

# Strands, Powers, and Their Shades of Grey

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Reggie Williams' reflections on the lives of three significant activist-theologians – Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer – serve as the starting point for a consideration of the anti-racist elements in the ethics of James Wm McClendon Jr. Both Williams and McClendon exemplify a narrative approach to Christian ethics out of recognition of the possibilities and limitations that both our embodied selfhood and our cultural heritages bring to the ethical task. Other voices incorporated here are those of Glen Stassen, John Howard Yoder, and George F. R. Ellis.

## Keywords

Countercultural Christianity; James McClendon; three-stranded ethics; Reggie Williams

## Introduction

I was honoured to be invited to contribute this article to *The Journal of European Baptist Studies*.<sup>1</sup> It gives me the opportunity to compare the thought of two theologians: Reggie Williams, a beloved graduate of my own Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and my late husband, James Wm McClendon Jr. Although the two never met, their approaches to the question of what Christianity is (or ought to be) overlap considerably to reinforce and amplify one another's in various ways. There are similarities that can easily be detected.

First, they agree in emphasising that Christian 'belief' cannot truly be belief unless it is lived out in practical ways. That is, the words of the Bible and those of the doctrines of many churches are the same, but in order to know how to live them out one needs, in Williams' terms, a particular hermeneutic, and in McClendon's words, images and metaphors. Both insist that theology must enjoin works of community formation, forgiveness, and care of one another, and as Williams strongly insists, work for liberation of those who are burdened and oppressed.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is revised and expanded from a presentation I gave at a conference in honour of the James Wm McClendon Chair for Baptist and Evangelical Theologies held by Prof. Henk Bakker at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. The conference was held in the Baptist House, Amsterdam on 19 November 2018. I was asked to respond to the presentation by Prof. Reggie Williams, but also to add references to my late husband Jim McClendon.

Another parallel is the fact that two of the exemplary lives in Williams' focus were also two of McClendon's: Martin Luther King is one of four lives examined in *Biography as Theology*;<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer merits a chapter in the first volume of McClendon's systematic theology.<sup>3</sup> This use of life stories involves them in a common approach to the theological discourse of narrative theology.

Another of McClendon's theses, perhaps not so well known, was that for baptistic churches, 'apostolic succession' does not require an official handing on, as with Catholics, and not even historical continuity of the sort one could map out for mainline Protestants. Rather, if one has eyes to see, baptistic churches often spring up independently of one another in different times and places. All that is needed is to have in common the teachings of Jesus and a particular reading strategy, which Williams calls a hermeneutic, while McClendon speaks more of images and metaphors. It was one of his major goals to make the Radical Tradition more visible.

It should follow from this thesis that similar baptistic theologies should sometimes arise independently in different times and places. McClendon could never shake off his Southern Baptist roots, and therefore he was constantly concerned for Baptists in the United States who were trying to make their way to something they could believe in and live out after they had fled the fundamentalisation of the Southern Baptist Convention. So that was the primary context shaping his work. Nonetheless, he and I spent three months in Europe, largely based at the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Switzerland, trying to get a sense of European Baptist life by attending as many worship services as possible. So the establishment of a chair in his name at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, mostly by people who had never met him, would have meant to him that, despite his unavoidable local concerns, appreciation for his theology in this time and place has contributed to its validation. At the end of the preface to *Biography as Theology* he invites his future readers not only to read but 'also to enter critically ... into the investigation of which [the book is] only a part'. And, he says, 'I *hope* you will consequently be inclined to join me in saying, insofar as it is right, *solī deo gratias*.'<sup>4</sup>

So although Williams' article could scarcely be deemed wholly independent of McClendon's, given that Glen Stassen was Williams' mentor and was also an admirer of McClendon's work (and that both McClendon and Stassen were influenced by John Howard Yoder), the parallels between

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<sup>2</sup> James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Ethics: Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986; rev. and enl. edn, Abingdon, 2002), ch. 7. Quotations here are from the latter.

<sup>4</sup> McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, p. 9.

Williams' article and various works of McClendon's would please him all the more *because* there are no references in it to McClendon's writings.

