defaulting to what I have termed a ‘minimalist’ approach. I am not sure that I am quite so convinced of this point as he appears to be, but I do understand it.

³ Curtis W. Freeman, “The ‘Coming of Age’ of Baptist Theology in Generation Twenty-Something,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 27 (2000): 21-38. See pages 32-8 for the typology.

from the other two by elevating baptist communities to normative status. My typology is focused on methodology, rather than location, and so is just different to Freeman's; that said, my fourth and fifth types would seem necessarily to map onto his third. My first three, however, divide the territory differently from his first two, and so do not map in any interesting way.

With these remarks in place, I offer my typology of 'Baptist theology':

1. THEOLOGICAL WORK DONE BY BAPTISTS

We might start, very simply, with the claim that Baptist theology is any theological work done by Baptists. George Beasley-Murray's commentary on John;⁴ John Colwell's account of the doctrine of election in Karl Barth;⁵ or Helen Wordsworth's study of parish nursing,⁶ are each examples of significant theological work that is 'Baptist' only in the sense of the denominational self-identification of the author. In many cases, of course, this will be entirely appropriate, in that the right methodology for the research question has no denominational entailments. If tasked with expounding the thought of a patristic theologian faithfully, or with tracing the social history of medieval religious orders, it seems unlikely, *prima facie*, that the research methodology will be different because one is Baptist. The tools of critical reading and the methodologies of social history at least appear to be ecumenical.⁷

Other research questions might be accepting of different answers. I will discuss below whether there is any specifically Baptist (or baptistic⁸) ways of doing biblical exegesis—I have argued in the past that there is.⁹ My arguments, however, have never excluded the importance of scholarly exegesis in the classical mould; rather they have suggested a necessary extra step where the gathered community receives the exegete's work as data for its own deliberations. A Baptist exegete, then, may (if my earlier arguments have been right) stop at the point where scholarly exegesis typically stops, or may push on to reflect on an eccentric, and specifically Baptist, practice of reception. If this is right, there is no failure on the part of the Baptist exegete who works only to broad scholarly norms, and so much Baptist Biblical scholarship might well fall in this area.

⁴ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 36 (London: Thomas Nelson, 1999).

⁵ John E. Colwell, *Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Thought of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1989).

⁶ Helen Anne Wordsworth, *Rediscovering a Ministry of Health: Parish Nursing as a Mission of the Local Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).

⁷ Qualifications here indicate that I am open to argument on these points; at present I cannot quite imagine what the argument would look like, however, so I take my point to stand until effectively challenged.

⁸ Following James McClendon, and many others who have followed him, I use 'baptist' or 'baptistic' to recognise that there are a family of Christian traditions who would not own the title 'Baptist' (and in some cases—the Society of Friends, e.g.—might not agree with our practice of baptism), but who represent a similar 'believers church' perspective. See James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Ethics: Systematic Theology vol. 1* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986). To avoid ugly repetition, every reference to 'Baptist' in this paper should be read as including the possibility of a broader baptistic grouping unless I explicitly exclude it; I will make this assumption explicit from time to time to remind the reader.

⁹ Stephen R. Holmes, "Baptists and the Bible," *Baptist Quarterly* 43 (2010): 410-27; idem. "Scripture in Liturgy and Theology," in *Theologians on Scripture*, ed. Angus Paddison (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 105-18.

For Baptists seeking an academic career, or even academic recognition, early work will probably fit on this point of the typology: we need to prove to our scholarly guilds that we are competent scholars before we may operate as explicitly Baptist scholars.¹⁰ This perhaps raises an interesting question for our denominational colleges: to what extent might the need/desire to prove academic competence to the guilds (and so to work like this, or in the next position on the typology) inhibit the production of self-consciously 'Baptist' scholarship, that fits in my fourth and fifth positions in this typology? I raise this as a question, which every Baptist college I have detailed knowledge of across the world is already wrestling with. I suspect that there is no general answer. In parts of Europe where Baptists are still suspected of being a cult, maintaining general scholarly respectability might be a crucial missional move, for example.

2. THEOLOGICAL WORK DONE BY BAPTISTS ON SUBJECTS RELATED TO BAPTIST LIFE

Second, we might consider theological work which fits all the methodological criteria in the first position above, but which addresses particular Baptist interests. Beasley-Murray's great book on *Baptism in the New Testament*;¹¹ Ruth Gouldbourne's historical work on the Anabaptist Casper Schwenckfeld;¹² or Paul Goodliff's analysis of the attitudes towards sacrament of contemporary BUGB ministers,¹³ might each fit here. Methodologically, each study could have been done by a scholar from any denomination (or none); the pieces are rendered specifically 'Baptist' because the authors are Baptists studying things that Baptists are particularly interested in.

The most developed area of British Baptist academic work is historical; Whitley's scholarship is still taken seriously far beyond even the theological academy,¹⁴ and in more recent times we might list (at least) David Bebbington, John Coffey, and Brian Stanley as British Baptist church historians who have attained to the highest honours in their academic discipline. In every case, an examination of their corpus, and of the doctoral studies they have supervised, will reveal many works that fit this type: serious historical scholarship, conducted according to the best standards of the discipline, which however takes as its subject matters that Baptists find particularly interesting. Stanley's bicentennial history of the Baptist Missionary

¹⁰ I would hardly hold my own career up for emulation, but it happens that my own early work conformed to this pattern, albeit without any design on my part. I worked on a series of historical studies, of which one or two fitted into the second position in my current typology, as addressing subjects related to Baptist life, but which all could have been done by any scholar trained in historical theology. See Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); idem. *Listening to the Past: The Place of Tradition in Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002).

¹¹ George R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973).

¹² Ruth Gouldbourne, *The Flesh and the Feminine: Gender and Theology in the Writings of Casper Schwenckfeld* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006).

¹³ Paul Goodliff, *Ministry, Sacrament, and Representation: Ministry and Ordination in Contemporary Baptist Theology, and the Rise of Sacramentalism* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2010).

¹⁴ Wing's *Gallery of Ghosts*, a standard publication of the MLA listing books known to have existed but lost to contemporary libraries, uses Whitley's work as a source, for example.

Society¹⁵ is an obvious example: any historian could have done the work, but it is not a surprise that a Baptist historian in fact did.¹⁶

There are research subjects where the boundary between this position on the typology and the others on either side is rather blurred. A British Baptist doctoral student studying (e.g.) pacifism in the early patristic church might just be interested in the subject, or might have been convinced through interaction with Alan Kreider's work that pacifism is a Baptist, or at least baptistic, theme, and so particularly deserving of her attention. On the other side, work done here still satisfies the scholarly guilds that it is methodologically sound; if its subject depends on a private interest, that renders it slightly quirky, but by no means without scholarly norms. This distinguishes it from the next position, where work is done to promote a particular agenda, which renders it suspicious in scholarly terms.

3. THEOLOGICAL WORK DONE BY BAPTISTS ATTEMPTING TO SERVE THE NEEDS, POLEMICAL OR PASTORAL, OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATIONS

Beasley-Murray's *Baptism in the New Testament* is a difficult book to locate: is it an exegetical analysis done by a Baptist that happens to support Baptist conclusions, or is it a polemical piece, using admittedly-excellent exegetical argument to press for a conclusion that was predetermined? The distinction is rather artificial, of course (what academic study was ever totally disinterested?), but it is also the boundary between the second and third positions on my typology. In the particular case I have cited, questions of history and eminence almost certainly intrude: George Beasley-Murray established himself as a leading international NT scholar, and so his account of baptism was received with more seriousness than would have been afforded to exactly the same arguments coming from an unknown, but confessedly-Baptist, writer.

Nigel Wright entitled his study of church-state relations *Disavowing Constantine*,¹⁷ the polemic is already visible there. This is not to denigrate his scholarship at all; the book meets any standard of scholarly excellence that I, at least, know. The scholarship is, however, directed toward an end; a confessionally Baptist theologian exploring the logic of the constantinian settlement was never going to conclude that it was simply positive. Edward Pillar's various published forays into anti-imperial readings of Paul might be read similarly: without any implied criticism of the scholarship, we know what sort of an answer a Baptist exegete is going to discover when asking about Paul's attitude to imperial claims.¹⁸

¹⁵ Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Mission Society, 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992).

¹⁶ Paul Fiddes and Rex Mason make a similar point in two contributions to Dare and Woodman, "*Plainly Revealed*", arguing that the focus of (British) Baptist OT scholarship in the twentieth century on prophetic literature relates directly to a Baptist nonconformist heritage. See Fiddes, "Prophecy, Corporate Personality, and Suffering: Some Themes and Methods in Baptist Old Testament Scholarship," 72-94, especially pages 73-8, and Mason, "Response to Paul Fiddes," pages 95-8, especially 97-8.

¹⁷ Nigel G. Wright, *Disavowing Constantine: Mission, Church, and the Social Order in the Theologies of John Howard Yoder and Jürgen Moltmann* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000).

¹⁸ See, e.g., Edward Pillar, *Resurrection as Anti-Imperial Gospel: 1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10 in Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013). With far less exegetical skill than Pillar, I reached many of the same conclusions, for many of the same reasons, in my *The Politics of Christmas* (London: Theos, 2011).

This is not an unusual position in contemporary theological study; a liberationist perspective on Paul and empire is going to be even more reliably negative than a Baptist one; feminist readings of the place of women in the gospel narratives (say) will either end up dismissing Christianity, or finding a positive account of what is said—as Baptist exegete Anne Clements did in her study of the women in the Matthean genealogy.¹⁹ In the postmodern academy, theological work, like all other work, is partial and committed; if Marxists are able to proclaim their particular understandings, as they are, Baptists should not be ashamed of doing the same. (And Marxist Baptists should flourish freely as well...)

Sometimes the polemical work will address internal questions. With several others, I was involved in writing a statement, ‘The Courage to be Baptist’, that sought to assert a particular position concerning questions of sexual ethics that are presently deeply controversial in British Baptist life.²⁰ We did not, I can report, enter into the writing of that statement wondering where our investigations would lead us; we knew the answer we wanted to propose. For all of us involved, that was on the basis of varying, but in every case substantial, amounts of scholarly work on the questions beforehand—we coalesced as a group because we agreed in important ways. No doubt some of each of our early work—probably unpublished—on questions of sexual ethics belonged to position two in my current typology—thinking about a question that was presently important to Baptists (in the UK), we played with interpretations and ideas, and began to form conclusions. Having formed conclusions, however, we each began to see the need to intervene in current UK Baptist debates with a definite end in mind. Our published statement, therefore, argued for certain positions unashamedly; it was, in that sense, polemical, and so belongs squarely in this third position.

4. THEOLOGICAL WORK DONE USING SPECIFICALLY BAPTIST (OR BAPTISTIC) THEMES ARE KEY ORGANISING CATEGORIES

If there is a binary boundary in the typology I am trying to develop, it lies between my third and fourth positions. Positions 1-3 assume the rightness of general scholarly norms, and explore what it is to be Baptist in the light of that assumption; positions four and five, by contrast, assume that the essence of being Baptist lies in challenging general scholarly norms.

The less radical way of mounting such a challenge is to accept that the modes of argument that are accepted in broader scholarly discourse are correct, but that there are themes that have been ignored that should be taken as decisive or even normative. The two most obvious examples in recent British Baptist life are peace and covenant. Peace as an organising category for theology is more associated with some of the communities we might describe as ‘baptistic’ rather than Baptist, of course: the historic peace churches include the Mennonites and Quakers. The rediscovery of sixteenth-century anabaptism as a potential inspiration for Baptist life post-christendom, and the personal inspiration of Alan and Eleanor Kreider and

¹⁹ Anne Clements, *Mothers on the Margin: The Significance of the Women in Matthew's Genealogy* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

²⁰ See “The Courage to be Baptist” at www.somethingtodeclare.org.uk (last accessed 20/11/2018).

Stuart Murray-Williams, led to a great deal of interest in the peace churches as models for British Baptist life in the closing years of the twentieth century, culminating in a commitment to explore becoming a Peace Church in the 1998 BUGB document *Five Core Values for a Gospel People* (which however was never followed through). In terms of native British Baptist theology, Steve Finamore appropriated Girard in some powerful ways in both a monograph and his earlier Whitley lecture;²¹ he also contributed to an edited collection exploring peace as an organising motif for Baptist theology.²²

Paul Fiddes has used covenant as a key organising category in a number of publications, most significantly perhaps *Tracks and Traces*,²³ a collection of papers on Baptist identity; similarly, *On Being the Church*, a collaborative volume by Brian Haymes, Ruth Gouldbourne, and Anthony Cross,²⁴ works from an account of the calling and gathering act of the triune God to a doctrine of the church that is centred on covenant. Haymes, Gouldbourne, and Cross see the human act of covenant making as being contained within the divine covenant of salvation;²⁵ Fiddes is more daring. He works out hints he finds in Browne, Smyth, and Keach, with the help of an actualistic reading of Barth's doctrine of election, to suggest that the the covenant which forms a church is in some important sense the same as the covenant of salvation that God has made with humanity, and even with the 'covenant of grace'—the inner triune relationships of Father, Son, and Spirit.²⁶ A particular concept of covenant is proposed as an organising category for ecclesiology, soteriology, and even theology proper, the doctrine of God. (It is worth noting that this differs fundamentally from the 'federal theology' of seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy, which focused exclusively on covenant as an organising category for soteriology, although it found many resonances outward from that; Fiddes gestures to this in citing John Gill who, although a Baptist, at this point followed the Reformed and did not link the church covenant with the covenant of redemption.²⁷) In being Baptist, for Fiddes, we know something decisive about covenant that causes us to construct theology differently from others.

5. THEOLOGICAL WORK DONE IN A DISTINCTIVELY BAPTIST (OR BAPTISTIC) WAY

Sean Winter's 2007 Whitley lecture, subtitled 'Biblical interpretation in covenant perspective,'²⁸ is clearly influenced by Fiddes here, and draws on some of the same sources; it moves, however, into the fifth category of my typology because Winter does not just use covenant as an organising category, but as a reason to

²¹ Steve Finamore, *The Bible, Violence, and the End of the World: The 2001-2 Whitley Lecture* (Oxford: Whitley, 2000); idem, *God, Order, and Chaos: René Girard and the Apocalypse* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009).

²² Anthony Clarke, ed., *Expecting Justice but Seeing Bloodshed: Some Baptist contributions to following Jesus in a violent world* (Oxford: Whitley, 2004).

²³ Paul S. Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces: Baptist Identity in Church and Theology* (SBHT 13) (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003).

²⁴ Brian Haymes, Ruth Gouldbourne, and Anthony R. Cross, *On Being the Church: Revisioning Baptist Identity* (SBHT 21) (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008).

²⁵ *On Being the Church*, 206-7, with examples ranging from Gainsborough in 1606 to Westbury-on-Trim in 1946.

²⁶ Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces*, 21-47 & 65-82; for the final point explicitly, see page 79.

²⁷ Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces*, 34-5.

²⁸ Sean Winter, *More Light and Truth? Biblical Interpretation in Covenant Perspective: The 2007 Whitley Lecture* (Oxford: Whitley, 2007).

propose a distinctive methodology—here, of exegesis. He proposes, that is, that Baptists should read Scripture differently to others just because they are Baptist. The thesis statement that he arrives at asserts that “biblical interpretation in covenantal perspective should be understood as the church’s active, diverse and ongoing engagement with the biblical texts.”²⁹ This focus on the church, the gathered community, as the proper location for Biblical interpretation is one I have also explored;³⁰ the radical nature of the claim should not be missed: there is some significant sense, if Winter is correct, in which the local church meeting is better able to interpret Scripture than the university seminar of biblical scholars.³¹

Now, neither Winter or I wish to dismiss the work of the exegete’s guild; I have argued why my proposal does not at some length in an essay;³² Winter implies it in his statement quoted above. He is constructing a method of biblical interpretation which, as is usual in the practice of his guild, can and will be deployed alongside other methods in approaching texts. He does seem to imply a certain normativity for this method for Baptists, however: if Fiddes’s account of covenant relations is correct, then this can be shown to be the best way to read the Bible—a point I would not disagree with.

Winter suggests that Baptist ecclesiology, or at least one form of it, will cause us to revise our exegetical practices; what of our theological methodology more broadly? The same, or a very similar, argument would seem to obtain: if gathered church meeting is where the mind of Christ is most clearly, or most properly, known, then theological claims should find their validation more easily in the congregation than in the academy. Paul Fiddes makes a stronger and more complex argument than this in the first chapter of his *Tracks and Traces*, predicated on the suggestion that every Christian community gives rise to its own theology.³³ He identifies several aspects of a ‘Baptist experience’—the direct rule of Christ in the local church; believers’ baptism; the priesthood of all believers—which he believes will necessarily shape the way Baptists do theology.

Of course, if Fiddes is right, and every Christian community gives rise to its own theology, then Baptists are not distinctive in so doing. Here we might return to the question of the relative distinctiveness of our Baptist tradition, with which I began this paper. If we assume that Baptists are no more different from (say) Presbyterians than Presbyterians are from (say) Anglicans/Episcopalians, then, although there might be a distinctively Baptist theology as Fiddes argues, it will be distinctive only in the sense of being a slightly altered version of the same basic faith. If we assume that Baptists (together with baptists) are radically different from all other Christian traditions, then we would expect the minor differences between other traditions of theology to pale by comparison with the fundamentally other theology of B/baptists. I have argued that Baptists are distinctive only in our ecclesiology, but that our different ecclesiology is surprisingly generative of radical positions. I suggest that this is also true here, with this question of theological

²⁹ Winter, *More Light*, 28.

³⁰ Holmes, “Baptists and the Bible”.

³¹ Helen Dare makes a similar argument in her essay “‘In the Fray’: Reading the Bible in Relationship,” in *Plainly Revealed*, 230-52.

³² See my “Scripture in Liturgy and Theology”.

³³ Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces*, 3-6.

methodology in view. On this basis I suggest that our theological methodology will be surprisingly radical, but basically ecumenical. This description of course demands some filling out.

Brian Haymes has argued for four distinctive aspects of a Baptist theological method: continual re-invention; imaginative indwelling of the biblical narrative; generous pluralism; and a collegial theological task between experts and other church members.³⁴ This last point connects with Winter's exegetical proposals (and my suggested extension of them to theological argument more generally): Baptists believe that God is best known in the gathered worshipping community, and if we are right to believe this, then we will have a different account of how to think theologically. Here, I propose, is the point where (for those of us who are B/baptists) our ecclesiology affects our theological methodology decisively.

The conference where I first offered these thoughts was a conference for people who were doing academic work whilst serving as ministers of local churches. Most of our Baptist scholars in the UK fit this description (if by 'scholar' we mean someone with, or working towards, a doctoral degree); perhaps twenty have posts in our ministerial training colleges, and fewer than half that academic posts in mainstream universities. As a community we have sometimes mourned this; perhaps we should instead celebrate it? The reasons for mourning are obvious: our best thinkers have little time to think or read, and almost no time to write. What reasons might we find to celebrate?

Pastoral ministers, more than any others, are embedded in the life of the local worshipping community. If, on a Baptist account, theology can only be adequately done from within that context, pastoral ministers are uniquely well-placed to do theology. Even if not on top of the recent literature, they bring insights from their pastoral context that are far more important for an adequate account of the matter under discussion than any merely academic theologian or exegete can ever bring. This is not, as I have noted earlier, to denigrate or disparage the work of the theologian or exegete—that work matters—but a contextual evaluation which only pastoral ministers are capable of matters as much or more.

This reflection poses a serious challenge to those seeking to serve as Baptist theologians whilst holding academic positions—like me. We, on this account, have a responsibility—indeed, a need—to locate ourselves in the closest possible connection with a particular local worshipping community. I would suggest that, in British Baptist life (at least—but it is all I know) we in fact know this, albeit tacitly. It happens that my local church entered a period of pastoral vacancy recently; realising that I would be called on to give a bit more energy there, I resigned from a couple of national groups I served on, one ecumenical, one pan-evangelical. I had been involved in both for over a decade, and received many generous comments that, however, fell into a pattern: Anglicans and Roman Catholics expressed varying levels of amazement that someone would decide to step back from national service to focus on the local congregation; Baptists—and baptists, mostly from the new churches—assumed (as I had done) that it was the obvious thing to do. Our B/baptist scholars (they were both groups drawing together academics to advise Christian charities) understand something about the primacy of the local congregation, even if they have not articulated it.

³⁴ Brian Haymes, "Theology and Baptist Identity," in *Doing Theology in a Baptist Way*, ed. Paul S. Fiddes (Oxford: Whitley, 2000), 1-5.

This, so far, is theoretical: what does the local congregation give to the would-be theologian, that is necessary for her work? This question deserves far more serious attention than I am able to give it at the end of this paper, but let me suggest two things in outline. First, drawing on Lindbeck,³⁵ if the speech of the worshipping community is primary theology, then deep immersion in a worshipping community is necessary for adequately debating theological questions. The B/baptist twist on this would be to insist that a particular and local community is necessary: one may not gain the needed insights from touring various churches and engaging with them, because the decisive worshipping communities for understanding faith are local covenanted congregations.

Of course, this is a claim based on a Baptist ecclesiology that might be challenged, but Baptist, and baptistic, theologians will want to assert it, and to live in conformity with it. The point is not that the faith of one Baptist church is fundamentally different from the faith of another, but that faith is lived out, and so narrated, in particular contexts, and so the best way to understand faith (as well as context) is to be profoundly attentive to, and thoroughly immersed in, one lived expression of faith. The authentically Baptist theologian will want to be utterly entwined with the life of a particular Christian community, because reflection on that life will be absolutely key for her academic work, whether she foregrounds that or not.

It is important to note here that this commitment to the local community in Baptist theology is never a reason to be detached from wider structures. The instinct to associate runs very deep in Baptist life, and every local Baptist community will be in covenant relationships with other congregations, in Associations, Connexions, Unions, and the like. The Baptist theologian's responsibility to her local community may sometimes involve recalling these broader relationships and insisting that they are a part of the identity of the local community, as I shall explore in my second point below.

One important part of that will be hearing, indwelling, and then exploring, the tacit systematic connections of a community. How does a doctrine function in this church's life and faith? Which doctrines are instinctively associated with each other, which reached for when solace and assurance is needed, which celebrated as precious distinctives? This will always be a contextual question—in seventeenth-century England, for example, to speak of 'covenant' was already to engage in political theology, and controversial political theology at that; this is far less true today, where 'covenant' might speak primarily of a counter-cultural witness to lasting intentional community in an individualistic culture. The doctrine of the Trinity, even, will function very differently in the discourse of a twenty-first century church acutely aware of its plural context than it did for a Baptist community in the seventeenth century (and will function differently in different contexts today, being a crucial mark of orthodoxy for minority Baptist communities suspected of being cults by established state churches, for example). Even the systematic task of theology, then, will be decisively affected by deep immersion in a local community, for the Baptist theologian.

Second, the Baptist theologian will be conscious of the different cultural possibilities, and so able to bring prophetic critique to her community. Alert to the political charge the word 'covenant' once had, she

³⁵ George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox, 1984).

will be able to ask if losing that has meant losing something important, if speaking of covenant should go hand-in-hand with speaking of peace, and should both support, and be supported by, anti-imperial readings of Paul (for example). In bringing such critique she will never disown or stand against her community—to do so would be unBaptist, at least in the way I have been developing the concept here—rather she will recognise that the church is gathered and covenanted to follow the ways of God, ‘known and to be made known’, and that the calling of each member is ‘to walk together and watch over each other’, and so will see that challenge and critique is intrinsic to faithful membership of the community.

6. THE THEOLOGICAL LIFE OF THE BAPTIST THEOLOGIAN

How, then, shall we live? I have explored what Baptist theology might look like—responsible to scholarly norms, but willing to be eccentric and challenging in its baptistic responsibility to the life of the local worshipping community (and the wider networks that entails). I have suggested that there is a sense in which the professional academic is handicapped by this, and the pastor-theologian privileged; such comments are theoretical, and might well be regarded as idealistic. Whatever benefits close inclusion in the life of the local community brings, they are far outweighed, it may be argued, by the privileges of a university post, including both access to resources and time to read and write.

There is some truth in this. There is certainly something important about access to resources (both financial and academic; we might hope that the present drive to open access publishing will help with the latter, although it is in grave danger of exacerbating the former—the move is towards the author paying the cost of publishing, so material will be free to access for the reader, which is in grave danger of further damaging the ability of those without institutional backing to publish academic work). Assumptions about generous amounts of time to read and write, however, can be rather romanticized given the reality of the modern university; this privilege is better narrated in parallel terms to the privilege of the pastor-theologian already identified—it is rooted in the benefits of inhabiting a particular community, in this case a scholarly community. It is not so much limitless time to read as an individual that is on offer, as the chance to be part of a community where most things will have been read, and so can be accessed and assessed through conversation.

The Baptist theologian will flourish, I have argued, only if he is deeply immersed in both ecclesial and academic communities. Our churches, at least at best, provide opportunity for the academic theologian to be immersed in ecclesial community, whether any given theologian takes advantage of these opportunities or not. How might we arrange for our pastor-theologians to be immersed in academic community? In some places, it will be naturally possible (in my home institution in St Andrews, for example, we offer an honorary lectureship to any doctorally-educated minister in the town routinely, inviting them to be part of our community), but these contexts will be the exceptions. If we (as a Baptist community) believe in the importance of our pastor-theologians, we will want to find ways of creating academic community in which they can be embedded and flourish; if my characterization of the benefits of being embedded in academic

community is correct, then the most important part of this will be constructing opportunities for conversation, for overhearing and sharing expertise.

MATTHEW'S GADARENE SWINE AND THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO: AN INTERTEXTUAL READING

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The stories of Joshua's conquest of Canaan are regarded as seriously problematic by many readers of the Bible today. Various attempts have been made to provide a theodicy for these narratives,¹ but one area which has been largely overlooked is whether the New Testament provides a commentary upon them. This paper offers a possible intertextuality between Matthew's gospel and the conquest of Canaan, suggesting that the later text might in this way be functioning as an early commentary upon the older one.

Intertextuality is present when a text enters into dialogue with a prior text by means of such literary devices as shared motifs, formulaic language, and direct quotation.² One of the chief tools used in the construction of an intertextual relationship is allusion. As Cynthia Edenburg says, "In allusion, one text constructs a covert level of significance by indirectly invoking another text. For allusion to fulfill its purpose as a signifying device, it must be accompanied by textual markers that alert the audience to an underlying significance."³

Detecting such markers is not always simple, however, and intertextual relationships can sometimes appear to lie more in the eye of the beholder than of the author. In order to try to avoid such over-reading, Richard Hays offers several criteria for evaluating whether a putative intertextual allusion is plausible or not.⁴ The argument in this paper will be that the postulated textual echoes satisfy his criteria of availability, volume, recurrence, and thematic coherence.

