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International Baptist Theological Study Centre
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Editorial

Toivo Pilli

Revd Dr Toivo Pilli is director of Baptist studies at the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam.
pilli@ibts.eu | https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4201-5097

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Teaching and learning, learning and teaching, go hand-in-hand. Drawing energy and inspiration from a religious tradition includes faithful and creative teaching, a kind of catechetic exercise. However, it also requires openness to new influences, ability to navigate a way through changing context, and learning to express 'old faith' in new forms and contemporary language. Baptist tradition is not an exception, and the present issue of the *Journal of European Baptist Studies* (*JEBS*) brings together ten articles which all, in one way or another, enable a reader to engage in the teaching-learning process of doing theology and reflecting theologically within the framework of the Baptist story. In turn, it enables a wider conversation and mutual exchange of ideas with other Christian traditions.

Ryan Andrew Newson sets the scene for this issue with his article 'Inhabiting the City: Envisioning Baptist Ways of Doing Theology amidst Pluralism' which he first delivered as the 2020 McClendon lecture, in an event organized by James Wm McClendon Chair, Vrije Universiteit, in cooperation with IBTS, Amsterdam. Newson points out the need to be receptive to others and stand against positions of superiority and the authoritarian use of power. The article, however, being inspired by McClendon's writings, argues against 'false neutrality' and seeks how we might articulate a Christologically oriented vision 'that can help guide people, Christian and otherwise, into an uncertain future'. This, no doubt, requires an attitude of learning and an ability to express one's convictions — both in narrative and practice. The author claims, 'I will argue that Baptist theology is best done as Christians live and move in the city – emerging out of the social world

of overlapping convictional communities where Christians share much with neighbours and strangers alike.'

The next article in this issue, by Valerii Alikin, gives a detailed account of the state of affairs of formal theological education in Russia. The first part of the article is an illuminating description of the role and aspirations of Russian Orthodox educational institutions. The challenges for Protestant schools, such as Baptist and Pentecostal, include strict legal requirements imposed by the state structures and a need to develop a fresh vision for training ministers, developing faculty and cooperating in wider academia. Alikin hopes that Russian Protestants, despite major hindrances, will gain official recognition for their theological educational endeavours and will succeed in entering 'the public space through presenting sound scholarship and quality research'. Stuart Blythe takes the wider notion of learning-and-teaching into a curricular area. The article explores how preaching in the liturgical context and the teaching of preaching in the classroom are both expressions of practical theology. Teaching preaching is a supportive practice with the aim of serving the Christian Church and enabling the embodied life of Christian people. It requires teaching 'what students actually need to learn if their theological education is to be enable them to do what they need to do as preachers'. Blythe argues for a pedagogical experience that extends beyond theoretical knowledge — episteme. The learning-and-teaching process has a goal to put into practice both 'wisdom' and 'skill', and not to rely simply on the 'knowledge about'. Laura Dijkhuizen opens another aspect of learning — in the broad sense of the concept — describing the role of focus groups in finding meaning among female leaders within the Dutch Evangelical Movement. The heuristic approach, exploring the praxis of the Evangelical female leaders, and combining action and reflection, helps to reach a more integrative understanding of what is going on in the lives of the focus group participants. In addition, the article helpfully depicts the difference between method and methodology in empirical theology and throws light on a researcher's role and aims in using a particular qualitative method — in the setting of focus groups.

The discussion in the following articles moves to the question of catholicity, which can also be understood as learning from and identification with the rich historical tradition of the Christian Church. Steven Harmon opens an insightful conversation, asking the questions: What is Baptist catholicity? What do Baptists learn as they apply the notion of catholicity, both in a quantitative and qualitative sense, to their tradition? The article is a helpful introduction to the topic, with comments into additional aspects of ecumenical relations and ecclesiology. However, the author is convinced that the Baptist tradition, in mutual relationships with different ecclesial patterns, should share its ecclesial gift with others. This gift becomes visible 'in the way they do theology as a relentlessly pilgrim community', seeking to be fully under the rule of Christ. Lon Graham turns to a case study and investigates Andrew Fuller and how his catholicity has been understood. On the one hand Fuller emphasised what he called a 'catholic spirit', on the other hand, his contemporaries were not fully convinced of his catholicity. The article analyses Andrew Fuller's nuanced views in comparison with John Ryland Jr and John Wesley. However, rather than engaging with current debates concerning catholicity, the author's aim is 'to provide historical perspective on how one of the chief theologians of the Particular Baptists understood relations to those outside of his theological and denominational tradition'. It is a helpful addition to the present theological explorations on catholicity and Baptists, providing a diachronic dimension to the discussion. Stephen Holmes engages in polemic with Kegan A. Chandler (see *JEBS* no. 2, 2019) on the issue of anti-Trinitarianism in early Baptist life and thought, with focus on Matthew Caffyn. While in agreement with Chandler that Caffyn should be seen as a representative of General Baptist tradition, Holmes strongly argues that historically it would be misleading, and without evidence, to view early Anabaptists and General Baptists, at least until 1660s, as unorthodox in their views about the Trinity. Besides the specific argument about orthodoxy or unorthodoxy of the General Baptists and Caffyn, the article offers material for reflecting on the method and logic of re-constructing historical movements.

The last third of this issue keeps the reader in the area of historical research. Mary Raber focuses on an important Russian evangelical leader William Fetler (Basil Maloff) and his ministry outside Russia and the Soviet Union. Fetler, exiled in 1914 from Tsarist Russia, spent most of his active ministry time abroad, in the USA and Latvia, as an evangelist and tireless organiser. He arranged the translation and publication of Russian Bibles and other Christian literature. In exploring a historical figure, the article touches, however, a very acute present-day issue: How does being an exile shape a believer's identity and Christian activities? Fetler's exile experience added authority to his evangelical and fundraising messages, and it 'gave him the freedom to minister in ways that would not have been possible if he had stayed in Russia'. Ian Randall takes the reader to twentieth-century century Cambridge, providing insights into the Robert Hall Society, a Baptist Students' Society in the University of Cambridge, covering the years from the 1950s to the 1980s. The article places special stress on the spiritual dynamics of the Society, from times of finding its place in the setting of pan-denominational student groups, to renewed spiritual vigour after some years of decline and struggles. Although the Society came to an end in the early 1990s, its legacy is wider: through its members and the ideas emerging in the Society, and with its aim of preparing members to future service, it contributed significantly to the Baptist denomination in the United Kingdom. Lee Spitzer's historical study investigates how the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has viewed its relations with the Jewish people. Spitzer argues that before the rise of Nazism, the Jewish people were given minimal attention in the BWA documents. It was only in the 1930s that the BWA, based on its core convictions, condemned in the words of a Resolution, all racial animosity and any form of oppression 'toward the Jews, toward coloured people, or toward subject races in any part of the world'. After the Holocaust and the emergence of the state of Israel, the BWA pronounced a balanced position concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, avoiding however, statements about antisemitism. In the twenty-first century, the BWA resolution urged Baptists to 'demonstrate their

opposition to antisemitism' and express solidarity with people of other religions. The article relies on a detailed analysis of sources.

Over the years, the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam (IBTS) has strengthened its network of researchers and has looked to publishing the results of their research. The *Journal of European Baptist Studies* is an element in the network of the research community, which is bringing international scholars, and also IBTS faculty, research students and alumni into conversation, exchanging ideas and building academic links. In this issue of *JEBS* the authors represent a number of aspects which form the core of IBTS understanding of its mission and theological aims. It is encouraging to see three articles by IBTS alumni published in this issue. It is good to see IBTS staff and adjunct faculty contributing to ongoing discussion in the field of Baptist studies. In addition, it is meaningful and enriching to welcome other authors, who share thinking with IBTS and offer the results of their research and expertise. The editorial team of *JEBS* hands this issue over to the readers, with a hope that these texts provide an opportunity to reflect on learning-and-teaching experience in its widest sense. How to face new challenges in a pluralist society? What does the teaching and learning of preaching require in the classroom and beyond? In what ways do Baptist relations with other traditions and with our own historical story inform us, and enable fresh interpretations?

Inhabiting the City: Envisioning Baptist Ways of Doing Theology amidst Pluralism

Ryan Andrew Newson

Dr Ryan Andrew Newson is Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina.
newson@campbell.edu
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Abstract:
This article[1] uses theological resources found in the work of James Wm McClendon, Jr to articulate a way for Christians, particularly baptists, to reconceptualise their purpose in a pluralistic and pluralising world. Two themes are highlighted as being especially important for such a context: a robust affirmation of the need for Christians to be receptive to others, rather than putting themselves in the position of perpetual teachers; and the importance of articulating a Christian conception of power that can counter the rise of authoritarian political movements throughout the West.

Keywords:
Pluralism; James Wm McClendon, Jr; Christology; political theology

Introduction

We live in a time of great unrest. Of course, people throughout history have believed the same thing about their own eras; and yet I do not think we are unwarranted in believing that this moment is, in fact, uniquely tumultuous. Global capitalism continues to reshape cities, pushing and pulling people around the world in search of a somewhat sustainable existence. These migrations force interactions between people within Western cities, and while some communities attempt to practise hospitality in whatever ways they can, others view new immigrant populations with fear and resentment — feelings that are often exacerbated by their own sense of economic precarity. Climate change

[1] This article was first presented as the 2020 McClendon Lecture, organised by the James Wm McClendon Chair of Baptistic and Evangelical Theology, Vrije Universiteit, in co-operation with IBTS Centre Amsterdam (Amsterdam, 13 November 2020).

promises only to accelerate these already troubling trends.[2] In the face of such daunting challenges (and others besides), many gravitate towards conspiracy theories that provide a hermeneutical key for unlocking the hidden secrets behind these complex and interlocking phenomena.[3] Others embrace nationalistic and authoritarian political movements that promise to restore forgotten greatness, strength, and to rid countries of undesirables — to restore 'order'. Whereas in the era just passed one could perhaps get away with believing that 'diversity' would inevitably, by some magical alchemy, transform people into loving and tolerant citizens of the world, today one should be painfully aware that people can recognise the reality of pluralism — and shudder.[4]

Needless to say, Christians have had a variety of responses to this situation — supportive of and resistant to authoritarian politics, critical of and trading in conspiratorial thinking. Some Christians attempt to remain neutral on political issues, positioning themselves as outside or above such partisan or divisive debates. Others push this kind of thinking even further, 'reminding' us that our focus should be on matters of the spirit (Jesus's kingdom is not of this world, they remind us) rather than 'earthly' things, which are (at best) of secondary importance, and anyway, are addressed by focusing on heaven, not earth.[5]

I must admit to finding such sentiments deeply misguided and unsuited for the world Christians are called to inhabit — for a time that

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[2] For a study of the way these factors are reshaping cities in the global south — leaving one billion people living in unstable urban centres—see Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (New York: Verso, 2006).

[3] In the United States, I have in mind the rise and popularity of the so-called 'QAnon' conspiracy, which is deeply resonant (but not synonymous) with American evangelicalism.

[4] Pope Francis addresses many of these themes in *Fratelli Tutti*, encyclical letter, Vatican website, 3 October 2020 <http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html> [accessed 1 November 2020].

[5] Consider this often-quoted passage from C. S. Lewis: 'If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. […] It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth "thrown in": aim at earth and you will get neither.' (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001; first published 1952), p. 134.)

I do not hesitate to call a *kairos* moment.[6] Indeed, my thoughts on this subject are well-expressed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who sought to redescribe the task of theology for a society that faced its own set of unprecedented political and theological challenges. Writing from prison, Bonhoeffer straightforwardly noted the inadequacy of popular responses to authoritarianism, fascism, and *Herrenvolk* ideology more broadly: reclamations of 'reasonability', or turns to ethical 'fanaticism', or appeals to 'conscience' or 'duty' or 'freedom' or 'private virtue' as panaceas.[7] For Bonhoeffer, each response crashed against the rocks of what he termed 'stupidity', which could not be overcome by protests or force, nor instruction or rational argumentation — for the stupid rarely recognise themselves as such.[8] Bonhoeffer saw that each response failed to recognise that 'in the great majority of cases inward liberation must be preceded by outward liberation'.[9] That is, before personal, individual change can occur there must be a change in the society within which individual agency is expressed. Under these circumstances, Bonhoeffer notes, the question for the church is whether we will be of any use in bringing about such changes, or whether we will sigh and resign ourselves to 'ineffectiveness'.[10]

I happen to agree with Bonhoeffer that in a situation like his (and ours), the idea that one could play both sides, avoid taking stands, or address deep structural evil simply by reasoning it out with people (or focusing solely on the world to come) is a fool's errand. That move often collapses into false neutrality and acquiescence to evil. I also agree with Bonhoeffer that the goal for Christians must be instead to seek to act with responsibility and obedience to the concrete question and call of God, in this time and place.[11] As such, these thoughts from Bonhoeffer

[6] '*Kairos* time is the right or opportune time. It is a decisive moment in history that potentially has far-reaching impact. It is often a chaotic period, a time of crisis. However, it is through chaos and crisis that God is fully present, disrupting things as they are and providing an opening to a new future — to God's future. *Kairos* time is, therefore, a time pregnant with infinite possibilities for new life. *Kairos* time is God's time.' (Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015), p. 206.)
[7] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Touchstone, 1997), p. 6.
[8] Ibid., p. 8.
[9] Ibid., p. 9.
[10] Ibid., p. 4.
[11] Ibid., p. 5.

bleed into my task here: to introduce a baptist way of doing theology that is 'of use' in a pluralistic world. In a time when previous visions of goodness, theological paradigms, and political set ups are failing, part of the theological task must include articulating a vision that can help guide people, Christian and otherwise, into an uncertain future.

While he is not perfect (no theologian is), I believe there are important resources for developing this theological approach in the writings of James Wm McClendon, Jr, who is popularly associated with the postliberal turn in theology, with its reclamation of the importance of *narrative* and *practices* in understanding distinctively Christian ways of speaking in and about the world.[12] I have elsewhere argued that McClendon shares much with postliberalism while remaining distinct in important ways, and so here I want to take for granted McClendon's commitment to narrative theology, his interest in Christians living into their convictions in public without translating them into another idiom, and his work on powerful practices.[13] Instead, I want to draw attention to other, equally important aspects of McClendon's theology, which (I hope to show) is not a balkanising or fideistic force, and in fact can directly challenge such tendencies among baptists writ large. I will argue that baptist theology is best done as Christians live and move in the city — emerging out of the social world of overlapping convictional communities where Christians share much with neighbours and strangers alike.[14]

To this end, I will explore two themes from McClendon's theology that help articulate a baptist way of moving within pluralistic, urban settings: the way his affirmation of the deep commonalities that exist between people couples with a rejection of hyper-individualistic conceptions of conversion; and his articulation of a cruciform sense of power that can

[12] See George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1984); and Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).
[13] On the similarities and differences between McClendon and postliberalism (also known as the Yale school), see Ryan Andrew Newson, *Inhabiting the World: Identity, Politics, and Theology in Radical Baptist Perspective* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2018).
[14] See Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), chapter 6, esp. p. 154; Jeffrey Stout, 'Response by Jeffrey Stout', in 'Pragmatism and Democracy: Assessing Jeffrey Stout's *Democracy and Tradition*', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 2 (June 2010): 413–448, (p. 442); and Newson, *Inhabiting the World*, pp. 117–18.

guide Christians in discerning which narratives within the life of the city we ought to listen to and which we should resist. The first set of resources suggests a type of engagement that is neither unidirectional nor inherently antagonistic; the second, a theological conviction that colours the form this engagement should (and should not) take.

Toward a Discerning Receptivity

Right from the start, it is important to note that some baptists will be wary of attempts to do theology in and for the complex urban settings within which so many of us find ourselves. Indeed, a particular inclination — properly called a temptation — haunts baptist approaches to this subject: namely, a wariness about participating at all, seeing such engagements as suspect in principle.[15] If baptists are to think about such matters, so the inclination goes, it should be in service to articulating a theology that is 'in but not of' the city, rather than seeing theology as a practice emerging out of the flows and movements that constitute any collective. Behind this inclination is a pessimistic picture about what Christians share with their fellow city-dwellers, and a belief that Christians' main goal should be to convert others to their form of life, all other considerations being secondary to this primary aim. Thus, articulating a faithful and effective (in the sense Bonhoeffer specified) way of doing theology for the city must directly subvert this inclination, as it will continue to do a lot of work behind the scenes if left unaddressed. We are always already involved in the life of our cities in myriad ways, whether we realise that or not. As such, our goal should be to describe the nature of our involvement *well*, and by so doing undermine the conceit that one even *could* avoid doing theology from within the complex web of interactions that make up social life.[16] We should allow this recognition to frame a better and more irenic theology

[15] I use 'temptation' here in the sense employed by Ludwig Wittgenstein — that is, a kind of intellectual trap that needs to be avoided and 'therapised'.

[16] McClendon reiterates the complex nature of social reality constantly in his work. See James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'Social Ethics for Radical Christians: Analysis and Program', in *The Collected Works of James Wm. McClendon, Jr., Volume 1*, ed. by Ryan Andrew Newson and Andrew C. Wright (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), § 14.

of conversion. And we should attempt to do all this without collapsing the distinction between church and world.

Of course, faced with pluralism and its attendant challenges (and opportunities), McClendon recognised that Christians may be tempted into a kind of retreat, however quixotic. That is, there are those who might recognise that pluralism is a reality — indeed, a reality that cuts right through each Christian heart — and seek 'to resolve that difficulty by abandoning the world and taking refuge in the church'.[17] McClendon certainly cares about the resources uniquely available to practising, worshipping communities. But he also consistently argues that Christian practices bleed into and always already imply cooperation with others, in a way that avoids an inherently antagonistic, Constantinian, or neo-colonial stance toward one's neighbours. McClendon is able, for instance, to say that those with whom Christians disagree are not evil, at least not necessarily. In a society marked by plurality, our interactions with one another will look different if

> I come to see those who differ with me, not merely as "fools" or "barbarians," but also as folk with flesh like my flesh, brain like my brain, soul like my soul. To that extent, though the justificatory task is still my own, it may draw upon sympathies, correspondences, insights that are not merely private or partisan. And therein lies our hope of transcending the convictional cellblocks to which we might otherwise be confined.[18]

Unfortunately, the move to retreat, either physically (as in a withdrawal to the woods) or, more likely, in stance — in the creation of alternative institutions meant to reinforce a unidirectional engagement with the city — is ascendant in many circles, including among those whom McClendon would label 'baptist'. Representative in the United States is the popularity of Rod Dreher, who is well known for pushing the narrative that conservative Christians in the West are being persecuted at the hands of 'totalitarian progressives', with a particular,

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[17] James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'Taking the Side of the World', in *The Collected Works of James Wm. McClendon, Jr., Volume 2*, eds. Ryan Andrew Newson and Andrew C. Wright (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), § 49 (p. 367). On the line between church and world passing through each Christian heart, see James Wm McClendon, Jr, *Ethics: Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, rev. edn (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002; first published 1986), p. 17.

[18] James Wm McClendon, Jr and James M. Smith, *Convictions: Defusing Religious Relativism* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), p. 173. That McClendon writes this with Smith, an atheist, is significant.

almost obsessive focus on LGBTQ issues.[19] Dreher synthesised his approach to Christianity and pluralism in his widely read book *The Benedict Option*, the entirety of which is predicated on the idea that 'traditionalist' Christians are and will be persecuted for their beliefs, especially about LGBTQ matters, and that as such Christians must find resources to survive 'the new Dark Ages'.[20] That Christians of his ilk could be *doing* any persecuting of gay and transgender people seems not to concern him. Dreher constantly harkens to 'tradition' to justify his positions, but not in the more nuanced sense of Alasdair MacIntyre (ironically), in which one simply is traditioned as one goes about reasoning in the world and participates in an ongoing argument extended through time.[21] Dreher rather seems to use tradition to refer to an unchanging set of doctrines and moral positions. Indeed, in *The Benedict Option* one regularly finds Dreher referring to 'the' Christian position on sexuality, what 'we' all believe about same sex marriage, or what 'the' Bible 'says' about transgender issues, in a way that should make any theologian or biblical scholar (worth listening to) uncomfortable.[22]

I bring up Dreher here not because his work is particularly interesting or unique, but precisely because it is *not* unique. Dreher represents a popular form of Christianity that responds to pluralism with antagonism or withdrawal — whose major driving ethos is to protect

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[19] Just as a sampling, see <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/coming-oppression-of-christians-communism>; <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/maya-forstater-totalitarian-transgenderism>; <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/ dreher/civil-rights-christopher-caldwell-totalitarianism>; <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/transgender-cultural-marxism-liturgical-language> [accessed 1 February 2020].

[20] Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2017), pp. 3, 170–71, 179–82. In a particularly revealing rhetorical flourish, Dreher writes that 'florists, bakers, and photographers [have been] dragged through the courts by gay plaintiffs' and suffer 'outright bigotry' for their anti-LGBTQ beliefs (ibid., p. 175). Dreher does not say a single word about the violence and discrimination suffered by LGBTQ people in his book, focusing instead on so-called 'blacklisting' of Christians (ibid., p. 182).

[21] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988), p. 12. See also Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'I Am a Traditionalist; Therefore, I Am', *Public Orthodoxy* (February 19, 2019), <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2019/02/19/i-am-a-traditionalist-therefore-i-am> [accessed 9 February 2020].

[22] Dreher, *Benedict Option*, p. 12, and especially pp. 195–204.

itself from being defiled by an impure, secular world. Dreher represents a Christianity expressive of hegemonic power that nonetheless narrates itself in terms of persecution surrounding cultural trends, thus reinforcing a reflexive unreceptivity toward those outside the fold.[23] Insofar as his project is driven by fear and fantasies of persecution — particularly at the hands of the LGBTQ community, secularists, adherents of 'identity politics', so-called Social Justice Warriors, and naive 'liberal' Christians — Dreher embodies what Candida Moss calls 'the myth of persecution', which leads Christians like him to 'see themselves as persecuted, make their opponents into enemies, and equate disagreement with demonic activity'.[24] Dreher's project has an allure among some baptists: that in a society marked by thick pluralism, the response should be to discover new modes of communal life through which 'both morality and civility might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness', to quote MacIntyre.[25] For Dreher, this means protecting 'our' vision of 'traditional' morality (especially sexual morality), and refraining from communion with those outside ideological borders as a primary good.[26] All such engagements, if they occur, should involve bringing knowledge *to* others, with Christians

[23] That Dreher pushed this persecution narrative even with Donald Trump in the White House is astounding. Dreher thinks conservative Christians are 'politically homeless' after Trump, despite the fact that the vast majority supported his presidency (ibid., p. 80).

[24] Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), p. 260. For example, when Christian blogger Rachel Held Evans pointed out that conservative Christians are actually the ones who wield political power in this country right now, Dreher responded by saying his concern is to avoid a future in which 'the Evanses of the world' would be collaborating with the secular state to find and kill orthodox Christians hiding in basements. Dreher even compares Christians today who refuse to be allies with LGBTQ people with early Christians refusing to burn incense to Caesar. 'No, what I'm worried about is that far in the future, should the police come looking for dissident orthodox Christians hiding out from state persecution, the Rachel Held Evanses of the world will point helpfully and patriotically, and say, "They're in the basement, officer."' (Rod Dreher, 'Rachel Held Evans Dismisses Benedict Option', *American Conservative* (March 9, 2017), <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/rachel-held-evans-benedict-option> [accessed 1 February 2020]; and Dreher, *Benedict Option*, p. 180.)

[25] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd edn (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 263.

[26] Dreher, *Benedict Option*, pp. 16–19.

occupying the role of perpetual teacher. In this way, Dreher enacts what Baptist theologian Willie Jennings calls 'pedagogical imperialism'.[27]

In any case, McClendon provides a different approach for baptists to take, one that I think is more faithful to God and more suited to the world we find ourselves in. For starters, McClendon's theological methodology includes an affirmation of the 'fallibility principle', which he defines as the recognition that even one's most cherished and deeply held convictions might be wrong and in principle are subject to revision or reformulation or rejection.[28] Being willing to listen to and learn from others is thus incumbent upon anyone who knows their own epistemological limitations. Recognising one's own finitude, in this sense, fits well with an affirmation of pluralism as a gift that allows us to receive and learn from each other as we move in the world, at least in principle.[29] That there are different ways of living in (and as) the city can be welcomed and celebrated as such, rather than merely tolerated. In the realm of public theology, the fallibility principle pairs with a rejection of the imperialist drive to control and dominate others; so too does it reject the illusion of retreat. Rather, communities who read the Bible as people addressed *by God* are also called to listen to other inhabitants of the city, and to allow their theological insights to emerge from that dynamic space. For McClendon, 'the humble fact that the church is not the world' does not mean that Christians can or should opt out of their participation in the city as such, important as attending to our unique set of stories remains.[30] The church's boundary from the world is porous and narratival, and is thus marked by discursivity rather than purity. To forget this point would lead to a confessionalism that on McClendon's own account 'draws ever more tightly the lines of "fellowship," ever more narrowly those of cooperation, and therefore ever more pitiably the lines of influence […] upon the world'.[31]

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[27] Willie James Jennings, *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), esp. pp. 140–41; and Wille James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 112–16, 208.

[28] McClendon and Smith, *Convictions*, p. 112.

[29] I explore the concept of receptivity or 'listening' as a fundamental feature of baptist theology in Newson, *Inhabiting the World*, pp. 19–26.

[30] McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 17.

[31] Ibid., p. 236.

Furthermore, McClendon is able to affirm the importance of receptive participation in the city without abandoning Christian convictions because of his markedly materialist vision of the Christian life. Internal to McClendon's method is an affirmation of our shared embodiment — that Christian convictions about God and politics are expressed by people who are organic entities, through and through.[32] For McClendon, this means that however different we may be from one another — however incommensurate our traditions — we are at least linked to our neighbours (and enemies) at the level of embodiment, which McClendon links to our being linguistic beings *as such*.[33]

Finally, McClendon pushes against the 'antagonistic and conversionist' model for moving in the city because he respects the nature of our plurality too much to speak in such overarching terms. McClendon rejects a 'generic' vision of the social world that would conceptualise participation or non-participation as a wholesale affair: *either* one participates, or one does not. Rather, McClendon rightly notes that cities are constituted by a complex interwoven network of practices that bundle together, such that there is always a degree of 'choosing' that happens as one moves in the world.[34] McClendon points to the importance of 'counter-practices' in navigating these complexities, and in enabling participation without being 'swallowed up' by any particular practice's habits and ends.[35]

I find these resources helpful for articulating a way of doing theology that is distinctively Christian and receptive to difference.

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[32] James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'Three Strands of Christian Ethics', in *Collected Works, Volume 2*, § 26.

[33] McClendon's own avenue into affirming embodiment came through language, recognising that to be human is to be shaped by language, and that language itself is an embodied affair. 'Language is spoken before it is written; it is sounds in the chest cavities, voice boxes vibrating together. It is, at one reach, a set of rhythmic and polypitched cries, song, poetry, sounds of play and of work and of love, the beat of life —and of death.' Of course, McClendon knew this meant that people were distinct, since clearly we do speak different languages. But it also meant that humans share a deep bond in our ability to speak *as such*. (McClendon, 'Homo Loquens', in *Collected Works, Volume 2*, pp. 127–28.)

[34] See James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'Ethics for a Career', in *Collected Works, Volume 2,* §45 (p. 323); and McClendon, *Ethics*, pp. 167–82. 'No one should, on Christian grounds, abandon hope in the costly work of witness to the structures of society, or indulge in a nonselective antipathy to whatever any government anywhere proposes.' (McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 181.)

[35] McClendon, 'Ethics for a Career', pp. 320–25.

McClendon never loses the sense that Christian identity is 'story formed', and this formation is intimately tied to participation in church practices.[36] Nor does he forget that living into this story happens as one participates in a shared world of powerful practices, within which people can converse across deep, convictional disagreement — even if only to a limited extent.[37] Nor still does he see the story-formed nature of Christian convictions as confining, even as it gives Christians news to tell that is good.[38] Rather, McClendon's theological approach resonates with a dialectic presented by James Cone — incidentally, a theologian to whom McClendon could have listened more deeply.[39]

> We are creatures of history, not divine beings. I cannot claim infinite knowledge. What I can do is to bear witness to my story, to tell it and live it, as the story grips my life and pulls me out of nothingness into being. However, I am not imprisoned within my story. Indeed, when I understand truth as story, I am more likely to be open to other people's truth stories. As I listen to other stories, I am invited to move out of the subjectivity of my own story into another realm of thinking and acting. The same is true for others when I tell my story.[40]

A baptist approach to theology that takes these insights seriously will not proceed 'from above', discovering truths from abstract or theoretical heights that are then 'applied' to the world. The notion that Christians either could or should get their theology in order first *and then* move to engage the world is illusory — and likely leads to putting off

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[36] McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 178.

[37] McClendon and Smith, *Convictions*, pp. 1–7, 155–56, 176; James Wm McClendon, Jr, *Witness: Systematic Theology, Volume 3* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), pp. 298–99. McClendon is here discussing that communication is *possible* even across deep, convictional differences — while we may disagree on the nature of 'justice', we can at least gather around certain terms in order to argue about what we mean by them.

[38] For an articulation of what it looks like to speak 'good news' in and through a postmodern, even relativistic world, see Brad Kallenberg, 'The Gospel Truth of Relativism', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53, no. 2 (2000): 177–211.

[39] See McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 53, 62. On reading Cone as a white person, with attention given to one of McClendon's central conversation partners, Stanley Hauerwas, see Kristopher Norris, *Witnessing Whiteness: Confronting White Supremacy in the American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[40] James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, rev. edn (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997; first published 1975), p. 94.

'engagement' or 'participation' or even 'ethics' indefinitely.[41] But so too is it illusory to think that Christians can abandon the work of theology altogether. Rather, on this view theology is done *as one lives* in the world, or perhaps as one proceeds along the way, participating and arguing and contributing to the life of the city. It is at the borders of encounter that we discover the (fluid, shifting) points of convergence and divergence between us.[42]

Of course, for some Christians it will be difficult to recognise the truth that our lives are mutually enmeshed in all sorts of intimate, complex ways, for they have built their identities around a much more antagonistic picture of reality. For these Christians, all such talk concerning what we may share with our neighbours is at best secondary to the primary goal of enacting what they understand to be 'conversion' in and for others — 'winning souls' for Christ. Inherent to this theology is a dualism that divides people into sharp, neat categories: saved and unsaved, Christian and non-Christian, good and bad. Conversion thus names getting an individual to move from one category into another. McClendon does not reject the inclination to preach good news to the world — far from it — but he does complicate it in important ways. For one, McClendon rejects any theology built on the presumption that people neatly occupy certain categories of good or bad, saved or unsaved, in any simplistic fashion. When he says that the line between church and world runs through each Christian heart, that is not a mere rhetorical flourish.[43] Further, McClendon argues throughout his work that salvation is not a matter of escaping to some other world, but rather living into the kingdom of God here and now, with all the attendant social and political implications associated with that turn.[44] Whatever it means to 'strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness' (Matthew 6:33), it does *not* mean withdrawing or focusing on 'spiritual' matters to the exclusion of the social or material. Such a view betrays a

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[41] This is partly why McClendon famously begins his systematic theology with ethics: not because it is more important than other loci of investigation, but because it has so often been neglected or deprioritised in the history of Christian theological thought. See McClendon, *Ethics*, pp. 39–41.

[42] See Newson, *Inhabiting the World*, chapter 5.

[43] See ibid., chapter 4; and James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'Knowing the One Thing Needful', in *Collected Works, Volume 1*, §18.

[44] See McClendon, *Doctrine*, chapter 3.

fundamental misunderstanding of what Jesus even meant by 'the Kingdom of God'.[45] Rather, the Christian life, if one can even describe such a thing in singular terms, is a matter of living into a story, a narrative, a vision *now* — not merely converting individuals *or* reflecting upon the world but, as Gustavo Gutiérrez writes, becoming 'part of the process through which the world is transformed'.[46]

Similarly, when McClendon discusses individual conversion, he frames it as a process that happens over time, as one participates in practices that shape and reshape one's character.[47] Included in this process, of course, are moments of turning towards God in sudden, even dramatic fashion — but such moments take their place within a much wider and longer transformation; they are relativised but not abandoned as one remains open to further surprises from God. Crucially, this theology of conversion does not put Christians in the position of seeing the world from God's point of view, *sub specie aeternitatis*. Indeed, it undermines the entire logic behind the 'saving souls' paradigm precisely by putting Christians together with others as people in need of receiving, from God and others; Christians are robbed of their (largely self-given) status as perpetual gift-givers, and instead tasked with seeking to witness to and participate in the story of God, situating our witness in our vulnerability and receptivity, and tying hope for our own conversion to the ultimate change of the entire cosmos.[48]

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[45] See David P. Gushee and Glen H. Stassen, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016). As Ched Myers argues, any reading of the Gospels that posits a sharp division between the spiritual and the secular imposes 'etic' categories onto the texts, introducing distinctions that would have been foreign to the first-century audience. See Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), pp. 45–47.

[46] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988; first published 1973), p. 12. 'It is a theology which is open — in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of humankind, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just, and comradely society — to the gift of the Kingdom of God.'

[47] McClendon, 'Toward a Conversionist Spirituality', in *Collected Works, Volume 2*, §40. See also McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 137–44.

[48] See James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*, rev. edn (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990; first published 1974), p. 170. My argument here is also resonant with the expansion of the concept of salvation found in Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, p. 85. Additionally, this line of reasoning has a natural affinity with the version of universalism argued by David Bentley Hart, though it does not necessitate

Insofar as this way of doing theology decentres the image of the individual Christian or Christian community unidirectionally offering gifts of salvation to a broken world, it is resonant with the work of Willie Jennings, who has shown how deeply Christians in the West have been shaped by habits of imagination that emerged within the colonial and post-colonial moment. These habits are chiefly manifest in the idea of 'incarnating' gospel truths in other lands or for other people, and seeing one's own people as the perpetual bringers of knowledge and blessing. European Christians taken in by this ideology forget that they come to the Christian story 'from without', as it were, as Gentiles.[49] As Mikael Broadway puts it, Anglo and European Christians confused 'white for light'.[50] By fostering a vision of the Christian life born of mutuality and receptivity, we are tracing the outlines of a theology that seeks to avoid reinforcing the same patronising, colonialist modes of interaction that Jennings shows are not just violent and exploitative, but idolatrous.[51]

Baptists should embrace the fact that we share our lives with others, and should cultivate a stance by which we are as prepared to 'be incarnated among' as to 'incarnate' truths. Regardless of any particular theological conclusions reached from this starting point, this way of doing theology is a first step in undermining movements that trade in making strong distinctions between 'saved' and 'unsaved', 'us' and 'them', or 'friend' and 'enemy' (à la Carl Schmitt).[52] A first step, but by no means a final or sufficient one.

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it. See David Bentley Hart, *That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell, and Universal Salvation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).

[49] See Jennings, *Christian Imagination*.

[50] Mikael N. Broadway, 'Mistaking White for Light: Awakening to a Truthful Search for the Light', in *Sources of Light: Resources for Baptist Churches Practicing Theology,* ed. by Amy L. Chilton and Steven R. Harmon (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2020), pp. 63–75.

[51] As Gutiérrez puts it, Christians' stance in the world should not be about 'struggling for others', which 'suggests paternalism and reformist objectives, but rather of becoming aware of oneself as not completely fulfilled and as living in an alienated society'. (Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, p. 82.)

[52] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005; first published 1922).

Power and the Cross: Christ the Rosetta Stone

There is much to be said *after* one accepts that baptist theology should be done with a full awareness and affirmation of one's situatedness within the complex matrices that make up social (and personal) life. But given the re-emergence of authoritarianism and xenophobic ideologies throughout the West — movements which often enjoy Christian support — I want to spend the second part of this article articulating a Christologically oriented vision of power that can guide baptists in resisting and countering these trends. Using resources in McClendon's work, I will sketch a baptist vision of power that is not squeamish about power-talk in general, nor acquiescent to hegemonic power, but rather feeds into an anti-authoritarian understanding of power rooted in the God of Jesus Christ.[53] This task is tricky, of course, because certain Christian theologies have bolstered the very authoritarian trends I seek to counteract. Indeed, among evangelicals in the United States, the combination of whiteness, masculinity, and Jesus has produced a particularly potent sacralisation of authoritarian power that is not easily defeated. We must admit that many Christians do not *compromise* to support authoritarian leaders and policies, but rather find in them a *genuine* expression of their theological sensibilities.[54] It is for just this reason that I think the attempt to articulate an alternative, baptist vision of power is worthwhile: it may undermine one of the roots driving Christians, at least, to support such political programmes.

As such, in this section I will describe McClendon's cruciform, Spirit-driven conception of divine power (and God's action in the world more generally). From here, I will argue that this theological conviction should guide baptists in discerning which narratives of the city we should affirm and 'hook into', and which we should resist; it aids us in articulating the *kinds* of engagement Christians should participate in that are neither controlling nor thin. Granted that we should work for goods in common, this investigation helps us name which goods are truly *good*.

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53 On the distinct uses of the term 'power', see Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Routledge, 1946), pp. 180, 294–96.
54 On this point in the United States context, see Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (New York: Liveright, 2020).

Put simply, McClendon's vision of God's power in Christ provides a theological 'Rosetta Stone' for Christians as we inhabit the city.[55]

As is well known, McClendon situates himself within a diverse theological tradition that is neither Catholic nor Protestant, which he labels 'baptist' (with a lowercase 'b'). The awkwardness of this term is intentional, as it names a wide-ranging group who do not neatly fit within any one expression of Christianity. For McClendon, the central marker of baptists is their commitment to reading the scriptures as addressed *to them*, and living in the world as a community before Jesus as teacher and Jesus as eschatological judge — in a phrase, baptists read as though 'this is that', and 'then is now'.[56] Described thusly, baptists cut across a variety of sub-traditions, denominations, and theological inclinations; the term names a distinct and diverse way of being Christian. And while the baptist vision is principally a hermeneutical perspective, 'beyond that it is a kind of Christian practice: it means finding in Scripture what we are to do now, God's people with an open Bible, ready to follow. This perspective and practice most simply defines the distinctive theological standpoint of baptists.'[57]

Because McClendon works within this theological paradigm, his insights regarding divine power — and the ways these insights bleed into expressions of power in the city — are similarly 'strange', neither Catholic nor Protestant.[58] McClendon resists expressions of divine sovereignty that baptise the status quo or automatically identify with those in power; so too does he resist theologies that claim Christianity should focus on 'spiritual' matters to the exclusion of 'political' ones. Instead, McClendon sees the full expression of God's power in the peaceable life and witness of Jesus Christ; the power of God is manifest in a crucified Messiah, humiliated and penetrated by imperial might (1

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[55] The image of Christ the Rosetta Stone is from H. Richard Niebuhr, held up in Glen H. Stassen, 'Concrete Christological Norms for Transformation', in *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*, ed. by Glen H. Stassen, D. M. Yeager, and John Howard Yoder (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), pp. 179–80.

[56] McClendon, *Ethics*, pp. 30–32.

[57] James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'A baptist Millennium?' in *Collected Works, Volume 1*, p. 301.

[58] McClendon typically frames the baptist vision in this way; as such, he assumes a Western focus that cuts out Orthodox theology as another 'option' in the tradition.

Corinthians 1:18–25).[59] For McClendon, this conviction about Jesus is a 'master picture' that should guide Christians as we navigate the world and, indeed, the multifaceted witness of the scriptures themselves.[60] And while the New Testament provides us with multiple, irreducibly distinct portraits of Jesus, there is no blue note that presents Jesus as the opposite of crucified and resurrected — a Jesus who takes up the sword or refrains from confronting evil and injustice in the world.[61] As such, for McClendon the question to ask concerning Jesus and power is not 'How might powerfulness be avoided' but rather, 'What kinds of power are in conformity with the victory of the Lamb?'[62]

McClendon highlights the connection between the cross, power, and divine nature throughout his work, but perhaps nowhere with more lucidity than when he reflects upon the so-called 'Christ hymn' in Philippians 2:5–11. McClendon notes that many theologians interpret this passage as describing the divine, pre-incarnate Christ 'emptying himself' of divinity, not grasping after 'the form of God' but rather descending to earth; it is about a 'heavenly being who laid aside his trappings to take up human existence'.[63] Understood in this way, the passage celebrates a kind of divine saga that would be difficult to identify with or emulate. However, McClendon interprets this passage differently, though his reading is not without precedent in the Christian tradition. Following Origen and Cyprian, McClendon sees in this passage not the story of a divine emptying (thus avoiding thorny metaphysical questions about how deity could 'empty' itself), but a way of describing the kind of power that Jesus embodied *on earth*. Rather than a 'Miltonian tale of a heavenly God who refused to rebel', he sees

> a reference to the human Jesus's earthly temptations — which the Gospels condense into a single story that unfolds at much greater length. […] If we read Paul this way, he refers here to a Jesus who might have been made a king […], but who instead identified himself and his cause with servants and

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59 See Brian J. Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men: Paul's Rhetoric of Gender and Power in 1 Corinthians* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2019).

60 McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 88–89.

61 These themes are sometimes explicit in the text itself, but otherwise it is very much present but implicit and subtle. For a helpful discussion of how these themes can be present without being immediately noticeable to contemporary readers, see Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*.

62 McClendon, *Ethics*, pp. 181–82.

63 McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 266.

> serfs, outcasts and victims, to a degree that led the authorities to arrange his death — an outcome that is just the cost of obeying God in this world.[64]

Read as such, McClendon sees in this short passage a beautiful expression of the kind of power that Christians should emulate: a power marked by cooperativeness (not motivated by 'selfish ambition or conceit') and self-emptying (*kenosis*). It is *that* kind of life that is marked out as authoritative. Here is a paradoxical affirmation of the non-sovereign sovereignty of Christ, that neither refuses powerfulness nor expresses power in 'lordly' terms. It signals a divine 'subreignty', a rule from below. Jesus's kingdom, in other words, is not marked by autocratic rule; it is rather 'a kingdom-at-hand characterized by an alternative, indeed a countercultural, life-style, one whose keynotes were *expectancy* (he was an eschatological *prophet*), *openness* (practicing a *priest*-like penetration of the barriers that divide us from God and one another), and *creativity* (thus disclosing himself a numinous *king*-in-waiting)'.[65] Thus, McClendon allows Christ to colour what is said about God's power more generally, and I find this instinct quite helpful.

Of course, taken on their own these theological reflections could tap into and reinforce a version of the 'unidirectional' critique that I noted above, this time expressed through a vision of heroic martyrs unilaterally bringing light to the world through their service.[66] Additionally, any invocation of 'self-limitation' must be careful to avoid the criticisms brought to this concept by feminist theologians.[67] As such, it is crucial to combine this insight about divine power and *kenosis* with a second affirmation: namely, that the kenotic power of God is consonant with and in fact chiefly manifest in a communal context marked by plurality and reciprocity, rather than uniformity, fear of difference, and 'order'. God is not powerful in the way an autocratic (male) ruler is powerful, seeking to impose order upon difference from above in a way that hoards power and is deeply terrified of any

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[64] Ibid., p. 267.
[65] Ibid., p. 269.
[66] See Jennings, *After Whiteness*, p. 75.
[67] See Sarah Coakley, '*Kenosis*: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations', in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, ed. by John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 192–210.

purported 'disorder'.[68] Without collapsing the distinction between creator and creature or saying more than can be said about the divine nature, McClendon affirms a vision of God's power and God's action that works with and for creation, celebrating difference, diversity, and empowerment rather than tyranny.[69] God's power is shared. God, for McClendon, is of course the beginning and end of all things, the source of ongoing blessing and strength to struggle against forces that contravene God's will.[70] But this affirmation is coupled with an understanding of the universe as dynamic, emergent, open, and relational. Within such a world, the conviction that God is the ground of all being means that God loves, wills, and enjoys creation as interactive and unfolding — all the way down and all the way up.[71] Paraphrasing Romans 8:28, McClendon argues that 'in everything, as we know, [God] co-operates [*sunergei*, "synergizes"] for good with those who love God and are called according to his purpose'.[72]

And so, we see in McClendon resources for a theological affirmation of power that is not autocratic but cruciform — that works in and through multiple strands in creation rather than overwhelming it from on high. What difference does this make to baptists seeking a theology of the city — or a way of inhabiting the city that is consonant with our theological convictions? Throughout Europe and the United States, neoliberalism continues to dominate our political and economic landscape, privatising everything it can and taking away even the possibility of talking about goods held in common.[73] These forces have gone largely unchecked over the past forty years, which coincides with a resurgence of authoritarian, xenophobic, reactionary ideologies across the West. Marked in particular by a heightened fear of immigrants and

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[68] See the reflections on the 'fear of chaos' or *tehomophobia* in many theological traditions in Catherine Keller, *The Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
[69] See Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1988).
[70] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 149.
[71] Ibid., p. 166. See Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), chapters 5 and 6, esp. pp. 169–77.
[72] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 169.
[73] See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Bonnie Honig, *Public Things: Democracy in Disrepair* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017). As a force that does spiritual as well as material damage, see Bruce Rogers-Vaughn, *Caring for Souls in a Neoliberal Age* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

a desire to reclaim past glory, these movements seek control and domination over others, and insofar as they are the opposite of the form of power held up by Paul in Philippians, I do not hesitate to call them anti-Christ.[74]

Baptists are in no way immune from supporting these movements; those who do so apply the 'this is that' hermeneutic, but to biblical texts like the stories of David, or King Cyrus, or Nehemiah — the equivalent of reading Genesis 10–11 as justification for apartheid.[75] McClendon himself describes how the baptist vision can be used in this way if it is decoupled from an affirmation of Christ as the 'master picture', the type of types that enables one to judge between different visions of goodness, political programmes, and strands within the scriptures.[76] My simple suggestion here is that if baptists truly believe that the nature of divine power is fully revealed in Christ, then we *should* resist movements that trade in authoritarian power. Christians are called to follow a Jesus who is our teacher, and whose teaching is 'embedded in his learning'.[77] Christ is the centre, as Bonhoeffer quipped; Christianity is indeed 'life lived out under the governance of a central vision'.[78] But the Christ *at* the centre is not a stagnant or self-contained

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[74] See Elizabeth Dias, 'Christianity Will Have Power', *New York Times* (August 9, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/09/us/evangelicals-trump-christianity.html> [accessed September 1, 2020].