In what follows I shall note some commonalities that are less obvious than the ones I have mentioned. Then I shall bring several other voices to the table, along with McClendon's, to address problems that Williams has identified in the thinking of Bonhoeffer and King. I end with some reflections on the relations between aesthetics and ethics.

### Less Obvious Parallels

Williams' third exemplar is Harriet Tubman. The main emphasis in his article is on her formative role in black Christian leadership, but her inclusion demonstrates his openness to the full inclusion of women in leadership and appreciation of the tremendous effects they can have on a whole country.

McClendon's *Ethics* also includes three illustrative biographies, and two of these are women: Sara Edwards and Dorothy Day. Day's reputation rests, first, on her concerns with poverty, but another striking element of her witness was pacifism, and one sort of war she condemned was race war.

There are differences between Tubman and Day. Tubman was raised in the tradition of radical (black) Christianity, but Day was raised by parents who did not attend church, and her father's roots were 'in the established white citizenry of the upper South', while her mother's 'household deity was conformity'.<sup>5</sup>

The similarities are more striking. Both were willing to break the law, whatever the penalties, and to suffer criticism from many fellow Christians. Both established homes for those in need. Both worked for the liberation of others. Tubman saw freedom as a means of allowing for the well-being of community; Day saw it as denying one's own will, when necessary, to take up the way of the cross. The most important similarity was their devotion to living out the way of Jesus, accompanied by the conviction that God was already working in those who sought to follow him.

A second and very important parallel between Williams and McClendon is a special concern for the injustices done to black people in America. While this may not be as prominent in his writings as it is in Williams' article, McClendon often used examples drawn from the lives of blacks. For example, he begins his account of 'the body strand' in Christian ethics (to be explained below) with a section titled 'Black Religion as Embodied Ethics'. Here he notes the ambiguity of the spirituals: for example, 'Steal Away to Jesus' can be interpreted as otherworldly escapism, or as code

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<sup>5</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 281.

for secretive slave meetings ('hush harbors'?) and escape (the Underground Railway?).<sup>6</sup> It is this surplus of meaning that gives the spirituals their power.

McClendon also used practices of the black church to illustrate the meaning he gives to Christian virtues. He writes of *presence* as a virtue (chosen because readers will have fewer preconceptions about it than those on classical lists of virtues). It is a dimension of the embodied Christian life, and could simply be described as *being there*, but he contrasts it with *mere* bodily presence, for example, in the case of an estranged couple together at a table who are mentally and emotionally withdrawn from one another; and with nosiness – butting into others' lives not for the sake of the other but to satisfy one's desire to be noticed.

McClendon claims that the black church, at its best, carries on the tradition of Christian slaves; when they had no other earthly resources, they knew how to be present to and for one another, without shame, and thereby witnessed to the presence of God with them.<sup>7</sup>

Special concern for black Americans was a constant, a powerful constant, in McClendon's life. He bore the shame of white racism from the time of that eight-year-old boy's discovery that his black nanny was not allowed to sit in church with the white people, through the writing of instructions for his death: to have his funeral in a black Baptist church he attended in Louisiana and to have his books sent to a black Baptist Bible college associated with the church. His life was characterised by the *shame* of realising he was a descendant of slave-owners, caught up in a *system* that he had no part in making.

These references to shame and systems introduce a third important aspect of McClendon's thinking, probably known to many readers of this journal, that Christian ethics needs to be understood as something like a three-stranded rope: the body strand, the social, and the resurrection strand, referring to the differences made to our ethics by God's action in the world, and intrinsically entwined.

The body is equipped by its Creator with certain characteristic needs, not only for food and air, but for companionship and prayer. It has built-in drives or impulses, such as sex and aggression. And in

the adventure in which we seek to meet these needs and cope with these drives, our selves acquire a range of feelings and may develop relevant powers of judgment – moral feelings and moral judgments, constituting the moral equipment or *capacities* of the body.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, pp. 87-8.

<sup>7</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, pp. 115-17.

<sup>8</sup> McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 97.

All of these factors need to be taken into account when considering social structures.