MATTHEW AS RECAPITULATION OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

It is well established that parts of Matthew's gospel offer a recapitulation of the story of Israel in the life of Jesus. Joel Kennedy, for instance, has demonstrated a detailed network of intertextual links between

¹ See, for example, the constructive conversation between C.S. Cowles, Eugene Merrill, Daniel Gard and Tremper Longman III in C.S. Cowles, et al, *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and the Canaanite Genocide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), or the more recent offering by Paul Copan and Matthew Flannagan, *Did God Really Command Genocide? Coming to Terms with the Justice of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

² K. Nielsen, "Intertextuality and Hebrew Bible," *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 80 (2000): 17-32; C. Edenburg, "Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Questions," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (35) (2010): 131-48.

³ Edenburg, "Intertextuality," 144.

⁴ Hays' six criteria are: (1) Availability of the putative intertext to the original readers of the text under study; (2) Volume (the number of explicit repetitions of words or syntactical patterns); (3) Recurrence (how many times the author refers to that passage elsewhere); (4) Thematic coherence (how well the alleged echo fits into the argument); (5) Historical plausibility (the likelihood that the meaning effect would have been understood by its original readers); (6) History of interpretation (whether have other readers have identified the proposed allusion). R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 29-32.

Matthew 1.1-4.11 and the exodus story.⁵ Using a combined methodology which includes historical criticism, literary critical analysis and attention to the theological concerns of the narrative, he has shown that by means of recapitulation, representation and embodiment, the early life of Jesus is being represented by the gospel writer as a passive and active re-enactment of the flight from Egypt and the wandering in the desert. His work was anticipated several decades earlier, *in nuce*, by the work of M.D. Goulder, who described the first five chapters of Matthew as being antitypical of the Joseph and exodus stories.⁶

This paper represents an investigation into the possibility that this recapitulation motif extends further into the gospel, and in particular, whether the conquest of Canaan might in some way be referenced in Matthew's account of Jesus' visit to gentile territory in Matthew 8. While the conquest narratives occupy a large portion of the book of Joshua, the archetypal event is the conquest of Jericho, and the archetypal action is the devotion to destruction (sometimes referred to as 'the ban', or the transliterated Hebrew word *herem*) of the peoples of the land and their cities.

Naturally we would not expect exact correspondence in the telling. The comparisons identified by Joel Kennedy have been marked by both their similarities and their dissimilarities—the latter often occurring, it appears, for a particular polemical purpose. For example, when the temptation of Jesus is compared to Israel's time in the desert, it becomes apparent that one of the main points of the gospel writer appears to be that Jesus was faithful where Israel was not.

Or, to use a second example, Kennedy demonstrates that Matthew's use of Hosea 11.1 ("out of Egypt I called my son") is more subtle than commonly noticed. In particular, Matthew's placement of the reference during the flight to Egypt (Mt. 2.15) appears counter-intuitive, and Kennedy suggests that Matthew is using this as a device whereby Herod's Judah is equated to hostile, oppressive Egypt, "[Some] scholars appear to misunderstand the relation of geography and movement in the story as it unfolds. Important to note, is that the narrative follows the *movements* of Jesus, and the geographical locations that are cited are a part of this movement" (emphasis original).⁷

This motif of movement rather than location will prove significant to the current investigation.

Indeed, the imprecision of correspondence within this episode appears deeper still, for Kennedy suggests that the flight of the holy family from Judea can be understood to correspond to both flights from Pharaoh—that of Moses as a young man and the exodus event itself.⁸

THEMES IN MATTHEW 8.18-34

Matthew 8 begins with a selection of miracle stories, where Jesus takes action against various forms of sickness in a series of miracles which might be understood as re-creational events. However, in the second

⁵ Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel: Use of Israel's History in Matthew 1:1-4:11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

⁶ Goulder used the criterion of cumulative evidence to 'prove' the typology, and in consideration of the question of how many 'coincidences' are necessary for the case to be made, suggested, "three or four points of correspondence suffice to form a convincing catena." M.D. Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: SPCK, 1964), 2-6.

⁷ Kennedy, *Recapitulation of Israel*, 132).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

half of the chapter, this confrontation with the de-creational forces of chaos intensifies in the stilling of the storm and the narrative of the Gadarenes, and it is striking that Jesus crosses over a body of water in order to reach the place. It is this portion of Matthew 8 that the current investigation will consider.⁹

Verse 18 appears to open the section, as Jesus states his intention to cross to the other side of the lake. However, he does not actually arrive there until verse 28. Why this proleptic comment? The most likely answer is that it is placed here in order to link the three pericopes: (vv. 19-22; 23-27; 28-34) into a single unit, forming an *inclusio* with Matthew 9.1.

The approach taken in this investigation, then, is first to consider Matthew 8.18-34 as a literary unity. Particular attention will be paid to thematic links between the pericopes, and to the ways in which these pericopes differ from the parallels in the other synoptic gospels. These may provide a clue to the author's particular purpose in this section. The themes which emerge will then be compared with themes from the Jericho account.

Jesus' response to professions of commitment vv. 19-22, "And a scribe came up and said to him, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky have places to live, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' Another of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me. And leave the dead to bury their own dead.'"¹⁰

Only Matthew has these sayings here. Mark lacks them altogether; in Luke they occur in expanded form prior to the sending out of the seventy-two. But Matthew has chosen to place them at this point 'somewhat arbitrarily', according to Donald Hagner.¹¹ However, crediting the gospel writer with literary and theological subtlety, his proleptic comment in verse 18 suggests that these two brief exchanges, and in particular Jesus' 'cryptic' remarks,¹² should be read in the light of what follows.

While Jesus' itinerant ministry would suggest that he often had 'nowhere to lay his head', this could never be more true than when he had crossed into the largely Gentile territory of the Decapolis region. In Nazareth, or Capernaum, or Bethany, he had friends or family to stay with; in the Gadarenes he was a stranger.

Discussions on the meaning of the dead burying their own dead have centred largely on the question of whether the man's father had already died (and he was wishing to return to perform his filial death duties), or whether the man was asking to wait at home until his father died.¹³ Certainly this seems to be the relevant question to account for Jesus' words in their immediate context. However, the graphic language used (just

⁹ In his comprehensive analysis of Moses typology in Matthew, Dale Allison considers whether Matthew 8 and 9 in fact represents an antitypology with the plagues of Egypt; he notes B.W. Bacon's structural analysis of both texts, and the 3x3 + 1 pattern they both contain. However, he concludes that there is not enough similarity between them in other respects, and that the 3x3 + 1 structure is a common device, extending even to Goldilocks and the Three Bears. D. J. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 207-13.

¹⁰ Translations are the author's own.

¹¹ Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC: Dallas: Word, 1998), 212.

¹² *Ibid.*, 213.

¹³ See, for example, J. Nolland, *Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 367.

try imagining Jesus' words literally) draws our attention to the theme of death, which will prove to be relevant in the forthcoming narrative, where the (metaphorical) dead dwell among the (literal) dead.

So, in view of the story to come, full of references to tombs and demons (traditionally associated with the places of death¹⁴), it may be that Matthew's placement of this conversation in this position is a deliberate action to foreground the issue of death and its associated phenomenon of uncleanness.¹⁵ Without casting doubt on their undeniable comment on the theme of discipleship, these remarks begin to draw our attention to the inhospitality, threat and impurity facing Jesus as he crosses to the other side of the lake.

THE CONFRONTATION WITH THE STORM VV. 23-27

The shared imagery with the Jonah story has long been noted, with commentators at least as early as Cyril of Jerusalem¹⁶ (identifying points of parallel between the stories. John Nolland notes these similarities, but cautions that "the desire to see significance in the Gospel journey into Gentile territory for the Jonah link has to reckon with the fact that Jonah was at this point journeying *away from and not towards* his role in Nineveh" (emphasis mine).¹⁷ This might not be so surprising, however, given that if Matthew's account does represent a recapitulation of the story of Jonah, he will be at pains to show Jesus re-enacting it without the faults and defects of his predecessor. Thus the issue is not so much the direction of travel as the reversal of Jonah's disobedience in the obedience of Jesus. Jonah was fleeing from his mission to the Gentiles; Jesus was obediently going towards Gentile territory. In the light of the passage that follows in Matthew, the possible 'mission to the Gentiles' theme here is noted and will be discussed later.

One of the striking differences between the accounts is the description of the storm.¹⁸ Matthew uses the term σεισμὸς μέγας ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, (a great earthquake in the sea). By contrast, Mark has λαῖλαψ μεγάλη ἀνέμου (a great windstorm) and Luke λαῖλαψ ἀνέμου (a windstorm). The effect of Matthew's choice of word is to focus our attention on the sea rather than the wind, which is not mentioned until Jesus establishes calm in verse 26.

The mythological resonances of the sea as a place of chaos, a "frightening monster, once roused" should be noted.¹⁹ In Hebrew thought the sea is an ambiguous, dangerous place, constantly pushing back at the order imposed upon it by God in Genesis 1, yet under his control (cf. Job 38.8-11). As it was with Israel's ancient near-eastern neighbours, the sea is sometimes personified in the Hebrew Bible as Rahab (Job 26.12; Isa. 27.1) or Leviathan (Ps 74.12-14; Job 41). Similar images are found in the apocalyptic literature

¹⁴ C. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 285.

¹⁵ Indeed, the exact species of animal referred to as ὀλώπηξ in verse 20 is unclear, and it is not impossible that it is jackals that are intended. Cf. Jdg. 15.4 in LXX and O. Margalith, 'Samson's Foxes,' *Vetus Testamentum* (1985), 226.

¹⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lecture XIV, in *The Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem*, ed. E. Gifford (Oxford: James Parker, 1893), 98.

¹⁷ Nolland, *Matthew*, 371.

¹⁸ There are four main differences between Matthew's account of the storm and its synoptic parallels. Two of them – the order of embarkation and Jesus' use of ὀλιγόπιστοι (men of little faith) – seem to relate to Matthew's emphasis on discipleship which is clearly evident in this part of the gospel. A third difference, the omission of the cushion, is probably done in order to avoid a clash with verse 20 (Nolland, *Matthew*, 370).

¹⁹ Ibid.

of both testaments and the intertestamental literature (e.g. Dan. 7.3, 1 Enoch 60.16; Rev. 13.1), and the sea is also a place of judgment (Exod. 15.4-5; 1 Enoch 60.9; Rev. 15.2²⁰).

Moreover, the earthquake imagery brings to bear eschatological images from the latter prophets and pseudepigrapha, such as Haggai 2.6, 21 and 2 Baruch 27.7. The use of σεισμός within the gospel itself appears to have eschatological overtones: it is found at the crucifixion (27.54), the resurrection (28.2), and in Jesus' 'end times' discourse in 24.7.

This pericope, then, reveals Jesus as the calm queller of chaos, rebuking²¹ the sea and restoring order, in an action which has creation and re-creation resonances.

THE DEMONIACS IN THE GADARENES VV. 28-34

Matthew's telling of this story is very different from Mark's and Luke's, and this is indicative of the particular emphasis with which he wished to imbue his narrative. The main points of comparison are summarised in Table 1 (below).

²⁰ cf. Ryken, et al, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 765-6.

²¹ The use of ἐπιτιμάω should not be over-interpreted, but is consonant with the postulated theme of personification of chaos.

Table 1. Comparison of the Gadarene narrative in the synoptic gospels

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Location	Gadarenes	Gerasenes	Gerasenes
Description of the man/ men	Two Demonised Comes out from the tombs Very violent No name	One With an unclean spirit Living in the tombs Unbindable Distressed, self-harming Named Legion	One Having demons Living in the tombs Guarded, but unbindable Driven by the demons into the desert Named Legion
Opening words by the man/ men	Son of God Have you come to torment me before the time?	Jesus, son of the Most High God I adjure you by God not to torment me	Jesus, son of the Most High God I beg you do not torment me
Direct speech of Jesus	‘Go’	‘Come out of him you unclean spirit... What is your name?’	‘What is your name?’
Demons’ request	Demons request to go into the pigs – direct speech	Demons request to go into the pigs – direct speech	Demons request to go into the pigs – indirect speech
Consequence for demons and pigs	Pigs plunge down steep bank into the sea and drown	Pigs plunge down steep bank into the sea and drown	Pigs plunge down steep bank into the sea and drown
Consequence for onlookers	Herdsmen flee and tell Townsfolk request Jesus’ departure	Herdsmen flee and tell Townsfolk afraid, Townsfolk request Jesus’ departure	Herdsmen flee and tell Townsfolk afraid, Townsfolk request Jesus’ departure
Consequence for the man		Man found sitting, clothed, and in his right mind Man requests to accompany Jesus, request denied, sent into the Decapolis	Man found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind Man requests to accompany Jesus, request denied, sent into the whole city
Overall impression	Conquest	Healing	Healing

Several differences may be relevant for our enquiry.²² Strikingly, Matthew’s description of the men lacks anything to evoke sympathy in the reader. Mark describes the distress of his condition, and their self-

²² There are two other chief differences. Matthew’s account is much shorter than Luke’s or Mark’s, and that it has quite a different flavour from these parallel accounts. The most obvious difference is that Matthew has two men, whereas the parallel synoptic accounts describe only one man. This has been discussed extensively in the literature, and can be related to Matthew’s general propensity to ‘double’. (E.g. some authorities tie it up with Matthew 18.16 (by the evidence of two or three witnesses) which in turn links to Deut. 19.15 (e.g. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2d. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 158; others consider that Matthew is compensating for similar stories he has omitted (e.g. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 282). The second evident difference is Matthew’s reference to the ‘Gadarenes’, while Mark and Luke position the story in the ‘Gerasenes’. However, the text-critical issues in all three synoptics are complex, and it is far from clear whether Matthew has genuinely deviated from the putative Markan tradition here, or whether the textual propagation has introduced an apparent deviation. (See, for example, the discussion in Nolland, *Matthew*, 373-4.) In either case, what

harming behaviour; Luke shows him being abused by human as well as supernatural forces. But Matthew's men represent sheer, raw, threat: described as demonized (δαίμονιζόμενοι), and very violent (χαλεποὶ λίαν).²³ Likewise at the conclusion of the pericope, Luke and Mark are concerned to show the man healed, clothed and sane, whereas Matthew follows the demons into the pigs and pays no further attention to the men themselves.

A similar pattern is found in the nature of the exchange of words between Jesus and the demonized man/men. In Mark and Luke, Jesus has a conversation with him and asks his name. Legion is described as falling at Jesus' feet and begging Jesus not to torment him. By contrast in Matthew, there is no conversation and the men remain unnamed; the comment about being tormented is made while the men are coming threateningly towards Jesus, and is phrased in terms that sound more like a challenge than an entreaty. In fact, the reference to it not yet being the time (ὁ καιρὸς) of tormenting (βασανίζω), both Matthean words suggestive of the last judgment,²⁴ indicates that it is the demons speaking to Jesus rather than the man himself. In Mark and Luke it is less clear whether the men are, at this point, speaking with their own voices or not.

The two men are described, in language used neither by Mark nor Luke, as χαλεποὶ λίαν. This phrase is often translated 'very violent' or similar, although the root meaning of χαλεπός refers more generally to a human or animal which is 'troublesome' to some degree. In fact, χαλεπός is only found in one other place in the New Testament, in 2 Timothy 3.1, where Paul is referring to the persecution of the church. It is found once in the Septuagint, in Isaiah 18.2, rendering the Hebrew נָרָא (niph'al of נָרָא), and used of the 'mighty and conquering' Ethiopians. However it is a common word in the intertestamental writings, particularly in Maccabees,²⁵ where it is often used to refer to the troubles suffered by the faithful Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes. In the choice of this word, our writer may be linking these men with the aggressors in historical narratives of pagan threat.

The power and fearsomeness of the demoniacs in the Gadarenes is such that they obstruct free movement, "so that no one was able to pass by via that road" (v.28). At this point, Jesus' words of verse 20 (the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head) may return to the reader's mind. This is a hostile place, where it is dangerous to travel and impossible to dwell. And Jesus' reputation has gone ahead of him, as the men and their demons instantly recognise and confront him. This is no neutral tourist trip; it is a power encounter from the moment that Jesus embarks to cross the lake.

Matthew describes the men as "demonized"; that is, possessed by δαίμονες. In contemporary Jewish thought, δαίμονες were the souls of the Nephilim, the offspring of the 'Watchers'. The Watchers ('sons of God' in the Genesis account) were the angels which had descended to earth and mated with human women (Gen. 6.1-4; 1 Enoch 6-7; Jub. 5.1-2). These creatures were permitted to roam on the earth, creating

is to be noted is that whether the general area of the Gerasenes is intended, or the more specific location of the Gadarenes, Jesus has crossed over into territory largely inhabited by Gentiles.

²³ Matthew's choice of the word χαλεπος will be discussed below.

²⁴ See Mt. 13.30; 18.34, and Gundry, *Matthew*, 159.

²⁵ See, for example, 2 Macc. 4.16; 6.3; 4 Macc. 8.1; 9.4.

affliction, oppression, and destruction (1 Enoch 15.11) until the day of consummation and judgment (1 Enoch 16.1). Such mythological undertones may be resonating between Matthew's account.

Evident throughout this sparsely narrated pericope are the linked themes of uncleanness and chaos/decreation. In the previous episode the forces arrayed against Jesus are symbolised in the chaos-monster imagery of the storm. Here the decreation theme is intensified even further with the themes of δαίμονες; the ritually impure dead²⁶ among whom the demonized men live; and the pigs²⁷ into which the demons pass. When the unclean spirits of the unclean men enter the unclean pigs and plunge off the cliff into the sea, even though Matthew does not use the Lukan word ἄβυσσος (abyss), it is clear that a mighty act of re-creation, a sovereign ordering of chaos, is being represented as the forces that oppose God are consigned to oblivion.²⁸

This short pericope in Matthew's gospel, then, is much more than a mission into Gentile territory; it is a power confrontation with the spiritual powers controlling the region.²⁹ We note, however, that the power balance is not equally distributed. The demonized men come out of the tombs towards Jesus with belligerent words, but Jesus does not match their aggression. The demons have held enormous sway, and they can bluster very effectively, but in the end Jesus only utters a single word in the whole narrative to expel them forever. This is, in fact, an effortless act of conquest.

REFLECTIONS OF THE CONQUEST

This paper will argue that the writer of Matthew's gospel has used multiple allusions to alert his audience to echoes of the Canaanite conquest in the life of Jesus.

Considering Matthew 8.18-34 as a literary unity, guided by the proleptic announcement in verse 18, we have identified a number of themes in the unit. We will now consider these in comparison with the Jericho narrative in Joshua 6 and the preceding chapters.

First, Jesus crosses a body of water, by means of a miracle involving the control of the forces of nature, into a place of threat; Matthew's use of χαλεποὶ λίαν appears designed to foreground the idea of pagan menace. Jesus has come to a place where he expects no hospitality and is indeed greeted with hostility. Parallels with Israel crossing into the land of Canaan will be apparent. Israel crosses the Jordan by means of a miracle which involves the heaping up of water far away (Josh. 3.16). However, the direction of travel is exactly contrary in the two cases: Israel journeys into Canaan, and Jesus crosses away from Israel (or into its hinterland). We need not regard this as a conclusive negation of the hypothesis, however. As discussed

²⁶ See, for example, Num. 5.2; 9.6; 19.6,22; 31.19.

²⁷ Lev. 11.24-28.

²⁸ John Nolland points out the similarity of the language used about the demons and the villagers. The demons implore Jesus (παρεκάλουν, v.31), then going out, they go into the pigs (ἐξελθόντες ἀπήλθον, v.32); in terror the herdsmen go (ἀπελθόντες, v.33) into the village, and the villagers go out (ἐξῆλθεν, v.34) from the village, before imploring (παρεκάλεσαν, v.34) Jesus to depart. This extends the image of uncleanness from the demons and pigs to the people of the town (Nolland, *Matthew*, 376).

²⁹ Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 343.

above, Joel Kennedy considers a similar problem with regard to the flight into Egypt (Jesus) being compared by the gospel writer to the flight from Egypt (Moses/Israel). The reader's focus is directed towards the movements, not their direction. Similarly, Jonah's flight from Nineveh is paralleled with Jesus' journey towards the Gentile place. We will consider the rhetorical effect of the unexpected destination shortly, but for now we note that Jesus is, like Israel, crossing from a place of familiarity—even 'safety'—into a place of inhospitality, which has not yet been brought into submission to the rule of God.³⁰

We have seen that the first century Jewish understanding of δαίμονες was associated with the Nephilim of Genesis 6 and the intertestamental literature. It is striking, then, in the light of Matthew 8.28, where the demoniacs are depicted as "so fierce that no-one could pass that way", that the Nephilim have also been described in similar terms. In Numbers 13.31-33, Moses's spies describe them guarding the land of Canaan: "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we[...] There we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak of the Nephilim, and we were as grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes." It is likely that the Nephilim are also referred to in Joshua 11:21-22, here as the Anakim who have been conquered: "Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah and from all the hill country of Israel."

We noted above that, unlike in Mark and Luke, the cleansing of the demoniacs is not cast by Matthew as an act of mercy, but rather as a power confrontation between Jesus and the demons. This, of course, is immediately redolent of many of the conquest stories in Joshua, not least that of Jericho. It is this evident contest for supremacy which forms the central backbone of the paralleling motif.

One of the distinctive features of the so-called 'holy wars' of the conquest is that they are conducted by God on behalf of his people, in the face of greater forces, superior weaponry, or other improbable circumstances for victory.³¹ Indeed Gerhard von Rad identifies several features related to this action of Yahweh on behalf of his people, among which are the following: the enemy is identified as Yahweh's enemy; the people of Israel are exhorted to have faith; and the enemy is shown to lose courage.³² Thus, for example, Rahab tells the spies, "I know that the LORD has given the land to you, and that the dread of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you... our hearts melted and there was no spirit left in any man before you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and the earth below" (Josh. 2.8-11).

Similar features to these are clearly identifiable in the power confrontations of the storm on the lake and the demoniacs of the Gadarenes. The exhortation to trust God happens in the first of the two stories, where Jesus urges his disciples, "Why are you fearful, ὀλιγόπιστοι"; the designation occurring only in Matthew. Identification of the enemy as being the enemy of God is clear in the second story. A group of men has disembarked onto the shore, but the demons, speaking through their victims, immediately single

³⁰ Of course, given the strong witness in Matthew that Jesus was not wholly welcomed in his own country either, there may be reason to think that the 'conquest' parallels, if there are any, will also be found in other, Judean and Galilean, narratives. This is outside the scope of the current investigation.

³¹ See, for example de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. J. McHugh (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 262.

³² Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, trans. M. Dawn (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1991), 44-47.

out—by title, not personal name as in Mark and Luke—the one man who bears the power of God. “What is between you and us, Son of God? Have you come here before the time to torment us?” (Mt. 8.29). And the enemy is afraid, “The demons implored him, saying, ‘If you cast us out, send us into the herd of pigs’” (v.31). Finally, and perhaps most strikingly, both these power contests are won ‘easily’, without a visible struggle. Jesus only has to rebuke the wind and waves for calm to be restored (v.26). The narrative of the Gadarenes is remarkable with regard to how much the demons have to say for themselves, compared with Jesus’ single word, ‘Go’ (v.32).

One of the distinctive features of the Jericho conquest is its pattern of sevens. For seven days the nation circles the city, on the seventh day it circles it seven times, before the walls fall. There is no corresponding numerology in Matthew 8. However, when the significance of the ‘sevens’ in Joshua is appreciated, links between the narratives are once more apparent.

Mircea Eliade has described how traditional societies regard the territory surrounding their inhabited space as a foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, demons and foreigners.³³ The act of settling in such territory is therefore an act of chaos-subduing; a performance of cosmogony, where the primordial work of creation is recapitulated. Building on this work, Philip Stern used ancient-near-eastern parallels and the philological study of the word *herem* (generally translated “devote to destruction” or “put to the ban”), to argue that the *herem* of Joshua carried a cosmogonic import. With regard to the Jericho account, he has argued that the stylisation of the pattern of sevens is reminiscent of the creation account in Genesis 1.³⁴

As discussed above, there is a number of places where the quelling of chaos appears strongly in the Matthean narrative. The role of the sea, threatening and then being subdued by Jesus, has been noted; this motif recurs when the sea is used in the Gadarene narrative as a place of judgment for the demonised pigs. This creation-recreation theme is reinforced further by the eschatological hints that occur in the narratives: the earthquake and the reference by the demons to the time of judgment (which is then immediately anticipated by Jesus’ actions).

A further link to the idea of conquest and *herem* is the theme of uncleanness/ impurity which is so strong in the literary unit. Anticipated in verse 21, it is triply intensified with the appearance of men who live among the dead, unclean demons, and pigs; and Matthew’s reduplication of *παράκαλέω*, *ἐξέρχομαι* and *ἄπερχομαι* incline us to extend this quality of uncleanness into the villagers. The power confrontation which takes place is thus cast in terms of the purging of uncleanness, an important motif in the ancient conquest theology. Thus, for example, the Deuteronomist says of the spoils of the Canaanite conquest, “You shall not bring an abomination into your house and become devoted to destruction as it is” (Deut. 7.26), and later, “Out of the cities that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall keep alive nothing that breathes, for you shall utterly devote them to destruction... as the LORD your God has commanded you, that they may not teach you to do all the abominable practices they do” (Deut. 20.16-18).

³³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. W. Trask (London: Harcourt, 1959), 29-36.

³⁴ P. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 141.

CONCLUSION: INTERTEXTUALITY AS TWO-WAY DIALOGUE

We have identified a significant range of thematic similarities between Matthew's Gadarene account and the conquest of Jericho, as narrated in Jericho. These are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Thematic links between Matthew 8:18-34 and the conquest of Jericho

Miraculous crossing of water
Exhortation to trust
Journey into 'hostile' territory
Quelling of chaos/ cosmogony
Power encounter with hostile, impure, pagan threat/ spiritual powers – Nephilim motif?
Destruction of what is impure
'Effortless' conquest

The language of 'typology' is regarded with some suspicion today, due to justifiable concern over its tendency to invite naïve Christological interpretations of Old Testament texts. Nonetheless, that certain Old Testament themes and narrative patterns recur in the New Testament should not be overlooked as a consequence of this wariness. It is helpful to focus not on any putative forward intention of the Old Testament text, but on the backward glance of the New Testament. In this regard, the concept of intertextuality is helpful.