[75] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 467. For further exploration of the way 'this is that' can go wrong in this way, see Newson, *Inhabiting the World*, chapter 7.

[76] McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 482–87. McClendon well knew that other visions of Christ could lead to other 'stances' in the world, and not all invocations of Christ were equal. The Ku Klux Klan in the United States could also claim that 'the living Christ is a Klansman's criterion of character'. For the Klan, Christ was committed to his own 'klan', the Jewish Nation — even establishing his own klan post-resurrection — and thus was a model Klansman himself, especially in his willingness to sacrifice himself for the greater good. Or more recently, the neoconservative Christian group known as 'The Family' seeks political power and influence guided by a simple phrase: 'Jesus plus nothing'. Thus, to speak of Christ as a moral criterion requires further investigation of what one means by 'Christ' and 'Christlikeness'; otherwise, such terms signal the projection of one's desires onto the social order and little else. See Kelly J. Baker, *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK's Appeal to Protestant America, 1915–1930* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), pp. 48–54, 74–75; David Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 45; and Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

[77] Willie James Jennings, 'Overcoming Racial Faith', *Divinity* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 5–9 (p. 9).

[78] McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, p. 125.

'thing' (or principle), but a wild, kenotic, and still-speaking person.[79] In Jesus, we see a God who is the ground not of being, but of adventure,[80] who works 'synergistically' with creation, and who thus funds a political imagination marked by cooperative power sharing and discerning receptivity. If *this* Jesus is truly guiding one's vision, then one's life will be marked by a kind of gospel instability rather than orderliness — since Jesus himself was radically open to tax collectors and zealots and even the occasional Roman, founding a community whose borders were ever expanding, gradually calling into question all barriers humans erect for themselves in service to the liberating work of God (see Luke 4). This community seeks to hear the *presently spoken* word of God, even as that word presses against the word of God spoken in the past.[81]

I would think this would be a natural move for adherents of the baptist vision. Baked into this hermeneutical principle is an affirmation of multiplicity and unity-in-difference — celebrating light that issues from many sources.[82] Indeed, McClendon's articulation of the baptist vision is drawn from the story of Pentecost found in Acts 2, in which people are enabled to listen to each other in their native tongues. This moment — fleeting as it is — suggests that the movement and presence of God is marked by multiplicity and intimacy through difference.[83] In any case, in the face of rising authoritarian movements in cities across the West, the response from Christians cannot be to avoid talk of power altogether, as if all invocations of 'power' are equal, or as if one could simply reason one's way through the competing interests and political visions we are facing. Authoritarian answers to our crises are neither

[79] As Cone writes, 'the resurrected Christ is not bound by first-century possibilities. Though the Jesus of yesterday is important for our ethical decisions today, we must be careful where we locate that importance. It is not found in following in his steps, slavishly imitating his behavior in Palestine. Rather, we must regard his past activity as a *pointer* to what he is doing now. His actions were not as much examples as *signs* of God's eschatological future and the divine will to liberate all people from slavery and oppression.' (Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, p. 205.)

[80] James Wm McClendon, Jr, 'The God of the Theologians and the God of Jesus Christ', in *Collected Works, Volume 2*, p. 197. See McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 285.

[81] Willie James Jennings, *Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017), pp. 119–20.

[82] I am here invoking the language of Amy Chilton and Steve Harmon in *Sources of Light*.

[83] For more on this point, see Jennings, *Acts*, pp. 27–33. It also suggests the necessity of what McClendon calls 'gospel contextualism', meaning that the good news of Jesus is always found within particular cultures. In a phrase, 'the gospel's living waters is only drunk from earthen vessels' (McClendon, *Witness*, p. 195). On gospel contextualism, see McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 35.

good nor Christian, but they are at least *answers*; they speak to the challenges we face today, even if these answers are antithetical to the gospel. They do not simply appeal to process or decorum, or act as though everything is already great. Christians will either acquiesce to and support such reactionary movements, or counter them with a power that is shared, organised, egalitarian, and non-coercive in principle.[84] To organise such power is to work toward the kind of 'outward liberation' that Bonhoeffer spoke of in *Letters and Papers* — and insofar as this involves working against authoritarians, it is to work for *their* ultimate good too, though they will not recognise that as such.[85] By tying talk of power to the witness of Jesus, McClendon both reminds baptists of a central guide in discerning *how* to go about this work, and also points toward a more robust vision of what it might look like to 'seek first the Kingdom of God' than (at best) vague allusions to ecclesial practice. Rather than pitting the kingdom of God *against* the work of justice (or contrasting the former with 'eternal' matters), one might come to see working against authoritarianism as part of what it means to pursue God's reign on earth as it is in heaven — as a way of living into *what lasts*, rather than simply hoping for what *is last*.[86]

At the end of the day, what I have laid out here is primarily a 'negative' resource for baptists, because it provides a lens through which we can name narratives and ideologies we should *reject*, rather than spelling out in advance precisely what our movements in the city will look like. We inhabit the city with everyone else, and that is to be affirmed; but there are parts of the city that we do not enter.[87] This willingness to say 'no' may put us at odds with our neighbours and even our fellow Christians; it may also put us in alliance with people we

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[84] See Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), p. 398.

[85] 'It is the same for the oppressors: they never recognize that the struggle of freedom is for all, including themselves. […] As bearers of liberation — of the realm of health in a sick society — the oppressed must therefore fight against oppressors in order to fight for them. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "The Son of man […] came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 RSV). The service would not be understood and would lead to his death.' (Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, p. 139.)

[86] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 96.

[87] See William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), chapters 2 and 3.

thought were strangers or even enemies. But as Curtis Freeman has shown, baptists should at least be used to playing the role of dissenters in service to the wider health of the community.[88]

To put the matter as bluntly as I can: baptists should not hesitate to join the fight against white supremacy, authoritarianism, and xenophobia in our cities. Our place is in the streets, and our theological reflection should follow from this action. To paraphrase a proverb that was often quoted by the recently deceased US Congressman, Civil Rights leader, and Baptist minister John Lewis, 'When you do theology, move your feet.'

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[88] Curtis W. Freeman, *Undomesticated Dissent: Democracy and the Public Virtue of Religious Nonconformity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017).

Current Developments and Challenges to Theological Education in Russia

Valerii Alikin

Dr Valerii Alikin serves as rector and chair of the Theology and Church History Department at St. Petersburg Christian University in Russia. He teaches various courses in Biblical Studies and Church History.
valikin@spbcu.ru

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Abstract

Theology as a study subject in higher education and as a scholarly discipline has been recognised in modern Russia for a period of less than thirty years. Secular universities as well as theological institutions of various Christian denominations are engaged in developing theological education for their respective purposes. This article seeks to present recent legal changes that significantly influence the development of theological education in Russia. At the same time the article seeks to highlight current challenges that Protestant (evangelical) theological institutions are facing in terms of state accredited programmes in theology and ministerial training. The article also presents some suggestions to overcome these challenges as well as offering ideas for further development.

Keywords

Theological education; Russia; Russian Orthodox Church (ROC); Theological Scholarly and Educational Association (TSEA); Russian Protestants; Protestant (evangelical) theological schools; Eurasian Accrediting Association (EAAA)

Introduction

As stated in the title, this article consists of two parts. The first part presents recent developments in theological education in Russia. It aims to make readers aware of the rather rapid and turbulent developments which have taken place over the past couple of years in Russia in the area of theological education, especially in the area of legal provisions for programmes in theology issued by the Russian Ministry of Education. This concerns the overall development of theological education within the framework of state and legal recognition of such education. It is important to be aware of what is going on in the wider

context because it has significant impact on the development of theological education among Russian Protestants.[1]

The second part deals with the current state of theological education among Russian Protestants and the political, cultural, and internal challenges these groups are facing when developing theological education mainly for the purposes of training ministers and religious personnel. Despite their existence in Russia during the past thirty years, Protestant theological schools are still struggling with issues of having qualified faculty, with levels of enrollment, conducting research, and in keeping up with government regulations for their licensed programmes. However, some major developments are now taking place that should help foster theological education among Protestants in Russia.

Current Developments in Theological Education in Russia

Theological education is a young discipline within Russian academia. There was no possibility of studying theology at universities in Russia prior to 1917, when the only option for pursuing a theological education in the country was within the framework of clergy training within Orthodox educational institutions. The October Revolution in 1917 worsened the existing situation. During the time of the Soviet Union, theological education in Russia became almost nonexistent. Only after the Second World War, were Orthodox clergy allowed to build up theological education within their schools in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Odessa, while evangelicals in the Soviet Union had the opportunity to study the Bible and other subjects through the so-called 'Correspondence Biblical Courses' in Moscow, beginning in 1968.[2]

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[1] The term 'Russian Protestants' refers to Christian denominations that are not part of the Orthodox or Catholic Christian traditions. Russian Protestants include all types of churches that belong to Evangelical, Baptist, Pentecostal, Adventist, Presbyterian, and Methodist denominations as well as various Lutheran and Reformed churches.

[2] For a helpful overview of the history theological education in Russia among Orthodox as well as Protestants see Петр Пеннер, научите все народы… Миссия богословского образования, М.: Библия для всех, 1999, pp. 188–245 [Peter Penner, *Teach All Nations… Mission of Theological Education*]. See also Vladimir Fedorov, 'Theological Education in the Russian Orthodox Church (in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus)', in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*, ed. by Dietrich Werner et al. (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), pp. 514–524.

It was only after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990s that it became possible to speak of introducing theology into the context of the state educational system and of the organisation of private theological schools representing various Christian denominations and other religious confessions. Theology was recognised as an essential part of higher education in 1993 when the state educational standard for theology was approved. However, it was not until 17 February 2000 that 'Theology' as an educational discipline was introduced into the List of Disciplines of Higher Professional Education at the meeting of the Inter-ministerial Council on Education in Russia. Since that time, state and private universities (mostly Orthodox) have begun offering theology as an accredited study programme in Russia at bachelor's level, and from 2011 at master's level.[3]

Several programmes subsequently appeared at various state and private universities. However, finding qualified faculty to teach professional blocks of courses within theological programmes as well as providing students with relevant theological textbooks became a fundamental problem.[4] When speaking about 'Theology' here, what is meant is the various theological courses united in several groups (Systematic Theology, Sacred Texts, Church History, Practical Theology, Theological Languages, Church and State Relations, and Ethics).

Educational institutions had two options for teaching professional disciplines to students pursuing theological studies. The first was to let their own full-time faculty members who had received scholarly degrees in philosophy, history, linguistics, and other social sciences teach theological courses although they had not been formally trained in theology. The second option was to invite specialists from the

[3] New state standards in theology for bachelor's and master's programmes were approved in August 2020. See Кодификация РФ [Codification of Russian Federation] <https://rulaws.ru/acts/Prikaz-Minobrnauki-Rossii-ot-25.08.2020-N-1110/> [accessed 20 October 2020].

[4] The State Educational Standard for Theology, as well as for other disciplines, usually consists of three clusters of disciplines: a foundational cluster which includes history, a foreign language, and a number of courses in humanities, such as philosophy, sociology, etc.; a natural sciences cluster (mathematics, information sciences, etc.); and a professional cluster which includes courses that pertain to the given programme.

Orthodox theological institutions who did have degrees in theology (Candidate of Theology and Doctor of Theology) from the Orthodox schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg to teach, even though those degrees were not recognised within the state educational system.

During the past fifteen years, two major issues with this second option have clearly emerged besides the fact that, according to state regulations, such adjunct faculty are not qualified to teach state accredited programmes. The first issue concerns the invitation of specialists from Orthodox seminaries whose faculty members greatly depend on their ecclesiastical authorities to decide whether they may teach at state institutions. Difficulty arises with this when faculty suddenly lose the favour of the authorities and are barred from teaching within such institutions. This issue is gradually receding as the ROC is becoming more involved in teaching theology at state universities.

The second issue is that invited faculty members from religious educational institutions are accustomed to different standards of education. They tend not to be familiar with the structural, methodological, and administrative provisions, norms, and regulations required by the state educational standards.

To combat the issue of a lack of qualified faculty with recognised degrees, it became necessary to raise the status of theology to the level of a scholarly discipline, and in 2015 theology was first recognised in Russia as an academic discipline. In May 2015, theology as a scientific discipline was approved by the High Attestation Commission.[5] This recognition gave a green light to being able to defend a dissertation in theology as a Candidate of Science or Doctor of Science. In May of 2016, the High Attestation Commission approved the creation of a Dissertation Committee in Theology which could grant degrees in historical and philosophical sciences with specialisation in theology. In August 2017, the Russian Government issued a resolution that allowed twenty-three universities to award scholarly degrees independently from the High Attestation Commission as is the practice of most universities

[5] This commission is responsible for granting degrees of Candidate of Science (PhD) and Doctor of Science in Russia. See the order of the High Attestation Commission that approves theology as a scholarly discipline and the possibility of defending dissertations in theology in Russia, <https://phdru.com/admission/teology> [accessed 22 February 2020].

in the world.[6] For this new practice, a one-time dissertation committee consisting of specialists in the topic of the presented dissertation would be formed. In April of 2018, the deputy minister of education issued an order allowing the creation in the following month of the United Dissertation Committee, which would be able to grant degrees of Candidate and Doctor of Theology.

The first Candidate of Theology dissertation was defended in June of 2017,[7] and the first Doctor of Theology (equivalent to German Habilitation) was defended in May 2019.[8] Shortly afterwards, the Department of Biblical Studies of St. Petersburg State University awarded their first PhD dissertation in theology with the degree Candidate of Theology in July 2019.[9] It should be noted that all these new defences at both the Cyril and Methodius Institute for Postgraduate Studies (CMIPS) in Moscow (seven Candidates of Theology and two Doctors of Theology) and at St. Petersburg State University (Candidate of Theology) were made by ROC clergy, meaning that they can all now officially lecture within any accredited programme in theology at any state or private educational institution in Russia.

Parallel to these steps to qualify ROC scholars at the state level is another recent trend in developing theological education in Russia. In June 2017, the CMIPS, in cooperation with several leading Russian universities, organised the first all-Russia conference entitled 'Theology

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[6] See the Russian government order enumerating the universities that can award degrees themselves, <http://static.government.ru/media/files/ JnFTLJA581O4J7RuZuruWKeKZAyWC1V7.pdf> [accessed 22 February 2020].

[7] Pavel Khondzinskii, with the dissertation 'Разрешение проблем русского богословия XVIII века в синтезе святителя Филарета, митрополита Московского' [Resolution of Problems of Russian Theology in the 18th Century in Synthesis of Moscow Metropolitan Filaret], <http://www.doctorantura.ru/ru/materials-dissovet/applicants/2379> [accessed 20 February 2020]. This dissertation and its defence aroused much debate about its quality and the legitimacy of granting an accredited degree. Source: <https://phdru.com/sciproblems/hodzinsky/> [accessed 20 October 2020].

[8] Oleg Davydenkov with the dissertation 'Христологическая система умеренного монофизитства и ее место в истории византийской богословской мысли' [Christological System of Moderate Monophisitism and Its Place in the History of Byzantine Theological Thought], <http://www.doctorantura.ru/nauka/dissertations/theology/373-soiskateli/3821-davydenkov> [accessed 20 February 2020].

[9] Alexander Andreev with the dissertation 'Книжная справа Ирмология в Москве в XVII веке' [The Reform of the Hirmologion in Moscow in the 17th Century], <https://disser.spbu.ru/zashchita-uchenoj-stepeni-spbgu/198-andreev-aleksandr.html> [accessed 20 February 2020].

in Education in the area of Humanities', held in Moscow. As the outcome of this, the presidents of nine universities decided to found the Theological Scholarly and Educational Association (TSEA)[10] with the goal of uniting universities which offer state accredited programmes in theology, or that have departments which offer theological courses to students of a respected university without having an accredited programme in theology because that does not fit with the specialisation of the university (as is the case with the National Nuclear Research University, for example).[11]

The TSEA was founded in February 2018 and received a blessing from the Patriarch of the ROC. This association is open to participation by educational institutions, the ROC educational institutions, and religious schools that belong to the culture-forming religions in the country that are part of the Interreligious Council of Russia (Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism).

A few words should be said here about the CMIPS, because it became the driving force behind all processes for the development of theological education in Russia, and is the centre for planning scholarly research and the training of scholars in the framework of TSEA.[12] This ROC educational institution began the process of analysing the experience of theological departments at state and private institutions, promoting exchanges of that experience, and detecting effective models of collaboration between educational institutions, the state offices of the regulation of education, and religious structures in various regions. Its main goal is the creation of an all-Russia model of theological education on the basis of life tasks and the global challenges our country, and human civilisation in general, is facing today.

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[10] See the TSEA website at <http://www.nota-theology.ru>, which offers information about recent trends and developments in sate theological education in Russia between 2018 and 2020 [last accessed 19 March 2021].

[11] See the Department of Theology website of the National Nuclear Research University at <https://theology.mephi.ru> [last accessed 19 March 2021].

[12] See the website of Cyril and Methodius Institute for Postgraduate Studies at <http://www.doctorantura.ru> [last accessed 19 March 2021].

In May 2018, TSEA organised a seminar entitled 'Lines of Development of Theology in Education'. The seminar's final resolution makes the following statements:[13]

> 1. We should accept as our primary task the necessity of defining the content of the subject matter of Theology as a scholarly discipline. Then we should recommend the strategy for the development of theological education in Russia and a road map for implementing that strategy with the active participation of the scholarly and educational community from traditional religions and state authorities. A number of common problems can and should be resolved with active participation of the Interreligious Council of Russia, Federal Educational Department in Theology, and Theological Scholarly and Educational Association (TSEA).
>
> 2. We should support the initiative of developing TSEA as a center of integration of progressive scholarly-educational materials through active involvement of secular and religious educational institutions of higher education.
>
> 3. We should accept the importance of scholarly and practical seminars and recommend holding them regularly under the auspices of TSEA. Those seminars will foster the raising of competencies of the administrative staff in organizing the study process and accelerate the adoption of state licensing and accreditation regulations by religious educational institutions that will allow them to enter the secular educational sphere and will also help to create a body of qualified experts within the professional theological community.
>
> 4. We should recognize the special importance of developing the system of further professional education in religious educational institutions for establishing the scholarly branch of Theology, and for development of a system of theological education in general. Thus, it will be necessary to introduce some changes into the Federal Law on Education and the Federal Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations.
>
> 5. We should initiate a discussion of the ways for improving the juridical regulation in the area of theological education on the level of state legislation as well as internal ROC regulations.

Such resolutions include understanding theology as a tool for creative interaction between religious traditions, preserving the cultural memory of the peoples of our country, and using the moral and ideological resources of Russia's traditional religions in education, science, social life, politics, law, and international relations. It seems this resolution

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[13] The text of these resolutions in Russian can be read on the TSEA website, <http://nota-theology.ru/content/public/upload/files/rezolyuciya.pdf> [accessed 21 February 2020].

offers an ambitious plan for developing theology in the state educational system which is initiated and lead by the ROC.

The creation of TSEA is justified by the fact that theology, when entering a secular educational environment, is able to provide effective support to the Russian government in addressing key strategic goals, including the education of responsible citizens, the growth of social justice and social solidarity in the country, and thus ensuring the sustainable and safe development of the country in a multicultural and multinational space.

Therefore, TSEA's agenda is straightforward. It intends to organise clusters of universities with a specific profile (medical, military, technical). These clusters will develop an exemplary model of theological departments in universities where theology will be taught to all students of the respective university.[14] Another goal is to create groups of universities that will tackle specific problems using theological instruction, for example, theology and spiritual and moral security among the youth. It reflects the importance of this topic in the context of religious security in Russia.

Another area that needs to be noted here concerns research and the publishing of textbooks for theological education. The TSEA promotes eight theological journals on its website.[15] A random browsing through the contents of the first three issues of the new journal *Questions of Theology* reveal that there are very few articles which can be attributed to the subject matter of theology. The articles appear more accurately attributed to the area of philosophy, history of the Orthodox Church, or simply religious studies. The titles of the published articles reveal that there are relatively few scholars presently conducting research in the areas pertinent to theology as is the practice in other parts of the world. These areas (biblical studies, systematic theology, ethics, and so on)

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[14] A good example that attracted media attention is the creation of the Chair of Theology at the National Nuclear Research University, where students were obliged to attend theological lectures taught by Orthodox priests. See, Livejournal <https://volodn.livejournal.com/189083.html> [accessed 15 January 2020].

[15] See, Научно-образовательная теологическая ассоциация [Theological Scholarly and Educational Association] <http://nota-theology.ru/publications/magazines> [accessed 15 January 2020].

continue to remain neglected in the newly developing theological studies within Russian academia. It is to be hoped that the number of theological journals so far available will find enough scholars who produce and publish quality research pertinent to theological studies comparable to that carried out in Europe and North America.

For the successful implementation of theological curricula, students should have access to quality theological literature. In 2015, the CMPIS launched an ambitious programme of writing and publishing sixty theological textbooks at the bachelor's level for the Orthodox seminaries in Russia, with the aim that those works would soon become standard textbooks for all programmes in theology taught at state and private universities. A significant number of Orthodox and secular scholars are involved in this programme, and over twenty textbooks have so far been published.[16] Through the involvement of TSEA, theological departments of state and private secular universities have now joined this endeavour, meaning that all the textbooks created in this series originally intended for the ROC will most likely be used by any educational institution that offers programmes in theology.

The most recent development took place in March 2019 when the High Attestation Commission issued a new version of the document that recognises theology as a scholarly discipline.[17] In this new version, theology is divided into three kinds: Orthodox, Islamic, and Jewish. This probably means that the only way to receive a scholarly degree of Candidate or Doctor of Theology will be by being an adherent of one of these three religions. Those who belong to other religious confessions will probably have no other option than to defend their dissertation in other branches of the humanities, such as history, linguistics, philosophy, or religious studies which have nothing to do with religious confessions.

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[16] See the website of the recently founded publishing house Poznaniye <http://www.poznaniye.ru> that actively publishes any quality research in theology conducted in Russia [last accessed 30 October 2020].

[17] The new version of this document, called in Russian 'Passport of a scientific discipline', which describes the areas of research in which an individual can be awarded a scholarly degree of Candidate or Doctor of science in Russia, can be read at the website of the High Attestation Commission at <https://vak.minobrnauki.gov.ru> [accessed 30 October 2020].

What does this all mean for theological education in Russia in general, and for the development of Protestant theological education in particular? The ROC is now establishing its leading role and will define the agenda for the development of the subject matter for theological studies, which will most likely be dogmatic and devoted to the study of Orthodox and Patristic traditions.

The secular educational system does not really know what to do with theology. Most programmes are oriented toward training specialists in the area of church-state relations, and do not differ much from the subject matters of philosophy and religious studies.[18] Theological courses are taught by the Orthodox priests who have received state accredited degrees. The main goal is for the graduates from those programmes (who clearly will be representatives of the Orthodox clergy) to enter public schools to teach religion.

In addition, there is a very rapid tendency for creating Departments of Theology at state universities which mostly educate students in exact or natural sciences rather than in the humanities. Optional courses in theology are taught mostly by Orthodox clergy. This situation can be compared with that of the Soviet Union when all students at higher educational institutions were supposed to study scientific Communism, regardless of which programme they were following (be that physics, art, or even metallurgy).[19] However, despite the desire to introduce theology into secular universities as a common extracurricular subject for students, it is unlikely that this initiative will find much response among students who are overburdened with their own studies and would not be interested in courses that mostly deal with

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[18] See the list of bachelor's theses defended in the theological department of the Ural State Mining University, <http://edu.ursmu.ru/upload/doc/2019/10/05/kaf._tg.pdf> [accessed 15 January 2020].
[19] See the article, Марина Лемуткина [Marina Lemutkina], 'Назад в светлое будущее: в вузах откроются кафедры теологии' [Back to a Brighter Future. Departments of Theology will be established in State Universities] (14 June 2016) *MK.RU* <https://www.mk.ru/social/2017/06/14/nazad-v-svetloe-budushhee-v-vuzakh-otkroyutsya-kafedry-teologii.html> [accessed 30 October 2020]. A desire to use Orthodox Theology as a means to impart some kind of basic ideological foundation to university students is obvious due to the current absence of overall ideology in Russia.

history and religion.[20] For example, the oldest Department of Theology, which was established at the Russian University of Transport in 2001, was dissolved in August 2020.[21]

However, the ROC's attempts to establish Departments of Theology wherever possible (it mostly happens at technical universities) will probably fail because it is based on private initiatives of the schools' administration and not on any developed strategy from the Ministry of Education. State universities will not spend budget money to support activities by theological departments. It seems that Russian academia does not really know what to do with theology, which should develop in vibrant dialogue with related subjects in the humanities.[22] What perspectives for further development might the Departments of Theology in the Universities of Transport or Mining have?[23]

Nevertheless, if theology as a subject matter continues to be promoted at state universities, the changes described above in the development of theological education in Russia have a number of implications for Russian Protestants. If there is any Protestant theological institution willing to accredit its theology programmes, it will probably have to go through TSEA, which is under considerable Orthodox influence.[24] That means that the state accrediting agency in Russia will follow the TSEA recommendations in this matter. Another

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[20] See the list of courses offered by Department of Theology at the National Nuclear Research University in Moscow, <http://theology.mephi.ru/process/cources> [accessed 15 October 2020].

[21] Source: University of Transport < https://www.miit.ru/depts/181> [accessed 20 October 2020].

[22] The debate on the emergence of theology as a part of national university training in Russia is still ongoing. See Бокова О.А., Кондрашов В.Д, Дискуссия о теологии в российской высшей школе // Вестник ЛГУ им, *А.С. Пушкина*, 4, (2015): 194–201 [Olga Bokova and Dmitry Kondrashov, 'Discussion about Theology in Russian Higher Education'] <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/diskussiya-o-teologii-v-rossiyskoy-vysshey-shkole> [accessed 30 October 2020].

[23] There are two volumes of the recently established yearly journal Теология и образование [*Theology and Education*] for 2018 and 2019 which contain over a hundred articles on various aspects tackling the development of state accredited programs in theology in state and private (Orthodox and Islamic) institutions. See <https://elibrary.ru/contents.asp?id=40889476> [accessed 3 November 2020].

[24] The only protestant seminary in Russia that has accredited its programme in theology is Zaokskii University of Seventh Day Christian Adventists. See <https://zda.zau.ru> [accessed 15 January 2020].

possible consequence may lead to private (Evangelical) theological schools (seminaries) losing their licences (through active checks by the state inspection on the supervision of education) which allow them to train clergy (workers) by awarding them bachelor's and master's diplomas.[25] Evangelicals will probably be driven into the area of additional training, which is not considered a higher education.

Theological Education among Russian Protestants

After presenting a short history and state of affairs in the development of theological education among Russian Protestants, I will highlight some challenges that Protestant (evangelical) theological schools are facing. Protestant theological educational institutions were founded by missionary denominations (Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Adventists, Baptists, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals) in the 1990s. The main goal in founding such institutions was to train leaders for churches in their respective denominations. The teaching staff in these schools was represented by foreign professors, but in the last ten to fifteen years they have mostly been replaced by indigenous faculty who hold a master's or PhD degree from those schools or from institutions abroad.

Despite being in existence for only twenty to thirty years, Protestant theological schools have been able to implement significant changes and achieve good results in training church members for ministry. However, when looking at those schools using the criteria of state accredited theological education at universities, we can see only a low level of theological reflection. Sometimes, there is a lack of indigenous qualified faculty, limited research and few scholarly conferences, as well as meagre library resources.[26] Cooperation and partnership between schools, hindered for many years by mistrust and

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[25] There is still a discussion as to whether religious institutions of higher education of any denomination or religious confession are allowed to award bachelor and master's degrees to their graduates on the basis of their current licences, which allow the training of clergy and religious personnel.

[26] These aspects were identified by Peter Penner back in 2005 in his chapter 'Case study EEST/CEETE', in *Theological Education as Mission*, ed. by Peter F. Penner (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2005), pp. 247–269 (p. 264). It seems that 20 or 30 years are just not enough to compensate for 70 years of the total absence of development in the area of theological education in Russia.

unresolved issues of the past, is now being developed through various initiatives.[27]

One of the difficulties is that church unions have not always taken ownership of educational institutions. In their opinion, it is very good to have educated ministers, but they are not truly ready or have the resources to invest in theological education. Previously, every church tried to have its own Bible Institute. The knowledge of existing state regulations for running an educational institution brought an understanding that accredited education, even at a college level, is not something that churches or church unions are capable of organising and supporting.

Mikhail Nevolin gives two reasons to explain the current state of affairs in theological education among Russian Protestants:

> The first reason is unclear policy in some denominations that do not have certain expectations of their ministers to have theological education. The second one is an inability of most churches in Russia to support a full-time paid pastor. This means that in addition to theological education, a person should receive secular education to be able to support himself and his family.[28]

As a result of this there are fewer young people who are interested in entering seminaries in order to pursue a ministerial career. Therefore, most schools have had to close their residential programmes.[29] The alternative to the residential programme became the growth of all kinds of non-residential, modular programmes offered by seminaries. To follow these, students attend the seminary several times a year for intensive courses. The quality of this educational approach significantly differs from that achieved through the full-time residential training.

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[27] Peter Penner and Anne-Marie Kool, 'Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe', in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*, ed. by Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Joshva Raja (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), pp. 541–544.

[28] Михаил Неволин, Христианское образование на распутье // Христианский мегаполис (2016) [Mikhail Nevolin, 'Christian Education at a Crossroads', *Christian Megapolis*] <http://www.christianmegapolis.com/христианское-образование-на-распуть/> [accessed 16 January 2020].

[29] There are a few schools that still offer a full-time residential programme in theology. St. Petersburg Christian University and Zaokskii Adventist University are among those. However, even these institutions are wondering whether they should continue the programme as the total number of students amounts to less than a dozen.

The advantage of the part-time approach is that the student body is represented by church ministers and church members who are already involved in some kind of ministry and are highly motivated in gaining knowledge and skills. In addition, these students remain in their cities and their churches, whereas the majority of graduates from residential programmes in Moscow and St. Petersburg never return to their home churches and find secular jobs in these cities. Though this new modular system has solved the problem of logistics and students entering theological schools to pursue education, such an approach to education damages the level of graduates and hinders the prospects for future theological development in the domain of evangelicals as such.

Zaokskii Adventist University is the only Protestant institute in Russia that has a state accredited programme in theology. However, the Adventists are a minority among the Protestant denominations, and they rarely draw students from other denominations. If a seminary can offer state accredited diplomas, it may attract more students, but the dim prospects of getting a decently paid job in a local church discourage young people from studying at theological schools. The graduates of theological schools in many cases do not pursue further study, nor engage in dialogue with other religious confessions or any kind of representatives on the side of secular human sciences. At its core, studying at theological schools does not seem to change students; in most cases, they receive degrees but do not undergo a deep scholarly transformation.

To summarise the current state of affairs in theological education among the Russian evangelicals, it is appropriate to cite Mark Elliott's conclusion in his 2007 article 'Contemporary Crisis of Protestant Theological Education in Countries of the Former Soviet Union' which is still mostly relevant today:

> Full-time Protestant seminaries have a very uncertain future due to their large number [this has changed during the past 10 years], the declining growth-rate of churches, the weak links between theological schools and churches, the lack of strict criteria for selecting applicants, the weakness of the curriculum, which does not provide enough practical skills, the existing distrust of churches, and the lack of financial involvement of churches in the management of seminaries. Finally, the situation of schools is complicated by the fact that fewer potential students and their parents see reasons to invest

> years of study in something that is unlikely to ultimately lead to the opportunity to earn a decent living. More and more often, those who think about entering a seminary ask themselves the question: 'Why would I spend three or five years of my life studying in order to ultimately remain as poor?'[30]

We now proceed to presenting some recent challenges and developments facing Protestant theological schools. Over the past couple of years (2018–2020), the State Inspection on Control of Education has begun planned checks of theological schools in the area of their compliance with the Federal Law on Education and State Licence Regulations. These checks were part of a general trend to decrease the excessive number of universities in Russia.[31] It is necessary to note that theological schools have never undergone such checks and most of them were not ready to pass the inspection's scrutiny.[32] In most cases, the inspection looked at the schools' compliance with the formal legal requirements. The schools were not used to fulfilling these requirements because of their sheer number and cost. As a result, some of the schools lost their licences and are now obliged to move into the area of additional education.[33]

Additional education, however, can only be taught to those who already have college or university diplomas. Secondary school graduates

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30 Mark Elliott, 'Contemporary Crisis of Protestant Theological Education in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union', *Protestant Newspaper* (September 2013) <http://www.gazetaprotestant.ru/2013/09/sovremennyj-krizis-protestantskogo-bogoslovskogo-obrazovaniya-v-stranax-byvshego-sssr/> [accessed 21 January 2020]. For more on the history of Protestant theological education in Russia during the past 30 years see a collected volume of articles by Mark R. Elliott, *The Arduous Path of Post-Soviet Protestant Theological Education* (Wilmore, Kentucky: First Fruits Press, 2020).

31 During the past 20 years the number of higher educational institutions in Russia rose to close to 3000 compared with the 600 there had been in the whole of the USSR. In 2020 the number of universities in Russia is now around 800.

32 For a detailed presentation and interpretation of the checks undergone by some schools see Mark R. Elliott, 'Increasing State restrictions on Russian Protestant Seminaries', *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, 40, no. 4 (2020), article 2 <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol40/iss4/2> [accessed 2 November 2020].

33 Two evangelical seminaries have lost their licences: The Eurasian Theological Seminary of Christian Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal) in 2018, and The Moscow Theological Seminary of Evangelical Christian Baptists in February 2020. In December 2019, The Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was denied permission to accept new students and in April 2020 its educational licence was withdrawn. See, 'Rosobrnadzor halted the licenses of Islamic Institute and Lutheran Seminary', *Interfax Education* (9 April 2020) <https://academia.interfax.ru/ru/news/articles/4454/> [accessed 22 October 2020].

cannot enter such study programmes because the level of award is merely at certificate level, equivalent to a type of course programme. Those schools which were able to keep their licences, usually through protracted court litigations with the State Inspection on Control of Education, did learn a good lesson however. They now understand the importance of strictly following regulations and the necessity of working together in battling the common 'foe'.

Another external challenge is the issue of degree recognition of faculty working in those schools. The most promising graduates from theological schools, after gaining bachelor's diplomas (not recognised in Russia), were sent to continue their studies at the master's and PhD level in western seminaries, to find on their return to Russia that these degrees were not recognised. The process of nostrification (official degree recognition) is highly complicated, almost impossible, because the previous education from the Protestant seminaries in Russia cannot be accredited.[34]

The internal challenges to Protestant theological education in Russia seem to remain the same as in previous years. Church unions who serve as founding bodies of theological schools lack clear vision for the development of theological education besides the necessity to train pastors. Since most of the leadership of Protestant denominations were not able to get theological education themselves, or were usually only educated formally for the sake of having a diploma, they cannot see theological education beyond the scope of meeting the immediate needs of having more leaders, or they are preoccupied with other burning church issues.

Theological education in Russian Protestant churches where pastors usually belong to the older generation (though the situation is gradually changing) is not in high demand. Historically, believers were

[34] The situation is quite different in the Ukraine where, since 2016, hundreds of graduates from the non-accredited theological schools were able to pursue the nostrification procedure and have their diplomas recognised by the Ukrainian government. See, for example, 'The First Certificates of State Recognition of Educational Diplomas of Religious Schools were issued in Ukraine', *Orthodox Life* (21 December 2016) <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/v-ukraine-vydany-pervye-svidetelstva-o-gosudarstvennom-priznanii-dokumentov-duhovnyh-vuzov> [accessed 20 February 2020].

not able to get an education during Soviet times. Therefore, the majority of ministers in evangelical churches have no theological education (except for the diploma from a technical school which gives a work specialty), and they are not seeking it because they do not see the need for and value in it. They communicate the same approach to their church members, who do not understand why theological education is necessary.

This affects the level of culture in the evangelical churches in Russia. Theological education which strives to teach students the capacity for critical thinking and reflection may represent a challenge to church traditions, as churches are mostly interested in upholding and passing on the existing traditions without much theological reflection and deep analysis of church practices. Educated church members can represent a threat to that status quo. Thus, there is a greater separation between churches and theological schools.

To bridge the existing gap between seminaries and churches the schools need to be more proactive in offering practical courses to local churches and at the same time conduct sound research in the area of practical theology, and implement its results into church practices.[35] Analysing contemporary church life and ministry and offering specific advice that would foster church ministry might be highly appreciated.

Another way to foster Protestant theological education would be to establish specific and working collaboration between theological schools. Until 2020 there was no effective collaboration, cooperation or exchange in education and research among the Protestant theological schools in Russia. During the past twenty years several evangelical seminaries in Russia did participate in projects carried out by the Eurasian Accrediting Association (EAAA), however this participation was mostly in the interest of the individual development of each school and the receiving of resources from and through EAAA rather than collaboration on mutually beneficial projects. Nevertheless, during the past several years thanks to EAAA projects, the leadership and faculties

[35] For example, St. Petersburg Christian University offers practical seminars to local churches which can be taught both at the university and in churches.

of Russian evangelical seminaries have been able to establish good relationships with each other.

The situation changed in 2020 when several evangelical schools expressed a desire to create an Association for the Development of Evangelical Education to facilitate joining forces in various areas of theological education where each school does not have sufficient resources to work effectively by itself. These areas comprise legal requirements, collective representation before the state modernisation of education, methodological work, research and others areas. This association is now going through official registration.

Another collaborative effort was initiated by the Zaokskii Adventist University — as noted above, the only Protestant school in Russia with a state accredited programme in theology. They have been working on creating and accrediting their master's programme in theology in collaboration with St. Petersburg State University;[36] however on 25 August 2020 the Ministry of Education approved a new state standard for theology at master's level, according to which the educational institution will have to set a profile for its taught programme that corresponds to the specific confession of one of three religious traditions (Christian, Islamic, Jewish).[37] This means that theology in Russia has become *de jure* confessional. Whereas state universities offer programmes in Orthodox or Islamic theology with specialisation in state-confessional relations, Protestant theological schools will now, in close collaboration, have to develop their own Protestant Theology programme and have it recognised at a state level. Recognition might prove difficult due to the fact that there is no legal notion of Protestantism in Russia. There are two unions of Lutheran churches in Russia as direct heirs to classical Protestantism, but even they do not have the word 'Protestant' in their official name.

Another area that needs mutual collaboration among Protestant theological schools is that of academic conferences and research

[36] A closer association with renowned state universities in Russia was suggested by Peter Penner, 'Guidelines for the Mission of Theological Education in the FSU', in *Theological Education as Mission*, ed. by Peter F. Penner (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2005), pp. 255–268 (p. 360).
[37] See footnote 3.

conducted by faculty members.[38] Research is costly, and each school separately is not able to fund quality research and other activities connected with it (e.g. scholarly publications). The other factor that explains why evangelical schools do not engage effectively in theological research is that Protestant theological schools navigate between the church and academia. The main purpose of the seminary is to train students for ministry; thus the faculty members are expected to teach a lot of practical subjects. The churches await graduates who can engage well in the practical ministry of preaching, counselling, teaching and administrating churches. Theory is viewed as something far removed from real life. There are few evangelical Christians who would like to pursue serious theological studies. There is, with rare exception, no research conducted, scholarly conferences are held sporadically, and there are few publications by evangelical scholars. As a result, there is little presence of Russian Protestant scholars in the wider research circles and in the public space in general.

Conclusion

Within our brief discussion of the situation, this article presented the extremely rapid development and changes that are taking place in theological education in Russia in general, and among Russian Protestants in particular. These changes can be explained by the overall political, cultural, and religious climate and developments in Russia. During the past thirty years of religious freedom, the ROC (as the major religious confession in Russia with its thousand-year history and tradition) has rebuilt its own foundation after the totalitarian and destructive reign of Communism in the matters of faith and religion.

Now, having firmly established its own structure, the ROC is entering into the public sphere, including education. It seems that theology, recognised in Russia as an educational and academic discipline, can serve as an appropriate tool to present and spread its ideas

[38] St. Petersburg Christian University holds a yearly theological conference in which Russian and western scholars from both state and denominational institutions participate regularly. Every year the Moscow Theological Seminary offers a conference for baptistic schools of different kinds.

and agendas among the intellectual circles in the country,[39] thus accounting for the current changes observed in the sphere of the state system of theological education. However, there are some doubts whether theological studies can be significantly developed to the level at which they are conducted in the West.

As far as theological education among Russian Protestants is concerned, it appears that after thirty years it is coming to a new stage of its development. Various external, as well as internal, challenges and general developments in state theological education will definitely cause evangelicals to reflect, and rethink their position, and introduce major changes in the way they run their seminaries and pursue their goals in accrediting programmes. We observe now a greater collaboration and sharing of resources in order to strengthen the mission of educating and training Christians for the work of ministry. There are hopes that Russian Protestants will succeed in gaining the recognition of Protestant Theology in Russia and entering the public space through presenting sound scholarship and quality research, thus making the voice of Russian Protestants better heard in this country.

[39] There are some sceptical views with regard to the development of Orthodox theology in Russia. Binding and interweaving with the state power structures brings certain disadvantages. Through that power the Orthodox Church does attract young students, but that attraction may primarily be to do with power and money rather than an interest in theological and pastoral vocations. The same is happening with many other state churches in Europe.

Teaching Preaching: As Practical Theology

Stuart Blythe

Revd Dr Stuart Blythe is the Associate Professor in the John Gladstone Chair of Preaching and Worship at Acadia Divinity College, Nova Scotia Canada. He was formerly the Rector of IBTS Centre Amsterdam and taught for many years at the Scottish Baptist College.
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Abstract:
This article explores the teaching of preaching as practical theology through a number of discussions concerning practical theology and theological education. According to Miller-McLemore's definition, both preaching, and the teaching of preaching are expressions of practical theology. One is located in the life of the church. The other in the curriculum of theological education. The purpose of Christian practical theology is to serve the life of the church. The teaching of preaching as practical theology should support the practice of preaching in the church. This means that theological educators need to pay attention to the types of knowledge students actually need for congregational practice. This requires knowledge that goes beyond cognitive understanding (episteme) to include practical wisdom (phronesis) and skill (techne). Since preaching teaching involves both wisdom and skill, there are limitations to what can be taught and learned in the classroom. Be this as it may, conceptualising the teaching of preaching as practical theology has implications for the classroom.

Keywords:
Preaching; practical theology; skill; wisdom; teaching preaching

Introduction

This article explores what it means to teach preaching in programmes designed for ministry preparation through the lens of a number of discussions regarding practical theology and its relationship to theological education. First, it positions practical theology as a discipline whose primary purpose is to serve the life and ministry of the church. Second, it conceptualises the teaching of preaching as an endeavour of practical theology that supports the practice of preaching in the church. Third, it advances the validity and value of seeking to teach knowledge that goes beyond 'cognitive understanding'. Fourth, it identifies the limitations of the classroom for teaching the sort of skills and wisdom

that the practice of preaching requires. Finally, it highlights some strategic implications for teaching preaching in the classroom.[1]

Practical Theology: Serving the Life of the Church

In her 2011 Presidential Address to the International Academy of Practical Theology, leading USA practical theologian, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore addressed several issues concerning the nature of practical theology.[2] As part of this, she offered 'a concise yet expansive definition' of practical theology.[3] Her description is important in the field. It was based upon a fuller explanation in the *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*.[4] It was also used to shape the format of *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, which Miller-McLemore edited.[5] Significantly for this article, it is a definition she credits as emerging from discussions about practical theology and theological education. These discussions included a 'consultation on Practical Theology and Christian Ministry that began in 2003', resulting in the 2008 book *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*.[6]

In her definition, Miller-McLemore describes practical theology as a 'multivalent' discipline that contains four 'distinctive' and yet 'connected and interdependent' 'enterprises with different audiences and objectives'.[7] She described these different enterprises as follows:

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[1] I wrote this article after completing and publishing an article, 'DMin as Practical Theology', *Religions*, 12, no.1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010031>. This present article shares some common source material and some general arguments with that earlier article. However, it significantly deepens and develops the material and the arguments in a distinct way with reference to the teaching of preaching.