We cannot be truly human without social structures. A continuing quest for the Christian ethicist is to relate normative Christian practices to the cultures with which they interact. The structures that make human life possible are divine creations, but, to the extent that they pursue their own goods at the expense of individuals, they are fallen. The church at its best provides a blueprint for the structures and powers of society. Yet without the constant presence and action of God in individuals and groups, the church itself becomes a fallen structure.

The epitome of God's presence is the risen Christ Jesus. McClendon stresses the interweaving of body, social, and resurrection strands because God's presence is (or should be) woven into both organic and social aspects of human life. He criticises Christian ethical theories that neglect any of these three strands.

This is not a criticism that can be made of Williams' work. As I read the first draft of his lecture, I marked numbers in the margins, from one to three, indicating his recognition of issues pertaining to each of McClendon's strands, and especially emphasising the passages that relate one strand to another. For example, his beginning with the question of the difference it makes when encountering a group of men in a dark alley if one knows whether they are coming from a bar or a Bible study is a reminder of the possibilities for the fallenness of the church (second strand), and for failing to cope adequately with bodily drives such as aggression or sexual desire (strand one).<sup>9</sup> When he describes slave worship in the 'hush harbors' he is describing the inseparability of McClendon's three strands: risking *life and limb* to defy a fallen *system* in order to create an exemplary one, with the knowledge of *God's day-to-day presence among them*. Many more examples of his recognition of these strands will be obvious to readers of Williams' article.

## **Helpful Contributors: John Howard Yoder and George F. R. Ellis**

My plan in this section is to bring into the conversation two voices that might provide useful resources for deepening or clarifying the insightful theological points Williams has made by means of his biographical sketches, and that I believe help to address the (few) deficiencies Williams notes in

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<sup>9</sup> This is a particularly poignant question for me. My brother Tom died in October 2018, and, given the lovely community that had developed in a nearby bar – the people who drove him to doctors' appointments and checked on him regularly – that is where his memorial was held. He had no church funeral and was cremated rather than buried in the plot my parents had bought for him in the Catholic cemetery.

Bonhoeffer's and King's positions. One voice is theologian John Yoder's, and the second is the combined voice of myself and my co-author, George Ellis, a mathematician and cosmologist in South Africa.

It would have been helpful in addressing McClendon's social strand of ethics to have first incorporated Yoder's use of the Pauline doctrine of the Principalities and Powers. These involve a variety of terms in the Pauline corpus, including 'principalities and powers', 'thrones and dominations', 'angels and archangels', 'elements', 'heights and depths', 'law and knowledge'. In intervening centuries many of these ancient terms were taken to apply to demons and angelic beings, and thus were ignored in modern 'demythologized' theology. Beginning after World War II, however, biblical scholars have reinterpreted these terms to refer to what a naïve reader may have thought: rules, rulers, authorities. However, this is a bit more complicated because the New Testament concept of the powers apparently developed from Old Testament concepts of the alien gods of other nations; hence there is a lingering sense of their being spiritual realities. Their most significant function, however, is in application to what Williams refers to as 'dominating systems and structures'. The twentieth-century interpretations include human traditions, the state, class and economic structures, and even religious structures. I have found the term 'the power(s) of the air' (Ephesians 2.2) particularly useful. In line with the interpretation of these words in terms of the powers we recognise today, I take the power(s) of the air to include the sorts of social conventions and expectations that are never written down anywhere, yet dramatically shape our perceptions and behaviour: the 'household deity' of Dorothy Day's mother. As such, it serves to parallel Williams' use of the concepts of white versus black *aesthetics*, as I hope to show.

This recent re-interpretation puts us in position to appreciate Paul's sociopolitical theory and to see Jesus' relation to the power structures. As noted above, the powers were created by God for good purposes, since human life is impossible without them. They are 'fallen', to the extent that they do not serve the good for which they were created but seek instead their own self-aggrandisement. They have become idols in that they require individuals to serve them as though they are of absolute value.

The 'most worthy' powers of Jesus' day were the Jewish religious establishment and the Roman empire. Yoder's account of atonement is based on the fact that it was these two powers that collaborated in Jesus' death, thereby revealing their lack of absolute moral standing, and opening for us the possibility of living lives free of the illusion of their absolute legitimacy. Nevertheless, the predictable consequence of defying the powers is retaliation, even death on a cross. A recurring set of themes throughout Williams' article is the dangers faced by those who defied slavery, Nazism,

and the more ethereal ‘power of the air’ of an aesthetic of whiteness. He describes multiple struggles against the powers, even the powers of churches, and of hardships, often ending with death.