Intertextuality is by no means a straightforward phenomenon; as Julia Kristeva has shown, all communication takes place within a network of prior texts, which cannot be wholly identified.³⁵ Moreover, texts often develop in dialogue with one another, and it is not always easy to collapse their relationship into that of a prior and a dependent text. However, in the situation of New Testament – Old Testament intertextuality, the chronology of textual history is fairly straightforward, so the relationship between them is relatively easy to simplify to a later, dependent, text and a prior text. Nonetheless, the dialogue between the two texts remains a two-way process.

First, it allows the prior text to shape the understanding of the later. This is how the recapitulation of Israel in the life of Jesus is generally understood; with particular focus on his consequent representation of Israel and its theological sequelae.³⁶ Part of the interpretive role of the prior text is in establishing a paradigm with which the later text is compared, whether consciously or subconsciously. Any deviations from this paradigm are then naturally foregrounded in the reader's appreciation. Of particular interest in this regard is the way in which, as we have seen, the geographical locations in Matthew are distinctly different from the

³⁵ Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez; trans. T. Gora et al (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 64-91.

³⁶ See, for example, N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 400; R. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel: with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 210.

equivalent ones in the Hebrew Bible. When the presence and role of the intertextuality is understood, the unexpected direction of Jesus' travel is revealed as an important part of the gospel writer's skilful commentary. If Jesus' journey across the water into the Gadarenes is understood in terms of a recapitulation of the conquest, the direction of his journey highlights to us that the 'unconquered' place is now not Canaan but the Gentile territories around it. This is thus the in-breaking of the eschatological reality of extending the kingdom 'to the ends of the earth'. Moreover, the destruction of the demonized pigs bears many of the hallmarks of *herem*: the total destruction of what is impure, the quelling of chaos and the new-creational act. Unlike the prior text, however, this *herem* is bloodless. It is a conquest over the forces of evil, not those they have afflicted.

But, second, the intertextuality can be used by the later author to make a particular interpretation of the prior text. So it is possible that Matthew is intentionally commenting on the conquest narratives by means of this creative recapitulation. How might the actions of Jesus be understood in that regard? A community is shaped by the narratives they tell themselves. When the story is told differently, it can be a collective act of repentance. Perhaps Jesus' bloodless conquest should be viewed as a redemptive act; a Christ-shaped re-enactment of the old story. It may be that future work in this area will shed more light on the difficult narratives of conquest in Joshua.

LEONARD CHAMPION AND A CALL FOR CLEARER, MORE COHERENT AND WIDELY ACCEPTED THEOLOGY AMONGST BAPTISTS

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Leonard Champion was an influential figure in Baptist life through much of the 1950s to 1970s.¹ He was Principal of Bristol Baptist College (1953-72), and President of the Baptist Union (1964). He was involved in several important Baptist Union Council reports on ministry, ecumenism and associating.² He had also represented the Union in the World Council of Churches and the British Council of Churches.³ In 1961 he was asked to address the Denominational Conference and he gave a statement on 'The State of the Denomination.' One of things he said on that occasion was that Baptists were in danger of a 'theological slum.' In his view, Baptists were being "neglectful" with regard to the work of theology and what was needed was "a prolonged process of positive, evangelical thinking, teaching and writing" and a "more manifest theological cohesion."⁴ The rest of that decade produced a flurry of theological reports, which in many ways only served to highlight the tensions within the Union. In 1979 he gave the Baptist Historical Society Lecture.⁵ It is probably not unfair to say that the annual BHS lectures generally do not live long in the memory, but Champion's did and has. Following the lecture a small group of Baptist ministers took up his challenge and began to work on providing what he had called "a clearer, more coherent and more widely accepted theology."⁶

Champion's lecture sought to be a timely word into the situation of changes taking place within the Baptist Union and in wider society. He understood the task of historical studies to be an opportunity to "offer a measure of illumination and guidance" on the present. He argues that the half-century between 1775 and 1825 was a helpful place to look. It was during these years that a new evangelical Calvinism emerged which gave new life amongst Baptists. It was this period that saw the beginnings of BMS, the Union itself and a number of the Baptist colleges.⁷ Champion's argument is that in these fifty years 'a

¹ Roger Hayden, "The Stillness and the Dancing: An Appreciation of Leonard G. Champion," in *Bible, History, and Ministry: Essays for L. G. Champion on his Ninetieth Birthday*, eds. Roger Hayden and Brian Haymes (Bristol: Bristol Baptist College, 1997), 1-8; Roger Hayden, "Leonard George Champion 1907-1997," *Baptist Quarterly* 37.5 (January 1998): 211-12; Brian Haymes and Morris West, "Rev Dr L. G. Champion," *Baptist Times* 18/25 December 1997: 12.

² He was a member of groups that wrote *The Meaning and Practice of Ordination* (London: Baptist Union, 1957), *The Doctrine of Ministry* (London: Baptist Union, 1961), *The Report of the Commission on the Associations* (London: Baptist Union, 1964), *Baptists and Unity* (London: Baptist Union, 1967).

³ He was a member of the WCC's Faith & Order committee (1954-71) and Chair of the Mission and Unity Department, British Council of Churches (1967-9).

⁴ Leonard Champion, "The Statement of the Denomination," in *The Denominational Conference* (London: Baptist Union, 1961), 25-26.

⁵ Leonard G. Champion, "Evangelical Calvinism and the Structures of Baptist Church Life," *Baptist Quarterly* 28.5 (January 1980): 196-208.

⁶ Champion, "Evangelical Calvinism," 206.

⁷ One of which was Regent's Park College, on which see the new history by Anthony Clarke and Paul Fiddes, *Dissenting Spirit* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2017).

renewed theology led to a rediscovery of mission and the creation of organisations for the fulfilment of mission.⁸ What happened then, he claims, shaped Baptist theology and life up to the present, but he asks whether “different patterns” might now be needed. If they are required, Champion argues that what must be learned from the history is threefold. First, “proper structures of church life need a coherent theology,”⁹ that is, it was theology, a widely shared theology, which made possible a new emphasis on mission and structures.¹⁰ The theology of Evangelical Calvinism was one that was “increasingly congenial to the majority of Baptists,” it laid the ground for the later amalgamation of Particular and General Baptists.¹¹ The new theology now needed is “an urgent task” says Champion, perhaps recognising it was easy to talk growth and reforming structures without giving attention to a theology beneath them.¹² It was a renewed theological imagination that changed the fortunes of Baptists in the late eighteenth century; growth and structures flowed from there. Champion calls on a younger generation to take up this challenge.¹³ Secondly, Champion suggests that we revisit the theology of evangelical Calvinism, not to simply repeat it, but to explore whether it has a new relevance today. He points to the examples of the emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the divine activity of grace through Christ by the Spirit as salvific, and the language of obligation and responsibility. How might these doctrines be restated in a fresh way in order to capture the vision and commitment of Baptists again?¹⁴ Champion’s third suggestion is to see that any new structures are a means of demonstrating that mission is a “corporate activity.”¹⁵ New structures must bring people together. This was the achievement of the evangelical Calvinism of the eighteenth century and something similar was needed again in an increasingly fractured Union.¹⁶

Ten years later, Champion contributed to a festschrift in honour of former BU General Secretary David Russell, with an article titled ‘Whither the Baptists?’¹⁷ Champion takes the opportunity to reflect on “the changes occurring among us” and again argues that there is a need for “a prolonged process of careful thought, leading to fresh theological formulations.”¹⁸ The call for theological engagement remained as

⁸ Champion, “Evangelical Calvinism,” 197.

⁹ Champion, “Evangelical Calvinism,” 206.

¹⁰ In a later article Champion says this need for theology is “not a plea for more academic theology,” Champion, “Baptist Church Life in the Twentieth Century – Some Personal Reflections,” in *Baptists in the Twentieth Century*. Papers Presented at a Summer School July 1982, ed. K. W. Clements (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 12. It is a theology grounded in and for the church.

¹¹ Champion, “Evangelical Calvinism,” 201.

¹² In the background here is the 1979 Baptist Union report *Signs of Hope*, which was a state of the Union type of report. Its origins lay in the intervention by Douglas McBain and Paul Beasley-Murray to the news of church decline at the 1977 Baptist Assembly. The response of the Union was *Signs of Hope*.

¹³ Champion was already in his seventies when he gave this lecture and so saw this as an opportunity to pass on the baton to a new generation.

¹⁴ In this argument to revisit evangelical Calvinism, we might see Champion’s dismissal of the theology that emerged in the 1960s onwards, with the likes of John A. T. Robinson’s *Honest to God*.

¹⁵ Champion, “Evangelical Calvinism,” 207.

¹⁶ Issues of ecumenism and Christology had witnessed some churches (those associated with the Baptist Revival Fellowship) leaving the Union in the early 1970s.

¹⁷ Leonard Champion, “Whither the Baptists?” in *Bible, Church and world. A Supplement to the Baptist Quarterly Published in Honour of Dr. D. S. Russell*, ed. J. H. Y. Briggs (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1989), 64-68.

¹⁸ Champion, “Whither the Baptists?” 64.

strong as ten years earlier, despite acknowledging the work towards this end of those who wrote *A Call to Mind* and *Bound to Love* (on which we will return).

Ten years on Champion identified four positive trends and three concerns. Positively he says that the mood among Baptists is more positive and optimistic with regard confidence in the gospel and the response to change. He also sees a greater acceptance among Baptists towards each other and this is paralleled by a recognition that as worship, structures and relationships with other denominations was changing, this was seen as an opportunity rather a matter of dissension. Lastly, he believed that the majority of Baptists were more open to ecumenism and the recognition that the gospel is “greater than the Baptist interpretation of it.”¹⁹ At the same time he is concerned that some acceptance of change was ‘superficial’ and merely ready to go along with ‘social fashions’, without an adequate theological engagement, what we might be called faddism.²⁰ Secondly, the diversity of the Union also led to “formation of competing groups,” which was generating a rivalry rather than a shared oneness in Christ.²¹ Champion’s last concern is that of a short-termism, that changes beget changes.

These positive and negative notes all require says Champion a “more adequate and thorough-going exploration and exposition of the theological foundation of the Baptist position.”²² Champion regards much of Baptist life as theologically-lite, with not enough attention being given to the creation of a shared theology, the like of which had underpinned earlier generations. Baptists might have grown numerically during the 1980s, but there remained still a lack of a theological centre in which the majority of Baptists could gather around.²³ For Champion without a commitment to the task of theology a Christian community “loses direction and purpose, and dissipates its energies in superficial enterprises.”²⁴

Re-reading Champion, nearly forty years on from that Baptist Historical Society Lecture, his challenge, in my view, remains prescient. Theological thinking remains low on the Baptist agenda; pragmatism and faddism remain largely the order of the day.²⁵ We have not established a theological foundation that holds Baptist together in purpose. We do little to champion or encourage the work of theology. This is not that some have not tried. A younger generation did seek to offer the beginnings of a theological foundation, in the two already mentioned books *A Call to Mind* and *Bound to Love*. Authored by Paul Fiddes, Brian Haymes, Richard Kidd, Keith Clements and Roger Hayden, this was an attempt to reflect theologically and in the later *Bound to Love*, to retrieve a theology of covenant as a means of grounding Baptist church, ministry and mission in the kind of theological foundation Champion was asking for. This theology

¹⁹ Champion, “Whither the Baptists?” 64. In 1989 Baptists voted to join the new ecumenical structures that replaced the British Council of Churches, despite the fact that Roman Catholics were joining.

²⁰ On faddism see Ian Stackhouse, *The Gospel-Driven Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004), 3-42.

²¹ Champion might have in mind here groupings like Mainstream and the Alliance of Radical Baptists, both active through the 1980s.

²² Champion, “Whither the Baptists?” 65.

²³ For examples the debate over Baptist identity, see Brian Haymes, *Questions of Identity* (Leeds: Yorkshire Baptist Association, 1986) and the response from Mainstream members, David Slater (ed.), *A Perspective on Baptist Identity* (Ilkley: Mainstream, 1987).

²⁴ Champion, “Whither the Baptists?”, 65.

²⁵ Brian Haymes, following Champion, has been a constant voice calling for the importance of theology. Haymes also followed Champion as both Principal of Bristol Baptist College (1994-2000) and President of the Baptist Union (1993). See Andy Goodliff, “Brian Haymes: Doing Theology for the Church,” *Baptist Quarterly* 50.1 (2019): 30–38.

of covenant was further developed in the 1990s in documents like *The Nature of the Assembly and the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain*,²⁶ *Transforming Superintendency*,²⁷ *Something to Declare*,²⁸ *On the Way of Trust*²⁹ and found an expression at the millennium in *Covenant 21*,³⁰ a liturgy that all Baptists were encouraged to share in, locally and nationally. The key thinker in this has been Paul Fiddes, who has continued to argue for the importance of covenant as an organising concept for Baptists, see in particular his collection of essays on Baptist ecclesiology, *Tracks and Traces*.³¹ In addition a theology of covenant has been re-championed recently again in the Baptist Union's magazine, although without any apparent recognition of the work done in the 1990s.³² We might assess this theology of covenant, against Champion's description of what was needed, as follows: whilst it has been coherent, it has not always been clearly understood or received, and so has not ultimately found wide acceptance. This is noted in *Something to Declare* where the authors (Fiddes, Haymes, Kidd and Quicke) note that covenant, as it had been used in *The Nature of Assembly*, was "one clear source of disagreement" within Baptist circles.³³ It goes on to acknowledge that the "objections were voiced with energy and commitment" and therefore *Something to Declare* is partly a new attempt to argue for the place of covenant to those that had been unconvinced.³⁴ *On the Way of Trust*, which followed, is also another effort, by the same group, to demonstrate a coherent, clear and widely accepted theology of covenant through the language of trust. The use of *Covenant 21* shows that there was at least some desire (or perhaps mollification) by the Union to think covenantally about Baptist life and structures,³⁵ however it has not taken deep root into the way Baptists talk and think beyond small circles.³⁶

In parallel with the covenant track, Nigel Wright has argued repeatedly from the 1980s and onwards for Baptists as a particular kind of evangelical.³⁷ To be Baptist is to be evangelical. Baptists are a kind of evangelical, but with certain ecclesiological convictions around baptism, governance and politics. Wright was not inspired by Champion, (or if he was he never mentions it), but he is an example of a Baptist seeking to provide a coherent, clear and widely accepted theology. In many ways we might say Wright has been the

²⁶ *The Nature of the Assembly and the Council of the Baptist Union Great Britain* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1994). A report produced by the Doctrine and Worship Committee.

²⁷ *Transforming Superintendency* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1996).

²⁸ Richard Kidd ed., *Something to Declare: A Study of the Declaration of Principle* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1996).

²⁹ Richard Kidd ed., *On the Way of Trust* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1997).

³⁰ *Covenant 21* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 2001).

³¹ Paul S. Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003). Fiddes was Chair of the Doctrine and Worship Committee (1992-1995) and was Principal of Regent's Park College, 1989-2007.

³² *Baptists Together* (Spring 2016), with articles by Lyn Green, Paul Fiddes, Catriona Gorton and others.

³³ Kidd ed., *Something to Declare*, 12.

³⁴ Kidd ed., *Something to Declare*, 12. In a review for the *Baptist Times*, Rev Dr Ted Hale remained unconvinced.

³⁵ The origins of *Covenant 21* were a challenge by Roger Hayden to the Baptist Union Council to mark the millennium with a fundraising effort. *Covenant 21* arguably was less about covenant and more an opportunity for the Union to gather people round the new structures that were implemented in the 2002.

³⁶ For example see Sean Winter's 2007 Whitley Lecture, *More Light and Truth?* and a paper by Dan Sutcliffe-Pratt, *Covenant and Church for Rough Sleepers* (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, Occasional Papers Vol. 14, 2017).

³⁷ Nigel Wright, *The Radical Kingdom* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1986); Nigel Wright, *Challenge to Change* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991); Nigel Wright, *New Baptists, New Agenda* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002); Nigel Wright, *Free Church, Free State* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005); cf. Nigel Wright, *The Radical Evangelical* (London: SPCK, 1996). For more on Wright, see Andy Goodliff, "Nigel Wright's Radical Theology," *Baptist Quarterly* 48.2 (2017): 69-77.

more successful.³⁸ Baptists, are generally now more consciously evangelical, and this has been especially true in terms of the Union's leadership from David Coffey to Jonathan Edwards and now Lynn Green. This embrace of evangelicalism have left some asking what has happened to Baptist identity. Brian Haymes has said "Baptists are often now just part of some general non-denominational evangelicalism"³⁹ and one religious journalist to Keith Clements commented that Baptists 'have opted for a "soft evangelicalism" rather than any theology with a real cutting edge.'⁴⁰ Our rich theological heritage has yielded to a basic middle of the road evangelicalism.⁴¹ Stephen Holmes acknowledges that there is some truth in saying 'Baptists are evangelicals with a different practice of baptism and church government', but that this is also 'misleading, because it misrepresents the extent of difference in theology and practice that our distinctive ecclesiology suggests.'⁴² Holmes himself has argued that we should understand Baptist theology as living around "two foci": the individual believer and the local church, both are necessary to Baptists.⁴³ Holmes summarises the heart of Baptist theology as follows: "God, through the Son and Spirit, calls individual believers into covenanted relationship in the local church, and equips them to build up one another within the local church, and to hear and obey the ongoing missional call to make every other human person a believer. This is Baptist theology."⁴⁴

Champion's call for Baptists to discover a coherent, clear and widely accepted theology remains still to be done, although arguably it is now an even harder task as the structures of the Baptist Union, when they were reformed in 2002 and 2012, in addition to changing patterns of society in terms of institutional belonging, have seen the ties that have bound Baptists together becoming more frayed.⁴⁵ There is a need for a new generation to heed Champion's call, although whether they will be heeded remains to be seen.

³⁸ He notes in *New Baptists* that his earlier book *Challenge to Change* had 'made a modest impact upon a process of rethinking and reforming' and that *New Baptists* was written to "give Baptists a new steer," 1.

³⁹ Brian Haymes, "The Communion of Saints," *Baptist Quarterly* 49.2 (April 2018): 10.

⁴⁰ Cited in Keith Clements, *Look Back in Hope: An Ecumenical Life* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2017), 374.

⁴¹ This is perhaps highlighted by the way Baptists have engaged with the vexed issue of same sex relationships. Some have argued from the position of evangelical theology, others from a position of Baptist theology.

⁴² Stephen R. Holmes, "Beyond a Bath and a Book: Baptist Theological Commitments," *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 9.2 (November 2014): 17.

⁴³ See Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 6-8.

⁴⁴ Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 7.

⁴⁵ Brian Haymes, "Still Blessing the Tie that Binds," in *For the Sake of the Church*, ed. Anthony Clarke (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage, 2014), 91-102.

WILL YOU BE MY FRIEND? HOW CAN FRIENDSHIP ENABLE THE INCLUSION OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED PEOPLE IN BAPTIST CHURCH COMMUNITIES?

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By way of introduction, the publicity for *Theology Live! 2017* got the title of my paper slightly wrong—it dropped the word “people” after the words “physically disabled”. Whilst this may initially seem trivial, it is I believe more significant than it might at first appear. You see when I moved to Coventry in 2001 my new GP asked “What are you?” rather than “Who are you?” The difference between ‘what’ and ‘who’ I am got me reflecting on my experiences and I think reflects whether disabled people are seen in terms of Martin Buber’s ‘I-It’ relationship, ‘what are you?’, or in terms of ‘I-Thou’ relationship, ‘who are you?’.¹

A note on language—Impersonal (the disabled) or Personal (disabled people), positive (disability) or negative (handicap/cripple), based on assumptions (often of what disabled cannot do) or understanding (knowing what disabled people can do), inclusive (“Please stand if you’re able...”) or exclusive (“Please stand...”)?

Reflecting on my personal experience to begin the pastoral cycle/spiral: I was born in the mid-1960s before tests for my medical condition were available; therefore unexpected and significant challenges came to light. Counter to expectations of the time I was raised in a loving family, rather than in an institution; mainstream educated to Masters level, rather than special school;² trained as a teacher but worked in the computing industry, rather than living on benefits; married rather than single, pretty independent rather than totally dependent. Throughout my life I have been positively shaped by ‘who’ people see me as, however ‘what’ people see me as does have a negative impact at times.

While going through Baptist Ministerial Recognition Committee, and ministerial formation in a Baptist College, ‘who’ usually dominated over ‘what’. However I have found that in a couple of periods of ministerial settlement the ‘what I am’ (a disabled wheelchair user) dominated over the ‘who I am’ (a Minister, academic, married person, brother, friend, etc.) Partly due to being in mainstream education I see myself as ‘a-non-disabled-person-sitting down’ rather than ‘a-disabled-person’. It has enabled me to form deep friendships with non-disabled people, with greater ease than some disabled people do.³ One way that I would sum up my experience of disability is the phrase, “When I am among friends I am least disabled, when I am among strangers I am most disabled.” However this relational view is not how disability has been

¹ Recent experience of railway staff radioing platform “There’s a wheelchair on its way to you.” No acknowledgement of the person using the wheelchair!

² Which tended at the time to focus on physical independence at great cost to educational attainment.

³ Observations and discussions when I lived in a Shaftesbury Society hostel and John Grooms housing complex.

understood and even today such an understanding has not been properly applied to disabled people with physical impairments.

Christian and secular contexts reveal some troubling problems with the inclusion of disabled people in church community life and secular society. A 2015 UK survey of disabled people attending a range of churches 'All of us complete in Christ'⁴ showed that there are many disabled people in churches who want to be more active in the life of the church. For various reasons, however, they are not encouraged or enabled to do so. Initial analysis of a Baptist Union of Great Britain Disability Justice Group survey from 2013 shows similar evidence. A very recent secular survey on loneliness and disability indicates a significant problem with isolation in the wider community.⁵ If churches are good at including disabled people then they can play a part in addressing this wider issue, which has implications for outreach that is inclusive of disabled people.

I want to explore some of the possible reasons for exclusion and point towards the potential for friendship with God and one another to facilitate the inclusion of disabled people in the life of Baptist churches, Associations, and in our Union. This will have a much wider impact, enabling the inclusion of various 'others' and may have ecclesiological impact as well. This might be particularly relevant to the current language of 'Baptists Together' as it might enrich our understanding of the family, body and covenant language that we use.

Historical and sociological perspectives are revealing. In order to see how disability is understood and how we can see things from a more inclusive perspective we need to understand something of how disability has been understood, historically⁶ and sociologically, noting the role of friendship. Prior to the industrial revolution disabled people, if they survived childhood, would have lived among their family and neighbours in a rural based economy, participating in the life of the local community as far as they were able.⁷ They were as likely as anyone to attend the local church. They were, however, at greater risk of poverty, their impairments might be linked to sin, curse or magic,⁸ or they were labelled 'the village idiot'.⁹ Friendships between disabled and non-disabled people, however, were at least a possibility in this setting.

The industrial revolution brought huge changes, as society shifted from rural to urban, with industrialisation. Disabled people were dislocated from the local community among family and friends, as they were less productive in an industrial society. They usually ended up in some form of institution with

⁴ <https://www.throughtheroof.org/abd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/All-of-US-Complete-WEB-FINAL.pdf>.

⁵ *Someone Cares If I'm not There*. Report of the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, 2017

<https://www.sense.org.uk/umbraco/surface/download/download?filepath=/media/1460/campaign-loneliness-someone-cares-if-im-not-there.pdf>

⁶ David M. Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment* (New York: Routledge, 2012); David M Turner & Kevin Stagg, eds., *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) and others have argued how hard it is to investigate disabled people historically because of their marginalisation. Evidence has therefore to be gained indirectly rather than directly.

⁷ Deborah Marks, *Disability: Controversial Debates and Psychosocial Perspectives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999).

⁸ Victor Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People* (New York: World Rehabilitation Fund, 1980); Dan Goodley, *Disability Studies* (London: Sage, 2010); Michael Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Michael Oliver & Colin Barnes, *The New Politics of Disablement* (London: Macmillan, 2012).

⁹ Tom Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited* (London: Routledge, 2013), 61-62 suggests this is the origin of the phrase.

the asymmetric relationships that this entails.¹⁰ The rise of modern medicine saw the medicalization of disability, focussed on healing/curing the individual to enable them to participate productively in ‘normal’ society. Disabled people were seen as dependent, passive and reliant on charity, often from churches or other religious organisations.¹¹ This way of understanding disabled people is now known as the medical or individual model of disability. Since this approach emphasised the difference between disabled and non-disabled people, friendship has often been dismissed as being a way of understanding disabled people and their relationship with non-disabled people. This situation dominated until the late twentieth century, and vestiges of it often persists today.

The late twentieth century saw another shift. In the early 1970’s disabled campaigners and academics within sociology triggered a major change in the understanding of disability. Instead of focussing on the individual and seeing their impairment as the problem, the focus shifted to society and located the problem with the attitudes and practises that exclude disabled people.¹² This approach is broadly called the ‘Social Model’ which has many variants; common to all is that disability is seen as a social construct.¹³ The inclusion of disabled people is therefore achieved by changing society rather than changing disabled people. It has been noted by one author that friendship has not been linked to physically disabled people either in sociology of disability or within the broader interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies.¹⁴

Moving to a theological perspective there is a long history of disability and disabled people being mentioned ‘in passing’ throughout the history of the church.¹⁵ It can be argued that from the 18th century onwards churches unintentionally adopted the medical/individual understanding of disability, leading to disabled people being seen as ‘other’—either because they were being judged/tested, were unforgiven sinners, or at the other extreme were seen as examples of virtuous suffering.¹⁶ In some traditions this leads to an over emphasis on the need for healing prior to be allowed to exercise their gifts within the church.¹⁷ This also reinforces the ‘working/doing for’ approach to disabled people, sometimes in segregated forms of ministry.¹⁸ These approaches inhibit relationships such as friendship and tend to exclude rather than include disabled people.

It was only with the publishing of Nancy Eiesland’s *The Disabled God*¹⁹ in 1994 that there was any coherent focus on theological reflection upon disability and from there disability theology has grown as a

¹⁰ A. Borsay, “Returning Patients to the Community: Disability, medicine and economic rationality before the Industrial Revolution,” *Disability & Society* 13.5 (1998): 645-663.