[2] This was published in 2012. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 'Five Misunderstandings About Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 16, no.1 (2012): 5–26.

[3] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 19.

[4] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 'Practical Theology', in *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, ed. by Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (Washington: CQ Press, 2010), pp. 1740–1743.

[5] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 'The Contributions of Practical Theology', in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), pp. 1–20. Miller-McLemore refers to these other uses of the definition, 'Five', p. 19, footnote, 45.

[6] Miller-McLemore, 'Contributions', p. 4; Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, eds, *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

[7] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', pp. 18–23.

> [A]n *activity* of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday, a *method* or way of analyzing theology in practice used by religious leaders and by teachers and students across the theological curriculum, a *curricular area* in theological education focused on ministerial practice and subspecialties, and, finally, an *academic discipline* pursued by a smaller subset of scholars to support and sustain these first three enterprises.[8]

For Miller-McLemore, these different enterprises are unified by a 'shared understanding of practical theology as a general way of doing theology concerned with the embodiment of religious belief in the day-to-day lives of individuals and communities'.[9] As she would argue, practical theology's concern for embodied Christian living is not merely 'descriptive' but 'constructive'.[10] She states, 'Practical theology's objective is both to understand and to influence religious wisdom in congregations and public life more generally.'[11] For Miller-McLemore, therefore, it appears that it is not merely that the academic endeavour of practical theology supports and sustains the other three endeavours but that all the expressions of practical theology serve the embodied and daily lives of believers. Elsewhere she writes, 'Practical theology either has relevance for everyday faith and life or it has little meaning at all.'[12]

That practical theology has to have relevance for the faith and lives of believing people is picked up and highlighted by the British practical theologian Pete Ward. In his response to Miller-McLemore's 2011 address, he welcomed her emphasis at the conference not merely on the theological but on the 'ecclesial'.[13] He contrasted this with what he saw as a move in practical theology away from ecclesial concerns to the broader area of 'the place of religion in society'.[14] In response to this move, he argued that practical theology finds its orientation in the church.[15] Moreover, in terms of Miller-McLemore's four types he suggested,

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8 Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 20 (emphasis original).
9 Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 20.
10 Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 23.
11 Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 25.
12 Miller-McLemore, 'Contributions', p. 7.
13 Pete Ward, 'The Hermeneutical and Epistemological Significance of Our Students', *International Journal of Practical Theology,* 16, no. 1 (2012): 55–65 (p. 63).
14 Ward, 'Hermeneutical', p. 63.
15 Ward, 'Hermeneutical', pp. 63–64.

> that there needs to be an epistemological order of priority between the types. Practical Theology may exist as a method, a theological discipline, and as a curriculum area, but these three find their raison d'etre in the life, expression, and reasoning of the Christian community.[16]

This emphasis defines Ward's later book *Introducing Practical Theology*, in which he engages positively with Miller-McLemore's typology and stresses the ecclesial location of his own approach to practical theology.[17] As Ward acknowledges, practical theology can be done in many ways and by people of other faiths and none.[18] However, his concern is to offer a 'way of doing practical theology that is fundamentally ecclesial and theological in nature'.[19] It is concerned with transformation in and through people's lives through the ministry and mission of the church. He writes,

> So the purpose and eventual product of practical theology should be the transformation of individuals and communities. The transformation of individuals, society, and the church is a work of God that comes about through the work of the Holy Spirit. Practical theology, however, is a participation in this transforming work through the faithful pursuit of understanding that takes both theology and practice seriously.[20]

Christian practical theology, therefore, is deeply rooted in and exists to serve the church. This article takes this approach to the nature of practical theology.

Teaching Preaching: A Supportive Practice

Christian practical theology exists in the service of the Christian Church. Following on from this, the teaching of preaching is an expression of practical theology that supports the practice of preaching as an expression of practical theology in the life of the church. This requires discussion on the distinction and connection between the 'ministerial

[16] Ward, 'Hermeneutical', p. 64.
[17] Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).
[18] Ward, *Introducing*, p. 3.
[19] Ward, *Introducing*, p. 3.
[20] Ward, *Introducing*, p. 167.

practice at hand', preaching, and 'the practice of the discipline that studies and teaches that practice'.[21]

Preaching as a 'process of reading the Scriptures and trying to make connections to life is a vital form of practical theology that has been church practice since New Testament times'.[22] In terms of Miller-McLemore's typology, it is a practice that operates as practical theology within the first use of the term. It is 'an *activity* of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday'.[23]

As an activity in believers' lives, preaching can be described as a form of 'strategic practical theology'. Don Browning, one of the pioneers of practical theology in the USA, argued that all theology should be practical.[24] Nevertheless, he found the need to describe the Christian Church's traditional disciplines such as liturgy, pastoral care, and preaching as 'strategic practical theology' or 'fully practical theology'.[25] He used these terms because it is through such practices that critical reflection in a church's life 'becomes fully or concretely practical'.[26] Browning writes of these disciplines, which include preaching,

> This is where ministers and lay persons who think about the practical life of the church really function. Here they make incredibly complex judgments of the most remarkable kind. If they are good practical thinkers, the richness and virtuosity of their work can contribute greatly to both the life of the church and the common good beyond it.[27]

For Browning, such strategic practical theology in a congregation's life, such as preaching, is only one sub-movement in his 'fundamental practical theology'. The other sub-movements are 'descriptive theology, historical theology', and 'systematic theology'.[28] Together they enable, 'the church's dialogue with Christian sources and

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[21] Miller-McLemore, 'Contributions', p. 13.
[22] Ward, *Introducing*, p. 173.
[23] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 20.
[24] Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 4–8.
[25] Browning, *Fundamental,* p.8.
[26] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 8.
[27] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 55.
[28] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 8.

other communities of experience and interpretation with the aim of guiding its action toward social and individual transformation'.[29] All of these movements for Browning are practical in the sense that they involve reflection on practice.[30] In this reflection, however, the movement is not from theory to practice but is instead from 'practice to theory and back to practice'.[31] The acts of strategic practical theology, such as preaching, seek to implement and communicate to the congregation insights derived from the critical reflection through the various other sub-movements.[32] However, while such disciplines as preaching mark a 'culmination' to this reflection in a congregation's life, this is not an endpoint. Instead, the issues which strategic practical theology raise, feed back into the 'hermeneutical cycle' of the critical reflection that makes up the life of a congregation.[33]

Such preaching as practical theology in the life of the church has a number of dynamics. Preaching can be 'a performative form of practical theological expression'.[34] This takes place through the activity of the preacher as they bring together doctrine, scripture, and experience, seeking to make connections with the lives of believers.[35] In turn, however, such preaching with its mixture of scripture, doctrine and life, becomes part of the listeners' experience as they then reflect upon the preaching in the light of their own broader knowledge and experience.[36] As such, it becomes part of their practical theological reflection as individuals and as a congregation. How preachers approach their task and congregants respond to the sermon, will be influenced by their ecclesial traditions and theological convictions. Be this as it may, implicitly and explicitly preaching contributes to the 'remembering', 'absorbing', 'noticing', 'selecting', and 'expressing', that constitute practical theology in the 'ordinary' life of the church as congregations seek to live out their faith.[37]

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[29] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 36.
[30] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 57.
[31] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 7.
[32] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 55–57.
[33] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 58.
[34] Ward, *Introducing*, p. 173.
[35] Ward, *Introducing*, pp. 172–173.
[36] Ward, *Introducing*, p. 173.
[37] Ward, *Introducing*, pp. 13–21.

In contrast to preaching, however, which according to McLemore's typology is located in the life of believing communities, the teaching of preaching is located in the classroom as 'a *curricular area* in theological education focused on ministerial practice and subspecialties'.[38] In the classroom, preaching is an academic sub-discipline of practical theology as are pastoral care and liturgics and leadership.[39] To teach preaching in higher education is to teach according to institutional and national standards. Teachers write syllabi and design courses. Students have fees to pay, grades to earn, classes to attend, and learning outcomes to be achieved. In this sense preaching and the teaching of preaching are 'distinct enterprises with different audiences and objectives'.[40]

Although these two enterprises of practical theology are distinct, they are yet 'connected and interdependent'.[41] Both are concerned with preaching as an activity in the life of the congregation and the world. Preachers can teach, and teachers can preach. Students bring the history, traditions, and practices of the congregations to which they belong into the classrooms. Ward expressed this very clearly in his response to Miller-McLemore's address.

> One of the places that I meet the enacted and the performed is in the classroom. My students embody theology. When they travel in to London to our University they do not leave their calling or their communities behind. They do not cease to be ministers when they enter the classroom. They carry their ministerial experience and theological commitment with them when they come to study.[42]

This is of consequence. It relates to Ward's broader argument discussed above. The teaching of practical theology should be shaped by the concerns and practices of the Christian Church. Consequently, the teaching of preaching as an endeavour of practical theology has an objective beyond itself. This objective is the preaching of the church as a transformative activity that enables the faithful, embodied living of Christian people. As such, the teaching of preaching as practical

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[38] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 20.
[39] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 17.
[40] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 20.
[41] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 20.
[42] Ward, 'Hermeneutical', p. 57.

theology is a supportive endeavour of preaching in the life of a congregation. This claim is more significant than it may sound. For it requires focused attention in the teaching of preaching to what students actually need to learn if their theological education is to be enable them to do what they need to do as preachers.

Teaching Preaching: Beyond Episteme

To teach preaching is to teach a sub-discipline of practical theology within the framework of theological education. The question raised above, however, is what it is that students need to learn for preaching in the church. On this issue, Miller-McLemore has critiqued theological education for its captivity to 'cognitive intelligence' or what she dubbed the 'academic paradigm'.[43] She critiqued an overemphasis on theoretical knowledge, which is associated with Aristotle's category of 'episteme'. Her point is not that that such knowledge is unimportant but rather that on its own it is not adequate for theological education.[44]

Miller-McLemore argues for the necessity of a broader approach to the nature of knowledge in theological education because those who study to prepare for ministry need to learn 'how to do' certain things. In a chapter on 'Practical Theology and Pedagogy' she states, 'Those who come into the classroom must leave better prepared *to do something*, whether that be to listen, worship, preach, lead, form, teach, oversee, convert, transform, or pursue justice.'[45] This is the case because, as she continues later, 'There are, after all, better and worse ways to stand when speaking from the front of a church or raising the bread and wine for praise and blessing.'[46]

As indicated above, the necessity for a broader understanding of the knowledge desired through theological education has direct relevance for teaching preaching. John S McClure in a chapter on

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[43] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 14. See also, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 'The "Clerical Paradigm": A Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness?', *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 11 (2007): 19–38.
[44] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', pp. 14–15.
[45] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 'Practical Theology and Pedagogy: Embodying Theological Know-How', in *For Life,* ed. by Bass and Dykstra, pp. 170–190 (p. 173) (emphasis mine).
[46] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 180.

preaching in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* puts it as follows: 'The goal of homiletical education is to graduate not students who know "about" preaching, but students who are on their way to becoming wise and skilled practitioners of theological communication in general, and of preaching in particular.'[47] For McClure, therefore, students of preaching need to learn both 'wisdom' and 'skill'. To put that differently and anticipate the following discussion, people need to learn both 'how to preach' wisely and 'to preach' well. These are distinct forms of knowledge from 'knowing about'. While connected, they are also distinct from one another, because there is a 'fundamental difference between knowing how to do something and being able to do it'. [48]

Helpfully, Miller-McLemore and others not only make the case for the necessity of knowledge beyond cognitive understanding but also argue for the nature and validity of that type of knowledge in theological education.[49] To do this, they draw upon and dialogue with a variety of authors and movements which unsettle 'mind-centred epistemology'.[50] They also critically appropriate the Aristotelian categories of, '*episteme/theoria*, (theoretical knowing as an end in itself), *praxis/phronesis* (practical knowing of how to live), and *techne/poesis* (productive knowing of how to make things)'.[51] They do this to highlight the existence of different forms of knowledge beyond episteme. It also allows them to stress both the neglect and yet the importance of phronesis, practical wisdom, in Christian living and theological education.[52]

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[47] John S. McClure, 'Homiletics', in *Wiley-Blackwell*, ed. by Miller-McLemore, pp. 279–288 (p. 279).
[48] Richard Carr, 'A Taxonomy of Objectives for Professional Education', *Studies in Higher Education*, 10, no.2 (1985): 135–149 (p. 137).
[49] I am concentrating particularly though not exclusively on Miller-McLemore's contribution. Some of her constructive work on this is in the collaborative enterprise Dorothy C. Bass, et al., *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016). She also offers a far-reaching critique of the 'Theory-Practice Binary' in 'The Theory-Practice Binary and the Politics of Practical Knowledge', in *Conundrums in Practical Theology*, ed. by Joyce Ann Mercer and Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 190–218.
[50] Miller-McLemore, 'Academic Theology and Practical Knowledge', in *Christian*, ed. by Bass et al., pp. 175–223 (p. 175).
[51] Miller-McLemore, 'Academic', p. 200.
[52] Bass, *Christian*, pp. 4–16.

Practical wisdom, they argue, 'is the good judgment someone shows in the face of everyday dilemmas. It is the ability to render a proper assessment of a situation and to act rightly as a result.'[53] It is the sort of 'knowledge' seen in 'the competent nurse, a good parent, a seasoned mechanic, a thoughtful congregant, a trusted daycare worker, a sage administrator'.[54] Or as one early advocate claims, it is the sort of 'intricate' and 'profound' knowledge, obtained through experience that allows a person 'to preach convincingly'.[55] Specifically 'Christian' practical wisdom is such embodied wisdom '*nourished by Scripture and reliant on the grace of God*' with the concern to enable people to live 'abundant lives'.[56]

The preceding discussion indicates something of the epistemological arguments for the validity and value of knowledge beyond episteme. Such arguments support the claims that the teaching of practical theology needs to give attention to cultivating such phronesis, '"pastoral wisdom" or "theological know-how"'.[57] However, this focus on practical wisdom only takes us so far in moving beyond episteme or cognitive understanding in the teaching of preaching. It focuses primarily on the practical wisdom of the 'how to' in context, rather than on the actual skill of doing. This is important. For as McClure suggested, preachers need not only 'wisdom' but 'skill'. [58] Skill is 'the ability to do something well' or the 'actual doing' of something 'with accomplishment'. [59] While connected to the 'how to', it is yet a distinct form of knowledge. Alternatively, to return to the Aristotelian language, skill is concerned with the techne/poesis (productive knowing of how to make things) rather than phronesis.

Miller-McLemore is aware of the limitations of merely highlighting the value in practical theology of practical wisdom in

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[53] Bass, *Christian*, p. 4.
[54] Bass, *Christian,* p. 1.
[55] Rodney J. Hunter, 'The Future of Pastoral Theology', *Pastoral Psychology*, 29, no. 1 (1980): 58–69 (pp. 66–67).
[56] 'In Anticipation', in *For Life*, ed. by Bass and Dykstra, pp. 355–360 (p. 359, emphasis original), and Bass, *Christian*, pp. 4–10.
[57] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 171.
[58] McClure, 'Homiletics', p. 279.
[59] Merle Patchett and Joanna Mann, 'Five Advantages of Skill', *Cultural Geographies*, 25 (2018): 23–29 (pp. 24–25).

addition to theoretical understanding. Consequently, she points to the work of practical theologians who have begun to explore the nature and value of knowledge involved with and generated through techne and poesis. Accordingly, in terms of techne, she states that when it comes to practical subjects, 'one needs knowledge that puts theology into action through movement, exercise, accumulated trial-and-error experience, and so forth'.[60] She highlights connections with the skills required and developed in sport, music, and nursing.[61] Thus John Witvliet in his chapter on teaching worship argues for the ongoing significance of 'key skills' not only in sport and music but for what he calls 'improvisatory ministry'.[62] Concerning poesis Miller-McLemore points to British scholar Heather Walton's work and her emphasis on the value of creative and imaginative perceptions which are part of the making of things.[63] This emphasis on the necessity, value, creativity, and complexity of the knowledge involved in skill finds support and development in other current research areas.[64] Tim Ingold in the concluding article on skill in a recent edition of *Cultural Geographies* writes,

> We recognise that skill is the ground from which all knowledge grows, that 'imitation' is shorthand for processes of attunement and response of great subtlety and complexity and that skilled practice entails the working of a mind that, as it overflows into body and environment, is endlessly creative.[65]

For Ingold, skill is the starting point. Therefore, it may be just as accurate to talk about skill and wisdom as wisdom and skill. Moreover, as he goes on to argue, skill is not merely a mechanistic activity but involves a form of embodied practical knowledge that is capable of articulation.[66] So just as with phronesis, techne and poesis point to other necessary and valid forms of knowledge to which the teaching of

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[60] Miller-McLemore, 'Academic', p. 214.
[61] Miller-McLemore, 'Academic', p. 214.
[62] John D. Witvliet, 'Teaching Worship as a Christian Practice' in *For Life*, ed. by Bass and Dykstra, pp. 117–148 (pp. 140–143). Although this is a chapter on worship, I will draw on some material when relevant for preaching.
[63] Miller-McLemore, 'Academic', pp. 215–216.
[64] This is not to say that the other literature necessarily agrees with Miller-McLemore in all areas of definition or interpretation of what constitutes skill or how it operates.
[65] Tim Ingold 'Five Questions of Skill', *Cultural Geographies*, 25 (2018): 159–163 (p. 159).
[66] Ingold, 'Five Questions', pp. 160–161.

practical theology subjects, such as preaching, needs to give attention beyond episteme.

To teach preaching as practical theology is to teach a practice which requires knowledge which extends beyond episteme. This knowledge includes skill and the wisdom that exists in relation to its contextual operation. This claim is not to abandon the importance of theoretical understanding nor to abandon theological education for training in '*mere* know-how'.[67] Instead, it is to recognise the necessity and validity of other forms of knowledge, their sometimes priority, and their interconnectedness, which can provide the sort of learning that enables people to do things well and wisely in context.

Teaching Preaching: The Limitations of the Classroom

Since the teaching of preaching is concerned with the teaching of skill and wisdom and not simply 'knowledge about', the classroom has its limitations. This learning is a long-term process. Practical theologian Craig Dykstra states, 'It is a beautiful thing to see a good pastor at work.'[68] By a good pastor, he means one who can respond well with words and actions in a wide variety of contexts and situations. According to Dykstra, this ability comes from a way of 'seeing' that he calls 'the pastoral imagination'. However,

> The pastoral imagination emerges over time and though the influence of many forces. It is always forged, however, in the midst of ministry itself, as pastors are shaped by time spent on the anvil of deep and sustained engagement in pastoral work.[69]

Christian Scharen makes a similar argument in a chapter he writes about ministry learning and the embodying of skill and wisdom.[70] Scharen recounts his first experience of preaching at a church while in his second year of training at a theological seminary. At seminary, he had been

[67] Miller-McLemore, 'Five', p. 15 (emphasis original).
[68] Craig Dykstra, 'Pastoral and Ecclesia Imagination', in *For Life,* ed. by Bass and Dykstra, pp. 41–61 (p. 41).
[69] Dykstra, 'Pastoral', pp. 41–42.
[70] Christian Scharen, 'Learning Ministry Over Time: Embodying Practical Wisdom', in *For Life*, ed. by Bass and Dykstra, pp. 265–288.

learning to preach using the Eugene Lowry *Homiletical Plot*.[71] In the classroom, he had received good feedback and a good grade. Nevertheless, when he delivered his sermon before a congregation, it was 'labored and awkward'.[72] He contrasted this with the church minister's 'seemingly effortless' preaching and his own later preaching.[73] As he argues in this chapter, the difference is learning gained through experience, supported by mentors, in the actual practice of ministry.

Scharen draws upon the work of Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus and their stages of skill acquisition to contrast and explain the difference between his earlier and later abilities.[74] According to this scheme, people acquire skills through the stages of 'novice', 'advanced beginner', 'competence', 'proficiency', and 'expertise'. [75] Scharen equates his initial preaching while in his second year of theological education with the 'novice' stage.[76] The novice stage is one in which a person follows and applies the rules with little situational awareness. Progression through the stages requires experience in situ beyond experience in the classroom. Scharen suggests students can achieve only the first two stages and the beginning of the third during their theological seminary education.[77] The remaining stages require the experience of learning in and through the practice of ministry.

Such schemes of stage development are, of course, problematic. People are individuals and bring a different range of experiences to their theological education. Nevertheless, such schemes highlight that practices such as preaching cannot be taught in a single course. The skills and wisdom required to do them well take time, experience, feedback, and reflection. This perspective concurs with McClure's chapter on homiletical theological education.[78] To be sure, in theological education, individual courses in preaching are supplemented with other courses

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71 Scharen, 'Learning', p. 272.
72 Scharen, 'Learning', p. 273.
73 Scharen, 'Learning', p. 273.
74 Scharen, 'Learning', pp. 267–269.
75 See, for example, Stuart E. Dreyfus, 'The Five Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 24, no. 3 (2004): 177–181.
76 Scharen, 'Learning', pp. 271–273.
77 Scharen, 'Learning', 279, footnote 29.
78 McClure, 'Homiletic'.

which provide associated knowledge and skills such as biblical exegesis. In turn, programmes can also offer fieldwork, placement, and practical experience. As Cahalan notes,

> Increasingly seminaries are providing more and varied experiences for performance in communities of faith, including full-year internships and programs aimed to support them beyond graduation in the transition into ministry.[79]

However, if this is to be cumulatively successful, it will require not merely several places in the programme where preaching is taught or happens. Instead, it will require intentional 'horizontal' and 'vertical' integration in curriculum design.[80]

Even with curriculum integration, it is the case that 'when ordination follows the master of divinity degree, we cannot suppose that the minister is fully competent, but he or she is recognized as possessing the gifts and education to become a competent practitioner'.[81] When McClure discusses the teaching of homiletics as practical theology, he focuses on a case study involving a pastor who has been a solo pastor for three years and has begun to worry that 'her preaching is not as effective as it could be'.[82] Cahalan indicates how significant these early years can be: 'The ministry setting is now the classroom and without sustained attention to learning in practice in the first years of ministry, many people will face burn-out, unnecessary conflict, ill health, and emotional upset.'[83] For seminaries and accrediting institutions, this raises questions of the role they expect and are expected to play in the ongoing development of their leaders and indeed preachers. For the teachers of preaching, it raises the question of what they can do in the classroom to facilitate the sort of learning that enables an appropriate stage of skill and wisdom to be achieved and also future learning to take place.

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[79] Kathleen A. Cahalan, 'Integration in Theological Education' in *Wiley-Blackwell*, ed. by Miller-McLemore, pp. 386–395 (p. 390).
[80] Cahalan, 'Integration', pp. 389–390.
[81] Cahalan, 'Integration', pp. 392–393. The MDiv is the main programme of theological education for ministerial preparation in North America. The point applies to other similar programmes elsewhere in the world.
[82] McClure, 'Homiletics', p. 281.
[83] Cahalan, 'Homiletics', p. 393. She also refers to the skill acquisition scheme of Dreyfus and Dreyfus.

Teaching Preaching: Classroom Implications

A classroom course in preaching cannot make skilled and wise preachers. Yet, the classroom education in practical theology has an important role to play in the overall development of people.[84] Given the arguments above, courses in preaching can seek to develop level appropriate skills and wisdom and lay the groundwork for potential future development. This goal has several significant implications for classroom teaching. These include the teacher as a preacher, the epistemological emphasis, and the adopted learning and teaching methods.

The teacher of preaching needs to be a preacher among preachers. Miller-McLemore highlights this point. In a creative play on a well-known adage, she claims, 'those who teach *can* do'.[85] The teacher's demonstrable skill is essential because from the perspective of the students, 'The *teaching* of a teacher of teachers, the *preaching* of a teacher of preachers or the *caring* of a teacher of care is seen as witness and proof of the professor's embodied theology and real knowledge of the subject.'[86]

The fact that the teacher of preaching is a preacher is crucial not merely for student confidence, but also for classroom pedagogy. It is the preaching of the teachers of preaching that keeps their teaching 'honest'.[87] It roots their own knowledge of the subject matter in practice. While research-led teaching is essential, so is practice-led preaching. Miller-McLemore writes, 'A pedagogy that is developed and continually nourished in relation to clinical, congregational, or other non-academic practice engenders shifts in epistemological commitments.'[88] This shift in epistemological commitments is towards the sort of knowledge that students actually need to preach well and wisely in context.

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[84] Scharen, 'Learning', p. 265.
[85] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 175 (emphasis original).
[86] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 175 (emphasis original).
[87] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 176.
[88] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 176.

The above emphasis on the knowledge required for skill and wisdom does not mean that cognitive understanding is unimportant in the preaching classroom. Instead, the issue is how that knowledge is generated and evaluated in relation to practice and what students need to know to do what is required of them in churches. Through the lens of practical theology, this means paying attention to actual practice as the source and goal of theological knowledge. Browning stated that all church practices are 'meaningful or theory-laden'.[89] This perspective means that the actual practice, the doing of it, becomes the source for biblical, theological, historical, and theoretical reflection. Here we have the crucial 'practice to theory and back to practice' move of practical theology.[90] Thus, it is the concern of practical theology pedagogy to make practice an 'avenue into fuller engagement with history and theory and to bring history and theory to bear in practice'. [91] McClure, argues for such a reflective approach in homiletical education as practical theology in his case study of the minister who wished to improve her preaching. He claims that it enables people to 'learn to relate the historical, theological, and theoretical perspectives on preaching to the task of developing a strategic contextual theology of communication'.[92] In the teaching of preaching as practical theology, therefore, cognitive understanding is important. However, it is important as it emerges from and relates to practice. The epistemological emphasis, however, is on practice.

This epistemological emphasis in practical theology requires appropriate teaching strategies to facilitate such learning. Just as the knowledge sought in the teaching of preaching goes beyond episteme, so too, the learning and teaching strategies need to go beyond the lecture.[93] Teaching preaching involves confronting the pedagogical 'questions of what it takes to shape theologically wise practitioners'.[94] The answer to these questions will be level specific and contextual. Nevertheless, two pedagogical strategies are offered below for the

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[89] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 6.
[90] Browning, *Fundamental*, p. 7.
[91] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 179.
[92] McClure, 'Homiletics', p. 287.
[93] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 173.
[94] Miller-McLemore, 'Practical', p. 174.

teaching of preaching as practical theology. The first is a strategic emphasis on the skill. The second involves the use of case studies to stimulate reflective practice.

In teaching preaching as practical theology, one pedagogical implication is the need to give greater attention to skill. This idea may seem obvious. Nevertheless, teachers may identify with Witvliet when he writes, 'In the teaching of future ministers, I find the teaching of basic skills the most difficult part of my work […] I want to use my 27 hours of teaching time to engage in discussions of content, not to practice skills.'[95] However, he also acknowledges that a coach's goal is generally not to teach more coaches but to enable people to become players.[96] To teach practical theology is to teach towards 'participation'.[97]

To pay attention to skill means paying attention to the skills which people bring. Some people may have preached a lot, and some people may have preached little. However, those who have spent any time in church life have heard sermons and implicitly or explicitly learned the practice and attendant theologies. Just as with the teaching of worship 'this set of attendant experiences is likely to be far more influential than any […] class in shaping their attitudes and habits of leadership'.[98] Thus if teachers simply apply a theory to practice model without dealing with inherited learning, students might implicitly or explicitly translate it through their prior learning. This filter can create resistance to new and transformative information. Effective golf coaches or singing instructors begin 'by making students aware of their acquired habits, and then work to reshape those habits by carefully chosen drills' and that to do otherwise is to court failure.[99] However, it is more straightforward to give such attention in one-to-one teaching situations than with a class of students. Possible responses include requiring students to provide recordings of their present preaching styles at the start of class or structuring a course where students preach earlier rather than later in the term. Another option, less direct but less

[95] Witvliet, 'Teaching', pp. 140–141.
[96] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 119.
[97] Witvliet, 'Teaching', pp. 118–121.
[98] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 127.
[99] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 127.

time-consuming, is to invite students to provide a personal learning outcome for the course in terms of what they hope to learn. Whatever approach teachers take, they need to recognise the prior skills and attendant experience of their students. It represents prior embodied learning. Witvliet makes the critical point that teachers may 'secretly' tend to see students' prior experience as 'irredeemably deficient' and an 'unfortunate liability in the classroom'.[100] Instead, he rightly argues that enabling students to reflect upon these experiences can be a 'key instructional resource', rather than a liability.[101] Furthermore, it emphasises that students are co-creators of the learning that will take place in the classroom. Both their own and that of others.

Paying attention to skill also means paying attention and enabling practice in the skills that students actually need. Cahalan writes,

> Some theological educators view teaching basic skills, or know-how, as merely technique and functions, but fail to see that novices need the "hints, tips and rules of thumb" of a practice, not because they constitute full ministerial practice, but because that is where practice begins.[102]

Preaching requires basic skills in at least three areas, interpreting the scriptures for preaching, designing sermons in terms of content and structure, and delivering sermons with attention to vocalics, non-verbal communication, and the medium of delivery. Since basic skill is where practice begins, teachers need to identify what level of specific skills need to be taught in that particular course and create opportunities for them to be practised for preaching. 'Learning a practice means practicing it over and over again.'[103] To be sure, however, it is not possible to have students preach full sermons every week. Be this as it may, it is possible to develop short exercises. [104] In preaching, these would be exercises where students regularly speak publicly, demonstrating some management of voice, body language, eye contact, tone, biblical interpretation. Students can give an illustration, tell a story, offer an introduction, look at the camera while introducing themselves, speak a short part of a recent sermon without notes. In all these

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100 Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 127–128.
101 Witvliet, 'Teaching, p. 128.
102 Cahalan, 'Integration', p. 392.
103 Cahalan, 'Integration', p. 392.
104 Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 141.

exercises, they can receive brief teacher and peer feedback. Instead of being asked to do additional reading, they can be asked to prepare and rehearse the skills involved in what they will be required to do as preachers in churches, speaking and speaking well. The point here is that if preaching is a skill and involves techniques, and if such skill relates to valid forms of knowledge, then the teaching of preaching has to give attention to these skills and techniques.

In addition to an emphasis on skill, another potential pedagogical strategy for teaching preaching as practical theology is the use of case studies. A case study is a focused and potentially in-depth study of a particular person or situation which invites understanding, analysis, and evaluation of practice. Daniel S. Schipani writes that 'the case study method is one of the most widely used and valued ways of doing practical theology even though, strictly speaking, it was not originally devised and developed by practical theologians and is not unique to practical theology'.[105] Witvliet identifies many of the strengths of the case study when he writes,

> Case studies expand our awareness of the diversity of ministry practices, ground theoretical discussions in every-day life, help us to perceive the complex interrelated dynamics involved in real life, and train new skills for perceiving what is at stake in any given situation.[106]

While case studies in practical theology may be associated primarily with pastoral theology, they can be used with preaching. McClure uses a case study to explore the teaching of preaching because case studies are a useful 'pedagogical tool in practical theology'.[107] Through his 'fictional' case study he demonstrates the relationship between preaching and 'self-reflection', 'congregational theology', 'public theology', 'theology of communication', and the implementation 'of new theologically grounded skills and practices'.[108]

Case studies allow focus on the breadth and depth of preaching from the perspective of practice. Breadth is necessary to give historical

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[105] Daniel L. Schipani, 'Case Study Method' in *Wiley-Blackwell*, ed. by Miller-McLemore, pp. 91–101 (p. 91).
[106] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 134.
[107] McClure, 'Homiletics', p. 279.
[108] McClure, 'Homiletics', p. 287.

and geographical 'perception'.[109] In a class designed to teach preaching, case studies are 'much more manageable for class discussion than larger surveys of the disciplinary landscape'.[110] Students can offer short presentations on a variety of selected case studies based upon delivered sermons. They can focus on the who, when, where, how, why, and style of these sermons. This approach can ensure that a variety of historical and cross-cultural, and marginalised voices are introduced and discussed. In this way, as successfully as any lecture, students are introduced to the long and diverse Christian preaching tradition but critically through engaging with actual sermons in context. In turn, any single case study, developed in-depth, can stimulate a range of theoretical and theological discussions about the practice of preaching. So, for example, a study of a sermon by Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944) invites relevant exploration of Pentecostal theology and preaching, women and preaching, the Bible and preaching, preaching and communication, preaching and performance, preaching and healing, preaching and crusade evangelism, the personality of the preacher, and media representations of preachers.[111]

As indicated above, the purpose of case studies is not merely descriptive. They invite research, analysis, and evaluation. In this way, as people ask questions and discuss the situation, they enable 'theory building' concerning how the people involved demonstrated good practice in context.[112] Frank A. Thomas uses Martin Luther King Jr's last speech 'I've Been to the Mountaintop' as a case study of what it means to preach in context with a 'moral imagination'.[113]

The pedagogical value of case studies, however, go beyond the content of what students discuss. It also relates to the reflective process in which the students engage. This value is also present when it is the students' own preaching that they discuss as the case study. The reflective process of case studies stimulates and teaches students the sort

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[109] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 126.
[110] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 134.
[111] 'A Chart Sermon' by Aimee Semple McPherson can be found in O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching Volume 2*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016), pp. 354–365.
[112] Schipani, 'Case', pp. 96–97.
[113] Frank A. Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018), pp. 49–67.

of discernment on the practice that they will need in ministry Thus, the goal of case studies

> is to train *perception*, to equip students with significant and instructive questions with which to habitually interrogate their own contemporary practice. In other words, we need to inform in ourselves and our students a kind of pastoral *intuition*, not unlike the kind of intuition needed by effective counselors.[114]

This questioning is precisely the sort of reflection McClure thinks should be built into the teaching of preaching as practical theology.[115] It is also an approach that resonates with the process of developing what Dykstra calls the 'pastoral imagination', and Miller-McLemore 'practical wisdom', albeit at a novice or beginning stage.

Students cannot become wise and skilled practitioners of preaching in the classroom. Nevertheless, with attention to the sort of knowledge that students need and drawing on practical theology's methodological approach, specific learning and teaching strategies can facilitate present learning and prepare for future post-classroom development.

Conclusion

The teaching of preaching, as with the practice of preaching, can be conceptualised as an expression of practical theology. As such, it is one that serves the preaching of the church. Teaching preaching in the church's service involves giving value and validity to knowledge beyond cognitive understanding. This is the embodied knowledge of skill and wisdom. There are limits to what skill and wisdom can be taught in the classroom because experience and context generate this learning. Nevertheless, in the classroom students can learn stage appropriate skills, and wisdom, and processes for future development. This is the case when teachers as preachers pay attention to epistemological considerations and the attendant pedagogical strategies for teaching preaching as practical theology.

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[114] Witvliet, 'Teaching', p. 135 (emphasis original).
[115] McClure, 'Homiletics', p. 287.

A Walk in the Woods: The Role of Focus Groups in Finding Meaning

I didn't want to tell the tree or weed what it was. I wanted it to tell me something and through me express its meaning in nature.[1]

Wynne Bullock, photographer

Laura Dijkhuizen

Laura Dijkhuizen MA is the Research Coordinator of IBTS Centre Amsterdam and the Academic Dean of the Foundation Academy of Amsterdam. Currently she is a PhD candidate at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in Practical Theology.
dijkhuizen@ibts.eu
https://research.vu.nl/en/persons/laura-dijkhuizen

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Abstract:
This article[2] describes the use of methods and the search for a methodology in the research of gender roles within the Dutch Evangelical Movement (DEM). This hermeneutical research is situated in the field of practical theology. The metaphor 'A walk in the woods' illustrates in a heuristic way the advantages of focus groups in understanding how meaning is constructed among female leaders within the DEM. Using a narrative approach, the interaction within a specifically convened focus group is combined with the 'problem tree' method, in which data already identified is discussed, and possible reasons behind it explored. I argue that working with diverse focus groups provides insights into the theological and social cultural dynamics at play, and reveals within the given frame deeper underlying motivations and actions that bring greater clarity to the actual current (or lived) situation of women within leadership.

Keywords:
female; methodology; focus group; leadership; practical theology

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[1] Wynn Bullock, photographer, cited in *Photographic Composition: A Visual Guide*, by Richard D. Zakia and David Page (Oxford: Elsevier, 2010), p. 250. Appendix 1 is about how to capture a tree through photography.

[2] This article was written in preparation for a conference at a theological institute in Central Asia. The request was to speak about methods and methodology in the field of practical theology with the possibility of publishing the paper. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the conference had to be cancelled but, since the paper was in process, it was decided to turn this into an article which verifies the methodology of my doctoral dissertation.

Introduction

It is a pleasant bustle when eleven women enter the conference room of the Dutch Evangelical Alliance.[3] All of them are theologians, most of whom are working in the church and within theological education. Some women are in-between jobs or ministries; others are working in a field which is not their first choice. Two are pastors of a church, something most of them dreamed about when they were still little girls (as did I).

The women came together to talk about the position of women within the Dutch Evangelical Movement (DEM). I invited this group as part of a piece of research into the role of women within this DEM. We discussed numbers, policy documents, theology, and experiences according to a method called 'the problem tree'.[4] It was an experiment which was received so well that I decided to centre my empirical research around focus groups to understand the theological, social and cultural dynamics at play.

In this article I will clarify my choice for the use of focus groups in combination with the problem tree method. Starting with a short introduction to the field of ethnography in relation to practical theology, I proceed to clarify the difference between a method, the technical part of doing research, and the methodology, which gives rationale to the theoretical framework. To illustrate the relationship between a method and methodology, I move on to the position that focus groups have within my own methodology. Within all of this, I will follow a metaphor that I have named 'A walk in the woods', which represents the heuristic approach of this hermeneutical research.

This article is part of a broader research on the theological, social, and cultural dynamics within the DEM in relation to female leadership. My overall research question is, 'How are gender roles of women understood among Dutch evangelicals in the context of late

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[3] This was 11 June 2019 at 'MissieNederland' which is the name of the Dutch Evangelical Alliance and the Dutch Evangelical Mission Alliance who merged in 2013. In 2019 I was the president of a network within that Alliance called 'Equivalent Leadership', which focused on encouraging the conversation about women in leadership within the evangelical churches affiliated with MissieNederland.

[4] More about this method later in this article.

modern society?'[5] The research is hermeneutical in nature: I will describe the process towards interpretation and understanding by listening to the experiences of female theologians and observe the interaction among them. Or in the words of practical theologian Ruard Ganzevoort,

> In practical theology, we study the field of lived religion in a hermeneutical mode, that is, attending to the most fundamental processes of interpreting life through endless conversations in which we construct meaning. These conversations not only include exchanges with our fellow humans, but also with the traditions that model our life.[6]

Thus, the aim of this research is to contribute from the perspective of the praxis of theology and to clarify the issues at stake in the debate about female leadership in the Dutch Evangelical Movement.

Why a Focus Group?

In 2015 I was actively involved in the establishment of a network of evangelical female theologians. The network's goal was to discuss and address the obstacles women experience in their jobs or ministries related to gender. The observed practices and the experiences of evangelical female theologians demonstrated the lack of consensus concerning the role and position of women in leadership. These female leaders encounter various theological positions, ambiguous beliefs, and a struggle to negotiate between the diverse opinions and a societal context where gender roles are shifting and debated. The several meetings demonstrated the value of conversations in which experiences and emotions are shared and recognised. The very existence of this network even caused a stir among Dutch evangelicals. In 2016 a well-known Dutch Christian newspaper nominated the network as one of the trending topics in their overview of the year.[7] The interaction with these women and the meetings subsequently organised with church

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[5] Laura Dijkhuizen, 'The Invisible Woman. Gender Roles in Contemporary Evangelical Churches in the Netherlands', doctoral proposal (Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit, 2018).

[6] Ruard Ganzevoort, 'Forks in the Road when Tracing the Sacred: Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion', paper presented at the International Academy of Practical Theology (Chicago, 30 July–3 August, 2009). The section on hermeneutics clarifies the point well.

[7] Clipping from *Nederlands Dagblad*, originally posted on our social media group January 2, 2017, without attribution (a copy of the article is in the archive of the author).

leaders within the DEM, inspired me to focus my research on the topic of female leadership. In the words of feminist theologian Jenny Morgans, 'I was *called* to research, that I *needed* to do following on from experiences that I had had.'[8] The experience, with open conversations during our regular lunch meetings, is the motivation to delve into the method of open conversations from a research perspective. From 2018–2020 I participated in a research group called Methods in Creative Conversations.[9] Meanwhile I studied the methods and methodology concerning interview techniques and focus groups, reviewing a range of literature to arrive at a research methodology.[10] And as this research is on the role of women within the religious domain, the book *Researching Female Faith: Qualitative Research Methods* edited by Nicola Slee, Fran Porter and Anne Phillips has been a major inspiration.[11] The information on Focus Groups is drawn from sources specialising in methodology concerning interview techniques such as the focus group.[12]

Focus groups and practical theology

This research is situated within the discipline of Practical Theology which can be defined as a 'critical, theological reflection on the practices

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[8] Jenny Morgan, 'Reflexivity, Identity and the Role of the Researcher', in *Researching Female Faith: Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. by Nicola Slee, Fran Porter and Anne Phillips (London: Routledge, 2018). pp 189–202 (p.190).

[9] The description of this research project was as follows: 'Grounded within the fields of practical theology and ethnography, Methods in Creative Conversations will explore the nature of transformation (or conversion) that takes place within conversational participants including the transformation of the minister or mission-person.' As written in the project description. The organisers were Drs Cathy Ross (Cuddesdon / CMS), Anna Ruddick (Urban Life) and Mike Pears (IBTS Centre). The results are presented in a booklet: *A Guide to Creative Conversations*, (Oxford: Church Missionary Society, 2020), also available online, <https://churchmissionsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/A-Guide-to-Creative-Conversations-FINAL-single-pages-Low-RES.pdf> [accessed 16 March 2021].

[10] Among which: Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds, *Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 68–79 and 310–328; Karen O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods,* 2nd edn (London/New York: Routledge, 2011); Christine Bellamy and Perri 6, *Principles of Methodology: Research Design in Social Science* (London: Sage, 2012). For a very practical approach to methods, including a chapter on focus groups, see also Greg Guest, Emily E. Namey, and Marilyn L. Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data* (London: Sage, 2013).

[11] Nicola Slee, Fran Porter and Anne Phillips, eds, *Researching Female Faith: Qualitative Research Methods* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[12] Among which: D. W. Stewart, P. N. Shamdasani, and D. W. Rook, *Focus group: History, Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007).

of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world'.[13]

Practical theology starts with the experiences of people,[14] and it focuses much more on 'what people do rather than on official religion'.[15] Although one should not mistakenly see practical theology as only looking at practices in a general way, it is broader than that. As Ganzevoort and Roeland point out, 'The notion of praxis as a field, a patterned configuration of action, experience, and meaning, includes and transcends these activities into a more integrative understanding of what is going on.'[16]

One of the approaches or styles within practical theology is called empirical theology which is closely connected to social sciences.[17] As such, ethnographic research, rooted in the field of anthropology, plays an important part[18] because it focuses on what people actually do. 'Historically it focusses on the cultural dimensions of life and behaviour such as shared practices and belief systems.'[19] The starting point of ethnographic research is a holistic perspective which considers the context, social structures and (faith) convictions. Although traditionally a researcher would immerse within a community through participant observation, in social sciences conducting interviews and focus group meetings are included in ethnographic research.[20] Sociologist Karen O'Reilly explains it as follows:

> Ethnography is a practice that evolves in design as the study progresses; involves direct and sustained contact with human beings, in the context of

13 John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), p. 6. Cf. on Practical Theology, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2011).
14 Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, p. 5.
15 R. R. Ganzevoort and J. Roeland, 'Lived religion: the praxis of Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology,* 18, no. 1 (2014): 91–101 (p. 93).
16 Ibid., p. 94.
17 Ibid., pp. 98, 99.
18 Cf., Christian Scharen, and Aana Marie Vigen, eds, *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics.* (New York: Continuum, 2011).
19 Guest, Namey, and Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data*, pp. 11, 12.
20 Compare, O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, pp. 127, 128, on what makes an interview ethnographic.

> their daily lives, over a prolonged period of time; draws on a family of methods, usually including participant observation and conversation; respects the complexity of the social world; and therefore tells rich, sensitive and credible stories.[21]

The choice for the interview techniques, such as those used in focus groups, reflect the holistic, creative, and evolving way that this research unfolds. The experiences and stories of the interviewees determine to an important extent the next steps in this research.