Note, though, that the powers are corrupted to varying degrees – thus in my title ‘*Shades of Grey*’. The church is meant to give an alternative vision of social reality, but churches fall along a spectrum, from the official Lutheran church supporting the Nazis at the negative end, to small and often fleeting church bodies that do indeed give one a vision of the Kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

So there can be no H-Richard-Niebuhrian typology of Christian attitudes to culture. The varying degrees of fallenness versus redemption of each structure in a culture need to be discerned. In some cases the fall is so deep and the means of calling them to redemption so few that resistance entails inevitable death. Williams does not address here Bonhoeffer’s rejection of non-violence in the end. Most of those who use powers language, I think, would focus on the depth of the fall in Hitler’s power system. McClendon focused instead on the lack of communal resources for non-violent resistance – skills he might have learned, had his planned trips to meet Gandhi taken place. Similarly, Williams says that Bonhoeffer was almost alone in his Christian opposition to the Nazis. Also, he says that Bonhoeffer failed to distinguish what Stassen called the triadic structure of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. A common misinterpretation is that they present impossible ideals rather than concrete instructions on how disciples should live; the missing element in Bonhoeffer’s interpretation was attention to what Stassen called the ‘transformative initiatives’ that provide ways of disrupting common cycles of violence, lust, hatred, greed, and so forth. Thus, ‘he surrendered vital Christ-centered norms when they might have been most helpful’.<sup>11</sup>

However, I have tried to think of what sort of transformative initiative the nearly solitary Bonhoeffer could have imagined by the time the Third Reich was so well established. This brings me to the issue of context, to which Williams pays due attention in his comparison between Bonhoeffer and King. It also brings me to the second part of what I hope to contribute to the conversation.

A large part of human sin is due to false dichotomies (and I have to blame Jesus himself for making it so easy to interpret his teachings as radical dichotomies: pluck out your eye, cut off your hand). So one often hears in churches ‘slippery-slope’ arguments. For example, we cannot obey Jesus’

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<sup>10</sup> Ellis’s small Quaker meeting house is one of these. For example, the group bought a van, painted it white with a red cross, and rescued black youths who were wounded during government-instigated violence. If they were ‘rescued’ by the authorities their injuries generally proved to be fatal. His wife Mary was a physician and provided the life-saving treatments they needed.

<sup>11</sup> [Williams’ typescript, p. 10]

injunction to give to everyone who asks because, while the church could give to a few people, we would soon be swamped by others asking for help. We cannot help them all, so 'let's just not get into that'. Yoder strenuously objected to the extension of the word *violence* beyond its usual meaning (I have even been accused of doing violence to Yoder himself by presenting his theology in a more systematic way than he did). But if promoting a thesis is intrinsically violent, then we academics cannot help but be involved in violence, and hence the call to live non-violently cannot be followed, except perhaps by a few heroic individuals.

George Ellis and I met at a conference on cosmology and theology. We noted that all of the other participants were either Catholic or mainline Protestant. He asked me what difference it might make to consider the science through the eyes of a Radical theology (he is Quaker and I am now in the Church of the Brethren). He persuaded me to write a book with him, which we titled *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Cosmology, Theology, and Ethics*.<sup>12</sup> A general thesis is that ethics needs to stand as an intermediary discipline between theology and the value-laden human sciences.