¹¹ David Braddock and Susan Parish clearly shows that religious institutions were providing care and support for disabled people throughout phase 1& 2. See David L. Braddock and Susan L. Parish, “An Institutional History of Disability,” in *Handbook of Disability Studies*, eds. G. L. Albrecht et al. (London: SAGE, 2001).

¹² See, for example Colin Barnes and Geoff Mercer, *Exploring Disability: A Sociological Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley, 2010), 30 and David Johnstone, *An Introduction to Disability Studies* (London: David Fulton, 2001), 14.

¹³ See Marks, *Disability*; Oliver, *Politics*; Oliver & Barnes, *New Politics*.

¹⁴ Shakespeare notes no significant change between the two editions of his book, *Disability Rights and Wrongs*.

¹⁵ Brian Brock & John Swinton eds., *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

¹⁶ Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008).

¹⁷ My personal experience of people assuming God will heal me and if not then I lack faith or am an unforgiven sinner. Anecdotally this is the experience of some other physically disabled people who I have talked to about this issue.

¹⁸ Disabled Christian Fellowship, services for healing of disabled people etc.

¹⁹ Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

field, in the UK and US in particular. Eiesland relies heavily on Liberation Theology and gives disabled people a voice for the first time within theology.²⁰ Her central argument that the risen Christ bears the marks of impairment and that victory is obtained through weakness and sacrifice, is significant for disabled people.

Here and now is not the place to survey the field but work has been done on making church accessible in the broadest sense,²¹ of acknowledging that all human beings have limits,²² and challenging the so called ‘cult of normalcy’.²³ Others have wrestled with scripture and its interpretation.²⁴ These approaches all use, implicitly or explicitly one of the social models of disability. Others have focussed not on showing disabled people as being ‘like’ non-disabled people but on understandings of God as one who welcomes all people, disabled and non-disabled, all made in the *imago dei*, to be included within His church.²⁵ Emerging from this line of thinking is the idea of the offer of friendship with God, and consequently of friendship with others.

A relational perspective can help here. We are primarily relational beings, made in the image of a relational God.²⁶ As we’ve seen, with regards to physical disability this relationality has been forgotten or ignored within both sociology and theology of disability, with one major exception. There has been a significant amount of work on friendship and people with learning disabilities, with the work of Jean Vanier and the development of L’Arche communities being the most obvious, together with the work of Hauerwas.²⁷ I have drawn on work by Hans Reinders²⁸ as a way of understanding friendship as a means of including all disabled people within the wider faith community. He suggests that friendship is a gift of grace from God such that *all* people are able to respond and have a relationship with God and other people.

So why do I think friendship is important as a means of fostering inclusion? There are many characteristics of friendship that have been identified by contemporary writers exploring a theology of friendship.²⁹ I want to focus briefly on three characteristics that can foster the inclusion of disabled people in church life. These can be connected to a Baptist understanding of church as a gathered covenant community, which is the particular context for my research.

Intentionality is important because spontaneous friendships occur between people who are ‘like’ each other in some way, who share something in common. Among fellow believers a common faith is often, but not always, a ground for developing friendships that might not occur beyond the faith community. However

²⁰ Also uses Minority Group Model, a version of Social Model of disability.

²¹ Jennie Weiss Block, *Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities* (London: Continuum, 2002).

²² Deborah B. Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology* (New York: OUP, 2009)

²³ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*.

²⁴ See for example the work of Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, & Jeremy Schipper, *This Able Body* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007) and Amos Yong, *The Bible, Disability and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2011).

²⁵ For other examples see Hans Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) and John Swinton, “Who is the God We Worship? Theologies of Disability; Challenges and New Possibilities,” *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 14.2 (2011): 273-307.

²⁶ The debates about the relational understanding of Trinity are complex and beyond this short paper. See Jason Sexton ed., *Two Views on the Doctrine of the Trinity*, (Zondervan, 2014).

²⁷ John Swinton ed., *Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas’ Theology of Disability* (N. Y.: Hayworth Pastoral, 2004).

²⁸ Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*. He focuses on the friendship relationships with People with Learning Disabilities.

²⁹ Steve Summers, *Friendship* (London: T & T Clark, 2009); Paul J. Wadell, *Becoming Friends: Worship, Justice and the Practice of Christian Friendship* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002).

there are some characteristics and visible disability is one example,³⁰ where even common faith does not overcome the perception of difference, reinforced by the factors already discussed.

God, through Christ's life, death and resurrection, has intentionally restored our relationship with our creator, a relationship that is described as friendship by Jesus in John 15:15. God offers friendship to all who are made in his image, disabled and non-disabled. This social distinction can be added to the lists, in Galatians 3:26-29 and Colossians 3:11, of the social barriers removed through faith in Christ. Just as we are called to share our faith with others, God calls us to intentionally share friendship with others who are 'unlike' ourselves, in ways that overcome the barriers created by spontaneous friendships between 'like' people.³¹

The social models of disability and the theological approaches that use these are interested in the general relationship between disabled and non-disabled people, often treating both as homogenous groups.³² Disability, like many other experiences, is however very diverse.³³ It is one thing to say that the church welcomes all disabled people and often a very different matter to welcome particular disabled people.³⁴ Friendship is *particular*, it is between *particular* people (although understood properly this is open to others and not exclusive), and the power to include particular 'others' arises from this focus, rather than a broad desire to include non-specified 'others' in a universal way.

One of the reasons that particularity in friendship is a positive characteristic is that it fosters responsibility for the good of the 'other' rather than a relationship based on being present with the other.³⁵ This is reflected in the 'being with' nature of friendship, contrasting with the 'doing for' nature of charitable attitudes towards disabled people.³⁶ There is also a significant link between particularity of friendship and hospitality that further fosters inclusion of 'others'.³⁷ There is a debate here, for another day, about the particularity of friendship and God's universal love.³⁸

Since the early eighteenth century disabled people have experienced highly asymmetric relationships, with institutions, professionals, charities and non-disabled people. Disabled people have been seen by non-disabled people as passive recipients of care (pastoral, medical and social), a notion that often persists today.³⁹ As a counter to these perceptions the mutuality of friendships is vital.

A significant impact of mutual friendships is that this enables two or more people to work together for the benefit of one another and others.⁴⁰ This means that disabled people are not just present in a church community but work with others to be empowered and to empower others to participate in the life and

³⁰ Others include race, culture, class, gender, age, sexuality.

³¹ Reinders, *Receiving the Gift*. See also numerous works by Vanier, Hauerwas and others

³² For example the sweeping reference to 'the disabled'.

³³ There are a wide range of impairments. Congenital/Acquired makes a big psychological difference.

³⁴ This is potentially an issue in ministerial settlement.

³⁵ Summers, *Friendship*, 125-27.

³⁶ An idea examined by Samuel Wells, *The Nazareth Manifesto* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), though not directly mentioning disabled people.

³⁷ Summers, *Friendship*, 146-50.

³⁸ Based around issues raised by Anders Nygren and others

³⁹ Narrative of disabled people as scroungers, dependent on the state, burden to society etc.

⁴⁰ Guido de Graaff, *Politics in Friendship* (London: T & T Clark, 2014), 164-172 where the body of Christ proposed in Romans 12 is examined through mutual relationship within a church community.

ministry of the church. In addition this challenges the very individualistic understandings that have in the past fostered groups that 'work for' disabled people, instead fostering an approach of 'being with' disabled people.

I am currently working on how our contemporary understanding of the role of covenant relationships within and among Baptist churches can be seen through the lens of friendship. At a recent Baptist Union Council meeting I was in discussion with someone who said "It's all well and good saying we are a covenant community but what does that look like in reality?" I suggest that it looks like a community of friends of God, called by God into friendship with others, marked by Baptism and the Breaking of Bread.

This needs a significant theological underpinning and I am currently examining Paul Fiddes' work on relational Trinity, which I believe will provide that grounding. This will in lead to an understanding of covenant relations in the church community that can be enriched by the concept of friendship. In turn this will enable the church to be an inclusive community, of disabled people and of others to tend to be kept on the edge or outside our churches.

So, we have seen that there has been very little work on the role of friendship and physical disability within either sociology of disability or the wider field of disability studies. Theological reflection of friendship and disabled people has so far been restricted to considering relationships with people with learning disabilities. My hope is that by focussing on friendship as a means of inclusion, then physically disabled people within Baptist (and of course other) church communities at local, Association and Union level, will be empowered to exercise their God given gifts in all forms of ministry. In addition there is an impact on the inclusion of other marginalised people and groups – since we seek to include our friends.

So finally I suggest that by enabling disabled and non-disabled people to become friends rather than remaining as strangers the commonly held myth that 'disabled people are passive recipients of pastoral care' can be challenged and a far more empowering understanding of and relationship with disabled people can foster proper inclusion in all aspect of Baptist Church communities.

DISCERNMENT AND THE CHURCH MEETING

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My current research is an analysis of the Church Meeting and how it seeks to ‘discern the mind of Christ.’ It is based on participant observation of four churches. Each Church Meeting is observed and then used as a starting point for interviews of the minister and two members to discuss the experience of decision-making in the Church Meeting. My doctorate course is in practical theology, therefore practical theology provides the framework for my research. This short paper touches themes that form questions for the interview stage: revelation in community, reclaiming discernment, participation and silence in the Church Meeting.

A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY APPROACH

The experience of listening to members making decisions together places this research project within practical theology, which takes “contemporary people’s experiences seriously as data for theological reflection.”¹ It was one critical incident within a discussion about a building project that led to this reflection on discernment. I sought try to understand why the incident took place and what theories might help me to lead the church towards a positive outcome as “the key questions of the interpretative task of practical theology.”²

My first pastorate was at Woolwich Central Baptist Church, London. The church site was due to be compulsory purchased as the large housing estate behind was to be redeveloped. While I was there we were in the early stages of discussing what kind of church we would like. As we began to discern the church of the future, the question of whether we would want a multi-purpose worship space arose. Our architect asked: “Would it be ok to play basketball in the same space as the church met on a Sunday?” And there was a physical gasp, right from the belly of some of members who could not imagine anything worse.

This incident highlighted that for some members at the church the physical space of the church was a sacred place where God dwelt and so should be set apart for congregational worship. Meanwhile for others it was in fellowship after a Sunday service that God could be found. The Anglican John Inge argues that a sacred place is relational and revelatory, as such form churches into being ‘storied’ places where all of life and worship is celebrated.³ Inge’s category of a storied place is helpful as it describes how congregations are formed with stories and remembered in a special way at church. I suggest that a Baptist church is a storied church that includes marriages, deaths just as Inge argues, but for Baptists a storied church would encompass how decisions are made together. This autonomy is part of our character.

¹ Stephen Pattison and James Woodward eds., *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 15.

² Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 8.

³ John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 36.

The discernment of the mind of Christ, whether done well or badly, gives character and shape to the congregation. At Woolwich the discernment process literally gave shape to the building. The revelation that we encountered transformed the project for the better. It is this sense of revelation in decision-making that I believe Baptists view as sacred even if it is not openly acknowledged. The qualitative research interviews will explore this theme of revelation at the Church Meeting. The interviews will provide a description and language of revelation experienced by Baptists. One outcome of the project is to then share examples of best practice of discernment in Church Meetings for the benefit of the denomination and beyond.

REVELATION IN COMMUNITY

Theologians such as Susan White and Philip Sheldrake argue the community of the church carries revelation formed by liturgical gathering acts.⁴ For Baptists, I offer that revelation also includes discernment at the Church Meeting as equal to and as an act of worship. Rowan Williams proposes that a holy place is understood in the “reality of a community ... [where Christians] see each other as signs of God’s mercy and liberty.”⁵ It is essential for a Baptist church to function that revelation occurs at the Church Meeting. Church Meetings often include worship and for some Baptists, such as Phil Jump, are viewed as an act of worship.⁶ A greater understanding of spiritual revelation within shared Baptist discernment is necessary.

The Baptist theological framework for community discernment is based on the overriding biblical belief in the priesthood of all believers.⁷ Stephen Holmes argues further for the practice of the Church Meeting to be understood as the organizational expression of 1 Corinthians 2.16, which serves as prophetic protest⁸ as it models radical community values and embodies equality.⁹ In practice by affirming the priesthood of all believers, numerous Baptist theologians¹⁰ affirm multi-voiced worship and the mechanism of the Church Meeting as it enables members to “be empowered and to think in mature ways. Freedom of conscience is fostered ... in discerning communities of faith.”¹¹

The Church Meeting has offered an opportunity for empowering the oppressed, which is evident in historic examples in enslavement uprisings,¹² however as Holmes suggests, in everyday Church Meeting

⁴ Susan White, “A Theology of Sacred Space,” in *Sense of the Sacramental: Movement and Measure in Art and Music, Place and Time*, eds. David Brown and Ann Loades (London: SPCK, 1995), 39. Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity* (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 32.

⁵ Rowan Williams, *Open to Judgement – Sermons and Addresses* (London: DLT, 1994), 103.

⁶ Phil Jump, *Healthy Church Meetings* (North West Baptist Association: Unpublished, 2007).

⁷ 1 Peter 2.5 “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”, NIV UK trans.

⁸ Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 102.

⁹ Stephen R. Holmes, “Knowing Together the Mind of Christ: Congregational Government and the Church Meeting,” in *Questions of Identity: Studies in Honour of Brian Haymes*. Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies (Vol.6), eds. A. R. Cross & R. Gouldbourne (Oxford: Regent’s Park College, 2011), 181.

¹⁰ See Paul S. Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces: Baptist Identity in Church and Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003) and Nigel Wright, *Challenge to Change: A Radical Agenda for Baptists*, (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991).

¹¹ Nigel Wright, *Baptist Basics 6: The Church Members Meeting* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 2009), 6.

¹² William Knibb, *Speeches of James Losh and the Reverend William Knibb on the Immediate Abolition of British Colonial Slavery Delivered at a Public Meeting Held in Brunswick Place Chapel, Newcastle 1833, Courant Office, Political Tracts 1719-1846* (J Blackwell & Co, 1833).

practice there is the distinct possibility of large-scale non-attendance of members or silence of those who do attend.¹³ Mindful of the established baptistic framework of priesthood of all believers, I question to what extent the silence and or non-participation of members is seen to affect the discernment process and to what extent is a shared discernment process liberative.

RECLAIMING A PLACE OF DISCERNMENT

The reality of life is reflected in my research in practical theology. Now in my third pastorate at New Southgate London, I can no longer focus on one church and one particular experience. My research has changed accordingly from the content of a question about a building project to the context of the Church Meeting in which that question was asked. When a Church Meeting is a place of discernment, church members find participation in decision-making affirming and exciting. My hope is to reclaim the process of discernment through understanding the value of participation of all members in decision-making.

Henri Lefebvre argues that communities of citizens who determine their own meaning are of greater value than individual people who inhabit the same place but only function as consumers.¹⁴ The experience of taking part in a Church Meeting with discernment and one that merely receives reports echoes this distinction between citizens and consumers. Lefebvre further suggests that a society that creates opportunities for inhabitants to engage with one another will ‘through mutual recognition, test one another, and in this way, be strengthened or weakened.’¹⁵ Although he is proposing a utopian vision for life, my hope is that a Baptist Church Meeting might be a place where by members are able to determine their meaning and be strengthened by the process.

Lefebvre’s ideal of the urban society has strong resonances with what a Baptist Church Meeting attempts to create, albeit on a much smaller scale. At a Church Meeting, all members are equal, all encouraged to participate and create the kind of church they desire for themselves and for their community. When the Church Meeting is functioning well it is a great source of solidarity for members. The original critical incident raises a concern about the sacredness of space for different ethnicities within the church. However it is only because we used our normative Baptist methodology of dialogue and discernment within a Church Meeting that this concern was heard at all. Furthermore, it was only because each person present felt confident to speak and participate in the process that a multitude of voices was heard. When this level of participation in discernment is achieved it is highly valuable to the health of the church.

¹³ Holmes, “Knowing Together the Mind,” 179.

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*. Translated by Robert Bononno (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1970]).

¹⁵ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 96.

PARTICIPATION AND THE CHURCH MEETING

Reflection is core activity within practical theology. Therefore as a researcher I analyze my concern for participation in decision-making with Heather Walton's question: "How do I position myself as narrator in this text?"¹⁶ I recall an early formative experience of my own: "Once I was in a meeting as a young woman. I was the only woman and I was wearing bright red, so I really stood out, or so I thought. I made an excellent suggestion out-loud but I was not heard. The chairman ignored me. A few minutes later an older man made exactly the same point as his own and the idea was hailed as brilliant." *Research log, May 2017*.

When my voice was ignored I felt disempowered and disillusioned. I realize that my concern for participation in the Church Meeting is to ensure women are valued in decision-making. Further noting the dominance of men speaking at a Church Meeting causes me to consider the importance of women's participation in the Church Meeting.

In Nelle Morton's essay 'The Beloved Image' she argues that women live out of patriarchal constructed images and therefore she seeks to find alternative images that offer freedom for women.¹⁷ Through a series of small group discussions she encounters women telling stories about their lived experience whereby "someone speaks precisely so that more accurate hearing may take place."¹⁸ This thick storytelling and hearing is likened to empowerment. Morton states: "hearing in this sense can break through political and social structures to be heard by the disinherited."¹⁹ Morton identifies Pentecost as a liberative image offering a reverse logic that evokes "hearing to speech."²⁰

How then might the image of Pentecost reflect on the Church Meeting? Stephen Holmes argues that the Church Meeting is: "profoundly subversive of almost every human social order ... This is the church, where every social division is levelled and each person granted the dignity of one made in the image of God and remade through the sacrifice of Christ and the work of the Spirit."²¹

A lack of people being heard and speaking then is a difficulty for a Church Meeting, as it indicates that an alternative image where women are not welcome to speak or be heard is dominant. Participation in discernment could be part of a deep listening of other church members that encourages all members to value one and other. Further a Church Meeting that hears every voice enables the Spirit to be heard most fully.

SILENCE AND THE CHURCH MEETING

Unfortunately, I know of plenty of church members who regularly attend the Church Meeting but have never spoken. Frances Ward's research in congregational studies causes me to consider the role of speech

¹⁶ Heather Walton, *Writing Methods in Theological Reflection* (London: SCM Press, 2014), xxii.

¹⁷ Nelle Morton, *The Journey Is Home* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1985), 125.

¹⁸ Morton, *Journey*, 127.

¹⁹ Morton, *Journey*, 128.

²⁰ Morton, *Journey*, 127.

²¹ Holmes, "Knowing Together the Mind," 185.

and the power of silence or withdrawal within a meeting and in research. In her ethnographic study in participation in the project was reduced through “absenteeism, sickness and fatigue of members.”²² However she drew inspiration from Kamala Visweswaran who uses an example of a woman who refused to be a research subject and notes that the woman’s refusal or silence within a project can be seen as a powerful form of resistance.²³

In reflection on my experience of silence in Church Meetings and Visweswara’s argument, I wrote in my journal: “If only non-participation in Church Meetings was due to a considered resistance, I cannot help but think it stems from apathy towards dull meetings that are repetitive, lack content to be discussed and attended out of a sense of duty. And so many people do not like speaking out-loud!” *Research log, April 2017*

In attempting to interpret a lack of spoken participation in meetings I found Donal Carbaugh to be persuasive in his argument that: “If speaking presumes a degree of membership and influence, then silence may signal social ambiguity and or/distance. Silence can be viewed as a way of dissolving, breaking, rejecting or refusing to recognise social bonds among participants”.²⁴

I am intrigued to explore within an interview setting what kind of silence and speech members are offering. For those who do not speak at the meeting, I am interested to learn how they view they are taking part in decision-making process. If a church member can express concerns, fears or experiences about the Church Meeting and it can be addressed in such a way that they might have courage to speak in the future, then this would provide positive steps for change within the church.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This research began by hearing a sharp intake of breath that led to a deeper discernment by church members. Practical theology calls for a reformulation of practice following reflection on experience. How then can discernment be explored and expanded within the Church Meeting?

My project hopes to redeem the Church Meeting by pursuing a greater appreciation for the revelation that is sought when members gather to pray and make decisions in and for the local community. It seeks to provide a language to appreciate shared revelation as a sacred place and uncover and suggest examples of best practice.

This research will highlight ways in which silence and non-participation can be understood and broader participation in the Church Meeting encouraged. Further that it will generate new ways of appreciating and revitalizing discernment at the Church Meeting. I will use both the image of Pentecost where Christians are united and heard into speech in miraculous ways and Lefebvre’s image of citizens engaging in mutual recognition as areas to explore in interviews.

²² Frances Ward, “The Messiness of Studying Congregations Using Ethnographic Methods,” in *Congregational Studies in the UK*, eds. Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting and Linda Woodhead (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 125.

²³ Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), ch. 6.

²⁴ Donal Carbaugh, “Silence and Ethnography,” in *Cultural Communication and Intercultural Contact* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts, Psychology Press, 2009), 325.

If the Church Meeting fails to hear from all of the voices within its membership then it fails to hear the fullness of the Holy Spirit's voice and so operates with a limited image of God. At Pentecost everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit and was heard unto speech, and this reverse logic is part of being a church that is truly shaped and fashioned by the Holy Spirit, which is fundamental to being a discerning Baptist church.

ABSENT FRIENDS: DO BAPTISTS NEED TO REIMAGINE HOW THEY CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

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Much of the discussion or debate amongst Baptists concerning the Lord's Supper has focussed on the way that Jesus is present at the table, if at all¹. Such a focus on what is happening to the bread and wine has typically meant that Baptists have given little thought to what sharing at the table might mean for the gathered church². The plural in my title, *Absent Friends*, raises the question of whether it is not just Christ's presence that is missed at the Table; by placing the emphasis so strongly upon personal devotion, is the church absent as well?

Over the summer of 2016 I conducted a survey into Baptist practice of the Lord's Supper that received responses from 69 different Baptist ministers. To tease out the details I invited twelve to take part in follow-up interviews. The results of this, albeit small sample, confirmed that the communion meal (as Baptists overwhelmingly prefer to call it) is not very much of a communion at all, if by that we mean a meal that deepens the fellowship of those who share it.

In the majority of cases, members of Baptist congregations remain in their seats to receive the bread and wine; and this is brought to them by either the minister or the deacons of the church. The wine is almost always shared in small cups rather than in a common cup. And this is true even on the very few occasions when people are invited to come forwards to receive the bread and wine. There is also very little happening in the way of gestures or movements that might enable a largely passive congregation to recognise who else is there. Only a few churches shared the peace and even those that did admitted that they don't do this often. When asked about the use of patterns, such as those in *Gathering for Worship*³, and particularly prayers in the patterns that involve congregational responses, the impression given was that this happens occasionally, and perhaps more so with the advent of new technology, but it is not the norm⁴.

This is not to say that those surveyed or spoken to lack the desire to get people more involved, and in fact the process also revealed a good deal of imagination that was encouraging. What it does suggest is

¹ See for example Michael Walker, *Baptists at the Table* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1992), 90-97, with reference to dispute between Godwin and Pusey.

² Scott W. Bullard, "Communing Together: Baptists Worshipping in the Eucharist," in *Gathering Together: Baptists at Work in Worship*, eds. Rodney Wallace and Derek C. Hatch (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 99-102. There are exceptions to this. For example, see Paul S. Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces: Baptist Identity in Church and Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 168.

³ *Gathering for Worship* is the most recent manual of resources for Baptist worship in the UK. It was published in 2005.

⁴ See Myra Blyth, "A Sign of Unity: The Changing Theology and Practice of Lord's Supper amongst British Baptists," in *Gathering Disciples: Essays in Honor of Christopher Ellis*, eds. Myra Blyth and Andy Goodliff (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017), 130. She argues that, when it comes to the use of liturgical patterns, "modern technology... has won over the hearts and minds of Baptists where texts alone did not."

that current practice of the Lord's Supper in many Baptist churches does little to encourage those who come to see sharing the bread and wine as in any way identifying them as the body of Christ.

The question of how we got to this place means that we go back to the history, because I want to suggest that our failure to discern the presence of Christ as we come to the table is in part the reason we do not discern his body. Now I am sure that there are many who understand the journey that Baptists have been on regarding the Lord's Supper better than I do. As such it is not my intention to rehearse many of the details. However a few broad brushstrokes are necessary.

Early Baptists picked up and continued the Calvinist understanding of the English Separatist movement out of which they grew. This is evident, for example, in the writings of the influential Baptist Thomas Grantham, as well as in the confessions and creeds of both the General and Particular Baptists that appeared in the seventeenth-century⁵. Calvin's view was that the bread and wine were not simply there to bring to mind the sacrifice of Christ, but rather were symbols that by the operation of God's Spirit could transport the believer into the presence of her exalted Lord.

Using hymn texts, as well as the confessions and other writings, Michael Walker has shown that this was the dominant Baptist view until the nineteenth-century, when fears of a return to Catholicism provoked a severe reaction.⁶ The outcome was that Baptists by and large embraced a memorial view that is often associated with Calvin's fellow reformer Zwingli, although there is good reason to believe that Zwingli's actual views are seriously misrepresented by the resulting Zwinglian position taken by Baptists⁷. David Bebbington argues that the subsequent Baptist view was influenced by more than just anti-Catholic sentiment, and among other factors he includes the triumph of rational thought over the idea of sacred mystery, which he says is evident in the writings of John Clifford⁸. The memorialist position promoted by Clifford, and which came to be the Baptist norm, regarded the bread and wine as mere symbols that, like the sermon, were effectual only in that they helped the believer bring to mind the sacrifice that Christ had made for her⁹.

Baptist rejection of Christ's presence at the table continued throughout the twentieth-century, despite the efforts of some to recover a more sacramental theology and practice. In her survey of the Baptist manuals for worship that were published in this period, Myra Blyth shows how there has been a movement back towards a more sacramental understanding of the Supper and then away again. Patterns in the latest manual, when seen alongside Paul Goodliff's survey into Baptist views of ministry, suggest the direction has

⁵ Fiddes, *Tracks and Traces*, 164-166. David Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 184-185.

⁶ Walker, *Baptists at the Table*, 2, 17-30, 85-90.

⁷ Keith G. Jones, *A Shared Meal and a Common Table: Some Reflections on the Lord's Supper and Baptists* (Oxford: Whitley Publications, 1999), 8-12. See also Curtis Freeman, *Contesting Catholicity: Theology for Other Baptists* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 334.