For example, in the introduction of the previously described focus group meeting, I introduced our topic 'the invisibility of women' as a problem. Organisers of evangelical events and the people who invite preachers for the services on Sunday often justify the lack of women in the pulpit by stating that they could not find a woman who was available or equipped to speak.[22] Also personal experiences and the interaction with female theologians, as well as the observance of the lack of female speakers, seemed to confirm this statement. I started digging to explore if the invisibility was a subjective observation or supported by facts. I gathered information through an internet search, studied policy documents and conducted interviews, all in combination with reviewing literature on women in church leadership internationally, analysing reports on emancipation and gender issues in The Netherlands, and Dutch articles about the lack of women in leadership within society.[23] The information I gathered confirmed the observation that women are uncommon within leadership roles in the DEM. Therefore, I asked the female theologians in the focus group about possible reasons for the invisibility of women within leadership in the DEM. To my surprise, some answered that the invisibility is not always seen as a problem. Neither by men nor women.[24] This forced me to change my next step.

[21] Ibid., p. 3.

[22] During the years I was connected to the group of female theologians and later to the Equivalent Leadership network, I addressed organisers about the lack of female speakers. Some would excuse themselves by admitting they had not thought of inviting women, but usually the answer was 'we tried to find one but could not'.

[23] According to the international Gender Gap Report 2020, The Netherlands dropped eleven places in the world ranking list on gender equality. This has been widely reported in the media. Source: World Economic Forum, *Gender Gap Report 2020* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2019).

[24] Equivalent leadership, 'Minutes of Focus Group Meeting', Driebergen, 11 June 2019, p. 2.

Is the topic I am addressing as problematic as I thought it would be? I needed to take a step back and do some research on this before moving ahead,[25] and at the same time it spurred me to reflect on my personal motivation and participation in this research.[26]

From Method to Methodology

Empirical theology leans heavily on methods, and therefore methodology, within the broader field of social sciences. Although research within practical theology focuses on the religious dimension of the praxis and comes from a religious perspective,[27] the methods employed to gather information are similar.

The difference between methods and a certain methodology is often overlooked and the words are used interchangeably. To clarify the difference, the following definition as to methods might be helpful:

> Methods are specific techniques that are used for data collection and analysis. They comprise a series of clearly defined, disciplined and systematic procedures that the researcher uses to accomplish a particular task. Interviews, sampling procedures, thematic development, coding and recognized techniques and approaches to the construction of the research question would be examples of qualitative research methods.[28]

Finding meaning is an important feature of qualitative research, of which interviews and therefore focus groups form an integral part. 'Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world

[25] This issue is addressed within the Equivalent Leadership network. Most leaders are in favour of an even male/female division but the culture within local churches seems to be in contradiction with this shift at the denominational and theological level (documented in the minutes of the meeting of October 8, 2019). This dilemma is one of the topics within the broader research.
[26] I was encouraged in this by the discussion of Ricoeur's hermeneutic of the self in Jaco. S. Dreyer, 'Knowledge, Subjectivity, (De)Coloniality, and the Conundrum of Reflexivity', in *Conundrums in Practical Theology*, ed. by Joyce Ann Mercer and Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 90–109. Reflexivity will be part of the introductory chapter of the final dissertation.
[27] Ganzevoort and Roeland, 'Lived religion: the praxis of Practical Theology', p. 96.
[28] Slee et al., *Researching Female Faith*, p. 2.

and the experiences they have in the world.'[29] Or as Christine Bellamy puts it, 'Social scientists study "meanings". This capacious term encompasses the full range of mental life including ideas, beliefs, desires, systems of classification, emotions, judgement and styles of thought.'[30]

Therefore, qualitative research is a 'contact sport, requiring some degree of immersion into individuals' lives'.[31] Contact with human beings is essential to find meaning by analysing their words, behaviour and stories. Creating theories out of experiences involves much interaction, which means that the data is highly subjective and dependent on the current context, cultural and psychological factors pertaining to the interviewees as well as the researcher, and the composition of a group. In the words of Karen O'Reilly, 'It is reflexive about the role of the researcher and the messiness of the research process.'[32]

Methodology serves the overarching theoretical framework as a guide in the research and in this way interprets the data resulting from the methods. It is not the sum of methods, the describing of findings, but rather an understanding, a defensible way to make sense of the results and interpret them. Methodology is concerned with drawing conclusions that can be defended and brings a rationale to looking beyond the surface to find deeper meaning. [33]

Although methodology is clearly connected to methods, it is more than an application of techniques. It has to do with an overall approach, the choice of a model or perspective serving the theoretical framework in which the data collected by the chosen methods is

[29] This and other definitions of qualitative research are stated and explained in chapter one of the book *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research* by Greg Guest, Emily E. Namey, and Marilyn L. Mitchell, pp. 1–40.
[30] Bellamy and 6, *Principles of Methodology*, p. 30.
[31] Stewart et al., *Focus Group*, p. 13.
[32] O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, p. 11. See also pp. 99, 100 on reflexive ethnography. Cf., Jaco. S. Dreyer, 'Knowledge, Subjectivity, (De)Coloniality, and the Conundrum of Reflexivity', pp. 90–109 and Jenny Morgan, 'Reflexivity, identity and the role of the researcher', pp. 189–220.
[33] See Bellamy and 6, *Principles of Methodology*, p. 2.

interpreted and leads to new theories. It is a search, a journey, a process in which suddenly one might shout, 'Eureka, I have found it!'[34]

The Focus Group as Evolving Research

Working with focus groups is strongly connected with (in-depth) interviews, which can provide similar data.[35] Leading up to the focus group meeting, I collected and analysed data from policy documents of faith communities that were related to leadership and women, from additional relevant literature and from an internet search. The aim of the internet search was to gather information on the number of female pastors and speakers within the DEM.[36] These results were discussed in semi-structured interviews with four leaders of the largest faith communities: the United Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches and the Dutch Baptist Union.[37] I experienced these interviews as a walk. It was like spending an afternoon together in the woods: the further in, the deeper the conversation goes. This can be the experience when walking with a single person but also with a group. Sociologist of religion Anna Davidsson Bremborg explains two main approaches to the in-depth interview by means of two different metaphors, where the interviewer is either a miner or a traveller. This is summarised as follows.

The (semi-structured) interview in the field of religion offers insight into a complex world. The interviewee understood as a source of knowledge, could be described by using the 'miner metaphor', whilst seeing the interviewee as a source of stories is designated the 'traveller

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[34] This exclamation is borrowed from the following citation: 'The creation of theory is seen as a *heuristic* exercise leading to more or less satisfying accounts of reality, and qualitative methods are favoured by this approach because they take far greater account of the porous line between the researcher and the researched.' (Slee et al., *Researching Female Faith*, p. 3.)

[35] See Guest, Namey and Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data*, pp. 173, 174.

[36] This internet search was commissioned by the network of Female Theologians (later, Equivalent Leadership) and supervised by the author from September 2018 – Feb. 2019. The results are documented in: MissieNederland, 'Minutes Team Meeting Network Female Theologians', Driebergen, 2019. The findings were presented to the network at the meeting of 5 May 2019: MissieNederland, 'Report Network Meeting Equivalent Leadership', minutes, Driebergen, 5 May 2019. The minutes and report can be requested from the author or by e-mailing: info@missienederland.nl.

[37] The interviews were transcribed, analysed, and coded according to different areas. After this they were divided into five different topics and subsequently organised.

metaphor', and asks for a different approach.[38] The miner metaphor shows a more static approach and is applicable when one is in need of a significant amount of detailed data such as numbers, policies or the outcomes of meetings. The traveller metaphor resembles the example of the walk in the woods, as with this approach the interviewer can distil knowledge through shared stories and experiences. Although the miner approach is valuable for collecting information about the situation within the different churches, the traveller metaphor is more suitable to answer my research question and suits the context of late-modernity in which narratives play such a dominant role. As Ruard Ganzevoort points out in his explanation of the narrative approach within practical theology:

> The question then is whether we see an interviewee's stories as windows through which we can access the historical truth and/or the interviewee's inner mindset or whether we see them as time-, place-, and relation-specific. If we take the latter position narrative research is limited in its capacity to unveil external facts, but it has high potential to uncover the processes of giving meaning to life experiences through life stories.[39]

In the four semi-structured interviews I mainly followed the miner metaphor to access information, but I combined this with personal questions to learn more about the narratives behind the figures. Or, in Ganzevoort's words, to look through a window to the inner mindset.[40] I invited the interviewees to share their route to leadership within their denomination. We, metaphorically speaking, started the 'walk towards the woods'. Along the way, I asked a few questions about the figures that emerged from the gathered data. Who are the women in leadership? Is there policy on gender-equality in leadership? Were there meetings, decisions, or regulations to encourage female leadership? I started digging. Moving on we discussed their personal position on female leadership, and ended up sharing dreams about the leadership of the DEM. The 'walk' provided a confidential and relaxed atmosphere

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[38] Anna Davidsson Bremborg, 'Interviewing', in *Routledge. Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, ed. by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 310–328 (p. 311). See also Mike Crang and Ian Cook, *Doing Ethnographies* (London: Sage, 2007), p. 35.

[39] Ruard Ganzevoort 'Narrative Approaches', in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed by B. Miller-McLemore, (Chichester: Blackwell, 2011), pp. 214–223 (p. 221).

[40] Ibid.

which resulted not only in information, but also aided the discovery of the way the person gave meaning to the current circumstances. In this way the interview resembles a creative conversation where the interviewer and interviewee interact and determine the direction of the walk. It is an evolving and not a static process; the interviewer is neither neutral nor purely objective. It is therefore a necessity that they reflect on their own involvement extensively in the research.[41] Anna Davidsson Bremborg highlights the co-creative nature of the process:

> The postmodern approach rejects any universal meta-story that could explain everything; instead, knowledge is viewed as constructed, achieving meaning through relations. On this view, knowledge emerges between the subject and the object, in relations between the interviewee and the interviewer, as well as between producers and readers of texts (reports). This more recent epistemological view has brought the interviewer as a person into focus. The interviewer's background, pre-understanding and personality are all seen as having significance for the result.[42]

Thus, it is important to reflect on my own role as researcher, which is an ongoing process,[43] asking what do I bring to the research and acknowledging the potential impacts of this.[44]

Invisible Women? The Focus Group in Practice

If one-to-one interviews might provide the needed information, why add focus groups? To answer this question, it is good to define a focus group and specify what, in terms of research in social sciences, the

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[41] Cf, Fran Porter, '"Sometimes you need a question": Structure and Flexibility in Feministic Interviewing', in *Researching Female Faith: Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. by Nicola Slee, Fran Porter and Anne Phillips (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 83–97. And Helen Collins, 'Weaving a Web: Developing a Feminist Practical Theology Methodology from a Charismatic Perspective', in *Researching Female Faith*, ed. by Slee, Porter and Phillips, pp. 54–69.

[42] Davidsson Bremborg, 'Interviewing', p. 311.

[43] Cf, Jenny Morgan, 'Reflexivity, identity and the role of the researcher', p. 201. In the article named below I have described the personal factors which led to this research. Despite the title, the article is in Dutch and published on a platform that focuses on diversity: Laura Dijkhuizen, *It's a man's world* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Wij, 2020), <https://www.nieuwwij.nl/opinie/its-a-mans-world> [accessed 3 September 2020].

[44] See Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen, eds. *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics,* pp. 20, 21. And Part Four 'Practicing Reflexivity', in *Researching Female Faiths*, ed. by Slee, Porter and Phillips, pp. 187–216.

benefits are. Researchers Greg Guest, Emily Namey and Marilyn Mitchell put it this way:

> A Focus Group is a carefully planned discussion with a small group of people on a focused topic. They yield data and insights that are more than just the sum of the perceptions, beliefs, and experiences of those taking part in the discussion.[45]

Regarding my research, focus groups are helpful in discerning how the position of women is perceived within the evangelical churches. According to Davidsson Bremborg, 'a focus group gives rich insight into how meaning is negotiated and how arguments are defended and re-evaluated'.[46] The interaction between individuals and the process of giving meaning to experiences value the issues at hand. This has already demonstrated itself, not only in organised focus group meetings, but also through the interactions between female theologians and church leaders as initiated by the Network of Female Theologians. For example, the lack of possibilities for female theologians to obtain a leadership position within the church has been undervalued for decades, not only by men, but also by women in the church. As mentioned by one of the participants in the first focus group meeting, it was not seen as a problem. However, when female theologians come together and share their disappointments, frustrations, but also victories and success stories, it becomes clear that the lack of vacancies for women is indeed a problem. At least for them. Since the awareness campaign between 2016–18 more and more leaders have come forward, not only in sympathy with these women, but they have begun to acknowledge the problem. However as with most changes, this is a slow process and the effects in terms of numbers are yet to be seen. The group interaction in combination with a confrontation with the data is extremely important in this whole process. It creates awareness and forces those present to (re-)think the matters at stake. Looking beyond facts, clichés and opinions lead to convictions and values which are part of the (church-) culture and reveal social structures and customs. While digging deeper, roots are discovered which might have been hidden for decades or

[45] Guest, Namey and Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data*, p. 172. For a broader introduction read chapter 1 of Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, *Focus Group* (see footnote 12).
[46] Davidsson Bremborg, 'Interviewing', p. 313.

more. This is no walk in the park but an adventurous hike, the destination of which is as yet uncertain.

The practice

As previously noted, my first focus group meeting was an experiment. I wanted a group of female theologians to interact with the complaint I had heard so often: women speakers are difficult to find or not available for speaking activities. Initially I sent an e-mail[47] to a homogenous group, all women who were theologians but different in age and work situation. I shared the idea of organising a focus group to discuss this topic. I explained that the invitation was related to my research, but that the meeting would also benefit the development of the network Equivalent Leadership. From the start, I informed them of the purpose of the meeting, that the conversations might be recorded, and notes would be taken for a report. I made sure that it was clear that the results would be used in my research, but that I would anonymise them if quoted. Not all responded to the e-mail but the ones who did, were pleased to contribute. The final invitation went to ten women of whom eight were able to attend. All together we were eleven people in the room, eight participants, a notetaker,[48] my intern who assisted me by writing key words at the flipchart, and myself as the moderator.[49]

To keep the conversation focused and on track, I chose a method called 'the Problem Tree'.[50] I drew the contours of a tree on the flipchart and wrote in the trunk: Women are invisible. 'The "Problem Tree" is a tool to analyse the first and second-level causes and effects of a core problem.'[51] The effects are symbolised by the leaves and the causes by the roots. So, the trunk was in the middle of the paper and

[47] This e-mail was sent Tuesday, 19 March 2019; a reminder to non-responders was sent 16 April 2020.

[48] This person was asked at the last moment, as the one I had originally invited had to withdraw due to health issues. The notetaker is an experienced secretary within several editorial boards and is a theologian herself. I paid her a pre-agreed small amount for her services.

[49] On recruiting participants and making contact also see Stewart, et al., *Focus group: History, Theory and Practice,* pp. 54–56.

[50] Jacques M. Chevalier, 'Problem Tree', in *SAS²: A Guide to Collaborative Inquiry and Social Engagement*, by Jacques M. Chevalier and Daniel J. Buckles (New Delhi: SAGE, 2008), pp. 108–115.

[51] Ibid., p. 109.

there was room under and above the trunk to write words at the places where normally the leaves would be and similarly the roots. At the end of the meeting, we took a picture of the completed tree, the results of which were added to the minutes.[52]

The participants were not well acquainted with each other and there were no attachments such as family relations, being colleagues or attending the same church.[53] This is strongly recommended in conducting focus groups because pre-existing groups share certain cultures and habits. In addition, power differentials might become problematic and prevent every participant from expressing themselves freely.[54]

The room was set up in a circle because this arrangement encourages people to stay focused and connected, and eye contact is possible. It enables the participants to talk freely and stimulates the conversation, while additionally giving the opportunity to observe body language, which is more concealed behind tables.

This setting paid off. I could see that the women turned towards the speaker, moving their bodies, leaning forward, and making hand gestures when agreeing or if they wanted to share related anecdotes. At a certain point, when a few women quite passionately communicated how they were treated differently than men in similar situations, the atmosphere in the room became noisy and chaotic. Although we had agreed to listen to each other, this subject brought forth so many emotions and memories that conversation rules no longer applied. One person stood up, seemingly desperate to share her story. This demonstrates the dynamics of the focus group and the way interaction can bring forth deeper emotions and the longing to share these with women in similar circumstances. Although the psychological aspect of my topic is not part of my research, noting it is helpful in the search for

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52 Equivalent Leadership, 'Minutes of Focus Group Meeting', Driebergen, 11 June 2019.

53 Almost all books on qualitative research have a section on the importance of sampling, choosing the right people to observe, interview or invite to a focus group meeting. See, e.g., Davidsson Bremborg, 'Interviewing', pp. 313 and 314 on sampling and chapter five in Guest, Namey and Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data*, pp. 41–74. Or the experiences described in Crang and Cook, *Doing Ethnography*, p. 83 showing that in certain cases pre-existing groups are helpful but there are several pitfalls that are better avoided.

54 Guest, Namey and Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data*, p. 173.

meaning. Furthermore, it brings an awareness that a single experience may seem unimportant or appear to be a minor detail, but when stories are shared, the cumulative experiences and the resonances between those can reveal social structures, which lead to a deeper understanding of the culture.

To give an example: one person mentioned that she received her theology diploma together with two male fellow students. All were congratulated with a short speech by the same person. The two men were admired because of the wonderful gifts God had given them and praised for their hard work, but when she came forward, the speaker mentioned that it had been so sociable to have her in the class with them.[55] This could easily be a slip of the tongue, an exception and not the rule, but it brought forth similar anecdotes which lead us to the discussion about significance: What are stories like this telling us, what does this mean?

Deriving Meaning: Towards a Methodology

As I have already noted in this article, discovering a methodology is a search, a journey. When the data arising from the various research methods is selected, coded, analysed and interpreted, the methodology serves as a framework in which conclusions and findings make sense. Although, in turn, methodology is a process itself. It is like artwork: although the artist might have an idea about what they intend to create, along the way the piece of art will develop under the influence of the experiences and development of the artist themselves, the context, and interaction with others. It is not only about craft and skills, nor the right method, analysis, or sample. It is about how to understand the facts, the stories, the emotions, and the interactions. It is an evolutionary process in finding meaning, or, as Bellamy states, it is how to evaluate the facts we find.

> By 'methodology', we mean the understanding of how to proceed from the findings of empirical research to make inferences about the truth — or at least the adequacy — of theories. Its importance stems from the fundamental insight that findings about empirical facts are often most interesting when

[55] Equivalent leadership, 'Minutes of Focus Group Meeting', Driebergen, 11 June 2019, p. 4.

> they enable us to make deeper judgements about what might be going on beneath those facts.[56]

With the metaphor 'A walk in the woods' in mind, I picture the women of the focus group around one particular tree, the 'problem tree'. The leaves are effects or symptoms of the problem. These are visible, out in the open; how they are seen, however, depends on perspective, personality, and narrative. To say there are no leaves, is reasonless. The information I gathered through the interviews, the internet search, and the documents, are the leaves. When I asked the group to share their experiences, looking at the leaves, the answers confirmed the observations. Statements like, 'I was at a conference with only male speakers,' or, 'Last year I was invited to preach in this church, and they said to me that I was the first woman ever to preach there,' confirm the statistics.

After describing the leaves, the next stage is to discuss possible causes, roots, for these effects or symptoms. To start imagining what it might look like beneath the surface. But not only that, by sharing stories, anecdotes, pain, and joy while looking at that tree 'meaning is constructed and negotiated on women in church leadership within the DEM'.[57] Roots are revealed and the next step is to discover if these roots are substantiated by fact through literature study and the experiences of others. For example, one participant mentioned that women always need to be more prepared and show more expertise than men.[58] This could be a statement out of frustration or a subjective observation. However, not only was she joined by women sharing examples, in a recent interview with a well-known Dutch historian, Dr. Beatrice de Graaf, the same opinion was expressed.[59] Does this make it a valid observation? When this was put to the male secretary of the Dutch Union of Baptists Churches in one of my interviews with him, he

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[56] Bellamy and 6, *Principles of Methodology*, p. 1.
[57] Inspired by the explanation offered by Anna Davidsson Bremborg, 'Interviewing', p. 313.
[58] Equivalent leadership, 'Minutes of Focus Group Meeting', p. 3.
[59] Carolina lo Galbo, 'Beatrice de Graaf: "We zijn er pas echt als er ook luie, slechte vrouwen aan de top komen"', *De Volkskrant*, October 19, 2018, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/mensen/beatrice-de-graaf-we-zijn-er-pas-echt-als-er-ook-luie-slechte-vrouwen-aan-de-top-komen~b12d06a8/?fbclid=IwAR0wrs435Q93gDKXpP5VlK2GZrGy2IsZSUQy7ux4NjV-UCwZ9EwVmZbG2tI> [accessed May 8, 2020].

considered this as 'nonsense'.[60] In discussing it with peers, one of my male colleagues could not imagine this as a valid, contemporary observation, similarly using strong words and a louder voice.[61]

Considering this, it is arguable that the perception of female and male leaders on this issue is different. Depending on experiences, but also on personal worldview as influenced by gender, position and background, meaning is constructed in a different way. This can be seen as the constructivist paradigm through which ontology, epistemology and methodology are viewed.[62] Or as Ganzevoort expresses it, 'The epistemological question has to do with the view that narratives are interpretations of an experienced reality in relation to a specific audience.'[63] Since this is not the place for an extensive discussion on this, it merely paints a picture of the way I am trying to find meaning using different interview methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, looking at a 'problem' through the problem tree method. Every walk with the same or with different people produces more insight.

How to proceed from here

As mentioned in the introduction, the experience of the first focus group meeting led to a continuation of this path. In this chosen framework of the walk in the woods, I identified three choices: I take the same group to look at different trees; I bring different groups together to look at one tree; or a combination of these two. I have decided to concentrate on this third option. The 'women are invisible' tree was chosen on the basis of my own observations, in light of the response to it within the meetings, and on the strength of the supporting

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[60] Personal interview with the author, Amsterdam, 15 February 2019.

[61] In a peer-review session on my draft article about the current situation of the position of women within the DEM, 29 October 2019.

[62] Cf., Egon G. Guba and Y.S. Lincoln, 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research' in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), pp. 105–117. In a later version the participatory paradigm was added which is very helpful in considering the ontological and epistemological aspects of the interviewee as well as the role of the researcher themselves: Yvonna S. Lincoln, Susan A. Lynham, and Egon G. Guba, *Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011).

[63] Ganzevoort, 'Narrative Approaches', 211.

data that was gathered. But it is very much a possibility that during the walk one of the participants might say, 'Have you seen that tree? Let us go over there and have a look!' To follow a heuristic path which unfolds along the way is an important feature of qualitative research and confirms the hermeneutical nature of this project. 'The flexibility to follow new leads during fieldwork and to take advantage of new information as it is collected and reviewed is a major strength of inductive sampling and of qualitative research in general.'[64] Sampling, choosing the best representatives and the right number of people for the groups, and for any follow up interviews, is therefore of major importance and needs to be taken into consideration before, during, and after the whole process. The group (or the individual) I take, figuratively speaking, for a walk determines for a large part the next step in the research.

In essence, this works like a continuous circle where the outcome of the initial interviews sets the stage for the first focus group meeting. The effects and causes mentioned in this first meeting lead to the topic(s) I bring to the next focus group meeting to identify the way that gender roles are understood. The interviews and focus group meetings lead to the interpretation of an observation but also bring up new questions to be researched by literature and brought back to a focus group.

Looking back at the different way the two men reacted to the statement that women must work harder to have the same opportunities, inspires me to convene a counter group with male theologians. Looking at the same problem tree with different homogeneous groups gives more insight into the way in which meaning is negotiated. In this way I can distillate the role personal experiences in relation to gender plays. It might be interesting to consider a male moderator for a meeting like this.[65] Along the way I might also consider different counter groups, such as women not in leadership versus women in leadership, or leaders in the church versus leaders in society.

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[64] Guest, Namey and Mitchell, p. 45.
[65] Guest, Namey and Mitchell, pp. 187–190 on the role of the moderator.

However, this will depend strongly on the limiting factors of logistics such as time and finances.[66]

Conclusion

In this article, by means of an illustrative case study from my own research, I have demonstrated how the careful use of a particular qualitative research method within the field of practical theology can bring greater clarity to the issues at hand in a given research topic. I have shown that working with diverse focus groups to consider a 'problem' provides insights into the theological and cultural dynamics at play and reveals within the given frame deeper underlying motivations and actions that give clarity to the current (lived) situation of women in leadership. In this I use a methodology based on the metaphor of 'walking in the woods', closely connected to the traveller metaphor of Anna Davidsson Bremborg. In this all I am aware of the famous quote of William Blake: 'The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way.'[67]

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[66] I did receive a small grant to cover the costs of five focus group meetings, including payment for the notetaker.

[67] William Blake cited in Zakia and Page, *Photographic Composition*, p. 249.

Baptist Catholicity — What Is That? And Why Does It Matter to Baptists and Other Christians?

Steven R. Harmon

Steven R. Harmon is Professor of Historical Theology at Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity in Boiling Springs, North Carolina, USA, and previously served on the faculties of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama, USA and Campbell University Divinity School in Boiling Springs, North Carolina, USA.
sharmon@gardner-webb.edu
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Abstract:
This article, originally presented as a lecture to the German Baptist seminary Theologische Hochschule Elstal,[1] offers an overview of the concept of a 'Baptist catholicity' as envisioned in the author's 2006 book *Towards Baptist Catholicity* and explains how the concept has been extended in more explicitly ecumenical directions in his subsequent work, in particular the 2016 book *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future*. The article explores the patristic antecedents of Catholic theologian Yves Congar's concept of a catholicity that is both 'quantitative' and 'qualitative', applying them to the Baptist tradition, before framing Baptist ecclesiology ecumenically in terms of a 'pilgrim church' vision in which Baptists share with other churches the pilgrim journey to a visibly united church fully under the rule of Christ.

Keywords:
Baptists; catholicity; ecumenism; ecclesiology

Introduction

'Baptist Catholicity — What Is That? And Why Does It Matter to Baptists and Other Christians?' This is a topic that is very near and dear to me as a Baptist ecumenical theologian. In an earlier stage of my work, I was a Baptist theologian teaching systematic theology while doing research in patristic theology, and wrestling with the tension between Baptist biblicism and the role that the tradition of the early church in its post-New Testament development plays in other Christian traditions, and in sometimes unrecognised ways in our own. That stage of my work

[1] An earlier version of this article was presented as a guest lecture for the Theologische Hochschule Elstal, Elstal, Germany, 29 June 2018.

is represented by my book *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision*, published in the year 2006.[2] In that book I defined the catholicity towards which I believed Baptists should move in a way that includes and builds upon historic Baptist affirmations of the church as catholic. The present article offers an overview of the concept of a 'Baptist catholicity' as I envisioned it in this earlier phase of my work on the topic and explains how I have extended it in more explicitly ecumenical directions in my subsequent thought.

Baptist Catholicity as Quantitative and Qualitative

Though there are many exceptions whenever one generalises about Baptists, most Baptists have no problem with a *quantitative* understanding of the church's catholicity, according to which there is a universal church to which all believers belong that transcends visible local congregations. This quantitative understanding of catholicity is explicitly affirmed in the two most significant Baptist confessions from the seventeenth century, both of which draw language from the Reformed Westminster Confession. According to the Particular Baptist *Second London Confession* published in 1689, 'The Catholick or universal Church, which […] may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the Elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof.' Likewise, the 1678 General Baptist confession called the *Orthodox Creed* appropriated three of the four Niceno-Constantinopolitan 'marks of the church', confessing in article 29 that 'there is one holy catholick church, consisting of, or made up of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered, in one body under Christ, the only head thereof', and in article 30, '[…] we believe the visible church of Christ on earth, is made up of several distinct congregations, which make up that one catholick church, or mystical body of Christ'.[3] But beyond this quantitative recognition of the universality of the church, I argued that catholicity also entails a

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[2] Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision,* Studies in Baptist History and Thought, vol. 27 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

[3] Particular Baptist *Second London Confession*, 1689, Article 26.1 (William Lumpkin, ed., *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. edn (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011), p. 283; General Baptist confession, *Orthodox Creed*, 1678, articles 29 and 30 (Lumpkin, pp. 327).

'pattern of faith and practice that distinguished early catholic Christianity from Gnosticism, Arianism, Donatism, and all manner of other heresies and schisms'; it therefore refers also to 'a *qualitative* fullness of faith and order'.[4]

The French Catholic theologian Yves Congar was arguably the most significant theological influence on the Second Vatican Council. His 1937 book *Divided Christendom* anticipated Vatican II's ecumenical trajectory.[5] His later book *True and False Reform in the Church* has been credited with inspiring Pope John XXIII to convene a council that sought reform, and his posthumously published book *My Journal of the Council* is a most fascinating first-person account of what transpired publicly and behind the scenes at that council, revealing the extent to which Congar was deeply and influentially involved in what happened in the background.[6] In *Divided Christendom*, Congar had observed that in patristic theology quantitative catholicity — the affirmation of a universal church that includes all who belong to Christ — is usually associated with this qualitative dimension, a qualitative fullness of faith and order. Indeed, Congar insisted 'there cannot be quantitative Catholicity without qualitative, this being the necessary cause of the former'.[7]

I have argued that this coinherence of quantitative and qualitative catholicity is implicit in the earliest use of the ancient Greek word *katholikē* as a descriptor of the church. In Ignatius of Antioch's Letter to the Smyrneans he writes, 'Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church.' It seems clear that a quantitative catholicity is one dimension of what Ignatius means by 'catholic', for his emphasis is on the Christological basis of the church's universality. Yet this does not exclude a more narrow meaning that increasingly became associated with the later patristic use of the term 'catholic' to distinguish early

[4] Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity*, p. 204.
[5] Yves Congar, *Chrétiens désunis: principes d'un 'oecuménisme' catholique*, Unum Sanctam, no. 1 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1937); English translation, *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. by M. A. Bousfield (London: Geoffrey Bles/Centenary Press, 1939).
[6] Yves Congar, *My Journal of the Council*, trans. by Mary John Ronayne and Mary Cecily Boulding, ed. by Denis Minns (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012).
[7] Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, pp. 115–17; English trans., *Divided Christendom*, pp. 93–94.

catholic Christianity from heresy and schism.[8] One paragraph prior to the description of the church as 'catholic' in *Smyrneans* 8, Ignatius warns the church at Smyrna regarding the doctrine and practice of the Docetists, 'They abstain from the eucharist and prayer, since they do not confess that the eucharist is the flesh of our saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered on behalf of our sins and which the Father raised in his kindness,' and then Ignatius exhorts them to 'flee divisions as the beginning of evils'.[9] It is significant that immediately prior to this section, Ignatius links the doctrinal errors of the Docetists, who lacked a truly embodied Christology, with their failures to embody the Christian way of life:

> But take note of those who [are heterodox with reference to] the gracious gift of Jesus Christ that has come to us, and see how they are opposed to the mind of God. They have no interest in love, in the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the one who is in chains or the one set free, the one who is hungry or the one who thirsts.[10]

For Ignatius, then, a qualitative catholicity is robustly incarnational. Because it is incarnational it is also sacramental, and because it is incarnational and sacramental it is also socially embodied and therefore concerned with social justice.[11]

Besides an incarnational Christology and sacramental realism, this qualitative catholicity for Ignatius included the visible unity of the church, summed up, as stated above, in his exhortation to 'flee divisions as the beginning of evils'. It also included an embodied safeguard of unity in the ministry of episcopal oversight. In *Smyrneans* 8 Ignatius urges,

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[8] G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), s.v. 'καθολικός', A.2.b-c and A.3; Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), s.v. 'catholicus', II. For particular examples, see notes 29 and 30 below.

[9] Ignatius of Antioch, *Smyrneans* 7.1–2 (*The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. and trans. by Bart D. Ehrman, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), vol 1, pp. 302–03).

[10] Ignatius of Antioch, *Smyrneans* 6.2, (*The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. and trans. by Ehrman, vol. 1, p. 303 [modifications in brackets]).

[11] While a speculative suggestion, I wonder if it is not merely coincidental that these connections also manifested themselves in the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement in the Church of England: the recovery of an incarnational sacramentalism went hand-in-hand with the commitment of Anglo-Catholic priests to doing social ministry in the slums of inner-city England. See C. Brad Faught, *The Oxford Movement: A Thematic History of the Tractarians and Their Times* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 151–52.

> All of you should follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father; and follow the [elders] as you would the apostles […]. Let no one do anything involving the church without the bishop. Let that eucharist be considered valid that occurs under the bishop or the one to whom he entrusts it. Let the congregation be wherever the bishop is; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there also is the [catholic] church.[12]

The precise nature of the office of bishop in Ignatius is much disputed. On the one hand, there are indications of something approaching a monepiscopate; on the other hand, the bishop and the elders collegially share a ministry of oversight. Regardless of how one reads the role of the bishop in these letters, for Ignatius the episcopate serves to guard the church against various threats to catholic wholeness.

These four marks of qualitative catholicity — incarnational Christology, sacramental realism, visible unity, and the ministry of oversight — are by no means restricted to *Smyrneans* 6–8; they are interwoven with the anti-Docetic polemic that is a central theological concern of the Ignatian corpus. Whatever else may have been involved in Ignatius's concept of the church as catholic, his understanding of catholicity in qualitative as well as quantitative terms coheres with later patristic uses of *katholikē*. By the fourth century Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius, and Epiphanius employed the adjective to denote the orthodoxy of the church's faith,[13] and in his catechetical lectures Cyril of Jerusalem offered an expanded definition of catholicity that is both quantitative and qualitative.[14] It is this sort of traditioned catholicity,

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[12] Ignatius of Antioch, *Smyrneans* 8.1–2 (*The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. and trans. by Ehrman, vol. 1, p. 305 [modifications in brackets]).

[13] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.30.16 (PG 20:716), in contrast to heterodoxy, and 10.6.1 (PG 20:892), in contrast to schism; Athanasius, *Adversus Arianos* 1.4 (PG 26:20); Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73.21 (PG 42:414).

[14] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 18.23 (PG 33:1047; English translation, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, trans. by Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, Fathers of the Church, vol. 64 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), vol. 2, p. 132). In the Latin West, the same fuller sense of catholicity is reflected in the hymn on the passion of Hippolytus of Rome by the poet Prudentius (d. after 405) in the *Peristephanon* 11.23–32: 'Nor is it strange that the aged man who once was an apostate / Should be endowed with the rich boon of the Catholic faith. / When, triumphant and joyful in spirit, he was being conducted / By the unmerciful foe onward to death of the flesh, / He was attended by loving throngs of his faithful adherents. / Thus he replied when they asked whether his doctrine was sound: / "Leave, O unhappy souls, the infernal schism of Novatus; / Rally again to the true fold of the Catholic Church. / Let the one faith of ancient times in our temples now flourish, / Doctrines by Paul

qualitative as well as qualitative, that I commended in *Towards Baptist Catholicity*.

Baptist Catholicity as Ecumenical Pilgrimage

But where is the church that is qualitatively catholic? Where is qualitative catholicity exemplified, so that a community that perceives its own catholic deficiencies might emulate it? In the primitive church? In the early church in its patristic maturation? In a church of historical continuity in which the catholic church subsists? These are questions I addressed in my most recent book, *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future*, which is something of a sequel to *Towards Baptist Catholicity*.[15] The earlier book was about how Baptists can not only recognise and consider themselves part of the quantitatively catholic church, but also recognise in the larger Christian tradition that preceded them some of resources they need for the renewal of Baptist life toward a more qualitative catholicity. The recent book is about how Baptists and the whole church can become more qualitatively catholic together through Baptist participation in the modern ecumenical movement, which makes possible the mutual exchange of the ecclesial gifts dispersed throughout the whole church without which neither a particular church nor the whole church can become most fully catholic. Among the proposals I make in *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future* is this: that one of the distinctive ecclesial gifts that Baptists have to share with the rest of the church is the way they do theology as a relentlessly pilgrim community that resists all overly-realised eschatologies of the church.[16] Their ecclesial ideal is the church that is fully under the rule of Christ, which they locate somewhere ahead of them rather than in any past or present instantiation of the church. Baptists are relentlessly dissatisfied with the

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and the high chair of Peter maintained".' (PL 60:534-36; *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina*, vol. 126, *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, ed. by Maurice P. Cunningham (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966), pp. 370-71; ET, *The Poems of Prudentius*, trans. by M. Clement Eagan, Fathers of the Church, vol. 43 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962), pp. 242–43.)

[15] Steven R. Harmon, *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future: Story, Tradition, and the Recovery of Community* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016).

[16] Harmon, *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future*, pp. 224–42.

present state of the church in their pilgrim journey toward the community that will be fully under the reign of Christ.

I propose that we conceive of the catholicity of the church in terms of this pilgrim church vision. If catholicity is merely quantitative, this would be an unnecessary move, for the quantitatively catholic church is already the church that includes all who belong to Christ. But if catholicity is also qualitative, then it has an eschatological orientation that locates the earthly church on a pilgrim journey towards the full realisation of its catholicity.

The christocentricity of Ignatius of Antioch's concept of catholicity carries with it some possibilities for development in terms of this pilgrim church vision — which I should point out is by no means limited to Baptists. It is reflected in the early monastic communities and later religious orders. Avery Dulles observed that Augustine's characterisation of the earthly church as a 'society of pilgrims'[17] was representative of patristic as well as medieval thought in its distinction between an imperfect earthly church and a perfected heavenly church towards which the church journeys as a pilgrim community.[18] Thus Martin Luther had precedent in the tradition when he advocated in his preface to the 1526 'German Mass and Order of Service' a form of covenanted ecclesial community that would embrace a pilgrim vision of the church as its organising principle (though it was never realised in practice).[19]

The pilgrim church vision belongs not only to free church communities with roots in the Radical Reformation, but also to the Catholic Church. The Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* gives attention to 'The Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church and Her Union with the Heavenly Church', the title of one of its chapters. *Lumen Gentium* insists that the church 'will receive its

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[17] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 29.17.

[18] Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expanded edn (New York: Doubleday, 1987), pp. 104–5 and 111. Significantly, Dulles treats patristic, medieval, and modern variants of the pilgrim church vision in a chapter on 'The Church and Eschatology' (pp. 103–22).

[19] Martin Luther, 'German Mass and Order of Service', in *Luther's Works*, vol. 53, *Hymns and Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), pp. 61–90 (pp. 63-64).

perfection only in the glory of heaven'.[20] But until then, 'the pilgrim church, in its sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and she herself takes her place among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the children of God'.[21] *Lumen Gentium* invokes the pilgrim image explicitly six times. One instance is especially germane to my constructive proposals to follow: 'On earth, still as pilgrims in a strange land, following in trial and in oppression the paths [Christ] trod, we are associated with his sufferings as the body with its head, suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified.'[22] Yves Congar published an essay entitled 'Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church', reflecting on the ecclesiological developments of Vatican II, in which he wrote the following: 'This reborn Church is not the only form that a Pilgrim Church can take […]. That pilgrim way has been open in principle since the Son of God became man and sent us, from the Father, the Spirit who makes us proclaim God's glory in every human language.'[23]

As both a gift that the Baptist tradition may offer to the rest of the church and a perspective that is ecumenically shared, this pilgrim vision can suggest a constructive ecclesiology that relates the mark of catholicity to the church's pilgrim character. I propose as a somewhat unusual entrée to a pilgrim church ecclesiology the Christology of the late Baptist theologian James Wm McClendon, Jr. It is unusual partly because of its stance toward what many might regard as a doctrine essential to qualitative catholicity, and yet that stance also exemplifies the pilgrim church theological orientation in its Baptist expression.

In *Doctrine*, the second volume of McClendon's three-volume systematic theology, he surveys three rival Christological models — the pre-Nicene Logos model, the two-natures model of the trajectory from

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[20] Second Vatican Council, 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium,* 21 November 1964', § 48, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. by Austin Flannery, rev. edn (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1992), p. 407.

[21] *Lumen Gentium*, § 48 (*Vatican Council II*, ed. Flannery, p. 408).

[22] *Lumen Gentium*, § 7 (*Vatican Council II*, ed. Flannery, p. 356).

[23] Yves Congar, 'Moving Towards a Pilgrim Church', trans. by David Smith, in *Vatican II Revisited: By Those Who Were There*, ed. by Alberic Stacpoole (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1986), pp. 129–52 (p. 148). These developments were also treated at length by Catholic ecumenist George H. Tavard in his book *The Pilgrim Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967).

Nicaea through Chalcedon, and the historical model influenced by the modern quest for the historical Jesus — to which he addresses three 'persistent questions' intended to probe their adequacy: first, 'what right has Jesus Christ to absolute Lordship — the Lordship that Scripture assigns to God alone?'; second, 'How can monotheists […] tell the Jesus story as their own?'; and third, 'how Christ-like […] are disciples' lives to be?' McClendon finds the culmination of the two-natures trajectory in the Chalcedonian definition deficient especially in regard to the third question, asking whether that Jesus provides a paradigm for discipleship that disciples can really put into practice. Later he concludes, 'Two-natures Christology has had its day, and we need not return to it save as a monument to what has gone before. All honor to Athanasius and Basil and Leontius, but they did not write Scripture, and it is to Scripture that we must return in fashioning our convictions.'[24]

Seemingly as a replacement for two-natures Christology, McClendon proposes a 'two-narrative Christology'.[25] In this account, one's identity is located not in one's classification according to abstract categories of 'natures', but rather in one's story. A person's story in its totality and particularity is the thickest possible description one can offer of a person's identity. For Christ, this narrative identity is both twofold and singular. We might summarise McClendon's proposal like this: *The story of Christ fully encompasses and discloses the story of the Triune God, which is God's identity. At the same time the story of Christ fully encompasses and discloses the story of humanity, which is our identity. Yet these two distinguishable stories, these two identities, are in Jesus Christ one indivisible narrative identity.* That was my characterisation of what McClendon proposes; here is McClendon's summary of his proposal in his own words:

> Therefore we have these two stories, of divine self-expense and human investment, of God reaching to people even before people reach to God, of a God who gives in order to be able to receive, and a humanity that receives so that it shall be able to give. Together, they constitute the biblical story in its fullness. *And now the capstone word is this: these two stories are at last indivisibly one.* We can separate them for analysis, but we cannot divide them; there is

[24] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 276.
[25] McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 263–79.

> but one story there to be told. Finally, this story becomes gospel, becomes good news, when we discover that it is our own. (emphasis original)[26]

Notwithstanding McClendon's declaration that 'two-natures Christology has had its day, and we need not return to it', I see his two-narrative alternative not as a replacement for Chalcedon but as an extension and enrichment of its strengths, teased out by re-reading the Council's insights in light of a new set of questions and categories that belong to a context other than the Hellenism of late antiquity. McClendon's qualifications correspond to those of the Chalcedonian Definition: the two narrative identities may be separated for analysis ('without confusion'), but they cannot be divided ('without division or separation'). It is true that 'to the objection that all this talk of twoness and oneness in narrative does not correspond very well to classic two-nature-in-one-being Christology', McClendon himself replied, 'it does not'. Yet there is good ecumenical precedent for considering them compatible. The Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* allowed that differing doctrinal formulations, including the relation of Chalcedonian Christology to the Christologies of the non-Chalcedonian churches of the East, may be 'mutually complementary rather than conflicting'.[27] John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* likewise posited the essential unity of 'different ways of looking at the same reality', exemplified by the common declarations on Christology signed by Catholic popes and patriarchs of non-Chalcedonian churches.[28] The progress made in bilateral dialogues between the non-Chalcedonian churches of the East and Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches shows what a pilgrim church stance toward the theological formulations of one's own communion can make possible ecumenically, in addition to opening up the possibility that McClendon's non-Chalcedonian Christology could escape anathema as well.

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[26] McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 276–77.

[27] Second Vatican Council, 'Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 21 November 1964', § 17, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Norman P. Tanner, vol. 2, *Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), p. 917. In context, the reference to 'mutually complementary rather than conflicting' theological formulations has in mind ecumenical relations with the Eastern Orthodox churches.

[28] John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, encyclical on Commitment to Ecumenism, Vatican website, 25 May 1995, § 38, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html> [accessed 21 November 2021].

While McClendon's willingness to revisit and revise the outcome of the Council of Chalcedon does exemplify the pilgrim approach to doing theology that I have identified as one of the Baptist tradition's ecclesial gifts, that is not the primary reason I introduced his novel Christological proposal. In the course of elaborating his two-narrative proposal, McClendon drops but does not develop the tantalising hint that features of his Christology may be extended ecclesiologically. He writes, '*In resurrection light*, apostolic Christianity can be construed as the continuation of the Jesus story already begun.'[29] In *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future*, I suggest that this narrative approach to Christology has unexplored implications for a Christological approach to ecclesiology that may help us re-envision the whole church as a community on pilgrimage to the ecumenical future as the body of Christ that embodies the story of Jesus in catholic fullness.

The New Testament offers a Christological approach to a pilgrim ecclesiology, epitomised by Ephesians 4:15: 'We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.' A Christological ecclesiology rooted in a narrative Christology in which the church continues the story of Jesus, growing toward Christ its head, has implications for the church's pilgrim journey toward full realisation of its catholicity. In one of the chapters of *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future* I proposed the following seven theses regarding what it might mean for the church to embody the story of Jesus as a pilgrim people.[30]

First thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ

If the church is identified with the whole Christ as the body of Christ, the church's identity can be nothing other than Christ's identity. The divided church is a church separated from the fullness of its common identity in Christ. Its pilgrim journey to its catholic future progressively recovers this identity.