One of Ellis's main contributions was to show how to defeat the slippery-slope arguments that create impossible either-or statements regarding moral behaviour. We considered interpersonal relations; sociopolitical ethics (with a focus on non-violent resistance); economics; and jurisprudence. Ellis noted that there are nearly always a variety of intermediate steps that can be taken toward what *at the present moment* can only be thought of as an impossible ideal. For example, there are three systems for state responses to criminality: retributionist, reformist, and restorative. The type found in the United States, despite intentions of the original reformists, has become largely retributionist. The whole system cannot be reformed at once, but small steps can be taken within individual prisons or more broadly via legislation to move from retributive justice to reformist. One current discussion is whether solitary confinement should be prohibited as 'cruel and unusual'; another is discussion of the age at which young people can be given adult sentences. Ellis and I claim that when there is more than one option, taking the one that comes closer to the ideal will change the situation so as to show further movement in that direction to be more possible and reasonable. Restorative justice is the ideal; it involves communication between the victim and offender. Experience among juveniles in New Zealand include reports of remarkable transformations; for example, a woman who had been robbed refused repayment when she found that the offender was unemployed. There is even a case of a woman who had

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<sup>12</sup> Nancey Murphy and George F. R. Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Cosmology, Theology, and Ethics* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996).

been robbed at gunpoint, but then offered the offender a place to live in her own home.<sup>13</sup>

We gave our most extended treatment to the issue of non-violence. A number of authors have scales of resistance, from persuasion, to non-injurious coercion, to injurious coercion. Consider Clarence Marsh Case's list of practices. Under the heading of persuasion he includes argument and suffering, either inflicted by the opponent, or self-inflicted, such as a hunger strike. Under non-violent coercion he lists, first, indirect action, including strikes, boycotts, and non-cooperation. Second, there is political action through institutions and culture – combining persuasion and impersonal coercion by means of law, such as use of force or 'legitimated violence' by police, courts, and prisons. Third, there is social coercion by means of ostracism, or collective pressure through passive resistance. He recognises violent coercion only as a last resort.<sup>14</sup>

C. J. Cadoux lists thirteen types of non-coercion, including personal example, intercessory prayer, conciliatory discussion, direct acts of love, non-resistance, unmerited suffering, self-imposed penance, arguments and appeals, mediation, arbitration, promises, and rewards. He claims that many more could be added.<sup>15</sup>

We claim that the consistent policy of using the lowest degree of coercion needed in order to have a chance of effectiveness will have a cumulative effect, increasing the effectiveness of less coercive means in the long run. One of many rationales for this is that violence regularly escalates, as the protesters arouse the ire of their opponents, and also give the opponents justification both for their past abuses and for escalated retaliation. Second, a goal of non-violent protest is to raise the moral level of both the opponents and bystanders.

This material relates to Williams' comparison between King and Bonhoeffer. He has said that a biographical approach to theological ethics is helpful, or even necessary, because different contexts change the way in which a theological ethic can be embodied. The difference between King's and Bonhoeffer's contexts is that King was working within a community with long experience in subverting the Powers, beginning with illegal worship by slaves in the 'hush harbors'. Consider the extent to which these slave practices employed principles only later enunciated in the twentieth century: first, accepting the suffering inflicted by the slave owners if they were caught – often lashings, but sometimes death. Second, while their

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<sup>13</sup> Murphy and Ellis, *Moral Nature*, pp. 125-6. Taken from Jim Considine, *Restorative Justice: Healing the Effects of Crime* (Littleton, New Zealand: Ploughshares Publications, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Clarence Marsh Case, quoted in William Robert Miller, *Nonviolence: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> C. J. Cadoux, in Miller, *Nonviolence*, p. 59.

prayer likely focused on their own freedom, it surely included intercessory prayer for the slave owners and for others who sanctioned the system. Third, it involved non-cooperation with their opponents; slaves praying with no whites present was made illegal during that time. Surely the risks faced together, the communal prayer, dancing, and singing, their cooperation in leading others to the locations (each different) of the ‘hush harbors’, created strong communal bonds that have apparently been passed down through the generations, and have helped to constitute the widespread communal support that Bonhoeffer lacked.

The Civil Rights Movement had these memories to build on, and its participants more intentionally employed (and possibly invented) nearly all of the techniques of resistance recognised by contemporary analysts: argument, voluntary and involuntary suffering, strikes, boycotts, non-cooperation. Eventually there was legitimated punishment imposed on those who refused integration.