⁸ David Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries*, 185-90, gives five reasons for what he calls the "decline of high churchmanship" amongst Baptists with regards to the Supper: the priority given to defending believers baptism; the change in the intellectual climate brought about with the Enlightenment; the Evangelical Awakening and the emphasis upon experience over matters of order; the enduring power of anti-Catholicism (given further weight by the rise of Tractarianism); and, a greater emphasis on respectability and professionalism in church affairs.

⁹ Walker, *Baptists at the Table*, 6-7.

changed again, but how much this is reflected in Baptist churches is open to debate¹⁰. The evidence of the surveys and interviews confirms the judgement made by Walker, Bebbington, and others, that Baptists have been left with a practice that is unfocussed, and determined more by pragmatism than any theological understanding or wider purpose¹¹. With the focus of the memorial position on the bread and wine as simply there to call to mind Christ's sacrifice, is it any wonder that most Baptists treat their participation as one of personal even private devotion?

This emphasis on Baptist practice of the Lord's Supper as primarily concerned with the believers' personal relationship with Christ has been further influenced by other historical changes, of which I want to briefly mention just one. Not one of the ministers who responded to the survey restricts participation in the Lord's Supper to those who are in membership of their church. Again, as Walker has shown, prior to the nineteenth-century a closed table would have been the default position of Baptists, but the influence of Robert Hall changed that, initially to make room for other Christians, despite their 'faulty' baptism!¹² It is not my intention to argue against an open table—I share the view of others that the last supper for Jesus was the sum of the other meals that he shared, at which all were welcome, and fellowship enjoined; but it is worthy of note that opening up the table has taken from Baptists a practice that once helped to reinforce their identity, as the gathered people of Christ.

Having briefly sketched out some of the historical background to current practice, I want to suggest that to remedy this will involve more than helping Baptists find a new way of thinking about the covenantal aspects of the Lord's Supper. Following Stanley Hauerwas and James K. Smith, among others, I want to argue that the embodiment of particular practices helps to shape the identity of the church.¹³ In regards to the Lord's Supper, Smith writes, "In a broken, fragmented world, the church is called to be the first-fruits of a new creation by embodying a reconciled community; and the way we begin to learn that is at the communion table."¹⁴

Smith understands the Lord's Supper as normative for the church, in that it is here that we become the body of Christ, bound together in love, and kept together by continually working out with one another what it means to forgive and to be forgiven. As such, I think that as Baptists we need to reimagine *how* we practice the Lord's Supper, because what we are currently doing undermines whatever else we might want to say is going on. We need to challenge the pragmatism that's come to dominate our practice because the way we do things is not neutral; it is shaping the people that we are.

In *Worship and Christian Identity: Practicing Ourselves*, E. Byron Anderson asks the question "How does faith get into our bodies?"¹⁵ He picks up the work of social anthropologist Paul Connerton, who identifies 3 processes that constitute what he calls "the rhetoric of re-enactment", calendrical repetition, verbal

¹⁰ Blyth, "A Sign of Unity," 132-133.

¹¹ Walker, *Baptists at the Table*, 197. Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries*, 191.

¹² Walker, *Baptists at the Table*, 45-65.

¹³ See for example, Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

¹⁴ James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 202.

¹⁵ E. Byron Anderson, *Worship and Christian Identity: Practicing Ourselves* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 59.

repetition, and gestural repetition¹⁶. In summary what Anderson says is that we get faith into our bodies by practices that are repeated at regular intervals (weekly, monthly and so on), by practices that repeat the same words, and by practices that repeat the same gestures or movements. Thus for the Lord's Supper, how often we celebrate, how familiar the words are that we use, and the gestures that are part of what we do, will all shape the way that the Lord's Supper forms us as God's people.

When it comes to gestures, Anderson makes the observation that, while the liturgies that we are currently producing for the Lord's Supper are putting a greater emphasis upon thanksgiving, by not addressing what he calls "incorporating practices", such as bowing our heads or kneeling, what we do will continue to speak more of penitence than it will of joyful gratitude¹⁷. What people are doing in Baptist services of the Lord's Supper, sitting in rows, being served, taking a single cup, and what we are not doing, such as sharing the peace, these things are, I believe, significantly shaping the kind of people we are. However much we might talk of this being a communion meal, one we share together, our actions say otherwise, and we betray any sense that we are the body of Christ.

With this in mind consider these comments from a couple of the follow-up interviews. I repeat them verbatim because I think they are telling. In the survey I had asked people to describe the character of the particular Lord's Supper they were completing it for. Was it celebratory, or sombre, or something else? This first respondent had opted for other and written "Somewhere between celebratory and sombre", so in the interview I asked what that meant. This was the response: "I think I make it a celebration and the congregation think it's sombre... so that's why it's always somewhere in between. [Here I asked a couple of clarifying questions: what do you do to try and make it a celebration?; and how do they make it more sombre?] It's tone... my tone 'this is a good thing, this is a place to rejoice at,' and they don't smile."

This second respondent had chosen celebratory. So in the interview I asked why and if that was how the congregation would have described that occasion. They said this:

I think I would use the word because I'm wanting people to sort of recognise and celebrate what Jesus has done for us. So, although there's a sense of remembering the pain and the suffering up on the cross, I think always the connection for me is that three days later the resurrection aspect. Interestingly when we did a review... we did a bit of a conversation with our teenagers a few... this is probably a couple of years ago, and this is maybe how the congregation perceived it, they, one of the children, or a couple of them, said when they'd been into communion, they said sometimes they felt like the atmosphere changed and became a lot more sober, which I thought was an interesting observation. I think probably some of that is because we get a little bit more formal ... we're quite an informal church in the way that we do Sunday mornings, but I think when we do communion we tend to be a little bit more, not ... we will use liturgy sometimes but we will have our own particular

¹⁶ Ibid., 76.

¹⁷ Ibid., 78-79. He describes incorporating practices as "those which impart messages by means of the current bodily activity of the sender or senders, by performance." He further argues that our focus on the writing of liturgical texts (an inscribing practice because it seeks to fix in place the meaning of an event) means that "the incorporating practices of the community at worship remain largely unaddressed."

set phraseologies that we go through, so that it can be a little bit more formal... and maybe that's what they're picking up. I think sometimes the congregation doesn't enter into that as much perhaps as I would like or we would like and it can feel a little more serious and sober...

Curtis Freeman writes, "For many Baptists, the Lord's Supper is a matter of individual piety. If individualism is the sickness of Baptist life, the antidote is healing grace that in part lies in recovering a sense of the Lord's Supper as an act of common prayer."¹⁸ If Anderson is right then that recovery will require Baptists to introduce gestures and movements into their celebrations of the Lord's Supper that intentionally turn the believer away from a moment of private devotion, and towards those brothers and sisters in Christ who have come to the table with her. Now I am not trying to argue that there is a dichotomy here, that it should be either personal devotion or common prayer, but that our current practice leans so much in one direction that we need to redress the balance and introduce gestures and movements that turn us back towards one another. The regular and repeated practice of sharing the peace is a gesture that could in time encourage Baptists to recognise the horizontal as well as the vertical aspect of the covenant that Jesus' death and resurrection have made possible. Such a practice is consistent with the idea that the Lord's Supper is a "re-membling" of the body of Christ, which makes it ironic that the pattern in *Gathering for Worship* that takes this name does not include it.

If we are going to do this then there a number of obstacles that we'll need to overcome. One of these is a dissonance between ministers and their congregations, which is hinted at in the first respondents comment above. We might persuade ministers, and indeed I think we're already seeing a sacramental turn towards recognising Christ's presence at the table, but I don't think it's there in the churches. I also think we'll need to find ways to overcome what Keith Jones highlights as the problem with our physical spaces¹⁹. Historically they've been set up for pulpits and oratory, for choirs and music, and more recently for worship groups on a platform, but they've never been set up for the table. And then thirdly I think we'll need to deal with the challenge posed by the limited amount of time we give to the Lord's Supper in our services.

These are initial thoughts rather than firm conclusions and my main aim has been simply to ask the question, Do Baptists need to reimagine *how* they celebrate the Lord's Supper? I think we do and I think we need to if we're going to find ways to bring these absent friends back to the table.

[In response to this paper the observation was made that there are three moments that are fairly common in Baptist churches when they share the Lord's Supper that do get us toward the communal aspect. These were: receiving new members immediately prior to celebrating the Supper; a time of pastoral prayer, particularly focussed on the local fellowships needs; the retaining of the individual cups so that everyone drinks at the same time, with the point often made that this is the sign of our fellowship in Christ. While I think all these are valid ways of encouraging the corporate aspect of our coming to the table, I am not aware

¹⁸ Freeman, *Contesting Catholicity*, 321.

¹⁹ Jones, *A Shared Meal*, 27-28.

of any gesture or movement taking place, and I suspect that in most cases it is still the minister who welcomes the new members or leads the pastoral prayers.]

THE 'SEAL' OF THE SPIRIT: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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One of the accusations that has occasionally been levelled against the book of Revelation is that it has an inadequate pneumatology; R.H. Charles provocatively suggested, as far back as 1920, that “there is no definitely conceived doctrine of the Spirit,” while David Aune has more recently ascribed the personified Spirit to a ‘Second Edition’ of the Apocalypse.¹ However, to suggest that the Spirit is not present within the book is to miss a key aspect of John’s theological scheme.² In this paper I will suggest that a renewed attention to the Spirit can shed new light on both the universal scope of the love of God, and the role of the church as those entrusted with a part to play in the salvation of the nations.³

There are four specific instances in Revelation of John describing himself as ‘in the spirit’. The first two of these are associated with his initial entry into his visionary trance. “I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, ‘Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches’. At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne!” (Revelation 1.10-11; 4.2).

The practice of spirit-possession leading to visionary activity was not unknown within Jewish religious practice, and is found both in the Old Testament, and in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts. So, for example, in Ezekiel we find: “He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me... Then the spirit lifted me up.” (Ezekiel 2.1-2; 3.12).

While the Ascension of Isaiah offers an interesting parallel to this from the early centuries of the Christian tradition, “And while he was speaking with the Holy Spirit in the hearing of them all, he became silent, and his mind was taken up from him, and he did not see the men who were standing before him. His eyes were indeed open, but his mouth was silent, and the mind in his body was taken up from him. But his breath was (still) in him, for he was seeing a vision.” (Asc. Isa. 6.10–12).⁴

¹ David E. Aune, *Revelation 1—5*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52A (Dallas: Word Books, 1997), 36; R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), vol. 1, cxiv.

² Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 150–73; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit in Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries and Today* (London: SPCK, 2013), 156–61; Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, ed. John Christopher Thomas, Rickie Moore, and Steven J. Land, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series, vol. 30 (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2006), 36–7; Simon Woodman, *The Book of Revelation* (London: SCM, 2008), 81–83.

³ A shorter version of this paper was published in Johnson Lim, ed. *Holy Spirit, Unfinished Agenda* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2015). Reproduced here with permission. All Biblical quotations are from the NRSV.

⁴ Translated by M.A. Knibb in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume 2*, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 165. See also D.S. Russell, *The Method & Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), 166–9.

Similarly, John is carried away 'in the spirit' to witness both the judgement of the great whore and the arrival of the bride of the Lamb. "He carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast... in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven." (Revelation 17.3; 21.10).

At issue in these passages is exactly whose 'spirit' it is that John is 'in'? It is possible that John is speaking about his own spirit ascending from his body into heaven, in a similar manner to the author of 1 Enoch who describes, "(thus) it happened after this that my spirit passed out of sight and ascended into the heavens" (1 Enoch 71.1).⁵

However, while this may account for the first two references, it is a less satisfactory explanation of the latter two, because if 'spirit' is understood as the Spirit of God, then John's language becomes a description of the Holy Spirit entering into him in order to facilitate his visionary journey.

Another repeated reference to the Spirit is found in the concluding sections of each of the seven letters, where it is stated: "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches" (2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22; NRSV). This has the effect of casting the content of each of the letters as comprising both the words of the Spirit and the words of the Christological 'son of man' (cf. 2.1, 8, 12, 18; 3.1, 7, 14). In this way, the Spirit is the one conveying the message of Jesus through John's writings to those in the seven churches. John is thus seen as prophet whose words are Spirit-inspired, communicating the words of Jesus.

In a similar manner, the Spirit is heard agreeing with the blessing spoken by the voice from the throne over those who have died in Christ, prophetically confirming to John that the words of Jesus are trustworthy and true, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.'" (Revelation 14.13; cf. 21.5; 22.6).

This function of the Spirit as conveying the 'testimony of Jesus' is therefore described as being 'the spirit of prophecy': "Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19.10).

The final direct mention of the Spirit in Revelation is found in the concluding chapter, where the Spirit joins with the bride of the Lamb to issue a call for everyone who is thirsty to 'come' and take the water of life. "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.' And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift." (Revelation 22.17; cf. John 7.37–8)

This passage in Revelation parallels the water of life discourse from the Fourth Gospel, where it is Jesus who issues the invitation to drink the water of life, although even in the gospel it is clear that there is a link between the invitation to drink water and the activity of the Spirit. "On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living

⁵ Translated by E. Isaac in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume 1*, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 49.

water.” Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7.37-39).

The form that this invitation to drink living water takes in the Apocalypse forms the conclusion to the main drama of the work, with the final act of the Spirit being to sound a note of universal summons. So, if the bride is understood as the Church, the first fruits of the great harvest (14.4), then it is an act of supreme theological theatre for John to close in this liturgical way:

[Cantor] The spirit and the bride say ‘come.’

And let everyone who hears say,

[7 Congregations] Come.

[Cantor] And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. (Revelation 22.17).

By this reading, the Church and the Spirit join their voices in calling the nations of the world, those beyond the gates of the new Jerusalem (cf. 22.15), to enter in and drink from the river of life which runs through the city; this is those who have been through the lake of fire and have emerged purified, purgated of their sins: “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22.1-2).

The Abrahamic covenant thus finds its fulfilment as the people of God become a source of blessing to all the nations, drawing them from the ruins of Babylon to their eternal destination in the new Jerusalem. In this way, the role of the Spirit in the present becomes that of inspiring the prayerful response of the Church, just as it has been to inspire the prophetic words of John throughout the Apocalypse. Bauckham observes that, “traditionally the inspiration of Scripture had as its corollary the inspiration of the reader of Scripture or the reading community. The Spirit who inspired the Scripture also inspires its believing readers to accept it as God’s message and to understand it.”⁶

And Bauckham goes on to suggest that the seven spirits of God found in Revelation should also be understood as the Holy Spirit. “Grace to you and peace from ... the seven spirits who are before his throne. These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God. In front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God. I saw ... a Lamb ... having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (Revelation 1.4; 3.1; 4.5; 5.6).

Bauckham identifies these seven spirits with the seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lamb, seeing these functioning together as representing the Spirit of Christ at work in the world.⁷ However, it may be more likely that the seven spirits function as a characterization of the omniscient nature of the one seated

⁶ Richard Bauckham, “Scripture and Authority,” *Transformation* 15, no. 2 (1998): 6.

⁷ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 162–6.

on the throne, in a similar manner to the eyes of the four living creatures: "Around the throne are twenty-four thrones ... and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God ... Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind." (Revelation 4.4-6)

Boxall suggests that these seven spirits should be understood as the "angels of the presence," or the Archangels, who are before the throne of God in Jewish mythology.⁸ One further intriguing allusion to the Spirit may be found in the divine seal with which the redeemed are marked.

I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." ... They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Revelation 7.2-3; 9.4)

These 'servants of God' receive a mark on their foreheads from the angel with the seal of God (1.1; 7.3f; 10.7; 22.3, 6). This mark indicates their allegiance to God in heaven rather than to the forces of evil in the world (9.4; 13.16; 22.4). In view here is the practice of marking slaves or prisoners of war with a brand or tattoo to denote ownership.⁹ The nature of this 'seal of God' with which the redeemed are marked is left undefined, although it is described as the name of both the Lamb and the Father, in language which evokes the words of Ezekiel. "With him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ... they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." (Revelation 14.1; cf. 22.4). "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." (Ezekiel 9.4)

An explanation of this 'mark' may be found in the Pauline language of being sealed with the Holy Spirit. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, significantly one of the seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 1.11; 2.1), Paul twice speaks of the Spirit as God's seal on believers. "In him you also ... were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. ... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption." (Eph. 1.13-14; 4.30; cf. 2 Cor. 1.21-22).

This is contrasted with the seal of Judaism, which Paul equates with the practice of circumcision:¹⁰ "He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith." (Romans 4.11)

By this understanding of John's imagery of the 'seal of God', it is the presence of the Spirit in believers that marks them as the people of God. The seal of the Spirit is thus, for John, the new circumcision; those sealed by the Spirit are the new Israel, and they are also therefore the heirs to the Abrahamic covenant,

⁸ Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St John*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Continuum, 2006), 99.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁰ Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (London: SPCK, 2005), 184.

“And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel.” (Revelation 7:4).

They are the light to the nations for the salvation of the world (cf. Isa. 42.6; 49.6). The 144,000 who are heard to be sealed become the vision of great multi-national multitude (7.9) in fulfilment of the divine promise to Abraham that his inheritance was a people too great to count (Gen. 22.17; 32.12). The first fruits of the redeemed (14.4) become the great harvest of the world, with the Spirit’s voice heralding the transition:

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them." Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand! Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped. (Revelation 14.13-16).

Thus it can be seen that the presentation of the Spirit within the Apocalypse is more complex than a mere facet of the presentation of Jesus, something which has implications for those seeking to explore the origins of Trinitarian theology, as well as those seeking an understanding of the scope of God’s love expressed in the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Although the Spirit in Revelation is not enthroned alongside the Father and the Son, nonetheless the Spirit fulfils a distinct function as the presence of the divine among the people of the Lamb, drawing the nations of the world to himself in universal acceptance.

HOW A CONCERN FOR CONVERSION STOPPED US FROM BEING MISSIONAL

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In 2017 I completed MPhil research at Bristol Baptist College, exploring the failure of Baptists in the city to engage with the white-working classes, in particular on the estates around the edge of the city, one of which is where the church where I minister is located. This paper emerged out of my research and my ongoing reflections on this issue.

In his recent exploration of Baptist theology, Stephen Holmes explores the practice of believers' baptism and how it witnesses to an important distinctive of Baptist belief. And then he says this:

In Baptist theology, God deals directly with each particular human being, summoning him or her to respond in repentance and faith to the gospel call, and to take his or her place within the active community of the redeemed, living a life of visible holiness and committed to the evangelisation of the world. Believer's baptism is an expression of this intensely individualist strain within Baptist theology: the faith of the church or the family is of no moment in the story of a person's journey to faith; only his or her own response counts.¹

In this paper I will explore the possibility that this emphasis may actually be an inhibitor to, rather than a driver of, mission.

Many of us here will be familiar with the historical background which in part explains this emphasis, our emergence from Separatist groups who sought religious liberty and who defined themselves in opposition to the idea of a state church, placing a high value on the purity of a community set apart from the institutionalised nominalism of established religion.² The historian B. G. Worrall records the evolution of Baptist belief and practice by the time of the 19th century, describing a people who felt that "they were the ones who took their religion seriously," with their "abundance of meetings and the fact that they practised extempore prayer,"³ setting themselves apart from what was perceived as the soft-peddling convenience of Anglicanism. Worrall notes that even though it came from an earlier age, the most popular book which expressed their understanding of faith was Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which speaks of an individual making their journey through the world characterised by a battle against temptation and a determination to make it to the Celestial City untainted and unscathed.⁴ He also observes that, "Chapel

¹ Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 95.

² See Christopher R. Ellis, "Spirituality in Mission," in *Under the Rule of Christ*, ed. Paul S. Fiddes (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 173.

³ B. G. Worrall, *The Making of the Modern Church: Christianity in England since 1800*, rev. ed. (London: SPCK, 1993), 137.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 137.

could absorb the whole non-working life of a family, effectively cutting them off from any other activity and giving an impression of narrowness,”⁵ a view reinforced by their strict moral outlook.⁶

The early years of the twentieth century saw Baptists facing up to the reality of numerical decline.⁷ Baptist Union General Secretary John Howard Shakespeare attempted to arrest this trend through the creation of new structures to encourage interdependence, an approach which, in retrospect, was always unlikely to succeed in “a denomination which owed its past vigour and growth to the local and spontaneous.”⁸ To this day, a stress on the independence of the local congregation continues to be an important feature of Baptist ecclesiology, cited by Holmes as ‘the other major ecclesiological distinctive shared by Baptists’⁹ alongside believers’ baptism.

But to what extent does that understanding accurately reflect the values of our forebears?

Paul Goodliff, in a paper written in 2012, has pointed out that the earliest Baptists: “were not individualists in the way that modernity privileges the atomistic and autonomous individual, but rather . . . they understood the nature of discipleship as both a personal choice to follow Christ, and a commensurate commitment to the community of those who have done likewise.”¹⁰

In the same article, he cites the work of American Baptist Theologian Philip E. Thompson, who uses the term *paramnesia*¹¹ to describe Baptist’s distorted reading of their own history. Viewing the story of the early Baptists through lenses which are coloured by the modern obsession with individualism, contemporary Baptists see their forebears as people driven by a pre-occupation with their rights to believe and worship on their own terms, a version of history which overlooks the central importance given by early Baptists and Anabaptists, to mutual accountability between members for whom Sunday worship often included discussions on practice and discipline, connections between churches¹² and congregational hermeneutics.¹³

Of course, an understanding of Christian faith which gives primacy to the beliefs of the individual is not a perspective unique to British Baptists. David Bebbington has famously defined conversionism, “the belief that lives need to be changed,” as one of four hallmarks of modern evangelicalism.¹⁴

A helpful overview of the roots of this conviction can be found in William Abraham’s book, *The Logic of Evangelism*. Abraham describes the way in which the eighteenth-century marked a watershed in evangelistic practice, when influential preachers such as John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards began to focus their sermons on the affections of listeners and the provocation of a personal, heartfelt response from the congregation.¹⁵ Abraham notes that Wesley and Edwards both had an understanding of the Gospel which

⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁶ Ibid., 138.

⁷ See Roger Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage* (Didcot Baptist Union, 2005²), 170.

⁸ Ibid., 177.

⁹ Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 95-96.

¹⁰ Paul Goodliff, “Baptist Futures: Networks,” Unpublished paper 2012, 21.

¹¹ Ibid., 20.

¹² See Hayden, *English Baptist History*, 32.

¹³ See Stuart Murray, *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2000), 167.

¹⁴ See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2.

¹⁵ William Abraham *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 58.

included a deep commitment ‘to the coming of the rule of God on earth as well as in heaven.’¹⁶ However, a course had been set which would lead to an increasing focus on personal conversion and renewal, typified by the preaching of evangelists such as Charles Finney, D. L. Moody and Billy Graham. Ultimately, the result has been the proclamation of a diminished gospel where crucial elements of the story, such as the coming of God’s kingdom and its announcement to the world in “the worship and ministry of the church are all treated as a kind of scaffolding or backcloth to the salvation of the individual sinner.”¹⁷

Why might this focus on individual conversion and piety be a problem with regard to mission? The initial stimulation for this paper came from Mark Mulder’s recent book, *Shades of White Flight*. The book is a study of seven Christian Reformed Churches (CRC) in Chicago who relocated to different suburbs in direct response to demographic changes which led to an influx of African-Americans to the areas where they were previously situated. He observes that, “white evangelicals have been opposed to individual racial prejudice while failing to understand the structural/institutional character of racism.”¹⁸

Mulder attributes this ‘antistructural’¹⁹ outlook to an understanding of faith that makes believers responsible for their personal piety but fails to challenge their collusion with systems which perpetuate deprivation. In this school of thought, a priority for Christians is the sustaining of a personal relationship with God, to the exclusion of wider social issues. Individual members of these churches insisted that their personal morality allowed no room for racist attitudes, but collectively they colluded with migration patterns which sustained racial segregation in the city.

A variety of reasons are offered to account for this problem. The history of CRC congregations is described by Mulder as “rife with schism.”²⁰ The breaking of a relationship or departure from a place came to be regarded as a legitimate response to challenges which may arise. The primary relationships for many church members were located within the congregation, thereby de-emphasising the importance of physical location. “Those communities tended to be largely spiritual—there was no emphasis on community being connected to ‘place.’”²¹ Finally, Mulder reflects on problems arising from CRC ecclesiology, noting that power is located primarily at the level of congregations who are free to resist strategies for mission which are developed regionally by the denomination.²²

I came across Mulder’s book during the course of my research and I was struck by a number of parallels might be drawn between these factors and the spirituality which characterises British Baptist life. I’d like to suggest that Mulder’s assertion that individualism can lead to an ‘anti-structural’ faith seems especially relevant when we consider Britain’s recent history.

A brief digression. Imagine the scene: it’s 1981, and in a speech in the parish of St Lawrence Jewry in the City of London, the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher outlined her understanding of Christian

¹⁶ Ibid., 58.

¹⁷ Ibid., 59.

¹⁸ Mark Mulder, *Shades of White Flight: Evangelical Congregations and Urban Departure* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 7.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²⁰ Ibid., 6.

²¹ Ibid., 78.

²² Ibid., 98-99.

faith and its relationship to social change “. . . the New Testament is preoccupied with the individual, with his need for forgiveness and for the Divine strength, which comes to those who sincerely accept it. Of course, we can deduce from the teachings of the Bible principles of public as well as private morality; but, in the last resort, all these principles refer back to the individual in his relationship with others.”²³

In her recent book, *God and Mrs Thatcher*, Eliza Filby comments that, “this was in essence Margaret Thatcher’s theology: the individual positioned at the centre of the spiritual and the temporal world.”²⁴ It is no accident that such a faith was formed within Non-conformism. From an earlier age, the most influential figure in Margaret Thatcher’s life was her father, Alfred Roberts, shopkeeper, president of the Chamber of Trade and the Rotary Club and also a Methodist lay preacher.²⁵ This was an understanding of faith which placed a heavy emphasis on discipline, personal propriety and hard work, but also one which encouraged deregulation, allowing for rising levels of debts from the 1980s.

During the 1980s, one of the most vocal opponents of the changes brought about by the Conservative government were the Church of England, with Bishops often voicing their concern about increasing unemployment and social division. One such example is the acrimonious Miners’ Strike of 1984-5, when David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham, spoke out in defence of the coal workers. However, Filby notes the, “comparative silence of the non-conformist churches, once the moral heartbeat of the mining villages.”²⁶ One is tempted to ask what goals Baptist and other non-conformists were pursuing in the same period.