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[29] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 272 (emphasis original).

[30] While this article does not interact with his proposals, George Lindbeck has offered a narrative account of ecclesiology in his essay 'The Story-Shaped Church: Critical Exegesis and Theological Interpretation', in *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*, ed. by Garrett Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 161–78.

Second thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ, which is the story of Christ

If Christ's identity is most fully described in terms of his story, and the church derives its identity from Christ, then unless head and body are severed, Christ's story is the church's story, and thus its identity. The divided church is a church that has lost its unifying story. Its pilgrim journey to the catholic future entails a recovery of Christ's story as its own — as the narrative world in and out of which it lives, in light of which it understands the world to which it bears witness.

Third thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ, which is the story of Christ, which is the story of our baptism

It is in baptism that Christ's identity becomes the church's identity, and it is baptism that discloses this identity as the story of Christ. According to Romans 6:3–11, in baptism the story of Jesus's death and resurrection becomes our story (Rom 6:3–11), making us participants in a new story in which characters have new roles: because we have taken on Christ's story in baptism, 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus,' as Paul insists in Galatians 3:27–28. The origin of the ancient rule of faith in baptismal confession underscores baptism's conferral of narrative identity. The baptismal creeds rehearse in brief the story of Christ told in full by the Bible. In baptism we embrace this narrative identity as ours, and it embraces us. The divided church is a church that has not fully recognised this baptismal identity as one baptism into the one body of Christ. Its pilgrim journey to the catholic future must involve mutual recognition of one another's baptisms, for not to recognise a person's baptism 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' is to deny Christ and his story as that person's identity.[31]

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[31] Two documents offered to the churches as the fruit of decades of multilateral dialogue through the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order have proposed possible pathways to convergence in mutual baptismal recognition: World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982); World Council of Churches, *One Baptism: Toward Mutual Recognition. A Study Text*, Faith and Order Paper No. 210 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2011). For a Baptist perspective on the proposals of the latter document, see Steven R. Harmon, "'One Baptism":

Fourth thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ, which is the story of Christ, which is the story of the Triune God

The divine story that is the story of Christ is not the story of generic, abstract divinity, but the inescapably triadic story of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who has taken on flesh in Jesus Christ and given God's Spirit to the church in Pentecost. The story of the Triune God is the story that we embrace and that embraces us in our tripartite baptismal confession. Yet there is a proper distinction between the story of the creator and the story of the creature.[32] For the church as God's creature, Christ is the key to this distinction. As the one in whom 'all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell' according to Colossians 1:19, Christ's story is directly the story of the Triune God. As the body that has Christ as head according to the preceding verse in Colossians, the church's story is derivatively the story of the Triune God. By virtue of our *koinonia*, our participation, in Christ as Christ's body, we have a participation in the life of the Triune God that gives the church its Trinitarian identity. The divided church has an attenuated Trinitarian identity because it is bodily diminished in relationship to its head. Its pilgrim journey to the catholic future requires taking up ecclesial practices that draw us into deeper participation in the life of the Triune God. As we participate more fully in the life of the Triune God, the mutuality of the Triune God's oneness-in-distinct-otherness becomes more fully manifest in our ecclesial life. A catholicity that is both quantitative and qualitative is among the fruit it yields.

Fifth thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ, which is the story of Christ, which is the story of our humanity

Here the emphasis is on *our* humanity. McClendon's insistence that the story of Christ fully encompasses and discloses the story of humanity means that in Christ's humanity is the story of humanity as it ought to be — seen in the New Testament emphasis on the sinlessness of Jesus, or positively expressed as his 'full faithfulness'[33] — as well as the story of humanity in opposition to God's intentions for human life. In regard

A Study Text for Baptists', *Baptist World: A Magazine of the Baptist World Alliance* 58, no. 1, January/March 2011, pp. 9–10.

[32] A distinction McClendon makes in *Doctrine*, p. 275.

[33] McClendon, *Doctrine*, p. 273.

to the latter, McClendon seems to suggest that the humanity which Jesus embraces is not unfallen humanity but our humanity inclined toward sin — an inclination that Jesus shared in his solidarity with our human condition but which Jesus faithfully resisted at every stage in his human moral development.[34] When Christ's story as the story of our humanity becomes the church's story, it is in this twofold sense. It discloses the church as it ought to be — the spotless bride of Christ, the church that is fully qualitatively catholic. But it also exposes the church's distance from that in its existence in the eschatological tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. The church is a pilgrim community because of its earthly distance from its not-yet-realised goal — a distance that includes what Catholic theologian Karl Rahner named as ecclesial sin.[35] Certainly the church's divisions and refusals to overcome them are among these ecclesial sins. The pilgrim church, whose narrative identity is that of Christ, shares especially in the story of our sin-inclined humanity that Jesus's story encompasses. The church's pilgrim journey to the catholic future therefore involves owning its temporal identity as a penitential community, called to repentance for sins of division and its perpetuation.[36]

Sixth thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ, which is the story of Christ, which is the story of all the members of Christ's body

The way to the catholic future entails the recovery of the common narrative-Christological identity the church receives in baptism, but that

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[34] McClendon, *Doctrine*, pp. 262 and 273. Karl Barth, whose anticipations of a narrative Christology McClendon applauded, had also insisted that it is this sort of sinful humanity that Christ assumed in *Church Dogmatics*, I.2, trans. by G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), pp. 151–55.

[35] Karl Rahner, 'The Sinful Church in the Decrees of Vatican II', in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, *Concerning Vatican Council II*, trans.by Karl-H. Kruger and Boniface Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1969), pp. 270–94. See also Rahner, 'The Church of Sinners', in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, pp. 253–69; these two essays, along with a chapter on 'The Church and the Parousia of Christ' (*Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, pp. 295–312), belong to a section of this volume of the *Theological Investigations* entitled 'The Pilgrim Church'. In this connection, it is significant that in the essay 'Justified and Sinner at the Same Time', placed two chapters prior to this section (*Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, pp. 218–30), Rahner offers a qualified Catholic affirmation of Luther's formula in the sense that the person who is justified 'remains a pilgrim', who in this pilgrim state is properly regarded as *simil justus et peccator* (pp. 229–30).

[36] This point is forcefully argued by Ephraim Radner, *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998).

does not require the relinquishing of the stories of our divided communities in their historic and ongoing journeys. While our denominational stories are in part stories of ecclesial sin, they also serve as bearers of the distinctive ecclesial gifts that are distributed throughout the divided church and that no one church completely possesses. The story of Christ includes such particular stories, for Christ is present in them. And if these stories belong to the story of Christ, they are our stories, too. The church's pilgrim journey to the ecumenical future involves the sharing of the particular stories that belong to the story of the whole church — as acts of confession, repentance, and reconciliation, and as acts of receptive ecumenism that receive as gifts from one another the missing pieces of our qualitative catholic wholeness.

Seventh thesis: The church's identity is the identity of Christ, which is the story of Christ, which is the story of the eschatological community

Story is inherently eschatological; a story goes somewhere. A story has a plot, driven by conflict and resolution. Jesus himself discloses a dimension of the conclusion to the church's story in John 17 when he prays for the visible unity of those who follow him. The story's plot is driven in part by the conflict of division, introduced already in the New Testament chapter of the story. The church's pilgrim journey to the catholic future takes place in the tension between the present conflict of division and the future resolution of visible unity that includes qualitative as well as quantitative wholeness. But because the church knows the story's conclusion, the church undertakes this journey in hope, no matter how dismal the present prospects may seem. Our confession that we believe in the 'catholic' church is both an acknowledgement of our present distance from that goal and a prayer that it be realised on earth, as it will be in heaven.

Baptist Catholicity, Ecumenical Pilgrimage, and the Pursuit of Justice

Baptist catholicity as pilgrim catholicity is thus not a call for Baptists to come 'home to Rome' and be received into the Roman Catholic Church, though it seeks the visible unity of a church fully under the rule of Christ

with oneness as its mark. It is not a summons to imitate the Roman Catholic Church in particular, though in the mutually receptive exchange of ecclesial gifts we may discover gifts of Roman Catholic faith and practice that we can in good conscience receive into our own Baptist patterns of faith and practice in ways that help us become more faithful communities of followers of Jesus Christ.[37] Nor is it a set of doctrines and practices that automatically make a Baptist community which takes them up more faithful. McClendon rightly insisted that the powerful practices that have the capacity to form the faithful may also fail to do so, and they are always in need of conversion.[38]

For Ignatius of Antioch, qualitative catholicity was inseparable from practices of seeking social justice, but not all who have affirmed orthodox doctrines of the incarnation have sought justice for people on the margins of society. When Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously declared that 'only those who cry out for the Jews may sing Gregorian chants', he had in mind the 'Berneuchener Movement' in mid-twentieth century German Lutheranism that advocated the retrieval of liturgical catholicity but seemed indifferent to the injustices of the day.[39] The report from Phase II of the international Baptist-Catholic ecumenical conversations emphasised the need for catholicity in biblical interpretation — that is, reading the Bible in community, in community with the local church and in community with the church in its catholicity — but it also insisted that catholicity in the reading of scripture cannot be separated from the proper Christian conduct of the community that reads scripture together with the whole church.[40] Much of American Christianity in my

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[37] I develop this assertion more fully in Steven R. Harmon, 'How Baptists Receive the Gifts of Catholics and Other Christians', *Ecumenical Trends* 39, no. 6 (June 2010), pp. 1/81–5/85.

[38] McClendon, *Ethics*, p. 222; idem, *Doctrine*, p. 28.

[39] Recollection of Hellmut Traub in *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reminiscences by His Friends*, ed. by Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann and Ronald Gregor Smith, trans. by Käthe Gregor Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 156, quoted in Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, trans. by Eric Mosbacher, rev. edn (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 441.

[40] Baptist World Alliance and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'The Word of God in the Life of the Church: A Report of International Conversations between the Catholic Church and the Baptist World Alliance 2006-2010', published in *American Baptist Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2012): pp. 28–122 and in *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity Information Service* 142 (2013), pp. 20–65; also published online by the PCPCU <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/alleanza-battista-mondiale/dialogo-internazionale-tra-la-chiesa-cattolica-e-l-alleanza-batt/

own context, including many Baptists, has failed in this regard, as evidenced by the widespread and well-known support of evangelical Christians in the United States for the 2016 and 2021 presidential candidacies of Donald Trump, and for policies proposed and enacted by his presidential administration that are contrary to the way taught and modelled by Jesus Christ.[41]

All of this is to say that Baptist catholicity as a pilgrim catholicity must resist the temptation to look for its orientation to idealised and distorted visions of a Christian past that never really was what we might idealise it to be. I conclude by paraphrasing Bonhoeffer very loosely: 'Only those Baptists who cry out for the immigrant and the refugee may claim catholicity in faith and practice.' Baptist catholicity matters in no small measure because it can help us make progress in the pilgrim journey towards a church whose inclusive catholic wholeness includes justice for all.

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documenti-di-dialogo/testo-del-documento-in-inglese.html> [accessed 21 November 2021] (§§ 51–53).

[41] On the support of American evangelicals, in particular white evangelicals, for Trump during the 2016 election and subsequent approval of his job as president, see Gregory A. Smith, 'Among white evangelicals, regular churchgoers are the most supportive of Trump', *Pew Research Center Fact Tank: News in the Numbers* (April 26, 2017), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/26/among-white-evangelicals-regular-churchgoers-are-the-most-supportive-of-trump/> [accessed 21 November 2021]. Initial analysis of exit polling data from the 2020 election revealed similar patterns: see Frank Newport, 'Religious Group Voting and the 2020 Election', *Gallup News* (November, 2020), <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/324410/religious-group-voting-2020-election.aspx> [accessed 21 November 2020].

'A Union of Sentiments in Apostolical Doctrines': The Catholicity of Andrew Fuller

Lon Graham

Dr Lon Graham (PhD, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) is the pastor of The Woods Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, USA.
panicbird@yahoo.com | https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3079-908X
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.700

Abstract:
Andrew Fuller has been called an example of Particular Baptist catholicity in recent scholarship but was castigated as uncatholic in sentiment by those closer to his own era. This reality, combined with Fuller's importance to Particular Baptist history, makes his understanding and practice of catholicity a topic worthy of examination. This article examines the writings of Fuller to discern which of the foregoing assertions is correct. While not denying the importance of recent discussions regarding Baptist catholicity, the present work seeks to understand Fuller's own thoughts on what he would have called a 'catholic spirit'. Fuller's nuanced, truth-oriented catholicity is placed in its historical context alongside his contemporaries John Ryland, Jr and John Wesley.

Keywords:
Andrew Fuller; Particular Baptist; catholicity; evangelical; John Ryland; John Wesley

Introduction

The concept of catholicity has been understood in various ways throughout the centuries.[1] It is helpful, therefore, as a way of more fully exploring the concept, to focus on important thinkers and leaders in order to see how their thought and practice sheds light on the overall understanding of catholicity. This article describes the catholicity, or catholic spirit, of Andrew Fuller, a leading pastor and theologian among the English Particular Baptists in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.[2] At the outset, it is important to understand that

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[1] See Willem Van Vlaustin, *Catholic Today: A Reformed Conversation about Catholicity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2020), pp. 18–161.

[2] There has been a resurgence of interest in Fuller in recent years. See, for example, Michael A.G. Haykin, *"At the Pure Fountain of Thy Word": Andrew Fuller as an Apologist* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004); Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller, 1754–1815* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2015); and the Works of Andrew Fuller Project under the general

this article does not mean to engage with recent scholarship related to Baptist catholicity,[3] but, rather, it aims to provide historical perspective on how one of the chief theologians of the Particular Baptists understood relations to those outside of his theological and denominational tradition. It will focus on the language with which Fuller himself would have been familiar: the language of catholicity, or a catholic spirit.[4]

Studying the catholicity of someone like Andrew Fuller is not a straightforward task, as he did not write a treatise which can be studied for a definition or theological foundation. This is not to say he thought it unimportant; he wrote shorter works about, and made important statements in longer works on a catholic spirit and adjacent topics.

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editorship of Michael A.G. Haykin, published by de Gruyter, which aims to publish critical editions of all of Fuller's works. For a more complete account of recent publications about Fuller, see Nathan A. Finn, 'The Renaissance in Andrew Fuller Studies: A Bibliographic Essay', *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 17, no. 2 (2013): 44–61.

[3] For more information on this, see Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006); Curtis W. Freeman, *Contesting Catholicity: Theology for Other Baptists* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014); Barry Harvey, *Can These Bones Live? A Catholic Baptist Engagement with Ecclesiology, Hermeneutics, and Social Theory* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008); Paul S. Fiddes, Brian Haymes, and Richard Kidd, *Baptists and the Communion of Saints: A Theology of Covenanted Disciples* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014); and Brian Haymes, Ruth Gouldbourne, and Anthony R. Cross, *On Being the Church: Revisioning Baptist Identity* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2009). Of course, this article may also provide supporting material for this ongoing discussion.

[4] The vocabulary of 'ecumenism' is not appropriate at this point, as it did not come into widespread use until later in the nineteenth century. 'Catholic' and its cognates have a long history in the Baptist world. The seventeenth-century confessions use this language (see chapter twenty-six of the 1677 *London Baptist Confession* and articles twenty-nine and thirty of the 1678 *Orthodox Creed*), as does the Bristol Tradition that came to influence so much of the latter eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Particular Baptists. Anthony R. Cross has done much to recover the history of the Bristol Tradition. For more information, see: Anthony R. Cross, '"To communicate simply you must understand profoundly": The Necessity of Theological Education for Deepening Ministerial Formation', *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, 19, no.1 (2019): 54–67; 'The Early Bristol Tradition as a Seedbed for Evangelical Reception among British Baptists, c.1720–c.1770', in *Pathways and Patterns in History: Essays on Baptists, Evangelicals, and the Modern World in Honour of David Bebbington*, ed by Anthony R. Cross, Peter J. Morden, and Ian M. Randall (Didcot: The Baptist Historical Society, 2015), pp. 50–77; *The Bristol Baptist Tradition, c.1720–2020: Able, Evangelical, Lively, Zealous Ministers of the Gospel* (3 vols; forthcoming). For a use of the term closer to the time of Fuller himself, see the church covenant of the New Road Baptist Church, Oxford (Daniel Turner, *Charity the Bond of Perfection* (Oxford: J. Buckland, 1780), p. 22) and Robert Hall, Jr, *On Terms of Communion* (Philadelphia: Anthony Finley, 1816), p. 128.

These must be studied collectively in order to understand his thought. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that there is some disagreement as to whether Fuller himself even possessed a catholic spirit. On the one hand, he is portrayed in one recent publication as catholic in sentiment because of his friendship with John Ryland, Jr, who did not share Fuller's views on closed communion.[5] On the other hand, an earlier writer, John Buckley, pastor of the General Baptist church in Market Harborough and later a missionary with the General Baptist Missionary Society, referred to Fuller as possessing 'a mighty intellect, though not a very catholic heart'.[6] The resolution to this uncertainty will be taken up later in the article.

Union of Sentiments: The Ground of Union

It will be helpful to begin with Fuller's understanding of the key word 'catholic'. In his *Strictures on Sandemanianism*,[7] Fuller describes the spirit of primitive Christianity as '*catholic* and *pacific*'.[8] He elaborates on what it means to be 'catholic' by juxtaposing it with 'sectarian'.[9] He writes, 'True

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[5] Michael A.G. Haykin, '"A Little Band of Brothers": Friendship in the Life of Andrew Fuller – An Essay on the Bicentennial of His Death', *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, 12, no. 2 (2015): 10–13. In another place, Haykin comments on Fuller and his circle of friends, 'This love of God for who he is, this emphasis on the revelation of his holiness in the cross, this evangelical catholicity that embraces all who are in Christ and this passion to see sinners saved were leading features not only of the spirituality of Pearce, but also of that of Fuller and Sutcliff' (Michael A.G. Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, His Friends and His Times* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1994), 264).

[6] John Buckley, 'Notes of Visits to the Churches, No. 4', *The General Baptist Magazine, Repository, and Missionary Observer*, 1.3 (March 1854), p. 147.

[7] Andrew Fuller, *Strictures on Sandemanianism* (New York: Richard Scott, 1812). For more information on Sandemanianism, see John Howard Smith, *The Perfect Rule of the Christian Religion: A History of Sandemanianism in the Eighteenth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008); Michael A.G. Haykin, 'Sweet Sensibility: Andrew Fuller's Defense of Religious Affections', *Puritan Reformed Journal*, 7, no. 2 (2015): 193–211; and Dyron Daughrity, 'Glasite versus Haldanite: Scottish Divergence on the Question of Missions', *Restoration Quarterly*, 53, no. 2 (2011): 65–79.

[8] Fuller, *Strictures*, p. 236 (emphasis original).

[9] Fuller seems to have understood these terms in light of one another, as in another place he writes of 'the disinterested testimony of a few people, who are united together, not by a sectarian, but a truly catholic spirit' (Andrew Fuller (A Dissenter), *A Vindication of Protestant Dissent* (London: Button and Son, 1803), p. 31). This work was attributed to 'A Dissenter' when it was first published, but it was subsequently published in Fuller's *Complete Works*.

catholic zeal will nevertheless have the good of the universal church of Christ for its grand object, and will rejoice in the prosperity of every denomination of christians, *in so far* as they appear to have the mind of Christ.'[10] To be 'catholic', in Fuller's view, is to have a universal view of the work of Christ, and it is to rejoice when any denomination prospers, regardless of its connection to one's own theological and ecclesiastical commitments. It is to be broad-minded in affection; indeed, it is to keep in mind the whole of the church and feel the affection of kinship with it. Fuller places an important limit on his catholicity, however, by the introduction of the concept of 'the mind of Christ'.[11] While there is an element of broadness and even openness to Fuller's thought, the mind of Christ becomes a boundary-establishing element of his catholicity.

Fuller repeats the emphasis on the 'mind of Christ' in other works, which help to flesh out his meaning. In his work defending strict communion, he indicates that 'the mind of Christ' refers to 'the precepts and examples of the New Testament'.[12] He summarises these precepts and examples, saying,

> If language have any determinate meaning, it is here plainly taught that mankind are not only ſinners, but in a *loſt* and periſhing condition, without help or hope, but what ariſes from the free grace of God, through the atonement of his Son; that he died as our ſubſtitute; that we are forgiven and accepted only for the ſake of what he hath done and ſuffered; that in his perſon and work all evangelical truth concentrates; that the doctrine of ſalvation for the chief of ſinners through his death, was ſo familiar in the primitive times, as to become a kind of Chriſtian proverb, or 'ſaying;' and

[10] Fuller, *Strictures*, pp. 237–238 (emphasis original). Fuller goes on to clarify what he does not mean by using the term 'catholic', saying that 'it is not our being of the religion of Rome, nor of any other which happens to be favoured by the state, that determines our zeal to be catholic' (Fuller, *Strictures*, p. 238). While it is unlikely that any of his readers would mistake Fuller for a Roman Catholic sympathiser, he apparently wanted to leave no room whatsoever for a mistake.

[11] He repeats this emphasis on the mind of Christ in a meditation on Ecclesiastes 1:15: 'There are few things more spoken against in the present times, than *party zeal*; but there are few things more common. To unite with those whom we consider on mature examination as being nearest the mind of Christ, and having done so to act up to our principles, – is our duty.' (Andrew Fuller, 'Irremediable Evils', *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, ed. by Joseph Belcher, 3 vols (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1845), 1, 466–69 (p. 467), emphasis original.)

[12] Andrew Fuller, *The Admission of Unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Supper, Inconsistent with the New Testament* (London: H. Teape, 1815), p. 29.

> that on our receiving and retaining this, depends our preſent ſtanding and final ſalvation.[13]

This brief summary of evangelical doctrine is what Fuller considered to be the mind of Christ that served to bound his catholicity. That he would summarise it so is unsurprising in light of his Calvinistic Baptist convictions,[14] but it is nevertheless worth establishing definitively that Fuller uses the phrase 'the mind of Christ' as a kind of shorthand to encompass these propositions. Indeed, he says as much when he comments that the early church 'conſidered the doctrine of the perſon and work of Chriſt as a golden link, that would draw along with it the whole chain of evangelical truth'.[15]

Fuller's catholicity rests on mutual commitment to these doctrines, as he states that communion with other Christians arises out of 'a union of sentiments in apostolical doctrines'.[16] His understanding of catholicity is rooted in shared theological convictions. In a letter written to Samuel Palmer on the 'bond of Christian union', Fuller makes the connection between a shared understanding of the truth and union explicit, saying, 'Christian love appears to me to be, "for the truth sake that dwelleth in us." Every kind of union that has not truth for its bond, is of no value in the sight of God, and ought to be of none in ours.'[17] Agreement as to the truth is the bond of union.[18]

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[13] Andrew Fuller, *An Essay on Truth: Containing an Inquiry into Its Nature and Importance* (Boston: Manning and Loring, 1806), p. 5. The quotation here retains the original formatting and spelling. The same will be done, as far as is possible, in the rest of the article.

[14] His friend John Ryland, Jr outlines what he considered essential evangelical doctrine in much the same way (John Ryland, *The Practical Influence of Evangelical Religion* (London: J.G. Fuller, 1819), pp. 6–14).

[15] Fuller, *Essay on Truth*, p. 6. In an essay on the deity of Christ, Fuller again makes Christ the central theme of any Christian union, saying, 'And where these things are rejected, there is no longer any possibility of christian union: for how can those, who consider Christ to be a mere man, join in the worship of such as are employed in calling upon his name, and ascribing blessing and honour, and glory and power, unto the Lamb for ever!' (Andrew Fuller, 'Deity of Christ Essential to Our Calling on His Name and Trusting in Him for Salvation', *The Complete Works*, 3, 695–697 (p. 696).)

[16] Andrew Fuller, 'On Spiritual Declension and the Means of Revival', *The Complete Works*, 3, 615–634 (p. 630).

[17] Andrew Fuller, 'Agreement in Sentiment the Bond of Christian Union', *The Complete Works*, 3, 489–492 (p. 490).

[18] Fuller appeals to the King James translation of Amos 3:3: 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' (Andrew Fuller, 'Agreement in Sentiment', *The Complete Works*, 3, 489–492 (p. 491)).

The Practice and Limitations of Catholicity

As mentioned above, Fuller often saw a catholic spirit in contrast to a sectarian, or party, spirit. He writes that, while a good person will no doubt unite 'with that denomination of Christians whose sentiments he believes to be nearest the truth',[19] such a person will not limit their affection to that denomination but will 'love all who love Jesus Christ'.[20] Fuller makes a distinction here, however, that reveals much about how he practised and limited his openness to others. There is *union* with those whose sentiments are closest to one's own, but there is only a *general love* for those who love Jesus Christ. While that may seem a pedantic distinction, it proves to be closest to Fuller's own practice, which showcases both his willingness to bridge the gap between himself and others who differ from him, as well as the boundaries of that willingness.

On the one hand, Fuller could readily overlook significant theological differences in others, affirm them, and even promote their work, so long as he discerned the mind of Christ being expressed in them. Three examples of this may be adduced. First, one may look to Fuller and the Arminians, of whom he was a vocal opponent, asserting in one place that they 'can find but little use for the doctrinal part of Paul's Epistles',[21] and in another categorising them together with Arians, Socinians, and traitors, whilst characterising them as heady, high-minded, and lovers of their own selves.[22] However, he says that he 'saw those whom I thought to be godly men, both among Arminians and High, or, as I now accounted them Hyper Calvinists'.[23] That Fuller could speak of godly men among the Arminians in light of his words against

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He says that this is the 'force and design' of that passage, though modern translations reflect a different understanding of the Hebrew, signalling less an agreement as to sentiment and more an agreement as to walk together. For example, the New International Version has 'Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?' The New Revised Standard Version translates it, 'Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?'

[19] Andrew Fuller, 'Nature and Importance of Christian Love', *The Complete Works*, 1, 522–524 (p. 523). Once again, Fuller show that truth may be apprehended but never comprehended.

[20] Fuller, 'Nature and Importance of Christian Love', *The Complete Works*, 1, 523.

[21] Andrew Fuller, 'Remarks on Two Sermons by W.W. Horne of Yarmouth', *The Complete Works*, 3, 583.

[22] Fuller, *Vindication of Protestant Dissent*, p. 21.

[23] Andrew Fuller, 'Letter IV', in *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope, Illustrated; in the Life and Death of Andrew Fuller*, 2nd edn (London: Button and Son, 1818), pp. 28–29.

them and their theology speaks to his willingness to 'rejoice in the prosperity of every denomination of christians',[24] even if they differed significantly.

Second, Fuller's catholicity is seen in his promotion of the work of the Edwardsean theologians from America,[25] who were, by and large, those with whom Fuller would have refused to share the Lord's table. Though Edwards was a paedobaptist and his followers tended to move in theological directions with which Edwards himself might have been uncomfortable,[26] Fuller admired and did not hesitate to promote their works, sometimes in a very shrewd, calculating manner. At one point in 1802, Fuller had in his possession something written by Jonathan Edwards, Jr, but he delayed in sending it to be published because 'it w^{d}. be introducing American divinity in such a form as most English minds w^{d}. revolt at it. I w^{d}. rather preserve it as a lump of good materials that may be used in a different form to a good purpose.'[27] Fuller's promotion of Edwards stemmed from his belief that Edwards had captured the essence of the mind of Christ in his work, regardless of Fuller's disagreement with him on other points.[28]

Third, Fuller had no problem preaching in the pulpits of those with whom he disagreed. He suffered no qualms about preaching in the pulpits of the Establishment, even admitting that, in so doing, he

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[24] Fuller, *Strictures*, p. 238.

[25] This would include the works of Jonathan Edwards Sr but also those of Jonathan Edwards, Jr, Samuel Hopkins, and Joseph Bellamy.

[26] See the series of essays which cover the stream of Edwardsean theology after Edwards in Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds, *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[27] Andrew Fuller, 'Letter to John Sutcliff', 11 January 1802, Angus Library and Archive. In the letter, Fuller refers to 'Dr Edwards' rather than 'Jonathan Edwards, Jr', but 'Dr Edwards' was the name used to refer to the son and 'President Edwards' was the name used to refer to the father.

[28] When he was criticised for his love for Edwards, Fuller responded with words that reveal the reason behind his affection: 'We have some, who have been giving out of late, that "If Sutcliff and some others had preached more of Christ, and less of Jonathan Edwards, they would have been more useful." If those who talk thus, preached Christ half as much as Jonathan Edwards did, and were half as useful as he was, their usefulness would be double what it is. It is very singular that the Mission to the East should have originated with men of these principles.' (John Ryland, *The Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ no Security against Corporeal Death, but the Source of Spiritual and Eternal Life* (London: Button and Son, 1815), p. 34.)

'materially served the mission'[29] of the Church of England. Fuller also preached in the pulpits of General Baptists, most notably that of Dan Taylor, the General Baptist against whom Fuller wrote repeatedly.[30] Indeed, when Fuller was given the option of preaching in Taylor's or another's pulpit, he commented, 'I had much rather preach in Mr. T.'s pulpit, to convince the world that perfect cordiality subsists between him and myself.'[31]

While Fuller could be broad-minded in some regards, his catholicity had decided limitations. Again, three examples will suffice to demonstrate this contention. First, his position against open communion has already been mentioned,[32] but it is worth considering at this point that his strict communionism meant that whatever ecclesiastical union Fuller sought with those with whom he differed ended with the issue of baptism. While affirming of paedobaptists as fellow believers, he was at variance with John Ryland, Jr, who not only affirmed their faith but welcomed them to the Lord's table.[33] According to Fuller, while he could respect the principles of those who differed,[34] if their sentiments on that subject were not united, then there could be no fellowship in the Lord's supper. Indeed, his promotion of Edwardsean literature may well have been more ardent because of their geographical distance from Fuller himself: it would be unlikely that he

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29 Fuller, 'Agreement in Sentiment', 3, 489.

30 See Michael A.G. Haykin, '"The Honour of the Spirit's Work": Andrew Fuller, Dan Taylor, and an Eighteenth-Century Baptist Debate over Regeneration', *Baptist Quarterly*, 47, no. 4 (2016): 152–161. It is not clear if Fuller ever returned the favour and allowed either a Church of England minister or Arminian to preach from his pulpit.

31 Adam Taylor, ed., *Memoirs of the Rev. Dan Taylor* (London: Baynes and Son: 1820), p. 177. It should be noted that Fuller did not preach during the Sunday services for Taylor's church. Rather, he preached for their Sunday School and Society for Visiting the Sick.

32 See Fuller, *Admission of Unbaptized Persons*. See also Ian Hugh Clary, 'Throwing away the Guns: Andrew Fuller, William Ward, and the Communion Controversy in the Baptist Mission Society', *Foundations*, 68 (May 2015): 84–101.

33 John Ryland, *A Candid Statement of the Reasons which Induce the Baptists to Differ in Opinion and Practice from So Many of Their Christian Brethren* (London: W. Button, 1814), pp. x–xi.

34 In his work defending strict communion, he writes, 'I am willing to allow that open communion *may* be practised from a conscientious persuasion of its being the mind of Christ; and they ought to allow the same of strict communion' (Fuller, *Admission of Unbaptized Persons*, 29.) He is willing to allow that they are seeking to know the mind of Christ and that they are living in light of their understanding. Fuller shows his Baptist convictions here, for each must follow their understanding of the mind of Christ, being bound by their own conscience to do so, and Fuller is not willing to intrude upon the conscience of others.

would ever have to deal with an American Edwardsean at the Lord's table in Kettering.

A second limitation in Fuller's practice of catholicity is seen in the give and take of life as a pastor and denominational leader, for Fuller's relationships with other Christians were not always marked by peace and concord. This is seen clearly in the breakdown of his relationship with the church in Soham. Toward the end of his tenure as pastor of that church, Fuller writes to John Sutcliff regarding the tense situation with the church, 'I continue far from happy, yet not so generally diſtreſsed as I was some weeks ago. I know not but I must remove at Michelmas yet can't tell how I shall get through it.'[35] This breakdown between Fuller and his church is illustrative of the real-world limitations of catholicity imposed by human frailty.[36] Even the most catholic of souls may find their broadness of love challenged by the real world of actual human relationships, though Fuller may have faced greater challenges in that regard than others. His own close friends speak of his temperament as one that could veer towards the severe: 'His natural temper might occasionally lead him to indulge too much severity, especially if it were provoked by the appearance of vanity or conceit […] He was not a man, however, to be brow-beaten and overborne, when satisfied of the goodness of his cause; nor could he be easily imposed upon by any one.'[37]

Third, while Fuller gave much of his life to the promotion of the work of missions with the Baptist Missionary Society, he felt no compulsion either to partner with other societies or to allow those with

[35] Andrew Fuller, 'Letter to John Sutcliff', 15 August 1781, Isaac Mann Collection, National Library of Wales.

[36] Another example of brokenness in relationships between those who were united in sentiments is seen in Fuller's relationship with John Rippon, a fellow Particular Baptist. Fuller did not always have a high view of Rippon, of whom he writes to Sutcliff, 'We are all offended with him and have reason to be so. He had a letter fm. Carey wch he kept back fm us, & yet wanted ours […] We must desire both the missionaries not to write any thing confidential to Rippon.' (Andrew Fuller, 'Letter to John Sutcliff', 22 January 1795, Angus Library and Archive.)

[37] John Ryland, Jr, *Work of Faith*, 2nd edn, p. x. Fuller had been a wrestler in his youth and 'seldom met with a sout man without making an idea comparison of strength, and possessing some of his former feelings in reference to its exercise' (John Webster Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (Boston: Lincoln and Edmands, 1830), p. 306). He seems to have carried the mindset of a wrestler wherever he went.

whom he differed theologically to partner too closely with the BMS. The relationship between the General Baptists and the BMS is illustrative of these limitations. In 1812, J.G. Pike, pastor of the Brook Street General Baptist Church, wrote to Fuller about the possibility of the General Baptists sending one of their own to the mission field through the BMS. Fuller responded to this proposal in the negative, citing the need for unanimity between partners. While he does not explicitly say so in his response to Pike, there can be little doubt that Fuller's ideas about a union of sentiments played a large part in his response. Fuller knew that the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists differed in significant ways with regard to theological sentiments, and, while they might have been able to look past those disagreements at the start, they would not have been able to ignore them forever.[38] Therefore, there could be no full partnership between the General and Particular Baptists with regard to missions.

Understanding the Catholicity of Fuller

What emerges from Fuller is a complex picture of catholic thought and practice. On the one hand, he decries a party spirit, but on the other, he could defend partisanship as necessary and good. In a brief letter to the editor of the *Theological and Biblical Magazine*, Fuller writes,

> There appears to be a mistaken idea, too commonly prevailing in the religious world at present, respecting what is called *a party spirit*. Many professors, while they endeavour to promote the interests of religion in *general*, too often neglect to pay attention which is due to the interest and welfare of that class or denomination of Christians in *particular*, with which they are or have been connected.[39]

Fuller here promotes what he considers a necessary partisanship, as a Christian is meant to promote the interests of the denomination to which they are connected, which connection springs from their closer union of sentiments. While he goes on to speak against

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[38] Indeed, Fuller's word to Pike is, 'Tho' there were no disputes on the subject wherein we differed at present, yet the measures they proposed might occasion them: and unanimity was of great importance' (quoted in G.P.R. Prosser, 'The Formation of the General Baptist Missionary Society', *Baptist Quarterly*, 22, no. 1 (January 1967): 25).

[39] Andrew Fuller, 'Party Spirit', *Works*, 3, 797 (emphasis original).

the idea of a 'candour' that drives people to abandon '*consistency* and *integrity*' in the name of unity,[40] there still exists some tension between this contention of the goodness of party and what he says elsewhere about the evil of a party spirit. The question he leaves unanswered is, where is the line between a good partisanship and a lamentable party spirit?

In light of the evidence, the boundary line of catholicity seems to be in the area of active partnership and practical union. Indeed, for Fuller, while a catholic spirit would lead a person to rejoice in the successes of those who differ, it did not necessarily entail full partnership in the work of the gospel. Again, the relationship between the General Baptists and the BMS is illustrative. When Pike made the suggestion of sending General Baptist missionaries with the BMS, he seems to have anticipated a negative answer from Fuller, for he also suggested that if the General Baptists could not send one of their own missionaries to Bengal, the Serampore missionaries themselves should choose a native believer to whom the General Baptists might send £14 a year as well as send and receive correspondence. To this Fuller assents. His catholicity would not allow him fully to partner with the General Baptists because of their difference in sentiments. However, it did allow him to receive their funds and allow them a lesser participatory role.

The issue for Fuller seems to be the extent of practical union and the conferring of authority to the other. Because of his understanding of catholicity resting on a union of sentiments, Fuller is hesitant to extend the fullness of fellowship, partnership, and authority to those with whom he believed did not fully share (or, at least, significantly share) his theological commitments. If Fuller himself maintains the authority, and the other with whom he does not share sentiments is under that authority, he is more willing to 'partner' with them. In other words, without a union of sentiments, Fuller is largely

[40] Fuller goes on to say, 'It is not uncommon to see one of these "*candid*" Christian professors keep at a distance from his own denomination, or party, where that denomination stands most in need of his countenance and support; while he associates with another party, which is sanctioned by numbers and worldly influence. And when the inconsistency of his conduct is hinted at, he will excuse himself by saying, in the cant phrase of the day, "That it is his wish to promote the interests of religion in general, *and not to serve a party*"' (Fuller, 'Party Spirit', *The Complete Works*, 3, 797).

unwilling to treat the other as an equal partner. Union of sentiments, for Fuller, meant equality of partnership and authority.

Fuller's catholicity, then, is two-tiered. On the one hand, he is willing to embrace all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and he warns against the insidious nature of a party spirit. On the other hand, he reserves co-labouring for those of his theological side, or at least for those with whom he is most in agreement.

Assessing Fuller's Catholicity

This outline of Fuller's catholicity suggests two questions that must be answered. First, there is the question of Fuller's relation to his own historical context: how does Fuller fit into his own time? The catholicity of John Ryland, Jr may function as a contrast and counterpoint to Fuller. Ryland's openness to those outside of his tradition, sometimes well outside, has been noted by both his contemporaries[41] as well as recent scholars.[42] His catholicity, however, was not like that of Fuller. Whereas Fuller roots his openness in a union of sentiments, Ryland finds his connection with other believers at the level of experience. He writes that 'so far as we can obtain evidence of godly sincerity, and a cordial union with Christ, we ought to take pleasure in the communion of faith, by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in our brethren toward Christ Jesus'.[43] Whereas Ryland sought a catholicity in the shared

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[41] Robert Hall, Jr, 'A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. John Ryland, D.D. Preached at the Baptist Meeting, Broadmead, Bristol, June 5, 1825', in *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.*, ed. by Olinthus Gregory, 3 vols (New York: Harper, 1832), 1, 202–224 (p. 217).

[42] Michael A.G. Haykin, '"The Sum of All Good": John Ryland, Jr. and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit', *Churchman*, 103 (1989): 343–48; Christopher W. Crocker, 'The Life and Legacy of John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825), a Man of Considerable Usefulness: An Historical Biography' (doctoral dissertation, University of Bristol, 2018), pp. 331–360; Lon Graham, '"All Who Love Our Blessed Redeemer": The Catholicity of John Ryland, Jr' (doctoral dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2021).

[43] John Ryland, 'The Communion of Saints', *Pastoral Memorials*, 2 vols (London: B.J. Holdsworth, 1828), 2, 280. In a letter to Stephen West, Ryland makes the same point in much the same language: 'I trust I do believe that all who are really sanctified have one common interest, and are, indeed, living members of one common body, of which our blessed Emmanuel is really the head, and are really animated by one Spirit' (Ryland, 'Letter to Stephen West', 31 March 1814, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 30.117 (January 1873), p 181.

experience of Christ and the Spirit,[44] Fuller seeks shared theological convictions. In the end, this leaves Fuller with considerably less openness to those who differ than Ryland, who not only preached in the pulpits of General Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the Establishment but also supported Wesleyan missionary societies and recommended Arminians to the mission field.

Much the same can be said when Fuller is compared with another contemporary, John Wesley. In his sermon on a 'Catholic Spirit', Wesley speaks to the 'peculiar love which we owe to those that love God'.[45] While he is keen to maintain a special connection to a local congregation, he nevertheless exhorts his hearers to love others who have a 'heart right with God'[46] and who show that right-heartedness both in orthodoxy[47] and orthopraxy.[48] This love, according to Wesley, entails more than well-wishing and a general positivity toward the other; in Wesley's words, it should not be 'in word only, but in deed and in truth'.[49] He then says that the person of a catholic spirit will join with others in the work of God, and 'go on hand in hand'.[50]

While these two contemporaries of Fuller may be said to be more liberal in their catholicity, it should also be recognised that Fuller is not out of line with his Particular Baptist forebears. Indeed, his practice is much closer to the majority of them than is Ryland's. Michael Haykin has made the argument that the Particular Baptist churches were

44 For more on this, see Graham, "All Who Love Our Blessed Redeemer," pp. 157–84.
45 John Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, 10 vols (New York: Harper, 1826), 5, 410.
46 Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', 5, 414.
47 Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', 5, 414. Wesley says that a heart that is right with God will believe such things as God's being, perfections, eternity, immensity, wisdom, power, justice, mercy, and truth. Such a person will also hold to the divinity of Jesus, justification by faith, and the crucifixion.
48 Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', 5, 414–15. Wesley speaks of possessing a faith that is 'filled with the energy of love' and which is 'employed in doing "not thy own will, but the will of him that sent thee"'. He includes a person's labour, business, and conversation in this description of a right heart.
49 Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', 5, 417.
50 Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', 5, 417. He summarises his understanding, saying, 'A man of a catholic spirit is one who […] gives his hand to all whose hearts are right with his heart' (Wesley, 'Catholic Spirit', 5, 419).

seen as 'enclosed gardens', separated from the world.[51] With regard to the majority of such churches and their practice, Haykin is surely correct. In the seventeenth century, Benjamin Keach wrote the following:

> Some part of a wilderness hath been turned into a garden or fruitful vineyard: so God hath out of the people of this world, taken his churches and walled them about, that none of the evil beasts can hurt them: all mankind naturally were alike dry and barren, as a wilderness, and brought forth no good fruit. But God hath separated some of this barren ground, to make lovely gardens for himself to walk and delight in.[52]

In the eighteenth century, John Gill wrote, 'And the church is like an "enclosed" garden; for distinction, being separated by the grace of God, in election, redemption, effectual calling and for protection, being encompassed with the power of God, as a wall about it; and for secrecy, being so closely surrounded, that it is not to be seen nor known by the world.'[53] Fuller's practice, if not his theological reasoning, reflects this enclosed nature.[54]

While Fuller would not have been considered out of step with those who came before him, his views would find decreasing acceptance in the future of Particular Baptist life. One year after Fuller's death, Robert Hall, Jr argued for open communion on the basis of catholic principles, stating,

> But since the Holy Ghost identifies that body with the church, explaining the one by the other, ("for his body's sake, which is the church,") it seems impossible to deny that they are fully entitled to be considered in the catholic

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[51] Michael A.G. Haykin, '"A Garden Inclosed": Worship and Revival among the English Particular Baptists of the Eighteenth Century', Manuscript of Lecture 28 February 2008, Louisville Kentucky, <https://equip.sbts.edu/event/lectures/icw/contemporary-baptist-worship-in-the-18th-century-1680s-1830s/> [accessed 30 January 2021], pp. 2–4.

[52] Benjamin Keach, *Gospel Mysteries Unveiled: or, an Exposition of All the Parables, and Many Express Similitudes, Spoken by Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, 4 vols (London: E. Justins, 1815), 2, 232.

[53] John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, 9 vols (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810), 4, 662; cf. Michael Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, His Friends and His Times* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1994), p. 20.

[54] Fuller, however, is more liberal in his openness than Gill. While Fuller was willing to preach in the pulpits of the Establishment, Gill wrote that the Church of England was 'very corrupt, and not agreeable to the word of God' (John Gill, *The Dissenter's Reasons for Separating from the Church of England* (London: n.p., 1760, p. 3), adding that it 'cannot be a true church of Chrift' (p. 5).

> sense of the term, as members of the christian church. And as the universal church is nothing more than the colective [*sic*] body of the faithful, and differs only from a particular assembly of Christians, as the whole from a part, it is equally impossible to deny that a Pædobaptist society is, in the more limited import of the word, a true church.[55]

Hall's argument rests on understanding 'catholic' as referring to the whole, universal church, and such catholicity, argues Hall, entails a much more robust acceptance of differences than that found in Fuller. If a paedobaptist is a member of the universal church, so goes Hall's reasoning, then societies of them must also be considered as expressions of the true church. Therefore, they ought to be treated as such. The belief in the catholic or universal church leads to an openness to, acceptance of, fellowship and partnership with all who are a part of that church. Subsequent history shows that the catholicity of Ryland and Hall would shape the denomination rather than that of Fuller.[56]

The second question concerns the concept of catholicity itself, as applied to Fuller's thinking and practice. This article earlier referred to the comment of Buckley that Fuller did not possess 'a very catholic heart'.[57] Is Buckley correct? Like Fuller's thoughts on this issue, the answer is not straightforward. If Fuller is allowed to define his own terms, and catholicity is understood as seeking 'the good of the universal church of Christ' and 'rejoic[ing] in the prosperity of every denomination of christians', then there is a sense in which it is proper to call Fuller's thought and practice 'catholic', as he did do those things. Thus, considered on his own terms, it is fair to deem Fuller to have possessed a kind of catholicity.