In particular, the patient endurance of suffering provided what Gene Sharp called ‘shock therapy’ to shatter the indifference of both oppressors and bystanders. Often the initial response is increased violence toward the protesters, so such campaigns need to be planned for the long term, but eventually sympathy can be aroused, even leading to lasting character change.<sup>16</sup>

For Bonhoeffer there had been little long-term community preparation for resistance to the state. The ‘theological imagination’, to use Williams’ term, of German Christians had not been primed to see Jesus’ ministry as non-violent rebellion against the Powers; to see the cross not merely as self-sacrifice for sin, but rather suffering the sinfully imposed penalty for his non-cooperation with oppression of the poor, of women, of outsiders.

Williams notes that both King and Bonhoeffer placed great emphasis on Jesus’ suffering as a guide to Christian discipleship. Despite King’s greater familiarity with actions akin to Stassen’s transforming initiatives, he says that King’s emphasis on redemptive suffering put him in danger of making it into a single principle that would move him away from Bonhoeffer’s (and Stassen’s) concreteness. In this he echoes a theme of McClendon’s: that Christian ethics cannot be derived from abstract principles. Williams writes that an ‘emphasis on redemptive suffering as a fixed principle... that justifies the Christian prior to action’ becomes

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<sup>16</sup> Gene Sharp, *The politics of Nonviolent Action*, 5th printing (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, [1973] 1984), pp. 709-10.

especially problematic when it is valued without respect for the lived reality of those who have no choice in suffering.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Poisoning of Theology by a White Aesthetic**

As Williams writes: ‘Since the slave trade, the white aesthetic has seized, marked, and claimed epistemological ownership, of darker bodies as it worked to stabilize white *masculinity* as the divine ideal, and the template for all humanity.’<sup>18</sup> In contrast, King preached of the beauty of black skin, and of the rich and noble history it represents. Note that Bonhoeffer was formed both by the Abyssinian Baptist Church, whose name harkens back to the earliest days of Christianity, and by the Harlem Renaissance literary movement during his time in the US in the early 1930s.

Williams traces the association of the white male with all that is good, beautiful, intelligent to Immanuel Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers. I, however, suspect that the association has a much longer history. Williams writes that aesthetics goes beyond what is literally visible and, often unconsciously, associates what is taken as a universal principle of physical beauty with all else that is to be valued.

Psychologists have a well-established term for such associations: ‘the halo effect’; a person with one good quality is automatically expected to have all good qualities – and vice versa. The starting point for triggering the halo effect (one of the powers of the air?) need not be physical beauty. As I was taught this theory I realised that I was assuming the intelligence of professors to be associated with high moral standards. This relates, in virtue theory, to the question of whether a person exemplifying one virtue will exemplify them all. Nonetheless, even if the Nazis did not have an equivalent term for this cognitive bias, anti-Jewish propaganda began with gradually caricaturing representations of Jewish faces, making them appear less beautiful, and then even less human, than Aryans.

The halo effect has also been shown to affect judgments of religiosity, so it is not surprising that, as Williams notes, the white aesthetic predisposes all who are gripped by it to attribute the gift of the image of God to whites and to see the Other as in need of the religion and culture of the white race.

Here we find yet another way of interrelating McClendon’s three strands of ethics: if we accept as true the presence of God in all people, the socio-psychological theory requires us to work backwards, evaluating the

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<sup>17</sup> [taken from p. 13 of Williams’ typescript] As one of the privileged few, I would not have considered writing a book on non-violence except with the support of Ellis, who knew that his anti-apartheid works had led to his being put on his government’s hit list.

<sup>18</sup> [Williams’ typescript, p. 13; my emphasis.]

extent to which we welcome those of another colour (or gender) into our fellowships, and to seek means of adjusting our intrinsic feelings and moral judgments to come closer to seeing the face of Jesus in all the women and men we are called upon to love and serve.

## **Conclusion**

The primary objective of this article has been to bring Williams' and McClendon's work into fruitful dialogue. Many parallels and complementary emphases are obvious. I have attempted to dig a bit deeper to find more points of agreement and support, particularly using Yoder's theology, shaped by his Mennonite context, and Ellis's insights, shaped not only by his anti-apartheid struggles but also by his broad familiarity with the sciences.

I conclude with a thank-you to my friend Reggie, for an interesting piece in its own right, but also for giving me some new ways of examining some of the works of my long-lost husband Jim.

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