One possible answer to such a question might be found in a brief consideration of the Protestant work ethic. As recently as 2015, 96% of Evangelical Alliance survey respondents affirmed their belief that, “Everyone has a duty to work to support themselves and their family if they can,”²⁷ while 11% agreed with the statement that, “if we are faithful we will prosper materially.”²⁸ In the same survey, evangelicals were asked about what they considered to be the top causes of poverty in the UK. Only 33% saw “educational inequality” as an issue, and only 37% believed “inequality or social justice” to be a factor. However, 75% of evangelicals considered “laziness” to be a problem, and 84% cited “welfare dependency.”²⁹ Perhaps, we see the blindness of privilege speaking in these responses, but I suspect that they also bear witness to a set of assumptions which underpin evangelical attitudes, the belief that God has a plan for *me* and *my* life, that he leads *me* to the one he predestined me to marry, that he opens the doors to the job he wants *me* to do, that my rewards for working hard and going along with his purposes come in the form of financial and material comfort given by the One who is ordering the world to work on terms which are favourable to his chosen ones.

²³ Eliza Filby, *God and Mrs Thatcher: The Battle for Britain’s Soul* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2015), 125.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

²⁷ Evangelical Alliance, “Good News for the Poor? A Snapshot of the Beliefs and Habits of Evangelical Christians in the UK,” Summer (2015): 7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

Another criticism of individualist faith cited by Mulder is the way it can separate belief from place. In my own experience of Baptist ministry in Birmingham, I am frequently struck by the number of Baptists who commute from one suburb to another on a Sunday morning, with ties *within* their congregations apparently stronger than those to the places where people live. The choice of where to worship for Baptists often appears to be predicated more on churchmanship than location. People will consider whether or not a church is sufficiently evangelical, charismatic or liberal, according to their tastes, ahead of where it is situated.

Commuter worshippers, inevitably, fail to connect with a neighbourhood in the same way as those who reside there. At its most extreme, those travelling to churches in areas of deprivation may even feel an ambivalence or disdain towards such places. One minister of a church I interviewed during my research, based in a deprived ward in Birmingham spoke about a member of his congregation who had told him: “I don’t like coming to [this area], I only come here for church.”

A considered reflection on this issue needs to account not only for Baptist ecclesiology and practice, but also for wider changes which have taken place in British society in recent decades. An increase in individualism has been caused by a number of factors including a “greater proportion of leisure time at home”³⁰ for families enjoying television or on the web.

Another reason has been the advent of widely-available personal transport. Those with access to cars commute in privacy from their communities during working hours, and then spend their evenings at home. The car also allows people to shop, play (and worship) away from the neighbourhoods where they live.

Not all sociologists regard the rise of individualism only in terms of the loss of previous patterns of community life. Elliott and Lemert suggest instead that it is a natural human reaction to the continual and fast-paced change experienced by many in modern society, that “a sense of detached engagement”³¹ is a survival instinct of those under pressure. However, this analysis is not supported by a 2010 UK charities report which suggests that “individuals and cultures that attach greater importance to self-transcendence and openness-to-change values,”³² are more likely to show “greater concern about bigger-than-self problems, and higher motivation to address these problems.”³³ In other words, self-preservation and detachment are not inevitable human responses in times of crisis; we can be conditioned to act towards others in a spirit of generosity and vulnerability. I wonder to what extent those sorts of values are being encouraged in our churches.

One final sociological insight should be considered. In his seminal study of individualism, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam notes the emergence of groups which offer opportunities to participate in various types of support or self-help. Examples include Weightwatchers, keep fit classes and support groups for

³⁰ See I. Jones, *The Local Church and Generational Change in Birmingham 1945-2000* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 141.

³¹ A. Elliott and C. Lemert, *The New Individualism: The Emotional Costs of Globalisation*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), xx.

³² T. Cromton, *Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values* (Godalming: World Wildlife Fund, 2010), 32.

³³ *Ibid.*, 32.

those with shared interests or problems, issues which Putnam notes are, “not nearly so closely associated with regular community involvement such as voting, volunteering, giving to charity, working on community problems, or talking with neighbours.”³⁴ Putnam draws on the insights of fellow American sociologist Robert Wuthnow, who offers the following analysis of such groups:

People feel cared for. They help one another. They may share their intimate problems . . . But in another sense small groups may not be fostering community as effectively as many of their proponents would like. Some small groups merely provide occasions for individuals to focus on themselves in the presence of others. The social contract binding members together asserts only the weakest of obligations. Come if you have time. Talk if you feel like it. Respect everyone’s opinion. Never criticise. Leave quietly if you become dissatisfied.³⁵

It is tempting to consider how Wuthnow’s critique could be applied to the home groups which have become the locus of church life in so many evangelical congregations. It would be wrong to discount the obvious benefits offered by these groups which provide opportunities for deeper fellowship and discussion about how faith is lived out in everyday situations. But to what extent have such groups moved the focus of discipleship from public witness to private opinions and inward-looking relationships?

In her most recent book Lynsey Hanley, reflecting on her journey from a working-class background to middle-class respectability, suggests that, “Put crudely, the ‘middle-class idea of the person’ is that you are a project: you are nothing without external input, matched with personal effort.”³⁶

Hanley’s remarks hold up a mirror against much of the practice which constitutes evangelical spirituality: the courses to be completed, the books to be read, the meetings to be attended, the knowledge to be acquired. Inherent in such an approach is the danger that faith becomes one more part of an overall process of self-improvement and self-actualisation.

In the early days of the Baptist movement, a focus on individual discipleship and taking personal responsibility for one’s faith represented a strength, a distinctive position to adopt during a time when membership of the established church was assumed and uncritical adherence to faith was a cultural norm. But is there a time when a denomination’s strengths become its weaknesses? In a society where individualism is now rife, there is a danger that this emphasis on personal salvation is no longer counter-cultural but actually represents a diminished understanding of the Gospel, one which demands less of us because it fails to ask questions of the ways we might collude with social and economic structures that de-humanise and marginalise others. My argument is not that we cast aside our theology of conversion, but that we think afresh about what we are converting people from, and the purpose for which we are discipling them. And at a time when many congregations are engaging more with their communities through social projects such

³⁴ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 151.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁶ Lynsey Hanley, *Respectable: The Experience of Class* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 99-100.

as Christians Against Poverty Debt Advice or Foodbanks, do we have a theology which actually equips them to make sense of the kingdom work they are undertaking?

CRAFTING PASTORAL CARE PLANS

Philip Halstead¹

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to develop a pastoral care plan for a church? Are you familiar with theological models that could help you in this endeavour? Do you know of resources, innovative possibilities, and people that might assist you to create a context-specific pastoral care strategy? Or does the idea of fashioning a plan render you nonplussed, because you do not know how to accomplish such a task?

These are some of the questions I pondered in 2016. A group of us had gathered to worship God and fellowship together when a visiting pastor encouraged us to take this initiative a step further and start a new church. After a season of discernment, we concluded that the idea was of God and under the leadership of two wonderful priests St Augustine's Anglican Church in Auckland, New Zealand was birthed. I was asked to lead the pastoral care component of this fledgling community and develop a pastoral care plan as part of my brief.

Experience had taught me that producing a church pastoral care strategy was no easy task. Many reasons account for this challenge. When I had been commissioned to develop a pastoral care plan for a church of 1200 plus parishioners in 2008, I had incorrectly assumed that all I would need to do was locate some plans that other churches used and modify them to fit our context. The problem was, however, that I was unable to unearth a single blueprint. I therefore set out on the lengthy, yet deeply satisfying journey of building and implementing a pastoral care plan from scratch.² Of course, the lack of literature on how to create a pastoral care plan is not the only challenge facing those given the task of developing new pastoral strategies. Designers also need to consider the discrete histories, idiosyncrasies, and ever-evolving needs of parishioners, as well as the unique demographics, ethnic compositions, and geographical locations of each church.

To navigate my way through these factors and craft a pastoral care plan for St Augustine's I used the integrative theological approach outlined by George Wieland, Myk Habets, and myself in *Doing Integrative Theology* as a framework. In the book we argue that integrative theology "sees the world of life, discipleship, and mission not only as the arena in which theological understanding is to be applied, but as the context in which the work of God may be discerned" and God may be "more fully known."³ This involves exploring (in no particular order) God's word (i.e., "the content of Christian belief; scripture and Christian theological

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² See Philip John Halstead, "Creating Pastoral Care Strategies for Churches in the 21st Century: The Organic Process of Developing the Pastoral Care Plan for St Paul's Symonds Street, Auckland, New Zealand," *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 11.1 (2016): 72-87; Philip John Halstead, "Mental Health and The Church: A Pastoral Care Structure that Assists Individuals, Families, and Congregations affected by Mental Health Concerns," *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 12.1 (2017): 32-49.

³ Philip Halstead, George Wieland, and Myk Habets, "Introduction: The Integrative Process," in *Doing Integrative Theology: Word, World, and Work in Conversation*, eds. Philip Halstead and Myk Habets (Auckland: Archer Press, 2015), 1-10, 4.

traditions”), God’s work (i.e., “the performance of Christian discipleship, community and mission”), and God’s world (i.e., “the worlds in which we live and the mission of God is realized”), as well as the interrelationships amongst these three overlapping elements.⁴

GOD’S WORLD

Each Sunday the people of St Augustine’s gather together from all corners of Auckland in an inner-city school auditorium to worship God, receive input, pray, and fellowship. Some of us also meet in various locations scattered around the metropolis during the week. Our website declares that everyone is welcome at St Augustine’s and that our goal is to give “ourselves away for the good of Auckland city.”⁵ But such aspirations are more easily articulated than achieved. Even for us to begin to welcome everybody and give ourselves away effectually—that is, to care well for all people—requires an awareness of the context in which we find ourselves.

Consider the following factors. Māori are the *tangata whenua*⁶ of Aotearoa New Zealand and as *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (the Treaty of Waitangi) confirms “Pākehā are only Pākehā as a result of their relation to Māori.”⁷ I would like to spotlight three of the many implications that can be drawn from these cursory though important observations. First, St Augustine’s is (at the time of writing) predominantly a Pākehā congregation. Second, we need to acknowledge that our identity as Pākehā “is a colonizing identity, and waking up to history positions Pākehā repentance, unbelonging, and witness in the context of the specific issues and structures of unjust power and privilege in Aotearoa New Zealand.”⁸ And third, when thinking about developing a pastoral care plan we should bear in mind the treaty principles of partnership, protection, and participation,⁹ as well as the impassioned plea of a Māori friend of mine who recently remonstrated “nothing about Māori without Māori.” This suggests that we need to approach the local *iwi*,¹⁰ attempt to build relationships with them, and be open to their input.

Another dynamic that needs to be considered as we form St Augustine’s pastoral care plan is that Auckland is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world with 39 percent of its population of around

⁴ Ibid. 5.

⁵ “Saint Augustine’s,” Saint Augustine’s Auckland Church, <https://www.saintaugustines.org/>.

⁶ *Tangata whenua* are the “local people, hosts, indigenous people.” See John C. Moorfield, “Tangata whenua,” *Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary*, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=tangata+whenua>.

⁷ Andrew Picard, “From Whiteness Towards Witness,” in *The Art of Forgiveness*, eds. Philip Halstead and Myk Habets (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2018), 241-268, 260.

⁸ Ibid. 260-261.

⁹ Ministry of Health-Manatū Hauora, “Treaty of Waitangi Principles,” <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/he-korowai-oranga/strengthening-he-korowai-oranga/treaty-waitangi-principles>.

¹⁰ *Iwi* are an “extended kinship group, tribe ...” that “often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.” See John C. Moorfield, “Iwi,” *Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary*, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=iwi>.

1.5 million people¹¹ being born overseas.¹² Europeans (59.3%) comprise the largest demographic in Auckland followed by Asian (23.1%), Pacifika (14.6%), and Maori (10.7%).¹³ Furthermore, over half of Auckland's inner-city population, which is where St Augustine's is located, identifies as Asian.¹⁴ While no pastoral plan or church can accommodate everyone's needs, Auckland's ethnic diversity must be considered in our pastoral care strategy; for instance, we could employ an Asian priest in the near future.

We also need to acknowledge some of our 21st century culture's proclivities. Busyness and stress are seemingly ubiquitous today. Pastors are particularly prone to this malady. Thomas Merton challenges us by writing "to allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to the violence of our times."¹⁵ Similarly, Eugene Peterson stated that a "sense of hurry in pastoral work disqualifies one for the work of conversation and prayer that develops relationships that meet personal needs ... the pastor must not be 'busy'. Busyness is an illness of spirit."¹⁶ Effective pastoral care plans need to grapple with these ills and offer alternative strategies.

Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted are other features of our culture. Johann Hari adroitly observed that over recent decades people in the West have exponentially been dropping out of community activities. This trend has by now become an epidemic and our present "obsessive use of social media is" merely a failed "attempt to fill" our need for safe, caring, face-to-face connections.¹⁷ Accordingly, designers of pastoral care plans can potentially assist lonely people by offering applicable church- and community-based programs that facilitate interpersonal (and transpersonal) connections, offer people a sense of belonging, and build community.

Analogously, vast numbers of Aucklanders embody an individualistic worldview. Far too many of us wittingly and/or unwittingly prefer to live and serve alone. I was recently convicted of this reality via a conversation I had with a Samoan friend. He told me that in Samoa if one person grievously hurts another the perpetrator's entire family along with the perpetrator will go to the victim and the victim's extended family to seek forgiveness knowing that the victim's family may or may not extend forgiveness. A strength of this approach is that it serves as both a fence at the top of the cliff (e.g., it acts as a deterrent to wrongdoing) and an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff (e.g., it demonstrates to perpetrators and victims

¹¹ "Auckland Population 2019," World Population Review, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/auckland-population/>.

¹² Lincoln Tan, "Auckland More Diverse than London and New York," New Zealand Herald, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11575305.

¹³ "2013 Census QuickStats about a place: Newmarket," Stats NZ, http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx?request_value=13397&parent_id=13171&tabname=&p=y&printall=true.

¹⁴ "Auckland's Asian Population," The Auckland Plan 2050, <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Pages/aucklands-asian-population.aspx>.

¹⁵ Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Image Books, 1968), 86.

¹⁶ Eugene Peterson, *Five Small Stones of Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 61.

¹⁷ Johann Hari, *Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression—And the Unexpected Solutions* (New York, Bloomsbury, 2018), 89.

alike that they are not alone). Other advantages include sharing the responsibility of care and uniting large numbers of people on multiple levels. Taule'ale'ausumai expands upon these points as follows:

The task of defining pastoral care from a Samoan perspective is extremely complex. The first difficulty is that the use of the term pastoral care in the context of Samoa creates an uncomfortable distinction between clergy and laity. When exploring the question, 'Who does the caring in an unofficial way?' the answer is everyone—clergy, laity, male and female. To explore pastoral care only as a clerical function excludes all these other caregivers from receiving credit for the work they do. Theirs may not be a ministry of the word and sacrament, but it most certainly is a ministry in every other sense of the word. Samoan people have as a second nature a concern for each other as well as for the environment in which they live. They do not need to be told when to visit the sick or pray for the concerns of the world: they cannot comprehend what it means to eat while their neighbours starve. Life revolves around the community and is part of the community ... Samoa's living standards may appear humble to the first world tourist, but even with the little it has, there is always room for one more guest in every home.¹⁸

The importance of these sentiments cannot be overstated. It seems to me that many of us need to experience a transformation regarding the concept of communal care. If pastoral care plans are to be truly beneficial, they and their advocates will need to inspire everyone who can care for others to provide care. No doubt, this will involve regular exhortations, prayer, and modelling. Meditation on the reality that we are interconnected and all part of Christ's body and that each one of us is essential to the vitality of the body will also help (1 Cor. 12: 12-31). Given the multiplicity of needs in all our lives, developing a community of caregivers is the only way forward.

GOD'S WORD

In *Doing Integrative Theology*, we define God's word as "the content of Christian belief; scripture and Christian theological traditions."¹⁹ The insights gleaned from these sources must shape the pastoral care offerings of churches. Consider the importance and implications of the following principles.

Love is at the heart of pastoral care. It has many different shades. Agape love, for example, describes the love that we are called to have for God and our neighbours (Mt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30). Such love "is totally for the benefit of the other and not dependent on it being reciprocated. It is giving love."²⁰ Many of us are used to hearing that this is how God loves us, but it is no small matter to discover that we are supposed to love (and care for) others free of any expectation of repayment. Some of the biblical descriptors of genuine love such as the call to demonstrate patience and kindness (1 Cor. 13:4) make this task even more

¹⁸ Feiloaiga Taule'ale'ausumai, "Pastoral Care: A Samoan Perspective," in *Counselling Issues and South Pacific Communities*, ed. Philip Culbertson (Auckland: Accent Publications, 1997), 215-240, 215.

¹⁹ Halstead, Wieland, and Habets, "Introduction: The Integrative Process," 5.

²⁰ John Sturt and Agnes Sturt, *Mentoring for Marriage: A Resource Manual for Pastors, Counsellors and Couples* (Auckland: DayStar Publications Trust, 2004), 72.

challenging. So, too, does the reality that if we love and care for others well, witnesses of our love and care will be drawn to Jesus (Jn. 13:35). Consequently, bona fide pastoral care ought to influence our attitudes *and* actions.

Our relatedness to God is another key component of pastoral care.²¹ Liston Mills argues that every genuine definition of pastoral care has at its core “a way of understanding our relatedness to God and the ingredients or acts which may serve to enhance or detract from that relatedness.”²² For Eugene Peterson, this entails paying close attention to what God does and then finding and guiding “others to find, the daily, weekly, yearly rhythms that would get this awareness into our bones.”²³

The traditional term for pastoral care links to the Latin phrase *cura animarum*, which means the care of souls.²⁴ “While *cura* is most commonly translated ‘care,’ it actually contains the idea of both care and cure.” Thus, *care* points “to actions designed to support the well-being of something or someone” and “*cure* refers to actions designed to restore well-being that has been lost.”²⁵ *Anima* is “the most common Latin translation of the Hebrew *nephesh* (‘breath’) and the Greek *psyche* (‘soul’).”²⁶ Traditionally, the Christian church has embraced both meanings of *cura*,²⁷ but sadly sections of the church today have lost sight of the goal of cure and have rather settled for care.

In their seminal study of the history of pastoral care, William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle argue that pastoral care “consists of helping acts, done by *representative* Christian *persons*, directed toward the *healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling* of *troubled persons* whose troubles arise *in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns*.”²⁸ What follows are four notable components of this definition and some examples of cure and care.

First, pastoral care involves helping acts and accordingly has a pragmatic focus. It grounds religion in present-day realities and specialises in the ordinary. In other words, pastoral care equates to ministry in mufti, which requires personal involvement and a sleeves-rolled-up, hands-on mentality.²⁹ Thus, when a St Augustine’s parishioner is hospitalised we should offer to visit, pray, help with transport, and provide meals for the parishioner’s family members to name just a few examples.

²¹ A version of this and the following eight paragraphs was first published in Philip *Doing Integrative Theology: Word, World, and Work in Conversation*, eds. Philip Halstead and Myk Habets (Auckland: Archer Press, 2015), 92-109. Permission was obtained from the book’s publishers to replicate portions of the text here.

²² Liston O. Mills, “Pastoral Care: History, Traditions, and Definitions,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds., Rodney J. Hunter, Nancy J. Ramsay, H. Newton Malony, Liston O. Mills, and John Patton. Enl. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 836-844, 837.

²³ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 45.

²⁴ Albert L. Meiburg, “Care of Souls,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds., Rodney J. Hunter, Nancy J. Ramsay, H. Newton Malony, Liston O. Mills, and John Patton. Enl. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 122.

²⁵ Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, “Spiritual Direction and Christian Soul Care,” in *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*, eds., Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 11-28, 11.

²⁶ Meiburg, “Care of Souls,” 122.

²⁷ Moon and Benner, “Spiritual Direction and Christian Soul Care,” 11.

²⁸ William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1964), 4.

²⁹ Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*, 1.

Second, pastoral care is carried out by representative Christian persons. These caregivers are recognized as trusted caregivers by their churches; they do not have to be ordained clergy. What matters is that they bring the compassion and wisdom of Christian tradition to the situations they encounter.³⁰

Third, Clebsch and Jaekle explain that pastoral care is “directed toward the *healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons*.”³¹ This suggests that care for struggling people might involve (a) healing that restores them to greater wholeness; (b) sustaining whereby troubled persons and their families are resourced to endure or transcend their circumstances; (c) guiding where the hurting are assisted to make prudent choices; and (d) reconciling wherein fractured interpersonal and transcendent relationships are re-established.³²

A fourth point that can be drawn from Clebsch and Jaekle’s definition of pastoral care is that people’s troubles need to be *meaningful*. For them, this means that authentic pastoral care only takes place when individuals’ existential concerns are being addressed and when the recipients of care acknowledge that the care is being given by representative Christian persons.³³ Clearly, this existential priority is not meant to detract from the importance of the helping acts alluded to in their first point. All expressions of pastoral care are significant.

God’s Word is full of inspirational images that can shape our thinking about pastoral care. Perhaps the most renowned pastoral image is that of the shepherd.³⁴ Contemplating the shepherd image may inspire caregivers to lead parishioners to rich pastures for nourishment, protect churchgoers, and tend to their flocks’ needs. Jesus outlines a similar set of characteristics in John 10: 1-18. He explains that good shepherds ought to be in relationship with their sheep and, if required, lay down their lives for them. Similarly, Jesus’ parable about the man who left 99 of his sheep to seek the lost one (Mt. 18: 10-14) suggests that caregivers should (on occasions) pursue hurting persons, especially as some of them will be in too much pain to be able to request help.³⁵ Images and parables like these reflect some of the sterling characteristics that caregivers can aspire to such as commitment, courage, and a willingness to go the extra mile.³⁶ They also display the advantages of shepherds having relationships with their flocks *before* crises hit. This is to say caregivers need to spend quality time with those in their care.

GOD’S WORK

In keeping with this study’s integrative theological approach, the third element that needs to be probed to source ideas for a robust pastoral care plan is that of God’s work (practice), which in *Doing Integrative Theology*

³⁰ Clebsch and Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, 4.

³¹ *Ibid.* 4.

³² *Ibid.* 8-9.

³³ *Ibid.* 6.

³⁴ See for example Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: HarperOne, 1983), 51-53.

³⁵ William B. Oglesby, “Shepherd/Shepherding,” eds., Rodney J. Hunter, Nancy J. Ramsay, H. Newton Malony, Liston O. Mills, and John Patton. Enl. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 1164.

³⁶ Alastair V. Campbell, “The Courageous Shepherd,” in *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings*, ed. Robert C. Dykstra (St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 54-61, 61.

we define as “the performance of Christian discipleship, community and mission.”³⁷ God’s work in the area of pastoral care at St Augustine’s can be witnessed in informal settings (e.g., friends helping one another out in times of crises) and formal ones (e.g., the development of the *LoveBites* initiative, which involves church members providing meals to people in need). God’s work can also be witnessed in other churches. Elim Christian Centre in Auckland city, for instance, cares for some of Auckland’s inner-city Asian community by hosting a weekly church service in Mandarin; translating English services into Korean and Mandarin; and running English as second language classes.³⁸ And predictably, God’s work also flourishes beyond church walls. A noteworthy example returns us to the theme of stress. Over a billion results are (supposedly) identified when one googles the phrase, “How to deal with stress?”³⁹ As I scrolled through several of these pages, the church’s contribution was conspicuous for its absence! An awareness of God’s work in other contexts enables us to learn from others and connect some of our attendees to existing support groups, programmes, and experts. After all, there is no point in reinventing the wheel.

To explore further where God might be working within St Augustine’s I asked numerous parishioners what they would like to see included in the church’s pastoral care offering. Eight themes emerged from these conversations. First, everybody I spoke with longed for St Augustine’s to be a loving community in which all attendees are genuinely cared for. Second, everyone wanted the church to orchestrate regular events and small groups that facilitate interpersonal connections. Third, the majority of unmarried 20 to 35-year-olds I listened to shared stories of disconnection from God and others. Some also expressed a measure of disorientation in life. Fourth, most interviewees craved to live in an environment of prayer, but some were uncertain as to what this might look like and how they should pray. Fifth, nearly everyone stated that the church ought to prioritise people’s spiritual growth and personal transformations. Sixth, there was an awareness that St Augustine’s comprised a high percentage of remarkable 55-plus year-olds who were spiritually mature, wise, and active in life. It was mooted that the pastoral care offering ought to tap into this rich resource. Seventh, several individuals expressed concerns about the heavy workloads that the church leaders carried, and they deemed it imperative that the church finds appropriate ways to support its leaders. And finally, a handful of parishioners articulated their desire to have access to pastoral counselling and prayer if the need should arise. Lofty as some of these aspirations may sound, there was a common conviction amongst the people I conversed with that they were obtainable given that St Augustine’s was a relatively small start-up church.

³⁷ Halstead, Wieland, and Habets, “Introduction: The Integrative Process,” 5.

³⁸ “Elim Christian Centre City,” Elim Christian Centre, <https://www.elimchristiancentre.org.nz/city-campus/>.

³⁹ See https://www.google.co.nz/search?source=hp&ei=44hKXPHsEom_wAOQhZ34BA&q=How+to+deal+with+stress&btnK=Google+Search&oq=How+to+deal+with+stress&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0l10.3272.15860..17587...2.0..0.504.8262.2-9j12j3j1.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0..0i131j0i10.nQgovpk-l-E.

ST AUGUSTINE'S PASTORAL CARE PLAN

Having listened to some of the key voices from God's world, word, and work, the next stage of the development of St Augustine's pastoral care plan involved me conflating the themes and insights outlined above into a proposal. This involved much discussion, thinking, and prayer. What emerged from this process are the six points below.

Caring for the Church Leaders

It is widely known that the health of churches depends appreciably on the wellbeing of their leaders.⁴⁰ It is also commonly accepted that church leaders encounter unique challenges and pressures in their roles that often contribute to stress, burnout, and depression.⁴¹ And one does not need to probe deeply to observe that a high percentage of church leaders do not have established self-care practices in place such as regular supervision and spiritual direction appointments. Complicating matters further is the fact that many leaders are reticent about seeking assistance and that they do not know where to find help. Accordingly, it is imperative that tailored care be provided for every pastor and people-helping leader, so that they are suitably supported to thrive, facilitate the church's blossoming, and sustain their ministries over time. As can be observed above, this emphasis displays society's cry to reduce stress, the explicit concerns of some of the interviewees, and the principle that everyone including the shepherds needs to be shepherded.