However, it is worth considering whether Fuller's practice was consistent with his own terms. As noted above, he sets the 'mind of Christ' as an important limitation of his catholicity. According to his own definition of the mind of Christ, Arminians and paedobaptists need not be excluded, yet Arminians did not enjoy full partnership with Fuller, and he did not welcome paedobaptists to the Lord's table. He was, thus, inconsistent within his own definition.

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55 Hall, *Terms of Communion*, p. 105.

56 Interestingly, Raymond Brown has argued that it was Fuller's modification of Calvinism that allowed this merger to occur (Raymond Brown, *English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 112).

57 Buckley, 'Notes of Visits', p. 147.

This then raises a final question: was Fuller's practice simply denominationalism without party spirit, rather than a version of catholicity?[58] If 'denominationalism' refers to a commitment to one's own denomination over against others, then Fuller's restrictions are more than mere denominationalism. Ryland was committed to the same denomination as Fuller, and sought to advance its interests as well, but that did not bar him from extending his partnerships to those outside of it.[59] Fuller's limitations were less about denomination and more about theological commitments, as he was concerned more about doctrinal sentiments than denomination. Indeed, in one letter, Fuller explicitly denies what might be called 'denominationalism'. Writing to the pastor of the Baptist church in New York, John Williams, Fuller thanks Williams for the kindness that the Americans had shown to unnamed BMS missionaries on their way to Bengal.[60] Fuller explained to Williams the importance that he attached to this particular mission, saying,

> We consider the miſsion to Bengal as the most favourable symptom attending our denomination. It confirms what has been for some time with me an important principle, that where any denomination, congregation, (or individual) seeks only its own, it will be disappointed: but where it seeks the kingdom of God and his righteousneſs, its own prosperity will be among the things that will be added unto it.[61]

His interest was more about doctrinal purity than denominational protectionism.

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[58] With thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this phrase.

[59] To make matters more complex, according to John Ryland, Jr, the 'Particular Baptist' denomination contained some Arminian churches among them (John Ryland, 'Letter to Unknown Recipient', 26 February 1806, Yale University Library). Ryland notes that there were ten or twelve such churches that leaned toward Arminianism.

[60] Based on the date of the letter, these missionaries were most likely Richard Mardon, John Biss, William Moore, and Joshua Rowe, along with their wives (Francis Augustus Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society, from 1792 to 1842*, 2 vols (London: T. Ward, 1842), 1, 137).

[61] Andrew Fuller, 'Letter to John Williams', 1 August 1804, American Baptist Historical Society Archive. This letter has been published several times: Andrew Fuller, 'Interesting Intelligence from India', *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*,1, no. 4 (May 1805), pp. 97–98; Leighton and Mornay Williams, eds., *Serampore Letters: Being the Unpublished Correspondence of William Carey and Others with John Williams* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1892); and Michael A.G. Haykin, *The Armies of the Lamb: The Spirituality of Andrew Fuller* (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2001), pp. 193–195.

Conclusion

Fuller's catholicity was nuanced. It possessed limitations that kept it from being expressed in significant ways. While he could support the efforts of those with whom he differed, he did so from a distance, never entering into a full partnership with them, nor embracing them fully as a fellow believer at the table of the Lord. His concept of a union of sentiments demonstrates that he could not unite with those with whom he truly differed, thus showing that his attitude was shaped less by a robust catholicity and more by a tolerance based on an unwillingness to violate another's conscience.[62] While conscience-based tolerance is important, it is, arguably, not necessarily catholic.

He was open in his love for all those who called on the name of Christ and rejoiced in their prosperity, but he was careful not to cast his net too wide, as he also describes approach to union with other Christians in contrast to what he has heard others promote, saying,

> I have heard a great deal of *union without sentiment*; but I can neither feel nor perceive any such thing, either in myself or others. All the union that I can feel or perceive, arises from *a similarity of views and pursuits*. No two persons may think exactly alike; but so far as they are unlike, so far there is a want of union.[63]

This speaks clearly to the distinctions to be found in Fuller's thought: unity is on a sliding scale of agreement as to the mind of Christ, and the greater the unity, the greater the equality in partnership enjoyed. For Fuller, if there was sufficient agreement between believers, then full (or

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[62] The literature on 'tolerance' is voluminous. Just a selection of more recent works reveals a wide array of approaches to its history and theory: Teresa M. Bijan, *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017); John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (London: Routledge, 2000); Jakob De Roover and S.N. Balagangadhara, 'John Locke, Christian Liberty, and the Predicament of Liberal Toleration', *Political Theory*, 36, no. 4 (August 2008): 523–549; Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter, *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Marjoka van Doorn, 'The Nature of Tolerance and the Social Circumstances in Which It Emerges', *Current Sociology Review*, 62, no. 6 (2014): 905–927; Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Robert Louis Wilken, *Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2019); and Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005). Future research into the influence of the Enlightenment on Fuller's thinking would no doubt prove fruitful.

[63] Fuller, 'Agreement in Sentiment', *The Complete Works*, 3, 491.

a fuller) fellowship and partnership could be extended and fostered. However, in the absence of such agreement, Fuller, while not willing to treat other believers with indifference, would not extend the fullness of fellowship to them.

General Baptist 'Primitivism', the Radical Reformation, and Matthew Caffyn: A Response to Kegan A. Chandler

Stephen R. Holmes

Revd Dr Stephen Holmes is a Baptist minister who presently serves as Head of the School of Divinity, and as Principal of St Mary's College, in the University of St Andrews, Scotland.
sh80@st-andrews.ac.uk | https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4222-8209
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Abstract:
Kegan A. Chandler recently argued that the Anabaptist movement was in part defined by an acceptance of anti-Trinitarianism, which heritage became a part of General Baptist life from the beginning; on this basis he locates Matthew Caffyn as an authentic representative of the General Baptist movement. I argue that Chandler's historical reconstruction of the Radical Reformation is flawed, being based on some errors of fact and some misreadings, and that most Anabaptists, and all early General Baptists, were unreflectively orthodox in their Trinitarianism. I suggest however that the case of Caffyn suggests both a willingness on the part of the denomination to regard orthopraxy as important alongside orthodoxy, and a degree of suspicion of non-biblical standards of orthodoxy.

Keywords:
Matthew Caffyn; Christology; Trinity; General Baptists.

Introduction

In 2019, this journal carried an article by Kegan A. Chandler, arguing for the rehabilitation of Matthew Caffyn (1628–1714) within General Baptist history, as an authentic representative of a native (General) Baptist tradition, rather than as an alien intrusion of some form of modernism.[1] He argued that we should view Caffyn 'not [as] the agent of some non-Baptist philosophy, but […] [as] a Reformer committed to that side of the General Baptist coin which had always reflected the Radical, not the Magisterial, approach to Christology and to religious freedom'.[2]

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[1] Kegan A. Chandler, 'Unorthodox Christology in General Baptist History: The Legacy of Matthew Caffyn', *JEBS* 19, no. 2 (2019): 140–151.
[2] Chandler, 'Unorthodox Christology', p. 151.

I have considerable sympathy with Chandler's desire to locate Caffyn within a Baptist tradition; and also with his insistence that the right lens through which to read Caffyn is absolutely not 'eighteenth-century rationalism'; that said, his paper makes a number of errors of historical fact and interpretation, leading to conclusions that are in danger of distorting the tradition he is trying to locate Caffyn within. In dialogue with Chandler, I want to offer here a different sketch of what it is to be Baptist, one that is more historically informed, but which is still capacious of Matthew Caffyn.

Constructing Historical Movements

The quotation of Chandler's summary above already indicates the organising distinction of his historical reconstruction: he proposes that there are discernible 'Radical' and 'Magisterial' strands to the Reformation heritage, both of which play into Baptist life. Much of his article is, in one way or another, a defence of this thesis, via a series of narrations of history that seek to demonstrate it, in the wider Reformation heritage, and then in General Baptist life.[3] Of course, thus stated the thesis is unexceptional, but it becomes more interesting, and more difficult, when he defines one of the terms. The 'Radical' strand, on his telling, is not just capacious of, but exemplified by, Caffyn's unorthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and so he argues that an unwillingness to commit to Nicene and Chalcedonian orthodoxy is native and normal in a Baptist, or at least a General Baptist, tradition.

Chandler, that is, offers a reconstruction of the Radical Reformation, and particularly of the Anabaptist, and early Baptist movements, in which anti-Nicene theology is both normal and normative. This is a striking claim, fairly thoroughly revising current historiography of these movements if true. Unfortunately, Chandler's historical claims in the essay do not all withstand scrutiny, and, as a result, his broader reconstructive work is at least called into question. In this section, then, I will first indicate the problems in Chandler's historical work, and why they fail to support his reconstruction, and then

[3] These sections fill pp. 142–150 of Chandler's article.

consider whether a better case for his position may nonetheless be made.

Chandler's first historical section (142–144)[4] looks at the origins and development of the Reformation, arguing that there is a distinction to be made between the 'Magisterial' Reformers, who looked to return to Augustine, and the 'Radical' Reformers, who wanted to go back behind Augustine,[5] to a time when the Christian movement had not accepted Nicene Trinitarianism.

Two features of this are worthy of note. The first is the construction of what Chandler calls 'primitivism'. This is nowhere defined in his paper, but seems to be identified with this invocation of a pre-Augustinian (or pre-Nicene) Christianity. Chandler lists 'primitivism' and a 'commitment to being scriptural' as two separate features of Baptist identity (141), so clearly 'primitivism' for him is not merely identified with biblicism. Chandler later suggests commonalities between Smyth's Christology and that of Valentinus (145) — this point is not elaborated upon, and I confess that I am at a loss to know what to make of it[6] — but it presumably implies that by 'primitivism' Chandler means second-century theology, rather than the fourth/fifth-century Nicene/Augustinian theology championed by the magisterial reformers. This would of course establish the latitudinarian approach to Trinitarian and christological dogma for which Chandler is arguing; whether it is a plausible characteristic of the Radical Reformation, or indeed of the seventeenth-century General Baptist movement, is a more difficult question.

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[4] For ease of discussion, all references to Chandler's article will be given parenthetically in the text.

[5] The point is stated in basically these terms on p. 144.

[6] Perhaps Chandler assumes that Valentinus did write the *Gospel of Truth* (as, e.g., King has argued: K. L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 154), and that the positions attributed to him by Irenaeus in *Ad. Haer.* I.1–8 are all simply false (which I confess I cannot find any recent scholar arguing)? On these conditions, it would be merely implausible, rather than utterly ridiculous, to compare Valentinus with Smyth. That said, it surely does not need stating that Smyth did not dream of a perfect Aeon emitting a Pleroma of thirty lesser aeons, comprised of a tetras of two syzygies that expands to an Ogdad, etc., but this is what we know with confidence that Valentinus taught, and his Christology can only be made sense of within this context.

Obviously the 'biblicism' that Chandler identifies is a feature of both the Anabaptist and Baptist movements; Chandler offers no evidence, however, of either group appealing to pre-Nicene patristic movements as examples, and it is hard to think of scholarship that makes the idea plausible. Baptists and Anabaptists alike wished to return to the New Testament church, not to the church of the second century (or whenever).[7]

The second feature is the suggestion that the 'Radical' wing of the Reformation was not accepting of Nicene Trinitarianism. Various well-known anti-Trinitarians from the Reformation period are named — Servetus, of course — but the key argument is an attempt to link the Anabaptist strand of the Reformation to an openness to anti-Trinitarianism, through (1) a reading of the Schleitheim Confession; (2) an invocation of Lelio Sozzini, described as an 'Italian Anabaptist and unitarian theologian' (p. 143); and (3) a reference to the 1550 Council of Venice.

Unfortunately, none of these three points are convincing. On the first, Chandler asserts that the Schleitheim Confession 'appears to identify the one God as the Father, not as the Trinity, and habitually distinguishes between "God" and "Christ", and even refers to "God and Christ",' although he follows this with an acknowledgement that the Confession may not have been 'consciously unorthodox' (142). This is at best misleading: the Confession treats only the points at dispute between the Swiss Brethren and the Reformers, and so the fact that there is no article on the Trinity, or on the Person of Christ, is strong evidence that the Brethren were happily orthodox, and in simple

7 There is, to be sure, recent Baptist and Anabaptist writing that regards the church pre-Constantine as normative at some level (it is a fairly common move in defences of pacifism, e.g.; I myself have invoked it in discussing episcopacy, pointing to the ancient bishop as the eucharistic minister of a single gathered congregation); I cannot think of a single example of a Baptist or Anabaptist writer prior to (say) 1950 appealing to the subapostolic church as normative, however. There is also an older tradition of finding an alternative apostolic succession (the most obvious example is Landmarkianism, seeking an unbroken chain of baptised believers from the apostles to the present day). This of course includes an appeal to second-century churches (although often enough it is to the Montanists, not to the Catholics), but it equally appeals to later groups — the Donatists in Augustine's day, various condemned medieval sects, and so forth — and in any case the appeal is not to normativity so much as to a claim of minimal faithfulness in the practice of believers' baptism (by immersion).

agreement with the Reformed, on these doctrinal points. The Nicene Creed, of course, speaks of 'one God, the Father almighty', and so the language Chandler claims as evidence of an unorthodox Christology is in fact merely an echo of the most orthodox Trinitarian theology possible. As to the suggestion that the phrasing was unconsciously unorthodox, the main author of the Confession was Michael Sattler, who had been a Roman Catholic priest before his Anabaptist conversion, and had been formed by the Benedictine tradition of his monastery, St Peters of the Black Forest. It is almost inconceivable that he would have been ignorant of basic Trinitarian theology, or would have lapsed into unconsciously unorthodox expressions. On top of all the textual evidence above, I note that we have extensive writings from Sattler and several other prominent Swiss Brethren, and that there is no indication anywhere in that corpus of any disquiet with the doctrine of the Trinity. There is overwhelming historical evidence that the Swiss Brethren were orthodox on the doctrine of the Trinity, and Chandler's (mis)readings of Schleitheim offer no reason to question or doubt that evidence.

Chandler's second claim is that the father of Unitarianism Lelio Sozzini was an Anabaptist; unfortunately, this is demonstrably just wrong. Lelio was (briefly) in contact with an Anabaptist group in Vicenza in 1546 (we know this because some years later one of that group denounced him to the Venetian Inquisition), but there is no evidence that he adopted their views on baptism, and fairly extensive evidence that he did not. The Inquisitorial condemnation asserts his anti-Trinitarianism, but does not associate him with denying infant baptism, implying that there was no suggestion that he did; further, his later close associations with (*inter alia*) Calvin, Bullinger, and Melanchthon make it almost impossible to believe that he opposed paedobaptism. There is also positive evidence for his acceptance of paedobaptism: in a 1549 letter to Calvin he queried the validity of baptisms performed outside the Reformed churches, demonstrating that he was accepting of infant baptism, although concerned about the sanctity of the celebrant.[8] Also, in his published 1555 Confession of

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[8] Lelio Sozzini, 'Lelio Sozzini a Giovanni Calvino (Basilea, 25 luglio 1549)', in Lelio Sozzini, *Opere: Studi e Testi per la Storia Religiosa del Cinquecento* 1, ed. by Antonio Rotondò (Firenze: Leo S.

Faith, he explicitly condemned 'all the errors of the Catabaptists'.[9] Fausto Sozzini certainly denied infant baptism (indeed, pretty much denied baptism *in toto*), but it seems absolutely clear that his uncle did not, regardless of Chandler's assertion.

The 1550 'Council of Venice' was indeed a gathering of Anabaptists that took anti-Trinitarian positions; we do not know in any real detail who was there, just that about thirty congregations from northern Italy were represented. Italian Anabaptism was not in close contact with the more numerous and influential Swiss, German, and Dutch traditions, and was clearly pursuing its own, rather different course. As a result, casting Venice 1550 as somehow representative of the wider movement is deeply problematic; it was a rather local and limited event, which was unknown rather than repudiated in the wider tradition.

The obvious contrast here is with Münster: virtually every later Anabaptist knew of the errors of Jan Matthijs and Jan van Leyden, and vigorously repudiated them because they brought the movement into disrepute; there is no doubt that they would have been equally vigorous in repudiating the denial of Trinitarian orthodoxy at Venice for exactly the same reasons had they known about it. Again, Münster is central to every condemnation of the Anabaptists for a century and more after the events; it is impossible to imagine that controversialists who knew of the Venetian doctrines would not have employed them with similar vigour — but no-one did. It seems virtually certain, then, that the Venetian council disappeared immediately into obscurity amongst both the Anabaptists and their opponents. It cannot, therefore, be taken as definitive of the movement, as Chandler tries to do.

George Williams's classic account of the Radical Reformation proposed three strands: Rationalists; Spiritualists; and Evangelical Anabaptists.[10] Historical work since has shown that Williams's

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Olschki, 1986), pp. 153–157. For the relevant point, see particularly pp. 155–6 in the 'post scriptum'.

[9] '[…] necnon etiam Catabaptistarum errores omnes fugio […]' (Leilo Sozzini, 'Confessio Fidei' in *Opere*, ed. by Rotondò, pp. 95–100, p. 96).

[10] George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), see pp. xxiv–xxv for a statement of this theme, which is then argued throughout the book.

(understandable and apologetic) desire to keep these strands completely separate was somewhat hopeful, but it is the Spiritualist strand, not the Rationalist one, that generally mixes with the Anabaptists. There is a small anti-Trinitarian fringe to the Reformation in the middle of the sixteenth century, exemplified by Servetus; its significance is rather amplified by contemporary hysteria, but even so, it had very little overlap with the Anabaptist movement.

The second historical section of Chandler's paper looks at the beginnings of the Baptist movement in Amsterdam in 1609, and focuses in on John Smyth's 'espousal of Hoffmanite (Anabaptist) Christology' (145), suggesting that Thomas Helwys strongly opposed him in this, 'finally breaking from him around 1610' (145). Chandler suggests that this debate represents in microcosm his 'Radical'/'Magisterial' split, and so locates that division at the beginnings of General Baptist life; he further suggests that there is a line to be drawn from Smyth to Caffyn, a line that establishes the presence of an anti-Trinitarian strand in General Baptist theology throughout the seventeenth century.

Unfortunately, again, the historical evidence does not support his reconstruction. There is some older scholarly debate, but since Jason Lee's 2003 monograph (or his 1999 doctoral thesis on which it was based) it has been fairly clear that Smyth never adopted a heavenly flesh Christology; rather, he moved to a place of regarding it as wrong, but not a barrier to communion.[11] Further, as is clear from Lee's reconstruction (indeed, simply from the dates of the key texts), the controversy is entirely wrapped up with Smyth's decision to join the Waterlander Mennonites, and Helwys's decision not to. It happens that the Waterlanders, taught by Menno, held to a heavenly flesh Christology, and so in joining them, Smyth had at least to concede that this was an acceptable position, even if wrong, which is what he did.

Standard accounts of this dispute, however, make nothing of Christology: Smyth and Helwys were Separatists, endlessly and profoundly concerned with questions of ecclesiology, and what renders a church, and a sacrament, valid; that is what led them both to finally

[11] Jason K. Lee, *The Theology of John Smyth: Puritan, Separatist, Baptist, Mennonite* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), chapter 7; see particularly the summary statement on p. 229: 'Smyth's acceptance of the heavenly flesh theory is questionable at best.'

repudiate infant baptism. They were thrown into a quandary by this repudiation, of course: if their own baptisms as infants were invalid, where could they receive a valid baptism from? Smyth resorted to se-baptism (and then baptised Helwys and the rest of the congregation) but when he met the Waterlanders he was convicted: if they were a true church of Christ, he should have sought baptism from them, rather than performing a somewhat bizarre rite on himself.

These are the well-attested reasons for Smyth's joining the Waterlanders; Helwys refrained from following because, although they held a true doctrine of baptism, there were several other doctrines — certainly including Christology — on which he regarded them as in error. To join the Waterlanders, Smyth had to at least insist that their Christology was not unacceptable, which he duly did, although he never committed to it himself.

Given this history, Chandler's attempts to suggest that Christology was the focus of the split between Smyth and Helwys seem doomed to failure: Smyth never in fact adopted the doctrine Chandler ascribes to him, but merely made space for it; his motives are all ecclesiological, and his minor Christological accommodation is explained entirely by his ecclesiological convictions. Chandler's telling of this story is in danger of being misleading; as a result, his broader claim concerning seventeenth-century General Baptist theology appears very weak: if he had both Smyth at the start, and Caffyn at the end of the century as witnesses to an acceptance of heterodoxy, as he claims, something might be made of that. However, Smyth is boringly orthodox, and so Chandler is left with one data point, Caffyn — and even if he is right about Caffyn, one data point cannot establish a trend.

Chandler's third historical vignette (147–150) concerns the early General Baptist confessional documents. He acknowledges that the flurry of doctrinal symbols offered by Smyth and Helwys around 1610 were all confessionally Trinitarian, but argues that, as we move to the middle of the seventeenth century, the published confessional documents were far less so. If one merely reads the texts published in William Lumpkin's compendium of Baptist confessions, without any context, this point might appear reasonable; any serious consideration of the context, however, will defeat it.

The three texts Chandler appeals to are the 1651 'Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations'; the 1654 'True Gospel Faith'; and the 1660 'Standard Confession'. On the 1651 text, he comments that the 'triadic sections are, upon close inspection, rather vague' (148). This is fair comment, but then the whole document is 'rather vague' doctrinally, emphasising much more ethical duties. Article 20, which contains the 'triadic statements', asserts in part, 'God giveth gifts, and the Son doth the same, also the Holy Ghost, So they are one.' The argument that unity of operation implies unity of essence is crucial to Nicene Trinitarianism (it is, for example, the whole argument of Gregory of Nyssa's much-anthologised short text *ad Ablabus*, 'That we should not think of saying there are three Gods'); I cannot prove that the framers of the 'Faith and Practice […]' were aware of this — in fact I presume that they were not, given the doctrinal naivety of the text — but the fact that they instinctively reproduced a central Nicene argument in framing their doctrine is surely not insignificant.

Chandler comments on the 1654 text that 'explicit trinitarianism appears to have all but disappeared from formal Baptist confession'. This assumes that the text is normative, of course, which it obviously is not,[12] but it also rather badly misrepresents the text, which is clearly a studied attempt to define doctrine using biblical language; as a result, there is indeed no stated doctrine of the Trinity, but the first article on the One God cites Biblical texts whose subject is Jesus, and so the document asserts, tacitly and unreflectively, the straightforward identification of Jesus with God — that it does so tacitly and unreflectively is compelling evidence that Trinitarian questions were not even on the radar of the authors, who implicitly assumed an orthodox Trinitarianism without imagining it could be questioned.

The comments on the 1660 Standard Confession are the most egregious. Chandler asserts that '[t]he one God [in the first article] is not the Trinity, but the Father, and Jesus is not mentioned until the confession's third section. The Holy Spirit is not brought up until the seventh section' (148), all of which is just to say that Articles I–VII of the Confession follow the shape of the Nicene Creed (no doubt

12 Or why the need to write the Standard Confession just six years later?

deliberately; even a casual reader will spot the verbal similarities at key points). The Creed calls us to assert that 'I believe in one God, the Father almighty […] and in one Lord Jesus Christ who […] and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who […]'. The Standard Confession follows exactly this pattern. I assume Chandler does not wish to try to argue that the Nicene Creed is anti-Nicene; if he does not, however, then his comments on the shape of the 1660 Standard Confession have no validity.

Further, it would appear that the framers of the confession were aware of such a possible criticism, and sought to head it off: Article VII, on the Holy Spirit, pauses after its first sentence to quote 1 John 5:7 ('there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, the Holy Spirit, and these three are one').[13] It is hard to give any account of the reason for the inclusion of this text at this point other than an awareness on the part of the writers (who included Caffyn, or so I have argued[14]) that the credal shape might be heard as failing to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, and an urgent desire on their part to exclude that interpretation.

To summarise: Chandler tries to demonstrate his thesis by appeal to early Anabaptism, by close examination of the relationship between Smyth and Helwys, and by an examination of General Baptist symbolic documents; all three arguments fail when tested against well-documented historical facts; he has demonstrated no historical basis for his thesis.

Of course, he might be right, even if his presented arguments are weak. I have already suggested that Williams's account of the Radical Reformation might offer him a way out, but then demonstrated that it unfortunately does not. I confess that I am at a loss to suggest other moves; it may be my blindness, but in the absence of more plausible suggestions, I assert that both the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, and the General Baptists, at least till 1660, recognised and understood the claims of classical Trinitarianism, and were comfortable with them. To

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[13] Modern Biblical criticism has of course demonstrated that this verse is inauthentic, but it was received as biblical by seventeenth-century General Baptists.

[14] Stephen R. Holmes, 'A note concerning the text, editions, and authorship of the 1660 Standard Confession of the General Baptists', *Baptist Quarterly* 47 (2016): 2–7.

the extent that Chandler's reconstruction denies this, it can be assumed to be wrong.

Caffyn's doctrinal views

Chandler does not particularly offer an account of Caffyn's thought, relying essentially on Leon McBeth for the judgement that he was 'unitarian' (140–2). I do not in fact think it is fair to call Caffyn 'unitarian'. His doctrine of the Trinity is hard to reconstruct, needing to be pieced together from the accusations of his opponents and circumstantial details,[15] but (as I shall argue) there is fairly strong evidence that he was opposed to Socinianism, and at least some evidence that his problems with classical Trinitarianism were more terminological than doctrinal. He was certainly heterodox, in the sense of being unwilling to subscribe to standard confessional formulae; he was also happy to associate with those (such as Daniel Allen) who were clearly Arian.[16]

That said, in 1692 Caffyn was an active member of a General Assembly that condemned Socinianism unreservedly and disciplined Richard Newton of Shrewsbury for teaching it,[17] and, although he was repeatedly accused of believing 'that the Son of God was not of the uncreated nature of the Father, nor of the created nature of his mother' throughout the General Assemblies of the 1690s, he was every time acquitted, suggesting that he was able to convince those tasked with judging him that this was not a fair summary of his views, whatever they were.[18]

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[15] The best account at present is probably Clint C. Bass, *The Caffynite Controversy* (Oxford: Regent's Park College, 2020), pp. 99–104. I am not wholly convinced by Bass's account, however, and suspect that Caffyn was more able to claim orthodoxy than Bass proposes. Some of the reasons for this judgement are indicated below.

[16] Allen expounds and defends his views in *The Moderate Trinitarian…* (London: Mary Fabian, 1699). He refuses the label 'Arian' (p. 10), although his doctrine would seem to fit it. He claims in passing not to know what 'Socinians' believe (p. v), although indicates his instincts would be irenic, whatever they believe.

[17] W.T. Whitley, ed., *Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England*, 2 vols (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1909), I, 33, 37–8.

[18] Some recent writers on Caffyn put this down to some sort of dissembling on his part (see, e.g., Curtis Freeman, *Contesting Catholicity: Theology for Other Baptists* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), p. 154, where he casts Caffyn as 'a master of theological obfuscation' and p. 157,

The distinction made in seventeenth-century England between Arianism and Socinianism might be relevant here: Socinians believed that Jesus was merely a man, not in any way pre-existent, and so that there was no 'incarnation'; Arians believed in a Son, a spiritual, perhaps even divine, being who became incarnate, but who was not of one substance, or co-eternal, with the Father. It seems plausible from the evidence we have to suppose that Caffyn was not prepared to break fellowship over the homoousion (he appears to have regarded it as a difficult doctrine to understand, I suspect because he understood 'person' and 'substance' in a broadly cartesian way, which does in fact make the doctrine impossible to hold without incoherence[19]), but was confessionally committed to some claim concerning the deity of the Son.

If all this is right, then Caffyn, far from being 'unitarian', was actively involved in repudiating that doctrine, and disciplining those who held it, at least in 1692.[20] Christopher Cooper's contemporaneous account of the troubles in General Baptist life is directed at 'Socinians'

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n. 61, where Caffyn 'was a skilled rhetorician who cleverly eluded his accusers […] and […] escaped conviction by managing […] to avoid plain language about what he did not believe'.). This seems to me to be an extraordinarily difficult proposal given that everything else we know of Caffyn's career and character suggests that he was a ready, even eager, controversialist. Alex Carver's alternative suggestion, that Caffyn survived because he had a loyal block of supporters who were willing to give him the benefit of the doubt almost regardless of the evidence, is more interesting, and I shall return to it later. (Alex Carver, 'Matthew Caffyn Revisited: Cooperation, Christology, and Controversy in the Life of an Influential Seventeenth-Century Baptist', *Baptist Quarterly* 47 (2016): 44–64.)

[19] As John Biddle, the father of English anti-Trinitarianism, pointed out succinctly: '[b]y Person I understand, as Philosophers do, *suppositum intelligens*, that is an intellectual substance compleat […]' (John Biddle, *XII Arguments Drawn out of Holy Scripture…* (London: [n. pub], 1647), pp. 2–3, marginal note). If a 'person' is simply an 'intellectual substance', then the number of persons must be identical to the number of substances in any non-material reality, and so 'three persons, one substance' is obvious nonsense.

[20] I suspect, on the basis of his footnote 18, that Chandler wants to use the term 'unitarian' capaciously to include all who deny the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, in which case Caffyn probably is included. The distinction between Socinian and Arian views is real and important, however — as I have suggested, the evidence indicates that it was a vital distinction for Caffyn. Further, in the late seventeenth century the word 'unitarian' referred to the Socinian view specifically (so *OED*, *s.v.* 'Unitarian'; see the example from Nye). In what follows, I shall use 'unitarian' in this specific sense, and 'anti-Trinitarian' to refer capaciously to all non-Nicene views. (Allen, to be fair, is prepared to accept the label 'unitarian' for his (Arian) views, *Moderate Trinitarian*, p. 10, but this usage is eccentric in the time.)

and 'Cafenists' (*sic*);[21] suggesting that he was aware of different positions, although as he warms to his theme, his accusations become less specific, if more entertaining; eventually Caffyn's doctrine is described as 'nothing but a Fardle of Mahometanism, Arianism, Socinianism, and Quakerism'![22]

That said, Caffyn was clearly unhappy with classical Trinitarianism, at least in its standard formulations,[23] and the fact that this did not exclude him from a national role in the General Baptist Assemblies of the 1690s is remarkable, and carries implications for narrating Baptist identity, as Chandler sees. The distinctions I have just been making, however, show that Chandler's claim that 'General Baptist fundamentals did not include a belief in orthodox Christology or the doctrine of the Trinity' (150) is at least misleading: the General Assemblies of the 1690s disciplined a Socinian, and condemned the formula that 'the Son of God was not of the uncreated nature of his Father', which certainly seems like a straightforward repudiation of a denial of the Nicene homoousion.[24]

The controversy they fell into — and it was a serious one, leading to several years of national schism — did not concern any acceptance of Trinitarian deviation, but whether Caffyn's views should have been considered to be implicated in their repudiation of error. If my reconstruction of Caffyn's hesitations above is correct, the General Assembly in effect, and not without strong criticism, judged that Caffyn's protestations that he did not really understand the traditional formulae were genuine, and further judged that, nonetheless, his views

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21 Christopher Cooper, *The Vail Turn'd Aside…* (London: printed for the author and sold by J. Marshal, 1701), pp. 14–15.

22 Cooper, *Vail Turn'd*, p. 110; this comes at the end of a classic genealogy of heresy, beginning with Simon Magus, and culminating in Caffyn, who is cast as heir to every error ever made in Christian history.

23 I have argued before that there is a remarkably stable doctrine of the Trinity for most of Christian history. See my *The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012).

24 In 1698 — in the middle of the schism, and at the height of the controversy, the General Assembly also unanimously condemned the proposition that 'the ffather Distinct or Seperate from the Word and the Holy Ghost is the Most High God' (Whitley, *Minutes*, I.53).

were conformable to the traditional formulae.[25] He was accepted because he was judged to be a good Trinitarian, albeit one who chose to express the doctrine in novel ways.[26] Contra Chandler, General Baptist fundamentals in the 1690s demonstrably include 'orthodox Christology' and 'the doctrine of the Trinity', but offer, albeit controversially within the movement, some latitude in how this is expressed.

Liberty of Conscience

Chandler briefly notes the long-standing Baptist commitment to liberty of conscience, but unfortunately again rather misrepresents it, citing Stefan Zweig to the effect that a commitment to liberty of conscience (specifically, the right to interpret the Scriptures personally) is incompatible with an account of heresy (150). This is not, of course, the shape of early General Baptist thought, which combined an insistence that no-one should be compelled to believe or practise anything by the state, with an (often astonishingly) narrow account of the limits of church fellowship.

The classic example is Helwys's *Mistery of Iniquity*,[27] which is essentially an argument that his little fellowship of a dozen or so believers are the only true Christians in the world, and that everyone else is destined for eternal damnation; at the same time, in treating of the kingship of Christ, he writes the endlessly quoted lines,

> […] our lord the king hath no more power over their consciences then over ours, and this is none at all: for our lord the king is but an earthly king, and

[25] There is some evidence that this was Caffyn's line of defence on at least one occasion. In a dispute in Chatham, Kent, in 1701, Caffyn was charged that he had repeatedly asserted '[t]hat Christ was not in any Sense the most High God'. Cooper (who is transparently partisan against Caffyn, it must be noted) states that he did not deny saying this, but tried to explain that it was a claim compatible with orthodoxy (Cooper, *Vail Turn'd*, p. 132).

[26] In the events around Exeter that led to the famous 1719 Salters' Hall Synod, John Cox offered precisely this defence of his own position. He says of his congregants 'I told them that I was no *Arian*; and then mention'd what I believed concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the words of the sacred scripture, which I thought were most proper to express the true sense of a doctrine that entirely depended on a divine revelation, especially since this doctrine was own'd to be ineffable and incomprehensible.' (James Peirce, *The Western Inquisition…* (London: John Clark, 1720), p. 181.)

[27] Thomas Helwys, *Short Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity* (1612) [original publication, n.p., n.pub.].

> he hath no aucthority as a king but in earthy causes […] mens religion to God is betwixt God and themselves; the king shall not answere for it, neither may the king be judg betwene God and man. Let them be heretikes, Turcks, Jewes, or what soever it apperteynes not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure […].[28]

A properly Baptist commitment to liberty of conscience, that is, is not a claim that people should not be judged for their beliefs, but an insistence that the only competent judge is Christ, who commands, in his sovereign power, all people everywhere to repent and to live according to his laws. There is much doctrinal innovation, formulation, and discussion in seventeenth-century General Baptist life, but it is emphatically not directed towards establishing a broad doctrinal latitude; rather, it intends a discovery of truth which will then be insisted on as a condition of fellowship.

Baptist Identity

As I indicated, at the beginning of this essay, I share Chandler's desire to find a way of narrating Baptist identity that is able to include Caffyn's story. I have given reasons above for not finding Chandler's own version convincing; what might be offered in its place?

The answer, I suspect, depends on how we reconstruct the reasons for Caffyn's repeated exonerations by the General Assembly in in 1690s. I have already suggested that we have to put to one side the idea that it was down to him dissembling; that was simply not in his character. I have proposed two further suggestions in passing: that he was in fact able to convince the Assembly that his views were orthodox, if expressed in novel terms; and Alex Carver's proposal that he had a loyal block of support. To these we may add a third, proposed by Clint C. Bass in his recent book on Caffyn, that the various forms of trial Caffyn was set were, by accident or (more probably) design, stacked to make it easy for him to acquit himself.[29]

None of these ideas are *prima facie* implausible; more significantly, nor are they exclusive. By the 1690s, Caffyn was an elder

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[28] Helwys, *Mistery*, p. 69.
[29] Bass, *The Caffynite Controversy*, see, e.g., pp. 55–6.

statesman of the denomination; he had planted may churches, contended for the faith in public against Quakers and others, and several times served prison sentences for his faithful service; it is not hard to see why there should be a degree of loyalty to him. This might easily manifest itself in a willingness to arrange tests to give him the best chance possible, and in his being allowed the benefit of the doubt where a decision was disputable.

It would be possible to read this cynically: an example of an 'old boys' club' protecting its own, and perhaps this was not wholly absent. That said, Paul was not afraid to claim that the churches he had planted owed him a certain loyalty, even in dispute (2 Cor 10, e.g.), and the respect due to the martyr who had stood firm under persecution and suffered is a common theme in the Christian tradition. This would point us towards accounts of Baptist identity in which a history of faithful service, of successful evangelism, and perhaps particularly of suffering for the faith, was relevant to determining someone's commitment or otherwise to that faith, even if some of what they had said was troubling — an account of Baptist identity where orthopraxy matters alongside orthodoxy.

What of Caffyn's unwillingness to subscribe to the standard formulae? I have already mentioned in passing the 1719 Salters' Hall Synod, where most of the General Baptists (and most of the Presbyterians) argued that subscription to non-biblical Trinitarian formulae should not be required of pastors;[30] this was also the decision taken by the General Assembly in 1697.[31] Caffyn had served several prison sentences under the Clarendon Code, essentially for his unwillingness to subscribe to the 39 Articles, and so perhaps had more reason than most to be unhappy about enforced subscription to extra-biblical standards.

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[30] Of course, the standard telling of later history suggests, not without reason, that this was not a happy position to take (in that most of the churches of non-subscribing pastors did in fact become unitarian in the decades following the synod). The formulae on the table were Article 1 of the 39 Articles of the Church of England, and questions 5 and 6 of the Shorter Westminster Catechism.

[31] Whitley, ed., *Minutes*, I.51.

For reasons not unrelated to the Clarendon Code, British Baptist life has developed a certain reserve concerning doctrinal statements, whilst maintaining a surprisingly energetic commitment to a broadly defined doctrinal orthodoxy. The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Baptist Union of Wales, and the Baptist Union of Scotland, all have remarkably brief Declarations of Principle, each of which essentially insist on congregational governance, believers' baptism by immersion, and the missionary imperative, and little else. These three denominations, however, have remained more committed to orthodoxy than almost any other historic denominations in the United Kingdom. If this uneasiness with enforced formulae of subscription is also a part of an account of Baptist identity that is capacious of Matthew Caffyn, then the continuing commitment to a broad doctrinal orthodoxy must also be recognised. I make no judgement in this essay as to whether Caffyn merely stumbled over proposed formulae, or whether he genuinely denied the doctrine of the Trinity; it seems clear from the historical data that the strand of the General Baptist tradition which was willing to welcome him judged that the former was the case, and so conceded nothing of orthodoxy except its insistence on certain extra-biblical formulae.

William A. Fetler in Exile, 1914–1957

Mary Raber

Dr Mary Raber is an editor, historical researcher, and lecturer affiliated with the Mennonite Mission Network (Elkhart, Indiana USA) and Odessa Theological Seminary (Ukraine). She received a PhD in history from IBTS (University of Wales) in 2015 and at present lives in St. Louis, Missouri (USA).
maryraber@gmail.com | https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4170-7611
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Abstract:
The Baptist preacher William A. Fetler (1883–1957) made important contributions to the evangelical movement in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, but most of his ministry was spent outside of that geographical area, following his exile in 1914. Besides surveying his many accomplishments in evangelism, literature production, and other ministries, this article focuses on Fetler's identity as an exile and the ways that status may have shaped his activities.

Keywords:
William A. Fetler; exile; Baptists; Stundists

Introduction

Just before Christmas 1938, a dilapidated bus pulled up at a border crossing between Denmark and Nazi Germany. Inside were twelve youngsters[1] ranging in age from four to twenty-four and their mother. They claimed to be an orchestra on their way to present a series of concerts in Switzerland. The border guards were intrigued by the numerous musical instruments among the luggage, but they were also suspicious. They took the youthful driver aside and questioned him at length. Were they really all one family? Why were they travelling? Why was their father not with them? Why did they present such a variety of travel documents for inspection?

At last, the group was permitted to continue their journey, but the true answers the driver (the oldest brother, Daniel) gave to the guards' many questions must certainly have strained their credulity. The

[1] There were thirteen children in the family, but just before this trip the second eldest, Timothy Fetler (1915–1981), went to the US to study.

young people on the bus were, in fact, a family who gave concerts — a sort of Baptist version of the Von Trapp family of *The Sound of Music*. They had been performing as a group since 1933, and, like other musical ensembles, they occasionally went on tour.[2]

However, there was another, long-range reason behind this particular border crossing (and for their itinerant lifestyle, as well). Their father, William A. Fetler (1883–1957),[3] a Baptist preacher and a Latvian by birth, had been exiled from the Russian Empire in 1914 for preaching the enemy 'German faith'. Ever since, he and his growing family had been on the move. The eldest son was born in St. Petersburg and had left Russia as an infant with his exiled parents. The next four children were born in the United States, then one in England, one in Germany, and the last six in Latvia. Between 1933 and 1938, the Fetler family had lived in Latvia, the Netherlands, and Sweden. At the time of the 1938 orchestra tour, the family had no fixed address and Fetler himself was in Riga seeing to matters connected with the large evangelical church (Salvation Temple; Russian: *Khram spaseniia*) he had founded there in 1927.

A Ministry in Exile

Primarily a revival preacher, Fetler had played an important role in the growth of the evangelical movement in the Russian Empire for just seven years, from 1907 to 1914. Following his banishment, until his death some forty years later, he initiated and sustained numerous ambitious projects aimed at evangelising the land he left behind. In other words, by far the greater part of his ministry was spent outside of Russia and the Soviet Union.

Because of this, Fetler is not well known today among Baptists and other evangelicals in the former Soviet Union, although there is

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[2] Joseph Fetler Malof, *Family Band* (2006), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=107191sKmFRQ&t=1640s> [accessed 7 May 2020]. This documentary is an informative 'home movie' about the Fetler family.

[3] This is Fetler's anglicised name, which will be used in this article; he was born Wilhelms Andreis Vettlers. When his family settled permanently in the United States during the 1940s and he became a citizen, he changed his name to Basil Maloff (Vasil' Malov).

growing interest in his career. He is a contradictory figure. Fetler was devoted to God, powerfully energetic, innovative in ministry, and a magnetic speaker. Yet even one of his admirers (and he had many loyal friends and supporters) described his approach as sometimes '*izvorotlivyi*' (dodgy, shifty).[4] Throughout his life, he was involved in conflicts with Baptist church structures in the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union and finally even with the board of the mission he himself founded.[5] How is William Fetler to be understood?

A complete character analysis is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, I propose tracing one thread of Fetler's experience which may contribute toward greater in-depth study of this leader, namely his status as an exile. Not surprisingly, the events surrounding his arrest, sentencing, and re-sentencing in 1914 formed an important turning point in his life and had deep emotional and spiritual repercussions. Along with a brief summary of Fetler's accomplishments, I will suggest ways that exile and the idea of exile may have shaped his ministry and family life.

A Commitment to Preach

Since his early youth, Fetler sensed a call to preach the gospel, which led him in 1904 to enrol at the Pastors' College, founded in London by C. H. Spurgeon (1834–1892).[6] The call became a passion, strengthened by his experience of the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905. Years later, an eyewitness recalled being present at a meeting in Wales when 'a young student from Russia', with tears in his eyes, suddenly cried out, 'Oh, pray for me to be baptised with power! Pray that I would be God's chosen instrument to labour in the darkness of Russia!' Although unidentified

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[4] As it was explained to me, *izvorotlivyi* refers to 'a person who can come out of the water completely dry'. The word was applied to Fetler in a biographical sketch of Ivan Iakovlevich Urlaub (1854–1936), who was dramatically converted through Fetler's ministry and supported him for many years (Stepan Sevast'ianov, *Moi vospominaniia: Pleiada sluzhitelei Doma Evangeliia, 1924-1937* [My recollections: The constellation of ministers at Dom Evangeliia, 1924-1937] (Asheville, NC: The Russian Bible Society, 2018), p. 165).

[5] Albert W. Wardin, Jr, 'William Fetler: The Thundering Evangelist', *American Baptist Quarterly,* 25*,* no. 3 (Fall 2006): 235–246 (pp. 239, 241–242).

[6] John Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai: Istoriia dukhovnogo probuzhdeniia v Rossii i Latvii,* trans. by Andrei Radchenko (Asheville, NC: Russian Bible Society and Revival Literature, 2016), pp. 24–38.

by the man who recorded the incident, there is little doubt that the student was Fetler.[7] He did, indeed, long to preach in Russia, and, saw that as the main purpose of his life.

In 1907, Fetler returned to St. Petersburg under the sponsorship of the Baptist Pioneer Mission. The timing was perfect. Toleration for 'sectarians' had been declared in 1905, and although the new laws were unevenly administered, and new restrictions were imposed in 1910, the evangelical movement was growing.[8] Hard statistics concerning his contribution do not exist, but Fetler's own evangelistic ministries were surely responsible for a significant portion of that growth, at least in St. Petersburg, where he was most active.

In 1912, he reported holding special meetings for university students and preaching in as many as twelve 'stations' around St. Petersburg.[9] In that same year, he became pastor of the flagship Baptist church in the capital, Dom Evangeliia (House of the Gospel), which seated 2000 and was reportedly packed full at every meeting. In addition, he was involved in any number of outreach ministries conducted from Dom Evangeliia and oversaw the publication of journals and other Christian literature.[10] Fetler also founded a Baptist church in Moscow (1909) and one in Riga (1910).[11]

Arrest and Exile

In spite of the official (if fragile) policy of religious toleration, however, Fetler was regarded as a threat by the Russian Orthodox Church and

[7] J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai*, p. 34. The incident was recorded by Sidney Evans, brother-in-law of the Welsh revival preacher Evan Roberts; however, J. Fetler does not reference the source.
[8] Heather Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 27.
[9] Wilhelm Fetler, 'Russia and the Gospel', *The Missionary Review of the World* (October 1912): 741–743.
[10] For greater detail on this period of Fetler's life, see Mary Raber, *Ministries of Compassion among Russian Evangelicals, 1905-1929* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), pp. 113–143.
[11] J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai*, pp. 62–67; Oswald A. Blumit and Oswald J. Smith, *Sentenced to Siberia* (Washington, DC: The Russian Bible Society, 1947), pp. 61–63; James Alexander Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry* (Asheville, NC: The Russian Bible Society, 1968), pp. 52–60.

consequently by certain representatives of the government.[12] He was under police surveillance more than once. With the beginning of the First World War, Fetler (as, indeed, all evangelicals) came under more suspicion than usual for his many foreign contacts and supposed propagation of the 'German faith'.[13]

Finally, in November 1914, in the middle of his usual Saturday evening prayer meeting, Fetler was arrested and jailed, sentenced to immediate banishment to Siberia. In his own words, 'Exile to Siberia was almost the same thing as a death sentence.'[14] He had only ten minutes to prepare before he was marched away and locked in a cell with several other prisoners.

However, even before he had time to lie down on a cot, he was taken to an official's office and told that if he was willing to pay for his own transport, he could have three days to prepare — an accommodation sometimes extended to prisoners who posed no threat of violence. This was certainly an answer to prayer and cause for rejoicing, even though the sentence still loomed. During the ensuing three days, however, through the intervention of influential friends,[15] the sentence was commuted to permanent exile abroad and the preparation time was extended. After ten days, which included ten evening evangelistic services and many tearful farewells, Fetler, his wife Barbara (nee Kovalevska, 1890–1969), and their infant son Daniel (1914–1995, the future road manager of the family band) departed for Sweden.

This basic narrative of events[16] would be repeated numerous times for the rest of Fetler's life. One of his main biographers and faithful supporters, Dr Oswald J. Smith (1889–1986), composed a written version, most likely based on Fetler's own words heard in many

[12] John Fetler hints that Grigoriĭ Rasputin, the favourite of Empress Alexandra, could have been behind efforts to repress his father (*Bozhiĭ glashatai*, pp. 81–83).
[13] Ibid., pp. 64–67, 81–84.
[14] Ibid., p. 86.
[15] Albert W. Wardin, Jr adds that Fetler also appealed on his own behalf to be sent abroad instead, citing concern for the health of his family ('William Fetler', p. 239).
[16] Ibid., pp. 86–90. John Fetler apparently 'quotes' his father, although he may also have drawn on Oswald J. Smith's version.

verbal testimonies,[17] which was later circulated in other biographies and promotional material.[18] Beyond the actual recital of the story, however, how did Fetler interpret his exile over time?

Exile as Providence

Although his initial reaction to being suddenly ejected from his home could only have been shock, Fetler soon came to regard the experience as evidence of God's providence. The family were welcomed by Swedish evangelicals. Fetler continued to preach and draw large crowds, but he still felt that his true calling was to evangelise Russia.[19]

A way to continue that ministry was presented to him when he learned of the situation of thousands of Russian prisoners of war in Germany. In February 1915, Fetler organised the Gospel Committee for Work Among War Prisoners in Europe, which became one of the key sources of Christian literature for distribution among the prisoners. Barbara Fetler translated numerous tracts into Russian.[20]

The Fetlers' contribution was enormous, but not single-handed. The evangelisation of Russian prisoners during the First World War was a huge cooperative effort, involving hundreds of individuals, churches, and organisations both inside and outside of Germany. As a result, the end of the war gradually released thousands of newly converted 'evangelists' into Soviet Russia.[21]

For Fetler personally, however, the literature ministry to POWs was clear evidence that God had providentially turned his exile into triumph: 'A preacher of the Gospel had to be hated by the priests, attacked, imprisoned, sentenced to Siberia. That sentence is quickly commuted to banishment abroad. Thereby instead of lessening the

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[17] Rev. Oswald J. Smith, 'A Prophet in Exile', in *Sentenced to Siberia*, by Blumit and Smith, pp. 31–36.

[18] See, for example, a pamphlet entitled *Exiled from Russia* (Washington, DC: The Russian Bible Society, 1951), pp. 10–11; Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry*, pp. 63–67.

[19] Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry,* pp. 67–68.

[20] Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry,* pp. 71–77; J. Fetler, *Bozhiï glashatai,* pp. 93–95.

[21] Hans Brandenburg, *The Meek and the Mighty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 158–161.

activities of the evangelist, they were greatly enhanced.'[22] In other words, although his enemies threw him out of Russia, God sent thousands of evangelists in his place. There was purpose in his exile.

Exile as Independence

To promote the ministry to war prisoners, the Fetlers went to the United States in April 1915. Always a powerful speaker, the exciting story of his deliverance and his new status as an exile probably added authority and authenticity to Fetler's message. He quickly raised $120,000 for the outreach to POWs.[23]

He was invited to head the Russian Department of the Northern Baptist Home Mission Society and later to lead the Society's Russian Bible Institute in New York City. However, his growing dissatisfaction with 'modernist' theology within official Baptist structures and educational institutions led him to resign from those posts. In 1917 he set up the Russian Missionary Society, with a training school in Philadelphia. Fifty of the fifty-three students at the New York school followed him there.[24]

Albert W. Wardin, Jr has pointed out that Fetler was long accustomed to making his own way. During his ministry years in St. Petersburg, although he participated in Baptist national congresses and other events, his geographical distance from the Baptist leadership in the south, his language ability, and foreign travels allowed Fetler to build up his own contacts and following. This made him somewhat independent of formal denominational structures. Now his disavowal of the Home Mission Society elicited sharp criticism, but it also set him free to manage his own affairs with full control of his own training

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[22] Pastor Basil Malof, 'The Greatest Missionary Challenge of the Christian Era for Work among the White People', in *Sentenced to Siberia,* by Blumit and Smith, pp. 140–141.
[23] J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai,* pp. 92–96.
[24] William Fetler, 'Kak ia otkryl eres' modernizma sredi amerikanskikh baptistov' [How I discovered the heresy of modernism among American Baptists], *Drug Rossii* [Friend of Russia] (August–November 1924), <http://rusbaptist.stunda.org/dop/fetler/html> [accessed 20 October 2020].

school and mission society.[25] He quickly raised funds for these new undertakings.[26]

It is also possible that his self-understanding as an exile added a touch of heroism. It served to distinguish him from worldly Americans and identify him more closely with ordinary believers in Russia who knew nothing of sophisticated theologies, a stance that would also help gain the support of American fundamentalists.[27] In his explanation for his abandonment of North American Baptist mission structures, Fetler declared that of all the evangelicals in Russia, 'As far as I know, among them there is not a single modernist: all of them are simple, devoted believers in the Lord and His Word.'[28]

Exile as an Ideal

It is not difficult to see what Fetler's critics were driving at when they accused him of being divisive, arrogant, controlling, and excessively independent.[29] However, there is also evidence of considerable soul searching on Fetler's part during the years 1915–1920, spent in the United States. He was well aware of the chaos that gripped Soviet Russia during those years. In addition, at this time Fetler reflected on the more distant historical experience of those who had suffered for their faith in Russia.

In 1922 he published a book of poems in English entitled *The Stundist in Siberian Exile.* The poems themselves, written between 1918 and 1921, have little literary merit. In his generous foreword, F. B. Meyer (1847–1929) warns the reader that '[t]hey do not pretend to smooth eloquence of phrase […]'. However, Meyer also points out that '[…] Pastor Fetler has entered deeply into sympathy with these persecuted ones'.[30]

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[25] Albert W. Wardin, Jr, *On the Edge: Baptists and Other Free Church Evangelicals in Tsarist Russia, 1855-1917* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), p. 354.
[26] Wardin, 'William Fetler', p. 240.
[27] Ibid., p. 239.
[28] W. Fetler, 'Kak ia otkryl eres' modernizma sredi amerikanskikh baptistov'.
[29] Wardin, 'William Fetler', pp. 239, 241–242.
[30] F. B. Meyer, 'Foreword', in William Fetler, *The Stundist in Siberian Exile and Other Poems* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1922), no page.

'The Stundist in Siberian Exile' (1921) is the longest poem in the collection. It relates the story of a devout peasant, Ivan Nikitich, who searched for God in all the ways of traditional Orthodoxy, but finally grasped the truth of salvation when he met a Bible *colporteur* who introduced him to Scripture. Ivan Nikitich thus became a 'Stundist', a pejorative Russian term derived from the German *Stunde,* meaning 'hour'. A Stundist did not attend Orthodox worship, but instead gathered to pray and read the Bible with like-minded people at a *Gebetstunde* (prayer hour) or *Bibelstunde* (Bible hour), following the example of Pietist German colonists. This was considered subversive activity by the authorities, and many Stundists — some of whom were personally known to Fetler — were exiled in chains to the far corners of the Russian Empire, especially during the 1890s. This is the fate of the Stundist in the poem. Ivan Nikitich goes bravely to serve his sentence and continues to minister faithfully to his fellow prisoners.

In 1920, the pastor of Dom Evangeliia, where Fetler had once ministered, was arrested and sentenced to three years in an internment camp at the former Solovetskiĭ monastery on an island in the White Sea. Is it a coincidence that the pastor had the same name as Fetler's 'Stundist'? Ivan Nikitich Shilov (1887–1942) was a navy medic who experienced a dramatic conversion and was baptised by Fetler in 1912. He soon became an effective preacher, and in 1919 took on the post of senior pastor of Dom Evangeliia when the previous pastor left Petrograd[31] with refugees in search of food. In years to come, Shilov would endure three more periods of internal exile until his death in 1942, while serving a sentence in a lumber camp.[32]

Even if Shilov's experience had no connection with it, the 'Stundist' poem suggests that during this time Fetler was thinking about those who actually endured the Siberian exile he had been spared. Probably, it would be excessive to claim that Fetler was experiencing 'survivor guilt', but it is certainly possible that a desire to live up to the legacy of the Stundists and a sense of responsibility toward those suffering in Soviet Russia led Fetler to compare their 'ideal' exile with

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[31] The Germanic name 'St. Petersburg' was changed to the Slavic equivalent 'Petrograd' during the First World War.

[32] Sevast'ianov, *Moi vospominaniia*, pp. 51–76.

his. Perhaps part of his great energy and determination came from a desire to make his own exile worthy of theirs.

Family Life in Exile

In 1920, Fetler and his family returned to Europe with a group of twenty-three missionaries trained in Philadelphia. After brief stays in Berlin and Warsaw, the Russian Missionary Society headquarters finally settled in Riga in 1923 where a training school, a publishing house, and a mega-church (Salvation Temple, 1927) were established. Throughout the 1920s, Society missionaries engaged in church planting, largely in the newly independent countries bordering Soviet Russia. Missionaries crossed into that country as well, and support was carried in to the pastors there. Literature work and ministries to Russian-speaking refugees throughout Europe were also part of the mission's calling.[33] Money had to be raised to sustain all these far-flung projects and Fetler was continually on the road.

The Great Depression hindered those efforts and increased repressions against believers in the Soviet Union led to the arrest of the missionary pastors Fetler supported. Meanwhile, political pressures in Central and Eastern Europe curbed missionary activity there as well, and led Fetler to establish new administrative centres in the Netherlands in 1934 and in Scandinavia later on. The family moved to Amsterdam and later to Stockholm.[34] However, conflicts with the board of the Russian Missionary Society continued, and Fetler resigned in 1936.[35]

Having freed himself from organisational ties, Fetler's status as an independent missionary also made it more difficult to meet his many commitments. Now he had sole responsibility for promoting his projects and supporting his family. Did his insistence on the complete control of his ministry amount to a kind of self-exile?

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[33] J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai,* pp. 106–107; Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry,* pp. 91–97; Wardin, 'William Fetler', pp. 240–241.
[34] J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai,* pp. 147–148.
[35] Wardin, 'William Fetler', p. 242.

Fetler's family, of course, shared his way of life. Before he married Barbara, Fetler had made it clear to her that ministry would always come first with him.[36] For forty-three years, she was a help and support to her husband, especially in the matter of raising the couple's thirteen children. She also was an accomplished literary translator. Fetler sometimes spent months at a time apart from the family and, although he was doubtless greatly respected, Barbara is the parent who was evidently remembered most fondly. She is the one who provided continuity during their wandering years.[37]

During the time that the family lived in Riga, the children learned to play various musical instruments, and as they grew up joined the orchestra at Salvation Temple. Several of them studied at the musical conservatory.[38] In 1932, Fetler was absent from his family for about a year, while he returned to the United States to raise money for printing Bibles to be sent to Russia. On his return in 1933, the children prepared a musical performance to welcome him home. He was extremely pleased by this attention and began to feature the family orchestra as part of worship at Salvation Temple. Invitations to other churches and venues followed, programmes were rehearsed and improved, and gradually the 'Rainbow Orchestra' took shape.[39]

The driving force behind the band was Fetler's eldest son, Daniel, who was not only the musical director but also the group's booking agent, publicity manager, bus driver, and even surrogate father. Photographs show the ten brothers and three sisters engagingly posed according to height. Their concerts were a mixture of orchestral and choral numbers in several languages. For extra charm, the youngest members of the family were each in turn featured as conductor until they grew out of the role. Fetler himself appears occasionally in the photos, but the actual business of running the band fell to Daniel.

[36] Smith, 'A Prophet in Exile' in Blumit and Smith, *Sentenced to Siberia*, p. 36.
[37] See J. Fetler Malof, *Family Band,* 'Dispersion', 50:47–56:09; cf. the sympathetic portrayal of Anna Sokoloff in Andrew Fetler, *The Travelers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965).
[38] J. Fetler Malof, *Family Band,* 11:20–11:26; J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai,* pp. 126–127.
[39] J. Fetler Malof, *Family Band,* 11:26–12:27.

As an adult, the youngest son, Joseph Fetler Malof (1934–2015), termed the concerts 'amateurish',[40] but the group was a novelty and enthusiastically received. They accompanied their father's preaching tours, but the family band essentially made the children self-supporting, although the concerts were free and only an offering was taken. To save money on hotels, Daniel would invite members of the audience to house one or more of the children overnight.

At the time of their last European tour (October 1938 to June 1939), described at the beginning of this article, Fetler was apart from his family. He rejoined them in Copenhagen in the summer of 1939 and they sailed for New York. Eventually, the family put down roots in Evanston, Illinois. The children were able to continue their schooling, but the Rainbow Orchestra continued to perform until 1944, sometimes three to five concerts a week, to support themselves.[41] Their unsettled lifestyle apparently did them no harm. All of the Fetler children went on to successful careers as music professors and composers, a sculptor, a colonel in the US Air Force, English professors and writers, a Russian teacher, and a librarian.

What is more, they made their move to the United States just in time. When William moved the mission headquarters from Riga to Amsterdam in 1934, he entrusted the Russian congregation at Salvation Temple to his younger brother Robert (1892–1941). The latter had also studied at the Pastors' College in London from 1911 to 1915. During the First World War he was exiled to the region of Yakutia, in eastern Siberia, but the revolution came in time to nullify the charges against him. Robert then returned to Petrograd, married, and went east again, ministering briefly in Omsk, Vladivostok, and Harbin.[42] Robert and his family returned to Riga in 1924 after William's family had resettled there.

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[40] Ibid., 'Dispersion', 50:47–56:09.

[41] J. Fetler Malof, *Family Band,* 'The Grand Tour', 20:08–24:49; 'Evanston', 45:04–50:46; 'Dispersion', 50:47–56:09.

[42] Albert J. Wardin, Jr ('William Fetler', pp. 242–243) and John Fetler (*Bozhii̇ glashatai*, p. 141) state that Robert served as a missionary with the China Inland Mission. The account offered by Stepan Sevast'ianov based on an interview with Robert's widow, Tat'iana Ivanovna, in Riga in 1973 (*Moi vospominaniia,* pp. 5–13), does not mention the China Inland Mission, but maintains that the Robert Fetlers ministered in the Soviet Far East somewhat by chance while they were waiting to be granted a visa to the United States.

On 1 September 1939, the Second World War began when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. The Soviets occupied Latvia in the summer of 1940, and a year later, in a mass deportation on 13 and 14 June 1941, Robert Fetler, his wife, and children were separated from each other and loaded onto freight cars bound for Siberia. Robert died in October 1941. His two sons lived a few months longer. Only his wife and two daughters survived to return to Riga.[43] Like Ivan Nikitich Shilov, his own brother had now suffered the exile that William Fetler once averted. As James Stewart states simply, 'He was a heart-broken man.'[44]

Exile as Identity and Credential

During the 1940s, when he became a US citizen, William Fetler officially changed his name to Basil Malof. John Fetler suggests that his father's name change signalled 'a new beginning in the New World'.[45] However, it is worth noting that the name was actually new only to Barbara and the three youngest children who also adopted it. To Fetler himself, it was an old name, an anglicised rendering of Vasil' Malov, a pseudonym he had used previously for some literary efforts. 'Malov' means 'small' or 'least' in Russian. As Fetler himself explained, the new/old surname echoed John the Baptist: 'He [Christ] must become greater and I must <u>become less</u>' [Russian: *'u*mal*iatsia'*] (John 3:30).[46]

However, besides the desire to live out John the Baptist's words, Albert W. Wardin, Jr observes that the name Basil Malof also served to link Fetler more closely to Russia than the name he was born with.[47] Such a link doubtless would have been of deep personal significance to Fetler, remembering his brother's death and knowing the sufferings of those professing religious faith in the Soviet Union. At the same time, the name 'Malof' was also part of Fetler's renewed emphasis on his experience of exile.

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43 Sevast'ianov, 'Robert Andreevich Fetler', in *Moi vospominaniia,* pp. 11–13; J. Fetler Malof, *Family Band,* 'Evanston', 45:04–50:46.
44 Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry,* p. 116.
45 J. Fetler, *Bozhii glashatai,* p. 155.
46 Ibid.
47 Wardin, 'William Fetler', p. 243.

Throughout the 1940s, Fetler continued to devote himself to promoting projects concerned with evangelising Russia — still the deepest calling of his life. In particular, he organised the Russian Bible Society, consciously drawing parallels with the historic Russian Bible Society established in St. Petersburg in 1813.[48] The urgency he felt to print Bibles, prepare study aids, and find ways to get the precious literature across hostile borders was genuine. He needed to inspire donors with that same sense of urgency in order to support his mission. Nothing would accomplish that purpose better than a personal testimony, and so during this time Oswald Smith's written version of Fetler's exile story was first circulated in print.[49] The image of Basil Malof, a dedicated pastor hounded by the authorities, arrested and banished, thus became his main identity, a kind of credential, emphasising Fetler's authenticity as a spokesman for believers living in peril in the Soviet Union. Photographs show him wearing a Russian-style belted and embroidered shirt.

It was not a cynical pose, yet this version of 'Fetler/Malof-as-exile' could easily stray into the realm of the sensational. The front cover of a pamphlet dated 1951, boldly titled *Exiled from Russia,* shows a figure in chains, while on the back cover a cartoon of Uncle Sam holds out a Bible to a group of Russians straining forward to grasp the gift. Somehow the contents connect Fetler's brief stay in jail thirty years before and the need for Christian literature in the Soviet Union.[50] Yet a more restrained approach would not draw the amount of attention needed to support Fetler's mission.

Fetler's sixth son, Andrew (1925–2017), addressed misleading self-promotion in a novel entitled *The Travelers.*[51] Its plot is certainly fiction, but many details are drawn from the Fetlers' life.[52] The novel

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48 Stewart, *A Man in a Hurry,* pp. 117–118.

49 Blumit and Smith, *Sentenced to Siberia,* was first copyrighted in 1940.

50 Rev. A. L. Leeder, Dr. Oswald J. Smith, Rev. Oswald A. Blumit, *Exiled from Russia* (Washington, DC: The Russian Bible Society, 1951).

51Andrew Fetler, *The Travelers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965). It is interesting that the novel is dedicated to the memory of Pope John XXIII.

52 Evidently, *The Travelers* cut close enough to the bone that Daniel Fetler sued for libel in 1966 because of the novel's unflattering portrayal of the oldest brother, Maxim Solovyov, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/364/650/316939> [accessed 15 May 2020].

concerns a family band consisting of thirteen children and their parents roaming Central Europe during the 1930s. This dark version of the Rainbow Orchestra depicts a hungry, ill-clad gaggle of restless, resentful children and teenagers struggling to assert themselves against their domineering father, Ivan Solovyov, who is obsessed with his great calling to evangelise Russia. Costumed in a wrinkled tunic decorated with strips of carpeting and tied with the cord of an old dressing gown, Solovyov no longer preaches sermons, but endlessly rehearses the dramatic story of his 'arrest and exile'. The truth, however, is that he spent a single night in jail for failing to pay the rent on a hired hall and then was sent out of Russia for his suspicious connections with a British evangelical mission. Solovyov's martyrdom is invented.[53]

Conclusion

William Fetler is not the fictional Ivan Solovyov, although the latter certainly serves as a cautionary example of where grandiose notions of one's mission might lead. Fetler's arrest and exile were genuine, affected him deeply, and formed one of the important themes of this influential preacher's life. His status as an exile had significant consequences for his family as well.

Exile came upon Fetler suddenly, yet he understood his life to be under God's sovereign direction and accepted exile as part of that. Exile gave him the freedom to minister in ways that would not have been possible if he had stayed in Russia. The knowledge that others were suffering other, harsher kinds of exile kept him focused on his ministry. If his exile set him apart and contributed to his tendency to be divisive and controlling, it also gave him an identity and integrity. If he exaggerated some of his experiences, it was always to serve the greater calling of evangelising Russia.

[53] A. Fetler, *The Travelers,* pp. 17, 31, 45, 78–84.

Baptist Students and 'Spiritual Dynamics': The Robert Hall Society in Cambridge, 1950s–1980s

Ian Randall

Dr Ian Randall is a Research Associate at the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide and a Senior Research Fellow of IBTS.
ian.m.randall@gmail.com

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Abstract:
This is a study of the Robert Hall Society (RHS), the Baptist Students' Society in the University of Cambridge, from the 1950s to the 1980s.[1] There is a particular focus on spiritual dynamics. There were transitions through the period examined, related to the members' spiritual commitment and the sense of denominational belonging. In the early 1950s the RHS tried to find a place in university life in relation to pan-denominational student groups. In the 1960s, a decade marked by confident RHS student spiritual leadership, the Society had as a principal aim preparing Baptist students for future service. The emphasis on witness in the university was also stressed, as was wider mission. A considerable number of RHS students of this period went on to take up significant roles in Baptist life and elsewhere. In the 1970s decline in denominational loyalty began to have an impact, and as a consequence the Society struggled. New spiritual dynamics were evident in the 1980s, but the Society came to an end. The article indicates that the RHS contributed in significant ways to the Baptist denomination.

Keywords:
Cambridge; spiritual; service; witness; denominational

Introduction

The prime mover behind the setting up of the Robert Hall Society (RHS), which dated back to 1902, was T. R. Glover, described by Brian Stanley as a 'classical historian, Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and one of the most highly educated British Baptist laymen of his generation'.[2] It was the first Baptist society to be formed in an English

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[1] I am grateful to Keith Jones, President of the Baptist Historical Society (BHS), for the opportunity to present this paper at a BHS conference in 2019.

[2] Brian Stanley, '"The Old Religion and the New": India and the Making of T. R. Glover's *The Jesus of History*', in *The Gospel in the World*, ed. by David Bebbington (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), p. 296.

university. At the inaugural meeting about twenty were present and Glover commented in his diary on the 'unanimity about going on vigorously'.[3] Connections were made with the internationally-linked Student Christian Movement (SCM): Glover was a popular SCM speaker and writer, and RHS members were encouraged to attend SCM conferences.[4] The 1920s–1940s saw periods of RHS advance as well as of set-backs.[5] From 1947 the Society was part of a wider fellowship in British universities, with the formation of the Baptist Students' Federation (BSF).[6] One Cambridge student and RHS member in the 1960s, Michael Quicke, who returned to Cambridge in 1980 to become minister of St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, discovered only a few students in the Society, but as numbers grew he found the same 'spiritual dynamics', as he put it, that he had experienced as a student.[7] Spirituality can be seen as concerned with the conjunction of theology, communion with God, and practical living.[8] This study has as its focus the 'spiritual dynamics' in the RHS from the 1950s to the 1980s. The BSF came to an end in 1977, but the RHS continued on to the early 1990s, when it also closed.

Fostering Understanding in the 1950s

It was agreed at an RHS meeting in October 1952, at which fifty-two members were present, that the Society could and should have a role in 'fostering understanding' between the SCM, which had a broader theological position, and the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian

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[3] Glover diary, 18 May 1902. T. R. Glover's diaries are held in St John's College, Cambridge.

[4] For example, Minutes of RHS General Meeting, 11 May 1913. S2/2. RHS minutes are held in St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, Cambridge. I am grateful to Eileen Hori, the church administrator, for her help.

[5] I have looked at this earlier period in my, 'Baptist Students in Cambridge: Denominational and ecumenical identities, from the 1920s to the 1940s', in *Ecumenism and Independency in World Christianity: Historical Studies in Honour of Brian Stanley*, ed. by Alexander Chow and Emma Wild-Woods (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 144–161.

[6] I. M. Randall, 'Seedbed for Baptist Leadership: The Baptist Students' Federation, 1947-1970s', *Baptist Quarterly*, 44, no. 6 (April 2012): 324–43.

[7] Michael Quicke, 'A Cambridge God Adventure (35): Not a 'Student Church' . . .yet!, blog, 20 February 2018, <MichaelQuicke.org> [accessed 22 February 2021]. I am indebted to Michael Quicke for his very valuable help with this paper.

[8] Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History* (London: SPCK, 1991), p. 52.

Union (CICCU), which was a conservative evangelical body.[9] The Society was in tune with wider BSF thinking: in the Federation's newsletter produced at the same time, John Nicholson, who was studying for Baptist ministry at Regent's Park College, Oxford, and had previously been a Cambridge student, hoped that Baptist societies in universities could assist members of interdenominational groups — SCM and the growing Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), with which CICCU was affiliated — to find common ground spiritually.[10] In Cambridge, the influences of SCM and CICCU were both present in the RHS. A possible way of distinguishing between the spirituality of these bodies was offered to the RHS in 1950 by Maurice Wiles, who was from a Baptist background and became an Anglican. He was chaplain at the evangelical Ridley Hall, Cambridge, and was later a widely read theologian. Wiles suggested that for CICCU 'the Gospel could best be spread by a closely drawn group', while the SCM approach was 'not to direct the Gospel at people but to live it among them'.[11]

An emphasis on the spread of the gospel was certainly a marked feature of RHS life in the 1950s. Norman Walters, who became Senior Tutor at Fitzwilliam Hall (later College — one of the colleges of the University), suggested in a paper on the history of the RHS (1947) that in the early 1940s a change, which he described as an 'evangelical revival', took place in the spiritual dynamics of the Society.[12] The effects continued. In 1950, George Beasley-Murray, minister of Zion Baptist Church in Cambridge (and later Principal of Spurgeon's College, London), spoke to the Society on 'The Strategy of Evangelism'.[13] In 1955 the magazine of St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, *The Messenger*, reported on RHS missions in various places; on youth work supported by Society members at Barnwell Baptist Church, in a needy part of

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[9] Minutes of Robert Hall Society Meeting, 13 October 1952. S 2/7.

[10] BSF Newsletter, October 1952. D/BSF, Box 1, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford. My thanks to Emily Burgoyne, the Angus Librarian, for her help. The attempts at SCM–IVF rapprochement are described in Robin Boyd, *The Witness of the Student Christian Movement* (London: SPCK, 2007), pp. 83–89.

[11] Minutes of RHS Meeting, 5 February 1950. S2/6. Wiles later became Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford.

[12] Norman Walters, 'A History of the Robert Hall Society' (unpublished, 1947), pp. 12, 13. This is held at St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church.

[13] Minutes of RHS Meeting, 24 April 1950. S 2/6.

Cambridge; and on a helpful RHS retreat at Histon Baptist Church, near Cambridge.[14] Also in 1955, Society Committee members hoped that the forthcoming Billy Graham Mission to the University, organised by CICCU, might bring CICCU and the SCM closer together. This wish was expressed in response to a statement in the previous month from Mervyn Stockwood, the vicar of Great St Mary's in Cambridge (the University Church), who attracted large congregations, that the situation in Cambridge 'leans far too much towards fundamentalism'. The RHS considered this kind of partisan approach unhelpful.[15]

The potential problems were exacerbated when there was a complaint in *The Times* newspaper that fundamentalism should not be given a hearing in Cambridge.[16] John Stott, rector of All Souls Church, Langham Place, London, who had close links with CICCU, wrote to *The Times*, insisting that Graham had denied the description 'fundamentalist'.[17] Eventually CICCU obtained permission from Mervyn Stockwood to use Great St Mary's for the mission.[18] Great St Mary's and two other churches were packed with students and Graham, after attempting initially to use what he termed an 'intellectual framework', preached 'a simple Gospel message on the meaning of the Cross', and 400 students stayed behind to talk further.[19] Stockwood began Sunday evening services aimed especially at students, and asked the RHS and other Free Church student societies for their support in this move. The RHS, in an effort to continue its policy of fostering understanding, agreed that it would not arrange meetings on Sunday evenings. It was emphasised that the RHS, while committed to Baptist spirituality, was not seeking to persuade Baptists who were 'keen adherents' of CICCU or SCM to abandon them for the RHS.[20]

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14 *The Messenger*, No. 325, July–August 1955.
15 Minutes of RHS Committee Meetings, 26 April 1955; 16 May 1955. S2/18.
16 'Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 15 August 1955, p. 7.
17 'Letters to the Editor', *The Times*, 25 August 1955, p. 14.
18 David Goodhew, 'The Rise of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, 1910-1971', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 54, no. 1 (January 2003): 78–9.
19 Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 259.
20 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 10 March 1957. S2/17.

The later 1950s saw growth in the RHS and in CICCU. RHS members were involved in missions in English towns and cities.[21] In Cambridge, the main missioner at the 1958 triennial CICCU mission was John Stott, and RHS members were involved.[22] John Stott was invited to speak at the RHS: he was not available, but suggested Donald English, an IVF Travelling Secretary who had commenced Methodist ordination training at Wesley House, Cambridge. English duly addressed the RHS in November 1958.[23] In the aftermath of the CICCU mission, which saw many conversions,[24] several speakers were invited to the RHS to help in consolidating the impact made. Raymond Brown, who followed Beasley-Murray as minister of Zion Baptist Church (and also later as Principal of Spurgeon's College), became a regular speaker, especially on themes connected with spiritual experience. After an address he gave on 'Christ in our Lives', instead of the usual question time his challenge to deeper spirituality meant that discussion 'would have been inappropriate'.[25] In 1959, RHS speakers continued to promote mission: one of these was Leslie Lyall, of the China Inland Mission, who had been a Cambridge student and a CICCU leader.[26]

Questions were regularly raised in this period about Baptist distinctives and ecumenical commitment. Morris West, a tutor at Regent's Park College, Oxford, who was involved in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC), spoke to the RHS in 1954 on 'Baptists and the Ecumenical Movement'.[27] There was also an interest in this period in Free Church identity. In 1955, B. R. (Barrie) White, a member of the RHS studying theology at Queens' College, Cambridge, was president of the Free Church Societies in the University and their representative on the Executive Committee of

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21 See reports in the *The Messenger*, for example nos., 367, 373, April and November 1959.

22 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 10 October 1958. S 2/20.

23 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 6 November 1958. S2/20. See Brian Hoare and Ian Randall, *More than a Methodist: The Life and Ministry of Donald English* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), pp. 30–36.

24 'Basil Atkinson's Memoirs', p. 85. MS Add. 8722 A2/6. Held in the Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and Archives. CICCU had about 400 members in this period.

25 Minutes of RHS Meeting, 19 May 1957. S 2/8.

26 Minutes of RHS Meeting, 7 June 1959. S 2/9.

27 Minutes of RHS Meeting, 17 October 1954. S 2/8.

SCM.[28] He was to become Principal of Regent's Park College and a leading Free Church historian.[29] Wider debates about distinctive Baptist experience featured in the RHS in 1959, when two Society members, Roger Hayden of Fitzwilliam and David Swinfen of St Catharine's College, argued that most people in Baptist churches 'are Baptists without really knowing why', with little clarity evident on theological matters apart from baptism, and that Baptists needed to know what they believed before progress with reunion could be made.[30] Fostering understanding was a challenge for the RHS.

Preparing for Service: Early to mid-1960s

A notable feature of the early to mid-1960s was the way in which the RHS addressed the challenge of preparing members for future Christian service, including service in Baptist churches.[31] Among the speakers invited in this period were well-known Baptist figures, notably Ernest Payne, General Secretary of the Baptist Union and a leading figure in the WCC, and J. B. Middlebrook, Home Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), as well as leading Cambridge theologians. Local Baptist ministers were also involved, including Arthur Jestice, who was minister of St Andrew's Street and the RHS chaplain, and Walter Quicke, minister of Arbury Road Baptist Church, Cambridge, who spoke on one occasion on 'The Case for a Baptist Monastery'. Spiritual life in the Society was emphasised and was nurtured through Sunday worship, prayer meetings, and Bible study groups. By the mid-1960s there were RHS representatives in almost all (over twenty) of the Cambridge Colleges.[32] Members took part in missions in Baptist churches, either entirely through the RHS or linked with the Baptist Students' Federation and those had an impact on RHS members as well as the churches. Martin Tarr, for example, spoke of how a mission in Dorking, held after his graduation and just before he began work,

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[28] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 16 May 1955. S2/18.
[29] See B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: from the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
[30] 'Free Church Union', *Baptist Times*, 19 February 1959, p. 6.
[31] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 20 February 1962. S 2/21.
[32] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 6 May 1964. S2/22.

helped 'set me up for the new life that I was to start'.[33] Support was also given to churches in the Cambridge area: in 1960–61, for example, students conducted services in twenty-two churches, with forty-five students participating.[34]

Student leadership was integral to the spiritual dynamics of RHS life. John Briggs, who began as a student at Christ's College in 1958, became a member of the RHS committee in 1959 and a year later, as president, he asked Haddon Willmer, of Emmanuel College, to be the Society's study secretary. They launched a study series on 'The Church', based on notes prepared by Arthur Jestice, notes they felt needed revising quite drastically for RHS purposes.[35] With his desire for unity, John Briggs was pleased that Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, from the Church of South India and the WCC, was taking up the subject of 'Christian Unity' at a joint meeting of the University's Free Church societies, and Briggs invited a range of people to this meeting in 'an attempt to resolve conflicts which ranged between societies, college chapels and town churches'.[36] John Briggs was to pursue an ecumenical vision in wider circles, as a member of the executive of the WCC and convener of the Free Churches Group in association with Churches Together in England. Within the Baptist world, his roles included editing the *Baptist Quarterly* and serving the International Baptist Theological Seminary and the Baptist World Alliance.[37] Experience in the RHS helped to set directions for the future.

World-wide opportunities for service were being explored, with the call to overseas mission high on the RHS agenda.[38] Missionary speakers were featured each term. Of those Society members in this period who went overseas, several went to Uganda and Kenya, in line with historic ties Cambridge missionaries had with East Africa. Among

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33 Martin Tarr, 'Memories of Dorking '66' (Unpublished, May 2019), p. 4. This is held at St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church.

34 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 24 May 1961. See the recollections in Paul Beasley-Murray, *This is my Story* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), pp. 51–52.

35 Faith Bowers, 'John H.Y. Briggs MA, FSA, FRHistS: An Appreciation', in *Ecumenism and History*, ed. by Anthony R. Cross (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), p. 2.

36 Minutes of RHS Committee Meetings, 31 October 1960. S2/20; 25 January 1961. S 2/20.

37 Bowers, 'Briggs', pp. 10–15.

38 Beasley-Murray, *This is my Story*, p. 51.

these were Michael and Anne Bowker (née Bennett), a doctor and teacher respectively; Christopher Bradnock, a teacher; and Jill Parfitt and Ruth Bywaters (later Tetlow), also in teaching. Michael Bowker and Christopher Bradnock had been Presidents of the RHS. Paul and Caroline Beasley-Murray, who served with the BMS in the Congo, had also both been RHS presidents. Colin Carr and Ed Burrows served in India, the latter at the historic Serampore College. Robert Bradnock taught in the University of London and made frequent visits to India, on which he was a specialist. Frank and Liz Guinness, although RHS members, went to Uganda with the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society (CMS), and Hilary Bryant married Peter Bewes and together they went with CMS to Uganda and then Tanzania. Another couple, Paul and Jennifer Jenkins, joined the staff of the Basel Mission, Switzerland.[39]

Still other RHS members entered ordained ministry in Britain. Paul Beasley-Murray, Keith Clements, Philip Clements-Jewery, Michael Herbert, Maurice Markham and Michael Quicke all became Baptist ministers. Derek Moore-Crispin became a Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches' (FIEC) minister. The RHS was important as a spiritual training ground for local church leadership.[40] Some moved into other areas of ministry, with Paul Beasley-Murray and Michael Quicke being appointed (successively) Principals of Spurgeon's College, and Keith Clements becoming General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches.[41] In 1967, at one of the services in St Andrew's Street taken by Society members, three who were later ministers — Markham, Quicke and Moore-Crispin — gave 'student testimonies' and the congregation responded appreciatively.[42] Michael Quicke (Jesus College) later wrote of the RHS as an 'amazingly varied group of students who had a major influence on my life'. Within the Society he 'learned many disciplines including prayer, preaching, leadership and serving in summer missions'. His period in the Society was unparalleled

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[39] Keith Clements, email to the author, 8 March 2018; Ruth Tetlow, email to the author, 12 March 2018; Christopher Bradnock, email to the author, 14 March 2018.
[40] Beasley-Murray, *This is my Story*, p. 52.
[41] For his life, see Keith Clements, *Look Back in Hope: An Ecumenical Life* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017).
[42] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 14 February 1967. S2/23.

in the 'spiritually and intellectually stimulating experience' it offered.[43] For Keith Clements (King's College) the Society was 'earnest and sociable', with football matches, theatre visits, parties, punting and an annual dinner, but with its importance lying 'in something deeper than mere sociability'. In the RHS he experienced 'liberation' through meeting 'the whole spectrum of varieties of Christian belief and commitment, from the most conservatively evangelical to the out and out liberal'.[44]

While missionary service and pastoral ministry were valued within the RHS as specific callings, 'preparing for service' was seen in broader terms. The vision was for the Society to nurture authentic spirituality that would be relevant in any sphere of life and work. John Briggs took this vision with him, talking in 1962, as BSF president, about spiritual priorities.[45] Guidance to RHS students was offered by two senior friends, Norman Walters, a member of the Churches of Christ, and Noel Schofield, a Baptist and an Old Testament scholar.[46] A number of RHS members went on to work in university settings. Briggs became senior lecturer in history at Keele University, and subsequently Principal of Westhill College and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University; David Thompson, also a member of the Churches of Christ, became professor of modern church history in Cambridge and an influential writer; Haddon Willmer became a professor of theology in the University of Leeds; and Adrian Gill, an Australian, made a major contribution to oceanography.[47] Many RHS members offered committed involvement as lay people in varied church settings. When Paul Beasley-Murray (Jesus College), became Society president in 1965, he reiterated that a central RHS aim was 'to prepare men and women,

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[43] Michael Quicke, 'A Cambridge God Adventure (35)', blog, 20 February 2018; also notes produced by Michael Quicke.

[44] Clements, *Look Back in Hope*, pp. 26–7. He adds that although for the most part RHS members 'were prepared to accept each other cheerfully while arguing their case', during his second, year tensions became 'almost disruptive' over a matter in which he found himself at the centre.

[45] Minutes of BSF Presidents' Conference, 1–3 January 1962. D/BSF, Box 2.

[46] The Churches of Christ joined the United Reformed Church in 1981. For the history see David M. Thompson, *Let Sects and Parties Fall* (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1980). J. N. Schofield wrote *The Historical Background of the Bible* (London: Nelson, 1938).

[47] Clements, *Look Back in Hope*, pp. 26–27.

dedicated to Christ, who will be able to take their places as future leaders of our churches'.[48]

Possibilities for Witness: Mid-1960s to 1970

The mid-later 1960s constituted a period of advance for the RHS. Membership grew to over sixty, with other students attending. Local involvements were flourishing, with Peter Wales (Trinity College), who would later serve with the missionary movement, Operation Mobilisation, a 'very keen' local activities secretary.[49] Paul Beasley-Murray took up the theme of local witness in his RHS presidential address:

> Nowhere is our responsibility greater than here in Cambridge, which – despite the fact that if all the men in Cambridge who possessed a dog-collar lined themselves up in a row they would stretch more than the length of King's Parade – is desperately in need. People need friends, and above all are in need of the greatest Friend. This is well illustrated by the fact that thirty-five percent of undergraduates contemplate suicide while they are up in Cambridge.

He concluded with a passionate appeal: 'If we believe that the Christian gospel is able to meet the needs of the whole man, then what are we going to do about it?'[50] This was a stirring spiritual challenge to RHS members to be fully involved in reaching out.

The Baptist Students' Federation offered a wider Baptist forum. Numbers at the annual BSF conference held at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, peaked at about 130 in the 1960s.[51] The RHS committee decided in 1966 to 'give as much support as possible to this year's [BSF] conference at High Leigh, and to advertise it as much as possible'. Michael Quicke, supporting this intention, commented on what he termed 'the present bias of B.S.F'.[52] It seemed that in several universities the BSF-linked groups were not offering a sufficiently clear spiritual

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[48] Beasley-Murray, *This is my Story*, p. 50.
[49] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 10 June 1964. S2/22.
[50] Beasley-Murray, *This is my Story*, p. 51.
[51] For one report, see Paul Ballard, 'Baptist Students' Federation Conference', *Baptist Times*, 25 April 1963, p. 8.
[52] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 30 November 1966. S 2/23.

witness to attract Baptist students. Two RHS members who held the BHS presidency in the mid-later 1960s, Keith Clements and then Paul Beasley-Murray, attempted to offer positive ways forward.[53] Caroline Griffiths (later Beasley-Murray), at Girton College, RHS president in 1966–67, noted that denominational endeavours (Baptist among them) were being questioned, but she argued that Baptist witness — in universities but also more widely — was important and that it was 'committed denominationalists who have something to offer in the age of ecumenism'.[54]

Although Caroline Griffiths was encouraged by RHS involvement in mission, she was concerned about some evidences of a lack of spiritual commitment within the Society. Attendance at several of the Sunday afternoon tea meetings had been poor, which was partly due to the standard of speakers having 'not been very high'; but a deeper issue for her was the absence of 'the staunch loyalty' that had characterised earlier Society members. In terms of the prayer meetings, she described the numbers as 'shocking'.[55] However, members were meeting in study groups.[56] This presidential analysis appears to have acted as a wake-up call, and Derek Moore-Crispin, building on this as the next president, re-affirmed RHS commitment to Christian witness.[57] When Moore-Crispin reviewed the year 1967–68, he was able to report on growth in numbers, stimulating speakers, and support for the 1968 CICCU mission at which the Anglican evangelical leader, David Watson, was the main missioner.[58] Paul Beasley-Murray had proposed appointing a full-time secretary for national Baptist student work, and Michael Quicke was commissioned to this role. He served from 1967 to 1969, visiting BSF groups at weekends and administering the 'commendation'

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53 Minutes of BSF Presidents' Conference, 31 December 1965–3 January 1966. D/BSF, Box 2.

54 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 15 March 1967. S 2/23. For an RHS reunion report by Caroline Beasley-Murray, see 'A Day of Reminiscence, Reflection and Resolve: A Reunion of the Robert Hall Society', <http://rhs.mtarr.co.uk/pdf/cbm_101001.pdf>; 'Robert Hall Reunion', *Baptist Times*, 1 October 2010 [accessed 22 February 2021], p. 5.

55 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 15 March 1967. S 2/23.

56 The committee included Michael Quicke (Vice-President), Isobel Bacon (Secretary), Derek Moore-Crispin (Missionary Secretary) and Maurice Markham (Group Secretary). Robert Hall Society Michaelmas Term Card, 1966.