In the St Augustine's context, I propose that each leader's individualised care plan be shaped around the four overlapping principles outlined in Luke 2:52—namely, the notions of wisdom, health, spirituality, and interpersonal relationships. To achieve this, a supervisor, spiritual director, counsellor, or respected person from outside of the leader's immediate context will be appointed to coordinate and monitor the details of the leader's personalised care strategy. This person must have the liberty and inclination to challenge the leader where applicable.

Wisdom is multifaceted and is needed in all areas of life and ministry. Consider the oft neglected area of finances. Many church leaders make little or no provision for their own and/or their families' long-term financial futures and the toll of this omission frequently proves to be extremely high. And how many caregivers have effective strategies in place such as robust reading programs to increase their wisdom? Given the tyranny of the urgent, as well as the demands and inevitable ups and downs of ministry, many church leaders will be unable to nourish the wisdom component of their lives without the consistent encouragement of a supervisor.

The health cog of the mooted schema may also be problematic for pastors and people-helping leaders. Most of us know that good hydration, balanced diets, adequate sleep, regular exercise, medical

⁴⁰ See for example Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

⁴¹ See for example Wayne Cordeiro, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* (Minneapolis, Minn: Bethany House, 2009).

check-ups, rest, recreation, and the like all contribute to good health. We also know that if we omit to consider our health we may unnecessarily break down or burn out. Yet, for a variety of reasons, many leaders ignore their own physical wellbeing. One of the most common explanations that persons provide for this omission is that the incessant stream of church-related needs that demand their attention leaves them with no time to fit selfcare strategies into their lives. Of course, what these leaders often fail to consider is the fact that if they push too hard for too long, and as a result become unwell, they will be unable to care for anyone.

Jesus reminds us of one of the key reasons why leaders need to prioritise their own spiritual health: He is the vine; we are the branches; apart from him we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5). Church leaders need to draw inspiration from Jesus. Their spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and experiences will invariably shape their church communities. It is therefore imperative that church workers find ways to nurture their own relationships with God. No doubt, this will look different for each individual and be subject to change. For St Augustine's leaders, this plan encourages them to receive monthly spiritual direction or the equivalent, attend a conference every year of their own choosing that cultivates their faith, and take a church financed sabbatical for (say) three months every five or so years. On their sabbaticals they might rest, walk the Camino in Spain and Portugal, attend Bethel's School of Supernatural Ministry in Redding, California, and/or be mentored by another minister in another context. Flexibility will clearly be needed here, because people's needs, life stages, and inclinations are unique; yet, the goal remains the same: to support the spiritual health and development of leaders.

Developing the interpersonal component of the designated St Augustine's leaders' lives is also vitally important. At an attitudinal level, for instance, this may involve some leaders entering therapy to explore their own shadows and unconscious worlds. And at a skills level it may necessitate that various leaders enrol in conflict resolution courses and/or find innovative ways to respond to the numerous requests they field from parishioners. Such steps could contribute towards greater congregational health.

While it is true that it would take a considerable amount of time for leaders to nurture the wisdom, health, spirituality, and interpersonal aspects of their lives, it is also true that the failure to invest in this critical work will in the long run reduce their effectiveness, soak up more of their time, and cause unnecessary damage to their flocks, families, and themselves. A friend recently summed this point up as follows: "If church leaders neglect to follow the airline safety rules of first putting on their own oxygen masks in times of emergency, they will very shortly be unable to assist anyone!" Thus, it is not a selfish act for pastors and caregivers to have long-term self-care strategies and prioritise themselves on occasions; in fact, it is essential that they do.

Pastoral Care for the Entire Congregation

The priority of offering pastoral care to everyone connected with St Augustine's reflects notions like God's goodness, our interconnectedness (1 Cor. 12:12-31), and the priority of love. It also mirrors the interviewees' desire to be part of a loving community and the fact that no one is beyond the need of cure and care.

To facilitate proactive pastoral care requires the development of effective systems. One expression of this in St Augustine's present context equates to the staff members (all of whom are part-time, of interest) collectively working through the church roll every four months to appoint each adult parishioner to a designated member of staff. From this point, staff are encouraged to initiate contact with their assigned people to enquire after their welfare, organise occasional catch-ups, elicit prayer requests, and build connections. If and when staff members observe that their nominated people are absent from church for a few weeks, they might e-mail or text them with a message like, "Hi Rob, I think I haven't seen you at church for the last few weeks and I was wondering if you're okay and/or if there's anything I could be praying for or assisting you with?" Predictably, we have quickly gathered bountiful evidence that demonstrates how these gestures are greatly valued. Even persons who have not attended church for some time frequently return to church after being contacted. This is not surprising given that most of us appreciate being valued and cared for.

Pastoral care strategies need to be flexible and non-restrictive. St Augustine's staff members can initiate contact with their nominated parishioners at whatever rhythm feels appropriate to them. Permission is not needed to communicate with persons from outside of one's designated group. And caregivers may ask others to connect with individuals in their own groups. What matters the most is that every church attendee tangibly experiences care and love. As the church grows, congregants with pastoral penchants will join the team of designated caregivers to ensure the sustainability of this stratagem.

Probably the best way to receive care at St Augustine's is to be part of a small group. It is in this context that people are most likely to be transparent, become known, and offer care to each other. As part of our burgeoning pastoral care strategy, we will clearly need to grow our small group offering, encourage people to join a group, and care for the small groups' leaders. Our hope is that the care of these leaders will be picked up by some of the church's vibrant and spiritually mature 55 plus year-olds.

Of course, we need to be open to new and changing modes of connecting people to care structures, too. One example spotlights the *Meet & Greet* evenings we recently initiated whereby persons who are relatively new to the church gather with staff and vestry members over a meal to get to know each other, hear about the church's philosophy, and ask questions. Our plan is to connect each cohort of attendees with a caregiver from the congregation who will accompany and care for them until they feel part of the church and have made some significant connections. Other plans include assembling a team of people who might be able to respond to congregants' practical needs and perhaps, in time, developing a geographical care-based structure since many of us live scattered across the city. Undoubtedly, further initiatives will emerge in time.

Care via Prayer

The primacy of prayer in pastoral care is well established. It can be witnessed in Jesus' care for others (Jn. 17), Peterson's earlier exhortation for pastors to find the time to pray for others, and the discussion of cure and care. Most people I spoke with about pastoral care at St Augustine's pointed to the importance of

prayer. It was as if they were saying that to pray for people is to care for people. Although there are multiple expressions of pastoral care, if prayer is not a leading component in a church care plan, and if prayer does not undergird every outworking of care, one could legitimately question if the care is Christian. Prayer not only builds transpersonal and interpersonal connections, it also seems to reveal the state of many people's spiritual vibrancy and maturity. Taken together we see that prayer has an immutable place in the Christian tradition of pastoral care. But what is prayer? Hans Urs Von Balthasar reasons that,

Firstly, prayer *is* a conversation between God and the soul, and secondly, a particular language *is* spoken: God's language. Prayer *is* dialogue, not [a person's] monologue before God. Ultimately, in any case, there is no such thing as solitary speech; speech implies reciprocity, the exchange of thoughts and souls, unity in common spirit, in a common possession and sharing of the truth. Speech both demands and manifests an I and a Thou.⁴²

Definitions like this remind us that we all have a lot to learn about prayer and that each person is at a different stage of her or his faith journey. If we are to help the interviewees fulfil their desires of living in an environment of prayer and if we are to make prayer accessible to everyone at St Augustine's, we plainly need to offer a wide range of prayer approaches. Some already exist. For instance, space is created in every church service for churchgoers to receive prayer. I contact each staff member at the beginning of each month to see if they have any specific prayer requests and concomitantly pray for them every day. And St Augustine's first three-day Silent retreat took place in 2018, which involved teaching on contemplative prayer, confession, creating space for God to speak, and giving each attendee the opportunity to meet with an experienced spiritual director for a one-on-one session.

Plans are also afoot to launch several new prayer ministries in the coming year. One is to establish a travelling prayer team whereby a small group of people will visit and pray for parishioners who desire prayer yet are unable to make it to a Sunday service to receive prayer. A second is to instigate a church prayer-line, which will enable persons to send their prayer requests to a designated church member, who in turn will send out a weekly (or emergency) e-mail to church members who have committed to pray for the people on the prayer-line. The recipients of prayer will also be followed up by an appointed pastoral caregiver. A third strategy is to link people who desire to deepen their connections with God to spiritually mature church members who can coach them in the art of prayer. And a fourth is to run a series of five-week prayer modules in our mid-week theology classes that will be commencing shortly. (We will also be offering five-week courses on pastoral care in this context.) By these and other means, we hope to advance our church culture of prayer and care.

⁴² Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1955/1986), 14.

Cultivating Interpersonal Connections

All the interviewees longed for St Augustine's to be a community in which every person who desires to connect with others can do so. Their unanimity is not surprising, given that we are created for interpersonal connections, we are linked to one another whether we acknowledge it or not (1 Cor.12:12-31), human bonds help to counter many of our epoch's ills such as loneliness, and care is best worked out in the context of community.

But how can meaningful social connections be nurtured in parishioners' lives in inner-city churches today? And how can people be encouraged to commit to others when they may at best be ambivalent towards the idea? In the St Augustine's context, one means is to continue with proven strategies such as the city-wide dinner banquets in parishioners' homes that occur several times each year. For these, a facilitator connects people who wish to attend a meal with those who want to host the events. An exciting twist to this scheme is that the facilitator only releases the hosts' addresses to the guests at the last minute and neither the hosts nor the guests know who is coming to dinner (or morning-tea, or lunch) until everyone arrives. This initiative has proven to be extremely popular and has enabled many new relationships to take root and blossom, which is particularly pleasing given that interpersonal connections comprise a crucial element in the lifeblood of effective pastoral care. Another means to encourage people to commit to others is to host church related social activities at least once per month such as tenpin bowling evenings, coffee tasting mornings, and educational mid-week presentations. In my view, most of these events should be aimed at the church's 20 to 35-year-olds who are not directly connected with families, as they were the interviewees who articulated the most disquiet about their disconnection from God and others. Interestingly, they also seem to equate to St Augustine's most under-represented demographic.

A further method of promoting social connections amongst ourselves (and others) would be to participate in an annual noho marae⁴³ at, ideally, the marae of the local iwi. Numerous benefits could stem from this, especially as experiences often transform lives in ways that nothing else can. We would observe first-hand how everyone serves on the marae. And we would hear stories that would lead many of us to deeper repentance, humility, and enlightenment.

Interpersonal relationships could also be enhanced via education on pastoral care related themes. For example, we could highlight the importance of friendship making, as friendships are an ideal context for extending and receiving care. Lynne Baab helpfully asserts that friendship is more like a verb than a noun⁴⁴ and Lex McMillan explains that *relations* is the primary ontology of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as, by implication, humans.⁴⁵ Additionally, Jesus' inspirational example of connectedness could be explored. Not only did he consistently find time to bond with God, but he also related to different groups of people

⁴³ A noho marae is a 'sleepover' on a marae (traditional Maori meeting house), which helps to facilitate quality learning. See Vaiolesi Passells and Judith Ackroyd, "Noho Marae Learning: Externalised Through the Experience," *Social Work Review* 18 (Summer 2006): 59-69.

⁴⁴ Lynne M. Baab, *Friending: Real Relationships in a Virtual World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011), 96.

⁴⁵ Lex McMillan, "Social God, Relational Selves," in *Stories of Therapy, Stories of Faith*, eds. Lex McMillan, Sarah Penwarden, and Siobhan Hunt (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017), 3-17, 8-9.

in various levels of intimacy. Church leaders might also share about their first-hand experiences of friendships and encourage congregants to sit next to isolated individuals in church.

Facilitating Wholeness and Wellbeing

As stated, several parishioners expressed that part of St Augustine's pastoral care offering should be aimed at supporting people's journeys towards wholeness and wellbeing. This goal echoes biblical processes like discipleship, transformation, and reconciliation, as well as Clebsch and Jaekles' famous definition of pastoral care that seeks "the *healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling* of troubled persons."⁴⁶

To determine a person's wholeness and wellbeing is no easy matter. The first step might be to define wholeness and wellbeing by studying the life of Jesus. Alternatively, it may be useful to utilise a psychometric scale such as John Fisher's *Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure* (SHALOM). This 20-item scale measures four domains of spiritual wellbeing—namely, people's relationships with themselves (i.e., the personal domain), others (i.e., the communal domain), the environment (i.e., the environmental domain), and the divine (i.e., the transcendental domain).⁴⁷

While some form of appraisal can be helpful, my experience suggests that what most churchgoers want when they are seeking help from the church is tangible assistance. Although every situation is distinct, care-seekers typically raise a surprisingly small number of themes. This reality offers pastoral caregivers and counsellors the opportunity to upskill in most areas they will encounter as they care for others. Keeping with Fisher's categories, examples include the importance of learning to grieve well (the personal domain); listen, forgive, and resolve conflict (the communal domain); live beyond oneself for the betterment of others (the environmental domain); and hear God's voice and determine God's will (the transcendental domain).

In keeping with the classic pastoral care image of the Gardener,⁴⁸ caregivers can facilitate wholeness and wellbeing in parishioners at a soil level. By this I mean, gardeners/caregivers can tend to the soil and create environments that enable the maturation of churchgoers. Caregivers can also nurture growth and healing via prayer and meaningful teaching. One example of these points spotlights the recent launching of a discipleship track at St Augustine's that enables explorers of the Christian faith to ask faith and heart related questions in a safe environment.

Developing a Pastoral Care Hub

Pastoral care is most effective when it is readily accessible and championed by appropriately motivated and skilled caregivers. To heighten the accessibility of a church's pastoral care offering it can be profoundly

⁴⁶ Clebsch and Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, 4.

⁴⁷ John Fisher, "Development and Application of a Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire Called SHALOM," *Religions* 1 (2010): 105-121, 107-109.

⁴⁸ Margaret Z. Kornfeld. "The Gardener," in *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings*, ed. Robert C. Dykstra (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 209-217.

helpful to establish a contact centre. In our case, this will involve setting up an e-mail address like pastoralcare@saintaugustines.org and encouraging church attendees to e-mail us when pastoral needs arise that cannot be met through their existing small group networks. One of the benefits of using a generic e-mail address, as opposed to an individual's, is that a handful of people can receive the requests and in turn discuss and pray about the situations before the most suitable person responds. A further advantage of a team approach is that it spreads the responsibility amongst caregivers and frees individual team members to step away from their roles on occasions without interrupting the church care mechanisms. Naturally, this system will not prevent parishioners from contacting individual staff members or congregants about pastoral care matters should they prefer to do so.

A further task of the hub's designated pastoral care leaders will be to look out for like-minded parishioners who they can invite to join and ultimately lead the church's different pastoral care teams. Such recruitment not only provides gifted and passionate caregivers with platforms to use their gifts, but it also spreads the load and helps to embed pastoral care further into a church's ethos. A related reason for growing teams is the fact that larger teams are the *only* way to ensure that every congregant will be cared for when church numbers swell. As teams increase in size, the focus of team leaders will often switch towards the care of team members, who, in turn, care for the parishioners.

As with all new initiatives, we must heed the voice of wisdom and overtly state from the outset that every new care strategy and appointment will be reviewed after (say) three months. Procedural junctures like this provide opportunities for review, change, and encouragement. They can also save much heartache.

SUMMARY

I set out to create an effective pastoral care plan for St Augustine's via engaging with God's World, Word, and Work as outlined in *Doing Integrative Theology*.⁴⁹ This journey proved to be most enlightening and included me presenting the draft six-point plan outlined above at an academic conference at which St Augustine's two priests and several Maori, Samoan, Chinese, Indian, and Pakeha academics and pastoral practitioners were in attendance.⁵⁰ The presentation and plan were very warmly received. The sole critique was to enhance further the communal approach to pastoral care for reasons such as those included in this article. Happily, St Augustine's priests approved the six points and we are now at the stage of implementing them.

I hope that many of you who have read this article will be inspired to create your own pastoral care plans for your specific contexts. May others of you find ways to adapt aspects of this plan to assist those in your care.

Pastoral care has innumerable benefits and can be summarised in Jesus' words: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13: 34-35). As we love and care for one another via

⁴⁹ Halstead, Wieland, and Habets, "Introduction: The Integrative Process," 1-10.

⁵⁰ I presented my paper "Reinventing Pastoral Care Strategies" at Carey Baptist College's Research Conference on September 14, 2017.

the multiple expressions of pastoral care outlined here, we will not only enrich ourselves, but also provide a lens through which others see and hopefully encounter Jesus. What a privilege this is! What a responsibility! Let us all care for one another.

REVIEWS

James M. Houston And Jens Zimmermann, Eds., *Sources Of The Christian Self: A Cultural History Of Christian Identity*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018. (Xxv + 694 pp.) ISBN 9780802876270

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The co-editors of *Sources of the Christian Self*, James M. Houston and Jens Zimmermann, have teamed up to bring together a superb volume. Enlisting a team of interdisciplinary scholars with expertise in theology, biblical studies, philosophy, and the humanities this book presents 42 chapters where each pursue the theme of Christian identity and what it means to be “in Christ” through a study of a figure from biblical and Christian history. The aim of this book then is to explore a cultural history of what it means to identify oneself as a Christian as revealed in the individual lives and lived reality of Christian saints throughout history up to recent history. The structure of the book is laid out in basically chronological order thusly: “Part One: Identity in the Old Testament,” “Part Two: Identity in the New Testament,” “Part Three: Identity in the Early Church,” “Part Four: Identity in the Middle Ages,” “Part Five: Identity in the Age of Reform,” “Part Six: Christian Identity in the Emergence of the Modern World,” and “Part Seven: Christian Identity in the Upheavals of the Twentieth Century.”

Students of philosophy will recognize that the title plays off of the study of selfhood in Charles Taylor’s groundbreaking *Sources of the Self* (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1989), which serves as the editor’s inspiration for bringing together their own study. However, as much as Taylor has a place as a springboard, the editors indicate their desire to go beyond Taylor’s more general treatment of identity and its importance for the shaping of contemporary horizons of meaning. This explains the choice to focus so strongly on the lives of individual Christians from history and the crucial link between their understanding of Christ’s identity (as Christos or the Messiah and Anointed One) and their own lifelong process of identification with him through discipleship. Thus, as a brief (and not exhaustive) sampling, each section of the book contains the following studies: Part One: Abraham and Moses; Part Two: Peter and Paul; Part Three: Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine; Part Four: Anselm, Aquinas, and Julian of Norwich; Part Five: Luther, Calvin, and Teresa of Avila; Part Six: Anna Maria van Schurman, Charles Wesley, and Christina Rossetti; and Part Seven: Karl Barth, Flannery O’Connor, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

While the choice to mention certain chapters is somewhat subjective, there are a few of the 42 present (of which all cannot be mentioned in the space given) that are particularly worthy of mention as touching on intersection points in contemporary Christian existence and identity today. For example, Markus Bockmuehl’s chapter, “Simon Peter: The Transformation of the Apostle,” is illustrative of the importance of metanoia, or one’s change in understanding and identity centred around Christ, to the Christian life. This

is epitomized in Bockmuehl's description of Simon Peter as "the second-chance disciple." And the volume as a whole testifies to the importance of women in Christian history for understanding Christian identity. This is nowhere better seen than in Elizabeth's Ludlow's chapter, "Christina Rossetti: Identity in the Communion of Saints," which uncovers a nuanced description of Christian identity in terms of the martyr through an examination of Rossetti's poetry. As well, two chapters in particular come into contact with discussions of theosis, or participation in the triune divine life, in recent theological scholarship. To be sure, Hans Boersma's chapter, "Gregory of Nyssa: Becoming Human in the Face of God," does not treat theosis outright. Nevertheless, Boersma's discussion of the beatific vision in Gregory of Nyssa can be seen to brush up against it with his own discussion of a theology of participation that is at once careful and suggestive for theological anthropology. Sven Soderlund's chapter, "Paul: The Christian as an 'in-Christ' Person," devotes space to specific mention of theosis in connection with scholars such as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and Michael Gorman.

Finally, an important contribution of this volume is the hermeneutical thread that runs through it. From a broad perspective the book itself can be seen as an extended exercise in cultural hermeneutics as well as a chronological description of Christian relation and identity. This is seen superbly in the chapter by Craig Gay, "Jacques Ellul: Christian Identity in a Technological Society." Through a conversation with Ellul and others, Gay uncovers the tendency of the emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness within the technological society to not only thin out human identity in general but also to subvert Christian identity in particular. In addition, the influence of the philosophical hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur is a most welcome feature. The editor's introduction itself contains a brief primer on Ricoeur's narrative philosophy and relational hermeneutics of the self. The importance of Ricoeur can be felt in Ryan Olson's chapter, "Gregory the Great: Conversionis Gratia – Ipse become Idem," in which Ricoeur's understanding of identity in terms of "sameness" (idem) and "selfhood" (ipse) becomes a lens to examine Gregory the Great's treatment of identity, relation, friendship, and character. Jens Zimmermann's chapter, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Question of Christian Identity," is also similarly concerned with Ricoeur's development of idem and ipse, this time in relation to Bonhoeffer. However, Zimmermann's exposition also demonstrates the manner in which Bonhoeffer's distinctive theological treatment of ethical agency toward the other, Christian identity, and their connection, which rests ultimately in our union with God in Christ and not ourselves, illustrates but nevertheless extends beyond Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the self.

Sources of the Christian Self is a rich and rewarding volume on Christian identity for scholar, professor, student, or motivated layperson. The structure and layout make it fit for both individual study and the classroom. An impressive piece of interdisciplinary scholarship, it has something of value for cultural historians, philosophers, biblical scholars, and theologians alike.

Ephraim Radner, *A Time To Keep: Theology, Mortality, And The Shape Of A Human Life*.

Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016. (304 pp.) ISBN 9781481305068

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Ephraim Radner has gifted us with a work of depth and wisdom. But though a gift, *A Time to Keep* remains difficult to classify. Radner is impressively interdisciplinary, weaving together insights and scholarship from theology, philosophy, cultural hermeneutics, sociology, and literature. The result is a dense, perceptive, and at times poetic offering in theological anthropology. The chapter titles: “Clocks, Skins, and Mortality” (chapter 1); “How a Life is Measured” (chapter 2); “Death and Filiation” (chapter 3); “The Arc of Life” (chapter 4); “The Vocation of Singleness” (chapter 5); “Working and Eating” (chapter 6) do well at gesturing toward Radner’s concern for a theological treatment of human mortality, finitude, fragility, contingency, and the shape of human living.

Radner conducts a theological investigation into the nature of time, in which one’s embodied creatureliness and narrative in the world form the relational context of human life. It is a feature of many contemporary discussions under which creatureliness lies—gender, sexuality, death, illness, work and vocation, and so on—that these aspects of human life get separated out and analysed apart from one another. One of Radner’s aims is to correct this; to not only treat the aspects of creatureliness, mortality, and finitude together, but to set them in their proper context. This has become all the more difficult since the advent of what Radner calls the “Great Transition,” in which human life has been dramatically changed by cultural, technological, and scientific forces that seek to transcend or overcome proper human creaturehood. In the face of this, Radner proposes a return to the importance of “filiation” (genealogy and family relation), that the temporal and time-filled aspect of human life is the triune God’s gift to reveal himself, and a concern to properly number our days under Christ as the shape of authentic human life.

It is in light of this that Radner treats the charged subjects of marriage, singleness, and sexuality. Radner gives evidence that with the proper theological context and with theological patience the importance of marriage and the goodness of singleness as a vocation can both be maintained. On the matter of sexuality, Radner displays his Scriptural agility in combination with his commitment to treat human existence as a whole cloth, in which one aspect cannot be ripped apart from another. While maintaining an insistence on the church’s historical teaching on “male and female” sexuality, he is able to steer clear of the dualisms and false choices of contemporary discussions. It is, for example, customary for some discussions to label a certain set of Scripture passages as “clobber verses” and then to seek strategies for laying these aside or making them off limits for the discussion. That Radner sets Genesis 2:24 and his theological reading of Leviticus in the holistic context of human creatureliness and mortality effectively subverts this strategy. Many readers may not be convinced by Radner’s argument here, but he has shown that such Scriptures cannot be so easily waved aside and he has moved the conversation along by setting human sexuality within the larger context of the practice of “numbering our days.”

By way of minor critique, three items are worthy of mention. One is a query whether Radner has attempted too much in one go? Each of the chapters could themselves have been books on their own, giving space to flesh out the contours of Radner's reflections on human mortality more fully. Yet the downside to this is that Radner's vision is to treat the various sub-topics together as a whole within the context of human mortality and life. Breaking up the discussion into multiple volumes would then lose the strength and character of *A Time to Keep* itself. Secondly, one may ask if it is a missed opportunity that Radner did not develop more of a sacramental ontology in relation to human life. To be sure, he speaks deeply of the Eucharist and the reality of human existence in Christ. Though the intimations are present, more could (needs to?) be said regarding an ontology of participation in which something like theosis is at once a participation in the triune life of God, as well as a recovering of authentic humanity through participation in the life of Christ (ie, theosis as anthroposis). Finally, specialists in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur should recognize Radner as a kindred spirit and friend. *A Time to Keep* contains a narrative theological quality in respect to human existence, mortality, and finitude that is potentially resonate with the narrative philosophical hermeneutics of Ricoeur. However, though Ricoeur could complement Radner's insights in significant and substantial ways, the inclusion of Ricoeur (beyond his brief mention) would likely also make *A Time to Keep*, in the best ways possible, even more of a challenging and productive read.

In reality these three critiques are minor and should be held loosely. *A Time to Keep* stands up well on its own as a theological reflection on human creaturely life under the triune God in conversation with Scripture, culture, and tradition. Radner has presented us with a work that is equally rigorous and academic, as well as in touch with the heart of human mortality and finitude. Radner's prose requires effort but for the genuinely theologically reflective, patient, and imaginative it will yield fruit for scholar, student, and layman alike.

Malka K. Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism*. Philadelphia: JPS, 2018. (xxx + 354 pp.) ISBN: 978-0-8276-1265-5

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Discovering Second Temple Literature is an entry-level survey of the people, places, history, texts and ideas of Jews in the Second Temple period (2TP). It is designed to work as a complement to JPS's *Outside the Bible* (2013). Simkovich, herself an Orthodox Jew (p. xxvi), and holder of the Crown-Ryan Chair of Jewish Studies and director of Catholic-Jewish Studies at the Catholic Theological Union, aims to help both Christians and Jews appreciate this period in Israel's history. She claims that both groups tend to view it as an "in-between stage", defining it, in the case of Jews, by the biblical period and the Rabbinic period, and in the case of Christians, by the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, many Christians do continue to refer to this time in Jewish history as the "intertestamental period", although the dates do not exactly coincide. For Simkovich,

the 2TP begins with the construction of that temple in 520-515 BCE and ends with its destruction in 70 CE, that is, it is “the extensive period of time between the end of the biblical period and the beginning of the Rabbinic period” (p. xxiii). This means that some late biblical literature was composed in this period, e.g. Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel.

Simkovich emphasizes both the diversity of and the commonalities among different groups of Jews in the 2TP. She argues that there were several elements that almost all Jews held in common: the Torah, the practices of circumcision, dietary law and Sabbath observance, and belief in the nation’s “divine chosenness” (p. xvii). But for the most part she highlights “the richly diverse chorus of Jewish conversations” (p. xvii). She demonstrates throughout that some Jews favoured separatism while others favoured assimilation, and in her words, there is a “lack of correlation between where Jews lived, the language they spoke, and their level of religious piety” (p. xix).

In the first part of the book (“The Modern Recovery of Second Temple Literature”), focusing on one aspect of “discovering” 2TP literature, Simkovich narrates the fascinating (and sometimes controversial) discoveries of the 400,000 fragments of the Cairo Genizah (ch. 1), manuscripts preserved in Christian monasteries from Ethiopia to the Vatican to Afghanistan (ch. 2), and of course the Dead Sea Scrolls (ch. 3), all of which set the stage for the next sections.

Part two (“Jewish Life in the Second Temple Period”) begins the discussion proper of the Second Temple period, focusing on the Jewish communities of Jerusalem (ch. 4), Alexandria (ch. 5) and Antioch (ch. 6). Each chapter describes key people and events in the cities’ histories, and their complicated relationships with their Hellenistic and Roman rulers.

Part three (“The Worldviews of Second Temple Writers”) introduces significant individuals and groups of the 2TP: the “Wisdom Seekers” (ch. 7), Philo of Alexandria and the author of the Letter of Aristaeas, who both argue that Jewish tradition is superior in some ways to Hellenism; the Sectarians (ch. 8), including the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Qumran community, Hasideans, Sicarii, Zealots and Therapeutae; and, “Interpreters of Israelite history” (ch. 9) in the Books of Chronicles, Jubilees and the Psalms of Solomon. In ch. 10, she writes in detail about the Jewish historian, Josephus Flavius, although his work features in many chapters.

Finally, in part four (“The Holy Texts of Second Temple Judaism”) Simkovich covers different collections of Jewish texts (ch. 11): the Hebrew Bible/Tanakh, the Septuagint, and the Syriac Peshitta. She compares the Hebrew and Christian canons and describes the Aramaic Targumim. In “Rewriting the Bible” (ch. 12) she discusses texts which elaborate on stories in books that would later be canonized into the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Greek versions of Daniel and Esther) and in ch. 13 characters of biblical origin who fascinated authors in the 2TP, and were strikingly developed, including various devils and angels.

Throughout the book and especially in part 4, Simkovich deftly navigates issues of canon and authority, suggesting that Jews of this period may not have felt “pressured to make absolute fault lines that divided texts into the categories of ‘holy’ and ‘profane’” (p. 53). She comments on the ease with which one could add to or remove scrolls from a collection, compared with the planning and precision required when

combining texts into a codex (by and large a later book form). For example, “An owner of two scrolls might have placed Judges, a text that would come to be regarded as canonical, on a shelf next to Jubilees, a document that would later be excluded from the canon, and this owner might have considered both scrolls to be equally sacred” (p. 203). Even in 200 CE, she shows that whether a text was biblical or non-biblical was still disputed, especially among the Writings. In particular, she highlights three pairs of similar texts, one of which was later canonized and one of which was not (Proverbs and Ben Sira; Esther and Judith; Daniel in Hebrew and Aramaic and Daniel in Greek), ultimately suggesting that dating and language may have been factors in canonization.

One disappointing aspect of the book concerns the Septuagint, which the author presents for the most part simplistically. She presents the myth of its origins from the Letter of Aristeas, and although she admits that scholars debate whether Ptolemy II really initiated the translation and talks about the motivations of the author (pp. 108-109), she appears to accept most of the account as historical. Critically, she assumes that Aristeas refers to the translation into Greek of all the books in the Hebrew Bible (which, as she has explained elsewhere, had not yet been canonized) whereas it is commonly thought to refer only to the translation of the Torah. Her bibliography lacks any standard introductory work on the Septuagint.

The timeline (pp. xxvii-xxviii) is useful to refer to, but it is regrettable that no maps or images are provided. Scripture and other ancient source references (included in the endnotes) would definitely serve the reader better in parentheses in the main text. An extensive glossary is included (pp. 275-80) and some definitions are provided in the main text where new jargon is introduced.

By design there is some repetition between chapters, enabling teachers to set readings in whichever order they choose. The book is intended to be used “in college and other adult education settings” and the author gives guidance to this end (pp. xxiii-xxv). There is also an accompanying study guide available online (<https://jps.org/books/discovering-second-temple-literature>, prepared by Rachel Slutsky).

Although the book claims to appeal to Christians as well as Jews, and makes reference to New Testament accounts where relevant, it does lean more toward a Jewish audience and references to Rabbinic literature are more frequent. For a recent introduction to Second Temple literature that focuses more on the person of Jesus one might consider Matthias Henze’s *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017). Nevertheless, Simkovich has written an engaging, easy-to-read introduction to the 2TP, with a wealth of information, and she certainly succeeds in presenting the period as one of diversity and “literary productivity” (p. xvii).

Kent Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue: Beyond the Models Of Disease and Choice*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2011. (197 pp.) ISBN 9780830839018

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Given the growing prevalence of various forms of addiction, both in society and in the Church, theological publications on this topic are rare. A recent exception to this rule is *Addiction and Virtue: Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice*, by Kent Dunnington (Greenville College, Illinois, USA). His central thesis is that “the category of habit is indispensable for charting an intelligible path between the muddled polarities of ‘disease’ and ‘choice.’” (p. 10) Accordingly, he begins by showing the problems with these options. He first argues against the disease model, particularly understandings of addiction regarding neurology, genetics and medicine. Even if addictive behaviour is often accompanied by certain brain structures, it does not neurologically follow that all people with precisely those brain structures will engage in addictive behaviour. The same is true genetically; addictive behaviour does not follow, uniformly or simply, from particular genetic conditions. And medically, “remission rates for addicts in [medically-based] treatment hover somewhere between 10 and 40 percent, significantly worse than the remission rates reported of the general population, most of whom do not seek treatment.” (p. 26). Conversely, the choice model is found to be an inadequate accounting of addiction, which is routinely experienced in ways qualitatively different from the ordinary moral struggles where weakness of will is the operative principle (p. 34-35).

In the second chapter, before establishing the essential nature of the language of habit, Dunnington describes addiction generally in terms of human agency. Drawing upon Aristotle’s categorization of human action (virtuous, continent, incontinent, and vicious), he locates addiction as a form of incontinent action, where an agent fails to act according to their better judgment (p. 37). This failure, for Aristotle, is either due to the strength of passion or the weight of habit (p. 43). He then goes on to describe a particular kind of incontinent action, which Aristotle called “impetuous incontinence”, which “occurs whenever hurry, strong appetite or an abnormal bodily state wrecks the deliberative process that is needed to arrive at a right judgment, which would lead to a right action” (p. 45). In all this, addiction is distinguished from “simple incontinence” where a conscious moral agent makes a clear decision (p. 42).

In the third chapter, Dunnington turns to Aquinas and the language of habit. The domain of habit lies, or mediates, between the polarities of involuntary action, determinism, and instinct on the one hand, and voluntary action, voluntarism and disposition on the other hand. In this way, habit is neither unchangeable nor easily or spontaneously changed. Habits can be changed, but only with great effort and practice (pp. 63-71). In light of the previous chapter, action that is incontinent or addictive becomes intelligible where the presence of a good judgment does not stop the flow of an addictive habit. The addictive and habitual behaviour can indeed be arrested (for example, by establishing the new habitual actions of a 12-step recovery programme), but the point here is that it cannot be abated through a simple spontaneous decision to ‘stop’.

Chapter 4 moves to discuss intemperance. The battle for temperate action lies in the tension between two types of habits: “mastery habits”, which are exercised through conscious volition, and “automatism habits”, which don’t always need conscious reason (pp. 85ff). An agent can override an automatism habit, but at the cost of great exhaustion. By contrast, acting on an automatism habit requires no psychological effort at all (p. 87).

In chapter 5, Dunnington moves to discuss three ways (arbitrariness, boredom, and loneliness) in which modern culture fails to provide the moral goods humans seek, and thus encourage various forms of addiction. Modern arbitrariness (pp. 106-112) has replaced a traditionally shared vision of the goal of living. Modern boredom (pp. 112-18) flows on from this arbitrary lack of prioritization of goals and tasks, leaving us weary of deciding what to do and strive for. Modern loneliness (pp. 118-123) stems from a shift away from traditional concepts of friendship, community and citizenship toward an increasingly disconnected and individualistic modes of being. Addiction, particularly in its modern form, fills the void of purpose, activity and community in modern culture.

Chapter 6 seeks to redress the relationship between addiction and sin. Whilst not conflating the two concepts, Dunnington demonstrates that a robust understanding of sin is large enough to include our understanding of addiction as habitual behaviour that grows to become beyond our immediate control, even as addicts remain responsible to act in ways that curtail their addictive behaviour.

In chapter 7, addiction is related to worship. Addiction is understood as “a failure of worship, a potent expression of idolatry in which we pursue in the immanent plane that which can only be achieved in relationship with the transcendent God” (p. 159). Thus both addictive behaviour and worship come ‘naturally’ for human beings which are wired to seek ultimate goods beyond present experience (p. 157).

The eighth and closing chapter discusses ways in which the church is in a posture both to learn from and operate in a larger mode than the recovery movement. Dunnington has critiques of the 12-step notions of a ‘God of our understanding’, identifying as an ‘addict’, and the low expectation of a ‘daily reprieve’. By contrast, he thinks the church can learn from the recovery movement’s practice of honest confession, the apprentice/sponsor model, and the physical proximity of the meeting room.

This is an immensely important and ultimately convincing project, particularly in its ability to converse with and challenge both the recovery movement and the Christian community. Dunnington is successful in establishing the primacy of habit language over that of disease or choice. Perhaps his critiques of the recovery movement go too far. Participants in 12-step recovery programmes will understand their self-identification as ‘addicts’ not in a philosophically (or indeed theologically) ultimate sense, but in the context of membership in a community of persons from whom ongoing admission of their behavioural patterns is beneficial. Likewise, the emphasis on the ‘daily reprieve’ has less to do with the absence of an ultimate hope or identity and more to do with the consistent effort which accompanies growth in sobriety. Those critiques aside, Dunnington issues insights too important to ignore in a world and church increasingly plagued by addiction.

Alan Noble, *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780830844838

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I realized recently that at any one time I attempt to do multiple things at once. While reading a book I have music playing and my dog wants me to play. Then I get a phone call from my brother, after which I realise I have ten notifications on my phone to check. Doing this, I fall into the endless scrolling void we call social media. Before I know it, an hour has passed, and I have completely forgotten all I was reading to begin and I have to start over. All of these distractions affect my ability to focus and complete the work I want to accomplish. It is fair to say that we live in a distracted age. This constant distraction may have more negative effects than we realise. This is the topic of Assistant Professor of English at Oklahoma Baptist University Alan Noble's recent book *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age*. In it he explores "what it means to live in a secular age and how this compounds the effects of distraction to create a deep and largely unacknowledged barrier to belief for most people" (p. 7). Noble's book is structured in two parts. At 189 pages it is brief and easy to read.

Part one, entitled "A Distracted, Secular Age" provides a helpful diagnosis of a prevalent problem in our culture, the problem of distraction. This age of distraction has affected our ways of communicating about issues concerning our faith. Noble argues that our past models of communicating our faith are no longer as effective, as they assumed a listener who was "active, attentive, and aware of the costs of believing" (p. 25). This distraction affects our ability to communicate by making it (1) "easier to ignore contradictions and flaws in our beliefs, (2) we are less likely to devote time to introspection, and (3) conversations about faith can be easily perceived as just another exercise in superficial identity formation" (p. 25). Our Christian faith becomes simply another thing vying for our time and attention. It is this combination of distraction and the prominence of the "secular age" that work together to create what he calls the "buffered self." By this he means "the criteria for belief shifts from external ideals to internal ones" (p. 40). This creates an understanding of the world that is self-sufficient (the immanent frame) and makes belief in a God who is involved to be difficult and even unnecessary. Thus, "our witness must work to disrupt the normative experience of life in a closed immanent frame" (p. 58). Noble closes Part one arguing that our distracted secular society has "scrambled" us. It has turned our belief into "frail, fragmented, and incoherent" systems (p. 61). He asks if this is indeed true then how can we find meaning and fullness in this kind of world? Meaning must come from something outside of us. It isn't just a personal preference. Thus, we must seek to be a "disruptive witness" which throws the whole individual, distracted, secular age into tumult and provides a new and real way of finding meaning.

Like a good doctor, once a diagnosis is given, a prescription is provided. Noble offers a prescription to this secular, distracted age in Part two, entitled "Bearing a Disruptive Witness." He begins by describing practices that ensure we have agency and are not simply a product of our culture. Practices

include Sabbath rest, saying grace, and time for silence. If we are to bear a disruptive witness we must adopt a new movement which involves “a shift in ends from ourselves to a transcendent God, and then letting that shift shape us in every aspect of our lives” (p. 90). Chapter 5 explores the outworking of this shift through “Disruptive Church Practices.” The practices of the church speak to our desire for belonging and meaning and interrupt the distraction and aid in the movement of focus from ourselves back to God. Chapter 6 is clearly written by an English professor. In it, Noble explores what it looks like for us to engage in culture in such a way that we can disrupt the distraction and use culture in order to point people to the goodness of God. He argues “Our calling is not to invent allusions to God in our lives but to reveal and affirm the ones that are already, necessarily there” (p. 171).

I applaud Dr. Noble’s work in this book. He does a wonderful job alerting us to something that is wrong in our culture and provides a helpful way for us to think about how we are to do our job as Jesus’ witnesses within this secular culture. Due to his heavy reliance on James K. A. Smith and Charles Taylor, though, it felt at times as though I was reading them and not him. Overall this is a commendable work that can help people to be more effective witnesses in our distracted 21st century culture.

Brian J. Wright, *Communal Reading In The Time Of Jesus: A Window Into Early Christian Reading Practices*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017. (293 pp.) ISBN: 9781506432502

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Brian J. Wright's *Communal Reading in the Time of Jesus* sets out to explore the communal reading practices of the first century, focusing particularly on the writings of the New Testament. Wright begins in his first chapter by outlining the lack of previous scholarship on both the practice of communal reading among early Christians and how such practices impact the shape of the texts that were read. In this volume, he is looking in particular for historical evidence that communal reading events took place in a range of different geographical locations throughout and beyond the Roman Empire to lay the foundations for further study into the impacts these events and their traditions would have had on the context that produced the New Testament and the early church.

In chapter 2, Wright begins by justifying his choice of “*communal* reading event” over “*public* reading event.” He notes that “*communal* is to be preferred because it both highlights the social aspect of reading and defines the reading event as one in which two or more people are involved. In other words, ‘communal reading’ can be public or private, but not individualistic” (p. 12, italics in original). This distinction removes an individual silently reading from the picture. He goes on to outline the extent of his study with its focus primarily on the literary evidence and defines some of the key Latin and Greek terms found in first-century literature that refer to communal reading events.

In the next two chapters, Wright turns to how the context of the first century would have supported the widespread proliferation of communal reading events. In chapter 3, he discusses the

economic and political factors, drawing on archaeological evidence from Galilee which suggests the area was prosperous in the first century, countering the usual narrative that the area was poor. He argues that the political stability of the Pax Romana also contributed to the abundance of communal reading events as it was easier to travel than previously so literature could spread faster and festivals and other entertainments were common.

This background is followed in chapter 4 with an analysis of the features of the social context of the first century that allowed communal reading events to flourish. Wright argues that such events were so common it began to impact negatively on the quality of literature produced and that texts could be read in many different contexts. He draws on primarily Greco-Roman literature here but has a short section that also focuses on Jewish communal reading events, particularly those that took place in the synagogues as the early church builds on many Jewish practices, including those of the synagogue.

Chapters 5 and 6 are the heart of Wright's study. In chapter 5, he looks closely at an extensive, but not exhaustive, selection of texts from the first century which describe or refer to communal reading events. This analysis is divided into Greek and Roman authors, followed by Jewish authors and demonstrates that communal reading events were common throughout the Roman Empire. The variety of authors surveyed allows for a variety of opinions on communal reading events to come through, from those wholeheartedly in favour to those who looked on them with disdain. Wright shows that people in the first century had many opportunities to hear or read texts communally. This proliferation meant that, in some places, quality controls were beginning to appear due to the proliferation of such events. These quality controls were one of the features that intrigued me throughout Wright's book and it is nice to know that snobbery and plagiarism have always been features of the authorial landscape. They deserve a study all of their own.

Chapter 6 turns to the New Testament and Wright painstakingly looks at every book in the canon (albeit looking at the Synoptic Gospels together with a primary focus on Luke) for evidence of communal reading events in and behind the text. This approach has a tendency to be a little more tedious than chapter 5 as considerable sections of the New Testament were written by a smaller number of authors and with similar aims than the wide range of Greco-Roman and Jewish authors surveyed. Wright concludes that the New Testament also provides considerable evidence of the widespread nature of communal reading events taking place in a range of locations and that they share many features with those found in Greco-Roman literature.

However, I found that in some cases Wright overstated his case in arguing for a communal reading event in the New Testament. One instance that particularly struck me was his argument that Jesus may have had some form of scriptural notes when "opening the scriptures" to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27, 32). I found his arguments in support of a literal reading of "opening the scriptures" unconvincing as it was based on a connection between verse 32 and 45, ignoring verse 27 which uses different language and suggests that the traditional image of Jesus verbally walking the disciples through the narrative of scripture without any notes. While the same language of "opening" is used in verses 32 and 45 it is figurative in the later, which suggests it should be figurative in the former. Instances

of such overstatement appear elsewhere as well and although they were distracting, I found they do not subtract from the overall value of this study. They are certainly a symptom of the need for more scholarship in this area.

Wright sees the widespread nature of communal reading events raising questions about many of the assumptions made in New Testament scholarship around literacy levels and access to texts in the first century. On this level, I found Wright's study very thought-provoking because his evidence suggests that literacy and access to texts were much more common than is usually assumed in New Testament studies, which in turn shapes our understanding of the early church. Overall, Wright has made an important contribution to the study of the New Testament through his work on communal reading events which should cause all those researching in this area to reconsider the assumptions we make regarding the impacts of communal reading in the first century, particularly how we assume illiteracy for a vast majority of the population while also arguing for intertextual allusions and echoes that require knowledge of and exposure to an array of other texts.

Dyron B. Daughrity, *Rising: The Amazing Story Of Christianity's Resurrection In The Global South*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018. (242 pp.) ISBN: 9781506421827.

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Looking for an accessible text on the growth of Christianity in the global south, *Rising: The Amazing Story of Christianity's Resurrection in the Global South* seemed like it might fit the bill. However, this work was not quite what I expected. Its central focus is not so much the story of Christianity's growth in the global south, but rather the potential for reverse mission which this growth represents. *Rising* is written with very specific cultural particularity, by a citizen of the United States, for citizens of the United States, which did create something of a sense of disengagement for myself as a New Zealand theologian. This could have been easily avoided had the language been slightly more globalised.

Nevertheless, Daughrity's voice sounds an important prophetic note that needs to be heard, particularly in an age of separatist politics heralded by Brexit, and the ongoing debate around American borders and walls. Daughrity rightly acknowledges that Christians hold a very different range of political opinions on immigration and border policy. His own position is made clear when he states that "immigration is good for Christianity" (p. 212) and that "doing the work of Christ is a responsibility that supersedes our national citizenship ... Christ urges us to look after the immigrant" (p. 213). These are particularly pertinent comments considering the significant impact of the American government shutdowns in early 2019 due to partisan disagreements over funding for border control.

Chapters are organised by geographic area for the most part, beginning with a focus on the decline of Christianity in Western Europe. Daughrity describes the sad juxtaposition of beautiful, large churches which have become "empty, cavernous temples" (p. 3) lacking the vitality of active, worshipping

congregations. The secularisation of Europe is attributed to both historical reasons (resentment against the church for its collaboration with evil regimes during the world wars), and a lack of trust in the institution of the church (on the basis of the cover-up of child abuse, and the misuse of funds for personal gain) (pp. 6,12-14). Although he could have done more to celebrate faithful European Christians engaged in worship, ministry and service, Daugherty rightfully observes the hope offered to Christianity in Western Europe by immigrants who bring with them a vibrant Christian spirituality (pp. 15-22).

Daugherty next turns to Russia, recognising that his comments are coloured by his perspective as an American who lived through the legacy of the Cold War and fall of the Berlin Wall (pp. 31-34). His survey of the Christianisation of Russia is very helpful, as are his observations on the devastation wrought by the socialist revolution and the widescale persecution and martyrdom of Christians in the mid-twentieth century. Emphasising that although Russia was ‘dechurched’, it was not ‘dechristianised’ (p. 43), Daugherty explains that this faithful remnant allowed Orthodox Christianity in Russia to thrive after a policy of religious openness was instated in the 1980s (pp. 47-50). Comparing American Christianity with Russian Christianity, Daugherty highlights that “Russia has unleashed the power of the church in a way that we in the West simply cannot comprehend due to our value of the separation of church and state” (p.56). This reflects the history of Russian Orthodoxy, a “history of symphonia — where church and state complement and validate one another” (p. 36).

Bookending his next chapter on Christianity in the United States with stories of his own faith journey, Daugherty suggests that Christianity in the US is changing rather than dying (pp. 67-68, 74). New expressions of Christianity are growing rapidly, exemplified by millennials’ attraction to large charismatic churches such as Bethel and the International House of Prayer (pp. 63-66). Again returning to the missionary potential of immigration, Daugherty notes that because the majority of immigrants to the US are Roman Catholic Latin Americans, this should “boost religiosity” in America (p. 72). Briefly surveying the ebbs and flows of Christianity in America, from the Puritans to the Great Awakenings, to Vietnam and the sexual revolution, Daugherty utilises Niebuhr’s five classifications of engagement from Christ and Culture to suggest that “Christianity will adapt” (p.78). Although the majority of Christians will choose a middle way, doing their best to live out a Christian faith without being extremists (p.80), while others see America “entering a long dark age, an age of malaise and decadence” (p.85), and withdraw from society as much as possible, there are some who will choose the “transformer/engagement view” (p.82), living with the vision of impacting mainstream society with the power of the gospel.

Daugherty pauses his geographical survey at this point to tell the story of the Jesuits and how this religious order “changed the religious demography of the world during their most fruitful centuries, from about 1540 to their suppression in the late 1700s” (p.102). Although Catholicism is declining in influence in its traditional strongholds, it is experiencing significant growth in the global south — often in places where Jesuits sowed their lives as seeds. Daugherty suggests that there is much we can learn from the Jesuits, not least their commitment to enter new cultures as learners, and their deep faith (pp. 111-115).

Daughrity next comments on the growth of Christianity in African nations over the last century. Celebrating African involvement in reverse missions, he suggests that rather than continuing to send Christians on short-term mission trips to Africa, a more fruitful alternative might be to host Africans for longer periods in our western contexts. This would allow communities to be shaped by a deep faith which has been forged in a context where the problems are entirely different to what many of us jokingly refer to as ‘first-world-problems’ (pp. 126-130). In many ways, “we are coming full circle.” African theologians like Athanasius and Augustine had a profound influence on the early church, and in the same way, Daughrity suggests, the rise of African Christianity means that world Christianity will “see a more profoundly African influence on the faith” (p.138). His focus continued to be on African Christianity’s influence on world Christianity, rather than a direct focus on African Christianity itself.

Daughrity’s chapter on Asia draws on his extensive personal experiences in India. He observes that despite significant missionary efforts, Christianity has not caught on in India to the same extent that it has in Africa. The caste system, the effects of colonialism, and division between Christians are identified as contributing to this state of affairs. Skirting the danger of over-generalisation, Daughrity examines the diversity that exists between different Asian nations, comparing the challenges of following Christ in India with South Korea’s rapid embrace of Christianity, and the complex structures of Chinese Christianity which is split between legal, organised churches, and unregistered, unrecognised churches. Daughrity’s encouragement is for Christian missions to turn towards Asia and the varied range of missional opportunities that exist there.

While Daughrity does not focus on immigration from Asia in his survey of Asia, he next returns to the US, this time focusing on the large numbers of Latin Americans and Asians who immigrate to the US. Sharing stories of his visits to ethnically diverse Christian communities in California, and his own experience pastoring a predominantly African American congregation in the same state, Daughrity reflects on the profound opportunity that exists to build congregations that represent the diversity of the kingdom of God, acknowledging that “the gospel stands in judgment of us if we privilege one shade of skin over any other” (p.200). This thought is continued in the next chapter, where the observations that Daughrity has made about immigration are practically applied. Rather than sign up for a lifetime of missionary service overseas, American Christians should become the ‘good soil’ that Jesus described in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13. Citing the Old Testament’s command to welcome, not oppress, foreigners, the fatherless, and widows, alongside the New Testament’s teaching on hospitality, Daughrity proposes that immigration positions us to recognise anyone — regardless of their national citizenship — as created in the image of God.

Daughrity’s final chapter is a celebration that despite the “premature forecast of its demise,” (p.228), Christianity is rising all over the globe. Acknowledging that for many America is a land of opportunity and thus a goal or dream, Daughrity makes the insightful observation that in welcoming immigrants, Christians must be willing for this to be a “mutually beneficial encounter,” (p.239) — to be shaped by themselves by their new “partners in the gospel” (p.240). Although his language is again US-

centric, this is an invitation that is relevant for the global church as missions now moves from everywhere to everywhere.