57 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 6 December 1967. S 2/23.

58 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting,14 March 1968. S 2/23.

scheme, through which churches with students going to university sent the names to the BSF so that they could be linked with Baptist chaplains.[59]

Robert Gardiner became RHS president in 1968 and sought to continue the focus on mission. Eileen Lacey (Girton College), as the missionary secretary, wanted more RHS members to know about the work done by Dr Michael Flowers, who was at Chandraghona with BMS and was linked with and supported by the RHS.[60] The RHS was encouraged by the emphasis that Michael Quicke, as secretary for nation-wide Baptist work in universities, was giving to student missions.[61] But the RHS demands and also BSF connections took their toll on Bob Gardiner, and he wrote to the Society secretary, Christine Clements, to say he was 'physically, mentally and spiritually exhausted' and was resigning as RHS president. Andrew Johns, vice-president, took over, and in February 1968 Eileen Lacey, who was to become president, expressed the committee's appreciation for Bob Gardiner's work. He responded with thanks, but regretted the lack of interest from the Society as a whole.[62]

Change was necessary. Eileen Lacey, as president, was joined by several new committee members, including David Bebbington (whom she would later marry), and efforts were made to re-build a sense of common purpose. Attendance at all meetings, including prayer meetings, increased. Missionary offerings doubled in a year. David Bebbington, who had been inspired by a call in February 1969 from George Beasley-Murray, then Baptist Union president, to distribute copies of John's Gospel, proposed that ten thousand of the contemporary *Good News for Modern Man*, be purchased — for £100 under a Bible Society/Fontana Books scheme — and distributed to each undergraduate. RHS support was forthcoming.[63] Bebbington raised the

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[59] See Michael Quicke, 'The Christian Student', *Baptist Times*, 14 September 1967, p. 8; Michael Quicke, 'Oh No! Not students', *The Fraternal*, October 1968, p. 42. Some churches with large youth groups were sending a considerable number of names.
[60] Minutes of Committee Meeting, 14 May 1968. S 2/23.
[61] Minutes of Committee Meeting, 15 January 1969. S 2/23.
[62] Minutes of Committee Meeting, 12 February 1969 S 2/23.
[63] Minutes of Committee Meeting, 13 March 1969. S 2/23. For the call by Beasley-Murray see 'Big New Boost for Easter Outreach', *Baptist Times*, 20 February 1969, p. 1.

finance and recruited distributors.[64] As Society president, Eileen Lacey's call was to 'bring others into RHS and to a living faith in the Lord', and she warned of 'introversion'. As part of this outward-directed spirituality, RHS members took part in a 'Procession for Peace' (the context was the Vietnam War) around Great St Mary's Church. Eileen Lacey's presentation of a vision for the Society's witness was described as 'highly edifying'.[65] Significant spiritual dynamics seemed evident.

Declining Denominational Loyalty in the 1970s

By 1970 the student population in the UK was much larger than it had been a decade before, and the number of Baptist ministers involved in student chaplaincies increased. But several BSF groups were losing impetus. To a greater extent than previously, Baptist students in Cambridge were looking to CICCU meetings as places of witness and fellowship. In 1971 David Bebbington, as RHS vice-president, encouraged involvement in the CICCU mission led by Michael Green.[66] Against the background of the continued advance of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (which became the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship),[67] coupled with a loss of a sense of denominational belonging, the BSF was to come to an end in 1977.[68] The phenomenon of waning denominational identity was not confined to Baptist life. Although the Methodist Society had traditionally been strong in Cambridge, its groups were faltering by the 1970s and Methodist students were joining Ecumenical Fellowship Groups (EFG). A suggestion came from the EFGs that the RHS should close its groups, which drew the response from the RHS that this was 'ridiculous'.[69] In

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64 Eileen Bebbington, *A Patterned Life: Faith, History, and David Bebbington* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), p. 42.

65 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 2 December 1969. S 2/23.

66 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 12 January 1971. S 2/24.

67 For the advance of the IVF/UCCF see D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 259–60.

68 Ian Randall, *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2005), p. 406. The demise of the BSF was deeply regretted by Ernest Payne (Morris West, *To be a Pilgrim: A Memoir of Ernest A. Payne* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1983), p. 89). John Briggs notes that students who were home-based often did not see themselves as representing a category different from other young people in their churches (email to author, 13 May 2019).

69 Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 8 February 1972. S 2/24.

1975, however, the RHS discussed the 'purpose of the Society', asking fundamental questions 'especially in relation to its role alongside [CICCU] College Christian Unions'.[70] In the University, Colleges were building additional student accommodation, a development which offered College Christian Unions extra opportunities.[71]

Although pan-denominational evangelical influences were evident, there were attempts within the RHS to maintain wider Baptist links. Eileen Lacey became BSF president for 1970–71, the first woman to hold this post. Broader Baptist identity was encouraged through an emphasis on Baptist history. David Bebbington, who would become a professor of history, reported that 1971 was the 250th anniversary of St Andrew's Street Baptist Church. One special meeting which, it was anticipated, would be of particular interest to members of RHS was a historical talk by B. R. White on 'Robert Hall'.[72] But numbers within RHS were declining and it was more and more difficult to sustain the Society. In 1976 Andrew Cozens, then the RHS president, spoke of the experience of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and how the early Christians were described as those who wanted to 'turn the world upside down'.[73] Radical change was in the air: within Baptist circles and elsewhere emphasis was being placed on the transformative experience of the Holy Spirit.[74] RHS members were invited to agree to suspend Society committee meetings, a move supported by Professor J. B. Skemp, a senior friend of the RHS who had retired from Durham University to Cambridge.[75]

The RHS still had a membership, and meetings were held. Also, Professor Skemp and his wife Ruby contributed through a weekly 'Open House'.[76] However, the Society could easily have come to an end. Unexpectedly, a new sense of purpose was apparent in 1978 with the

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[70] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 14 April 1975. S 2/24.
[71] I am grateful to Richard Black, who joined the RHS in the late 1980s, for this observation.
[72] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 4 November 1970. S 2/24.
[73] Andrew Cozens, 'The Robert Hall Society', paper presented to the Society, November 1976. S 2/24.
[74] For the story of Baptists and charismatic renewal see Douglas McBain, *Fire over the Waters* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997).
[75] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 28 November 1976. S 2/24.
[76] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 7 June 1974. S 2/25.

production of a *Newsletter*. Andrew Nainby, a student at Fitzwilliam, was behind this. He reported in the first issue that there had been an RHS autumn retreat at Histon Baptist Church, with David Martin, the Young People's Secretary of the Baptist Union, as the speaker. Three RHS discussion groups were now functioning each week.[77] Another *Newsletter* was produced in early 1979. This discussed ecumenical issues as they affected the RHS. In an echo of an event two decades previously, Lesslie Newbigin spoke at a special meeting held at St Columba's Church with the aim of promoting an ecumenical vision.[78] May 1979 saw the RHS *Newsletter* become the *Baptist Telegraph*, produced monthly. In early issues it was acknowledged that considerable spiritual re-building in the RHS was required.[79]

As it transpired, new possibilities were on the horizon. The October 1979 issue of the *Baptist Telegraph* expressed pleasure that Michael Quicke had been called to be the new minister of St Andrew's Street and would be RHS chaplain.[80] There were hopes for the future, but also realism. Chris Blainey, at Trinity College, who took over as editor of the *Baptist Telegraph* at the beginning of 1980, spoke of the situation within the RHS. He was forthright: 'Let's face it. RHS is in trouble!' Blainey accepted that the RHS was 'deliberately inclusive and diverse' in its approach to fellowship. He also outlined how the Society had historically encouraged members to share their 'experience of life before God' and help Baptist churches. But he was concerned that there had been a loss of spiritual distinctiveness: he identified a 'secularization of activity' and also 'a breakdown of relationships'.[81] At a time when Cambridge students from Baptist churches were increasingly drawn to the witness taking place through the pan-denominational evangelical world, it was clear that if the RHS was to survive, let alone flourish, then renewal was needed.

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77 *Robert Hall Society Newsletter*, Christmas 1978, p. 3.

78 *Robert Hall Society Newsletter*, 4 February 1979, p. 2.

79 *Baptist Telegraph*, May 1979, p. 2; June 1979, p. 2.

80 *Baptist Telegraph*, October 1979, p. 1.

81 *Baptist Telegraph*, February 1980, p. 1; May 1980, p. 1.

Renewal in the 1980s

The new vision which Michael Quicke brought to St Andrew's Street produced fresh energy in the RHS.[82] The Society re-constituted a committee and looked again at its purpose. A statement was produced, affirming that the RHS existed 'to bring together in fellowship Baptist students in Cambridge; to promote their understanding of Christian life and faith, and their common growth in grace; to fraternise with other Christian groups within the University; and to engage in Christian work outside the University'.[83] It was noted in November 1980 that a weekend retreat at Histon Baptist Church had taken place, with Michael Quicke, who was to become the regular speaker at future Histon weekends, speaking on spiritual connection and spiritual gifts.[84] The sense of spiritual dynamic was seen in a renewed commitment to Bible study — something, it was emphasised, that was not only 'a CICCU activity' — and in a desire 'to live out the gospel'.[85] New initiatives were taken. Some members began visiting young people in Douglas House, an Adolescent Rehabilitation Unit connected to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. Several members were reading *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, by a Mennonite, Ron Sider, and decided to give to a scheme developed by the evangelical relief agency Tear Fund to support children in Rwanda.[86]

It was clear in *Baptist Telegraph* reports in May–June 1981, when Julie Brown at Selwyn College took over as editor, that growth in the St Andrew's Street congregation was being accompanied by RHS advance. As well as featuring theological articles, book reviews, missionary items and interviews, the *Telegraph* included reports on RHS speakers, Bible studies in Colleges, prayer teas and sporting events. Hospitality extended to RHS members by the minister of St Andrew's Street (a feature of the RHS in its earlier days) was evident, with Michael and Carol Quicke hosting events for up to one hundred students, who appreciated the good food and opportunities for conversation.[87] June 1981 saw eight

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[82] *Baptist Telegraph*, October 1980, pp. 1, 3.
[83] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 12 October 1980. S 2/24.
[84] *Baptist Telegraph*, November 1980, p. 3.
[85] *Baptist Telegraph*, February 1981, p. 1.
[86] *Baptist Telegraph*, March 1981, p. 3. This book remained important for the RHS and was commended again in the *Baptist Telegraph* in February 1985, pp. 3–4.
[87] Minutes of RHS Committee Meeting, 21 May 1981. S2/24.

students baptised at St Andrew's Street. In the *Telegraph* one of those being baptised spoke of the impact on her life of the 'R.H.S.'s spiritual activities'. Another described how she 'came to know Jesus' in her first year at Cambridge and how it was 'out of my love for Jesus, and my desire to obey Him, that I decided to be baptised'. About five hundred were at this baptismal service. For most students present it was the first time they had seen baptism of believers by immersion. Michael Quicke saw it as a 'spiritual breakthrough event'. People came forward to the baptismal pool in response to the invitation. Students who were baptised became church members/associate members.[88] Julie Brown, *Telegraph* editor, was among those baptised in 1982.[89]

RHS membership grew to over fifty in the early 1980s, with a number of nurses from Addenbrooke's Hospital also attending Society events. In 1982, in celebration of 80 years of the RHS, Paul and Caroline Beasley-Murray, introduced as 'very well-known figures of our denomination', were invited as guests. For them it was an opportunity to challenge RHS members to take up responsibilities in Baptist churches.[90] At a meeting in 1984, with forty RHS members present, it was decided to aim for three 'vacation projects' each year.[91] The RHS *Annual Report* (1983–84) included an article by Michael Quicke in which he spoke again of 'spiritual breakthroughs'; for him 'highlights' of his RHS chaplaincy. Karen Blunt, who had recently been baptised and had 'felt so filled with God's Spirit', described the Histon weekend on the theme of witnessing.[92] A similar sense of vitality was evident in the *Annual Report* two years later (1985–86) when Andrew Henton-Pusey, who would later enter Baptist ministry, was RHS president. The report noted that some RHS talks had focused on witness in Europe, especially behind the Iron Curtain.[93]

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88 *Baptist Telegraph*, June 1981, pp. 1, 4. Michael Quicke, 'A Cambridge God Adventure (32) A Mini-Pentecost', blog, February 16, 2018, <MichaelQuicke.org> [accessed 22 February 2021], drawing from his diary.

89 *Baptist Telegraph*, March 1982, p. 1.

90 *Baptist Telegraph*, December 1982, p. 2.

91 Minutes of RHS Open Meeting, 28 October 1984. S 2/26.

92 *Robert Hall Society Annual Report, 1983–84*, pp. 2, 5, 10, 13–16.

93 *Robert Hall Society Annual Report, 1985–86*, pp. 2, 4, 6.

There were indications in the mid-1980s, however, that the RHS was not as secure as it seemed. At an open meeting in November 1986, apart from the committee, only seven members were present.[94] Michael Quicke, while delighted about the witness of Society members, had expressed concern about 'that growing number of students who worship at St A's [St Andrew's Street] on Sundays but who do not belong to the RHS'.[95] It was clear that RHS members were connecting with interdenominational mission groups such as Operation Mobilisation (OM), and Baptist connections were being somewhat overshadowed.[96] The difficulty was highlighted in the 1986–87 *Annual Report*. Sue Goodman, as RHS president and secretary (simultaneously), had at times been 'ripping her hair out', realising that new students coming to Cambridge from Baptist churches did not seem to want to be committed to the RHS.[97] It was not that Baptist life in England was faltering. Indeed, some growth was evident.[98] At St Andrew's Street the congregation more than quadrupled, to over four hundred, and students who had been members of the church and of the RHS were going out to serve in many parts of the world.[99] But the wider context, reflected in Cambridge, was that more and more people who attended Baptist churches did so because they found spiritual life in these congregations, with Baptist identity being of considerably less importance.

By the end of the 1980s it was becoming evident that the renewal the RHS had experienced was not able to ensure its longer-term existence. For most students who attended St Andrew's Street, the focus was moving away from the Society.[100] There was still a committed core, and in the 1988–89 *Annual Report* Katherine Parker, who would later serve with OM in Russia and would become one of OM's international leadership team, spoke of the effect of initiatives in prayer within the Society.[101] At a committee meeting in November 1990, however, Steve Holmes, who became a Baptist minister and a leading theologian, as

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94 Minutes of RHS Open Meeting, 30 November 1986. S 2/28.
95 *Robert Hall Society Annual Report*, *1983–84*, p. 2.
96 *Baptist Telegraph*, April 1986, pp. 7–8; June 1986, pp. 2–5.
97 *Robert Hall Society Annual Report, 1986–87*, pp. 10, 15.
98 Randall, *English Baptists*, p. 417.
99 *Baptist Telegraph*, January 1988, pp. 6–10.
100 *Baptist Telegraph*, February 1989, p. 3.
101 *Robert Hall Society Annual Report, 1988–89*, p. 13.

RHS president suggested that the RHS 'had begun to lose its direction, its sense of expectancy that God would work in meetings'.[102] Nonetheless, the Society continued. The presidency passed to Heather Taylor, later a clinical biochemist, who would marry Steve Holmes. St Andrew's Street appointed one-year pastoral assistants from among RHS members.[103] But in a *Telegraph* article in 1992 Heather Taylor said that the Society was now attracting only eight to ten regular members.[104] It was subsequently agreed that there was no demand for a Baptist Society; the RHS came to an end.[105]

Conclusion

This study of the Robert Hall Society has had a particular focus on the spiritual dynamics of the Society. There were transitions through the period examined here, related to the members' spiritual commitment and the sense of denominational belonging. In the early 1950s the RHS, as part of the recently formed Baptist Students' Federation, mirrored the endeavour of the BSF to find a place in university life in relation to the traditional role of SCM and the growing influence of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, represented in Cambridge by CICCU. In the 1960s, a decade marked by confident RHS student leadership, the Society did not feel the same need to define itself in relation to other bodies. Instead, there was an aim of preparing Baptist students for future service. The emphasis on witness in the university, alongside the witness of other groups, was also stressed, as was wider mission. A considerable number of RHS students of this period went on to take up significant roles in Baptist life and elsewhere. In this way the Society was an important incubator of future Baptist leaders. In the 1970s the decline in denominational loyalty began to have an impact on the RHS, and as a consequence the Society struggled. With the appointment of Michael Quicke as minister at St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, and with his

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[102] Minutes of RHS Committee, 18 November 1990. S 2/28.

[103] The RHS group in the late 1980s and early 1990s included these students and Ken Hori and Eileen Gayton, who later married, Richard Shaw and Richard Black, all of whom subsequently stayed in Cambridge and in St Andrew's Street.

[104] 'Easter 1991–Easter 1992 Report', *Baptist Telegraph,* 1992, p. 2.

[105] Minutes of RHS Open Meeting, 17 February 1994. S 2/28.

role as RHS chaplain, new spiritual dynamics were evident in the Society in the 1980s. In the early 1990s the RHS came to an end, but the Society, as with sister societies elsewhere in British universities, contributed in significant ways to the Baptist denomination from the 1950s to the 1980s.

The Baptist World Alliance and Antisemitism: An Historical Overview

Lee B. Spitzer

Revd Dr Lee B. Spitzer recently retired as the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA and now serves as the Historian for the Baptist World Alliance and as an Affiliate Professor of Church History for Northern Seminary, Chicago, USA.
spitzer.lee@gmail.com | https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6361-3424
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Abstract:
This historical study investigates how the Baptist World Alliance responded to the struggles of the Jewish people throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in light of Baptist core convictions, as expressed in World Congress and General Council resolutions and statements. As a collection, the past resolutions, statements and messages of the Baptist World Alliance indicate that the Jewish people were given only minimal attention until the rise of Hitler and Nazism. Responding to that challenge, antisemitism as a manifestation of racism became a recurring theme in Baptist pronouncements. After the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel, the BWA strove to articulate a balanced and nuanced position concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians (and terrorism), while avoiding any consideration of how antisemitism might play a role in the conflict. With the rise of twenty-first century antisemitism, in 2019 the BWA returned to its historical roots and once again expressed friendship with the Jewish people and opposed antisemitism.

Keywords:
antisemitism; Baptist World Alliance; Jews

The Re-Emergence of Antisemitism in the Twenty-First Century

Speaking online to the World Jewish Congress on the 82nd anniversary of Kristallnacht, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, on 9 November 2020, expressed grave concern about rise of contemporary antisemitism: ‘In recent months, a steady stream of prejudice has continued to blight our world: anti-Semitic assaults, harassment and vandalism; Holocaust denial; a guilty plea in a neo-Nazi plot to blow up a synagogue […] Our world today needs a return to reason — and a rejection of the lies and loathing that propelled the Nazis and that fracture societies today.’ Guterres furthermore expressed

a personal commitment to continue 'the fight against anti-Semitism and discrimination of every kind'.[1]

Contemporary manifestations of antisemitism are occurring at an increasing rate. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) revealed that in 2019, '2,107 antisemitic incidents [occurred] throughout the United States. This is a 12% increase from the 1,879 incidents recorded in 2018 and marks the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.' [2]

Similarly, European countries are experiencing an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents.[3] The European Jewish Congress (EJC) worries that 'normalization of antisemitism on the streets, online and in mainstream society, in politics and media legitimises and encourages acts of violence against Jewish individuals and institutions'. The EJC provided troubling statistics confirming the rise of antisemitism:

> France […] saw a 74% increase in antisemitic incidents in 2018. In Germany, some 1,646 antisemitic acts were reported in 2018 […] marking their highest level in the past decade […] In the United Kingdom, reported antisemitic hate incidents hit a record high in 2018, with more than 100 recorded in every month of the year.[4]

Assessing the BWA's Position on Jews and Antisemitism

In response to this rising tide of antisemitism, the Baptist World Alliance General Council passed a resolution on 11 July 2019, rejecting antisemitism and violent attacks against other people of religious faith. In opposing such prejudice, the Council relied upon a consensus that had developed over the course of a century with regard to past manifestations of antisemitism and other forms of intolerance.

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[1] 'Oppose Hatred in all Its Forms, UN Chief Urges', *UN News*, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077282> [accessed 10 November 2020].

[2] 'Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2019', *Anti-Defamation League*, <https://www.adl.org/audit2019> [accessed 10 November 2020].

[3] See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Antisemitism: Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in the European Union 2009-2019* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020).

[4] 'Antisemitism in Europe', *European Jewish Congress*, <https://eurojewcong.org/what-we-do/combatting-antisemitism/antisemitism-in-europe/> [accessed 10 November 2020].

Baptists historically have believed that all humans, being made in God's image, are to live in freedom and liberty. Individual conscience is to be protected by soul freedom, which in the social and political realms, means that people of all faiths (and even no faith) deserve full political freedom and civil rights. Furthermore, racial and ethnic prejudice, and hate are sin and must be opposed. From its earliest days, the Baptist movement has specifically applied this principle to the Jewish people.[5]

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has served as a prophetic voice of conscience on behalf of most of the global Baptist family. Since 1905, when the first Congress was convened in London, to the present time, thousands of Baptists crafted, debated and adopted resolutions, messages, and statements that sought to express Baptist convictions in response to a panoply of spiritual, ethical, moral, social and political concerns. In between Congresses, the BWA's General Council would also meet and express judgements on pressing issues.

In Baptist polity, resolutions and other collective statements are not binding on Baptist individuals or churches. They intend to share wisdom and raise consciousness rather than to demand conformity or hinder the soul freedom and responsibility of people to follow the dictates of their own Christ-led conscience. In 1955, BWA General Secretary Arnold T. Ohrn stated this principle well:

> Further, it should be understood that an Alliance Congress, when adopting pronouncements, can speak for itself alone. The resolutions naturally carry great moral authority, coming as they do from a Congress so representative of Baptists in the entire world. But no union or convention has ever authorized a Baptist World Congress to speak on its behalf. The people who voted for the resolutions, did so on their own behalf, not on behalf of their churches or conventions. But these statements would never have been proposed, much less adopted, if they were not considered indicative of the trends of opinion within the Baptist world.[6]

Inevitably, the Jewish people and their religion, place in society and struggles have come to the attention of the Baptist World Alliance.

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[5] Lee B. Spitzer, *Baptists, Jews, and the Holocaust: The Hand of Sincere Friendship* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2017), pp. 19–21.

[6] Arnold T. Ohrn, ed., *Golden Jubilee Congress (Ninth World Congress), London, England, July 16–22, 1955* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1956), p. 6.

This historical study will investigate how the BWA responded to the journey of the Jewish people throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in light of Baptist core convictions, as expressed in World Congress and General Council resolutions and statements.

Baptists and Jews Before the Rise of Nazism (1905–1928)

During its formative period (1905–1928), the BWA's resolutions and statements reflected a growing awareness of its responsibility to address significant issues and challenges. In the inaugural London Congress in 1905, delegates expressed their 'profound sympathy with sufferers [of the] Rhondda disaster'.[7] The Second Congress in Philadelphia (1911) produced resolutions on peace and social progress,[8] two themes that would be revisited often by subsequent Congresses. In Stockholm, the Third Congress (1923) tackled specific issues in Russia and Romania, as well as temperance.[9] Reconciliation between Baptists from World War I combatant states was addressed, anticipating positions and actions during the Nazi period.[10]

None of these statements evidenced any recognition of the Jewish people's plight during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Jewish communities throughout Eastern Europe suffered tremendously during World War I, and pogroms from Poland to Russia were not uncommon. Apparently, the BWA had not yet reached a stage of socio-political maturity to specifically engage Jewish people or their unique issues, despite the experience of several of its key national constituents.

One of the great Baptist apostolic leaders of the nineteenth century, Julius Köbner — 'a converted Jew of remarkable intellectual

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7 BWA World Congress Resolution 1905.2 *Disaster at Rhondda, South Wales*. Details of all the resolutions, messages, manifestos and statements referred to in this article can be found at BaptistWorld.org/resolutions. The original source for each resolution may be found in the *Citations* section of each pdf document.

8 BWA World Congress Resolution 1911.4 *Regarding Peace;* BWA World Congress Resolution 1911.5 *Social Progress*.

9 BWA World Congress Resolution 1923.8 *Rumania*; BWA World Congress Resolution 1923.5 *Temperance*; BWA World Congress Resolution 1923.6 *Russian Delegates*.

10 BWA World Congress Resolution 1923.3 *Thanks for Help in Time of Distress*; BWA World Congress Resolution 1923.7 *International Peace*.

and literary powers'[11] — ministered alongside Johan Gerhard Oncken as they and others founded Baptist movements in Germany, Denmark and across Europe. British Baptists had been engaged in missions to the Jewish people for decades preceding the BWA's birth. Sébastien Fath has documented the existence of French Baptist philo-semitism, especially as evidenced by the ministry of Ruben Saillens.[12] Southern and Northern (now American) Baptists in the United States had interactions with Jewish communities, initiated missions to evangelise, assimilate, and alleviate the conditions Jewish immigrants faced, and passed resolutions concerning Baptist-Jewish issues by the 1920s.[13] In 1921, Jacob Gartenhaus became the highest ranking Southern Baptist Jewish disciple of Jesus, when he was called to serve as the denomination's director for Jewish evangelism.[14]

Though unaware of the central place the struggles the Jewish people would occupy in the Baptist articulation of its core conviction of religious and political liberty a decade later, the 1923 Congress published the precedent that would guide their defence of Jewish rights. In a *Message to the Churches and World*, the rights of Jews are implicitly defended: 'The State should protect the rights of all men of various religious beliefs.'[15]

The BWA's Response to Hitler's Antisemitism (1933–1945)

After a year's delay due to the global depression and concerns about Germany's political climate, Baptists gathered in Berlin for the Fifth World Congress on 4–10 August 1934. Under the watchful eyes of the Nazi regime, Baptists passed perhaps its most prophetically courageous and significant resolution in the BWA's history. Newspapers across the world covered the deliberations and endorsement of Resolution 7

[11] J. H. Rushbrooke, *Some Chapters of European Baptist History* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1929), p. 18.

[12] Sébastien Fath, 'Evangelical Minister Ruben Saillens and Judaism', *Archives Juives*, 40, no. 1 (2007): 45–57.

[13] Spitzer, *Baptists, Jews, and the Holocaust*, pp. 19–66.

[14] See Spitzer, *Baptists, Jews, and the Holocaust*, pp. 286–297, 426–432.

[15] 1923 BWA World Congress, *Message of the Baptist World Alliance to the Baptist Brotherhood, to Other Christian Brethren, and to the World*. The message also contains the first specific reference to Jews, in a section on stewardship and tithing.

concerning 'Racialism', focused on the rights of racial groups and their status before God.[16]

In a concise three paragraph argument, the resolution expressed the core Baptist conviction that all people are made in the image of God and thus have equal political, social, and religious rights. Quoting Galatians 3:28, the initial paragraph endorsed an understanding of the Church as a multi-cultural and fully inclusive racial fellowship (including Jews) where equality and mutual reconciliation are normative:

> This Congress representing the world-wide, inter-racial fellowship of Baptists, rejoices to know that despite all differences of race, there is in Christ an all-embracing unity, so that in Him it can be claimed with deepest truth there is 'neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all in all'.

The welcoming of Jews as a race into the Church implied opposition to the emerging Nazi position that Jews should be excluded from the Church. The second paragraph expanded the argument to the civil realm by prophetically opposing all manifestations of 'racial animosity' even outside the confines of the Church. In this regard, it rightly went beyond the more famous Barmen Declaration that was released in May 1934.[17] The BWA's Racialism resolution declared,

> This Congress deplores and condemns as a violation of the law of God the Heavenly Father, all racial animosity, and every form of oppression or unfair discrimination toward the Jews, toward coloured people, or toward subject races in any part of the world.

The tripartite racial breakdown in the resolution can be found in other Baptist statements from the United States.[18] Racialism as a social justice category addressed white majority concern for Blacks suffering from Southern Jim Crow era discrimination and lynchings, Jewish persecution and antisemitism primarily in Europe but also in the United States, and discriminatory policies affecting Asians (particularly Chinese and Japanese). Baptist opposition to 'a every form of oppression or unfair discrimination toward the Jews' was immediately

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[16] BWA World Congress Resolution 1934.7 *Racialism*.

[17] The text of the Barmen Declaration in English can be found in Hubert G. Locke, ed., *The Church Confronts the Nazis: Barmen Then and Now* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1984), pp. 19-25.

[18] See Spitzer, Baptists, Jews, and the Holocaust, pp. 143–227, 272–340, 350–370.

understood as a rebuke to the Nazi antisemitic restrictions on Jewish freedoms, based on the spiritual principle of the equality of all people under God, which trumps all nationalistic considerations.

The final paragraph invoked a now forgotten core conviction, embraced not just by Baptists, concerning the 'personality' of human beings:

> This Congress urges the promotion of Christian teaching concerning respect for human personality regardless of race, and as the surest means of advancing the true brotherhood of all people, urges the active propagation of the Gospel of Christ throughout the World.

Employed in a pre-psychological sense, *personality* referred to the spiritual essence of human beings. All people, by virtue of possessing a soul, were made in God's image and thus possessed dignity and immeasurable worth; therefore the common possession of *personality* promoted the unity ('brotherhood') of the human race. By asserting that Jews, Blacks and Asians possessed *personality*, the resolution theologically rejected the Nazi antisemitic devaluation of the Jews as a supposedly inferior race. There are no inferior races, the Baptists declared in Berlin.

Black Baptist leaders attending the 1934 Congress not only pressed for the inclusion of the phrase 'coloured people' but further urged the BWA to convene its next Congress in the heart of the American South, so that oppressed Black people could enjoy the same support as the German Jews received. With National, Southern and Northern Baptist support, the 1939 World Congress was held in Atlanta, Georgia, on 22–28 July. This Sixth Congress did pass a resolution on Racialism, which was in reality merely a reprinting of the original 1934 resolution with a preface: 'The Congress finds that the strong and unwavering convictions which govern the attitude and policy of the Baptist World Alliance are clearly and adequately expressed in the Resolution adopted by the Fifth World Congress, which met in Berlin in 1934. It therefore solemnly reaffirms what was then stated […].' The text of the original resolution was then quoted in full.[19]

The resolution echoed General Secretary J. H. Rushbrooke's somewhat defensive response to criticism of the BWA's rather

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[19] BWA World Congress Resolution 1939.5 *Racialism.*

lacklustre response to ongoing Nazi antisemitism in the years following the 1934 Congress and in particular, the travesty of Kristallnacht in November 1938.[20] There was nothing new in the 1939 resolution; it merely asserted that the Baptist movement's position on antisemitism had not changed. Most notably absent was any report of subsequent actions taken on behalf of the suffering German Jewish population.

The historical legacy of the 1939 Congress concerning antisemitism is accordingly mixed. The peacemaking impulses of Rushbrooke constrained the Congress from breaking new ground in opposing antisemitism in general or specifically criticising Nazi policies and actions against the Jews. Despite a vociferous public debate on totalitarianism and democracy (where the latter was championed by the British Baptist leader M. E. Aubrey), the German Baptist leadership's complicity with the regime was not officially rebuked. While personally opposing Hitler, Rushbrooke consistently sought to maintain the unity of the global Baptist fellowship despite political divisions, even after the Second World War broke out on 1 September 1939.

The Holocaust, Antisemitism and Genocide (1947–1965)

Copenhagen 1947

There were no World Congresses during the Second World War. Europe's devastation led to the BWA's post-war efforts to aid ailing Baptist national conventions and assist Baptist displaced persons. Accordingly, a European venue for the next Congress made a great deal of sense. In 1947, Baptists travelled to Copenhagen for its Seventh World Congress. The 1947 Congress, in contrast to its predecessor, not only revisited the topics raised by the 1934 Racialism resolution, but also

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[20] A similar response by the BWA Executive Committee's Administrative Subcommittee two weeks after Kristallnacht merely recalled the 1934 resolution and stated that it 'offers a clear description of the attitude of the Alliance'. Unlike the Congress, the committee also asked Baptist entities to 'take steps to furnish all possible assistance to those who are the victims of anti-Semitic action'. See BWA Administrative Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes 1938-11-28, Section 8, 'Anti-Semitism', in *Baptist World Alliance Minutes of the Administrative Sub-Committee Meeting on Monday, 28th November, 1938 at the Offices of the Alliance, London* (London: Baptist World Alliance, 1938), pp. 8–9.

expanded on them in light of the intervening thirteen years in two historically significant resolutions.

The first resolution focused on 'Race Relations'. It confessed that Baptists had 'tried to ignore, evade, and attempt by platitudes to solve this most grave problem', and that these avoidance strategies needed to be replaced by a deeper 'appreciation for the ideals, aspirations, and personalities of all races'. In order to 'build a Christian order and equality for all children of men', the resolution rejected 'un-Christian practices and abuses of people, such as lynchings, race extermination, economic and racial discrimination, unfair employment practices, and denial of political rights [which] are contrary to the principles of Christianity'.[21] The term 'race extermination' no doubt included the Jewish persecution in Europe.

A second resolution concentrated Baptist attention on the Holocaust-era Jewish experience.[22] Composed originally by Jacob Gartenhaus, it forthrightly acknowledged

> the unprecedented suffering through which the people of Israel have passed during recent years, millions of them being exterminated by the most inhuman means; aware also that these sufferings are not yet at an end, but that hundreds of thousands are still in concentration camps or wandering homeless from land to land.

The Holocaust was summarised in honest terms and the ongoing post-war plight of Jewish refugees was not denied. The root cause of this 'unprecedented suffering' — prejudice against Jews — was still a threat. The statement asserted that 'the poisonous propaganda and destructive designs of anti-Semitism are still at work in many lands', eliciting an expression of Baptist 'sorrow and shame that such conditions prevail'.

Reflecting Gartenhaus's perspective, the resolution affirmed Jesus's Jewish background and urged Baptists to 'do everything in their power to alleviate the sufferings of the Jews', while also 'supporting missionary work among the Jews'.[23] Countries were asked to open their

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[21] BWA World Congress Resolution 1947.2 *Race Relations*.
[22] BWA World Congress Resolution 1947.3 *Concerning the Jews*.
[23] Gartenhaus facilitated a conference 'to consider our obligation to preach the Gospel to the Jews' on July 30; see Walter O. Lewis, ed., *Seventh Baptist World Congress, Copenhagen, Denmark, July 29–August 3, 1947* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1948), p. 62.

borders to 'the homeless and oppressed refugees', which in context included Baptist displaced persons as well as Jews.[24]

Not all of the resolution's requests represented Gartenhaus's personal views or expressed pro-Jewish sentiment. It advised 'Jewry everywhere to refrain from provocative acts and to restrain those among them who would resort to violence'. This was a reaction against the King David Hotel bombing on 22 July 1946 and other violent acts against British rule. The resolution was silent regarding the Jewish aspirations for a territorial homeland, perhaps in deference to British sensibilities and an ambivalence surrounding the creation of an independent Israel within certain Baptist missionary circles.

On the closing day of the Congress, a 'Manifesto on Religious Freedom' was adopted and served as the meeting's message to the global family. It asserted, 'Since the foundation of all our freedoms is the dignity of man created in the likeness of the eternal God, it is our first duty to extend the rights of conscience to all people, irrespective of their race, colour, sex, or religion (or lack of religion).'[25] Outlasting Nazism, and presently facing the challenge of Communism in Eastern Europe and Asia, Baptists in Copenhagen reiterated historic Baptist core convictions on human freedom, which formed the theological basis for their support both of oppressed Blacks and surviving Jews, as well as for all other minorities around the world.

Cleveland 1950

Meeting in the American heartland city of Cleveland, the 1950 Congress symbolised the ascendency of the American denominations within the BWA. With the destruction of the BWA's London headquarters during the war, the offices of the BWA were relocated to Washington, DC. The East-West (communist/democratic) bifurcation of the political world led Baptists to place their faith in the mediatorial work of the newly established United Nations, and this was reflected in the Cleveland resolutions.

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24 See BWA World Congress Resolution 1947.4 *Displaced Persons*.

25 This statement comes in the introduction to the 1947 BWA World Congress *Manifesto on Religious Freedom*.

Post-war reflection on the scope and horrific nature of the brutality of the Holocaust inspired efforts to declare the intentional destruction of a people illicit under international law. The 1950 Congress supportively pointed to the work of the UN, which adopted the term 'genocide' to denote such efforts: 'Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings.'[26]

Although the Holocaust lay at the heart of the matter (historically speaking), the Baptist statement followed the generalising principle of the UN and did not specifically mention Jews; instead, it asserted that 'during the last war certain of the nations were guilty of this inhuman practice, using it both against minorities within their own borders as well as against conquered peoples and prisoners of war'. Since 'Christian conscience has been outraged by such treatment of human beings', the Congress urged governments to ratify the Genocide Convention (six more affirmative votes were needed).

In 2021, the identification of the Jewish people as a distinct race is a controversial and disputable notion, but in the early to mid-twentieth century the concept was commonplace both in Baptist thinking and the wider social milieu.[27] Antisemitism was a manifestation of racial discrimination as well as a religious freedom issue. This dual manner of treating the socio-political challenges confronting the Jewish people was illustrated by the actions taken by the Eighth World Congress in 1950.

The Congress's resolution on 'Race Relations' acknowledged its indebtedness to the resolutions published by earlier Congresses in 1934, 1939 and 1947 that 'condemned racial discrimination'.[28] However, while reiterating the traditional trinitarian racial categories of Jew, American Black and Asian peoples, the proclamation broke new ground by referencing additional struggles: 'This problem manifests itself in several unchristian ways such as discrimination against Jews in many lands, the Apartheid Movement in South Africa, the discrimination against

[26] BWA World Congress Resolution 1950.3 *Genocide*.
[27] The identification of Jews as racially white was largely the result of the post-war successful assimilation of Jews into the American middle class. See Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
[28] BWA World Congress Resolution 1950.4 *Race Relations*.

Orientals and Mexicans in some areas, and the segregation by law of Negroes in the United States; […].' The resolution declared that 'discrimination and segregation based on religion, race, color and culture are ethically and morally indefensible and contrary to the gospel of Christ and the principle of freedom for which Baptists stand', and so called on Baptists to reject 'racial and cultural prejudice'.

Jews as adherents of a religion are specifically mentioned in the Congress's Manifesto regarding 'Religious Freedom'. Reaffirming the historic Baptist core conviction on religious liberty and freedom for all people, and linking it to the 'the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights', the Manifesto specifically affirmed that state churches should not restrict the religious liberty of 'Jews and members of other religious groups'.[29]

The 1950 Congress once again neglected to discuss the birth of an independent Jewish state. Even though Israel was founded as a technically secular homeland for the Jewish people, no one could deny its spiritual implications for many Jews (and Christians). Many Baptists, especially those influenced by evangelical and prophecy-centred dispensational movements, were supportive of Israel's rebirth.[30] Furthermore, the BWA was obviously aware that the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman — a Baptist — had played a key role in promoting global recognition of Israel's right to exist as an independent nation.[31]

Racial Inequality (1955–1965)

Nevertheless, with Europe's Jewish refugee crisis resolved, and as American Jews left their immigrant past behind them and successfully became established within the middle class, the 1950 Congress resolution on Genocide effectively closed the chapter on Baptists, Jews and the Holocaust. As the memory of the Holocaust faded, new problems, such as the nuclear arms race, the Cold War, and race

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[29] 1950 BWA World Congress *Manifesto—Mid-Century Call to Religious Freedom,* 'Appeal to Action' section.

[30] See Yaakov Ariel, *An Unusual Relationship: Evangelical Christians and Jews* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), pp. 83–110, 171–13; Spitzer, *Baptists, Jews, and the Holocaust*, pp. 236–239.

[31] See Michael J. Devine, ed., *Harry S. Truman, the State of Israel, and the Quest for Peace in the Middle East* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2009).

inequality, would trouble Baptists. Specific references to antisemitism became less common. For example, the 1955 Resolution on 'Race Relations' reaffirmed that in '1934, 1939, 1947 and 1950', the BWA had 'already declared itself unalterably opposed to racial discrimination in every form',[32] but antisemitism was not specifically mentioned. In a further declaration, the Congress similarly generically affirmed that 'the right to be free is a gift from God to all men of whatever race'. [33]

In 1960, Baptists from around the globe travelled to Rio de Janeiro for the first World Congress held in South America. The delegates recalled that their 1934 resolution on Racialism proclaimed that Jesus 'condemned every form of oppression or unfair discrimination toward the Jews, toward colored people, or toward subject races' and expressed 'gratitude to God for the measure of progress which has been made in the improvement of race relations'. Looking to the present and future, the focus of this Congress's concern — 'racial segregation and the caste system' (American segregation and probably South African apartheid[34]) — may have signalled a belief that antisemitism was no longer a leading manifestation of racism.[35]

The trend away from focusing on antisemitism as a specific and ongoing manifestation of racism continued at the 1965 Congress in Miami Beach (a city with a significant Jewish population). In just one generic sentence, delegates affirmed 'the brotherhood of all Christians and the equality of all men under God, regardless of race or social position'.[36] Similarly, the 1965 *Manifesto* thanked God for 'the decrease of discrimination because of race or creed'.[37]

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32 BWA World Congress Resolution 1955.2 *Race Relations*.
33 1955 BWA World Congress Golden Jubilee *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, 'Our Jubilee Declaration' section
34 The Fifteenth Congress in 1985 passed a detailed repudiation of apartheid in 1985; see BWA World Congress Resolution 1985.2 *Racism in General and Apartheid in Particular*.
35 BWA World Congress Resolution 1960.1 *Race Relations*.
36 BWA World Congress Resolution 1965.2 *Brotherhood and Equality*.
37 1965 BWA World Congress *Manifesto on Religious Liberty and Human Rights*.

Jews, Israel and the Middle East

Looking at the resolutions of the Tenth and Eleventh BWA Congresses, a Baptist could not be faulted for hoping that antisemitism was no longer a significant contemporary problem and that the Jewish state of Israel was not a pressing subject for critical reflection. That would change with the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and its Arab neighbours on 5 June 1967.

Peace and Conflict Resolution (1967–1981)

The Six Day War fundamentally transformed the political dynamics of the Middle East. Israel emerged as a victorious and militarily strong national power, while its conquest of territory owned by Syria (the Golan Heights), Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (Sinai and Gaza) created a new reality that continues to be controversial to this present day.

Meeting less than two months after the conclusion of the Six Day War, the BWA Executive Committee merely referred to the region's 'continuing tension'.[38] Similarly, in 1968 and 1969, the Executive Committee noted conflicts around the world, with the Middle East being but one example.[39]

Although not cited by name, Israel and its neighbours received attention in the resolution on 'World Peace and Reconciliation', passed by the Twelfth World Congress in 1970: 'We cry out against the continued tragedy of the conflicts in Indochina and the Middle East and urge that the killing be stopped.'[40] Baptists looked to the United Nations to facilitate peace negotiations in trouble spots such as the Middle East.

Another resolution continued the practice of recalling the sequence of statements against racism initiated by the foundational 1934 resolution, and also furthered the more recent strategy of avoiding specific mention of antisemitism:

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[38] BWA Executive Committee Resolution 1967.5 *Message to Baptist Churches Throughout the World.*

[39] BWA Executive Committee Resolution 1968.1 *Peace*; BWA Executive Committee Resolution 1969.6 *Peace.*

[40] BWA World Congress Resolution 1970.1 *World Peace and Reconciliation*.

> At Berlin in 1934, at Atlanta in 1939, at Copenhagen in 1947, at Cleveland in 1950, at London in 1955, at Rio de Janeiro in 1960, and at Miami Beach in 1965 the Baptist World Alliance registered its opposition to racial discrimination and its parent, racism, which is the evil of looking at men in terms of their differences of color or culture rather than their oneness as children of God. The fact that here again in Tokyo in 1970 we are obliged to address ourselves to this evil is evidence of how stubborn and deeply ingrained this practice is in human thought and action […] We Baptists lament the presence of and repent for the sins of racism that have existed, […] We pledge ourselves to labor within our own churches, conventions, and unions and also in the whole of society for the total elimination of every vestige of racism and those discriminations and oppressions which are its offsprings.[41]

In 1975, both trends continued as the Thirteenth Congress published a restatement of Baptist core convictions concerning religious freedom, human rights, peacemaking and morality. While opposing 'violence and armed conflict persisting in many parts of the world', neither the Yom Kippur War of October 1973 nor the Vietnam War was named. The resolution also affirmed that 'the right to maintain cultural identity includes the rights of racial, ethnic, and national groups to maintain their self-determined identities. We affirm the principles set forth in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.'[42] It is unclear if the Resolution intended to be applied to the Palestinian gains in the United Nations and the rise of the PLO as their representative in 1974–1975.

The Baptists' reliance on the United Nations to mediate conflicts was restated in 1980.[43] The plight of Vietnamese boat people as well as that of Palestinians in refugee camps may have been in mind when the 1980 Congress implored unnamed governments to 'act with humanitarian concern towards persons seeking shelter as a result of personal dispossession or exclusion from their own nations'.[44]

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[41] BWA World Congress Resolution 1970.2 *Reconciliation and Racial Discrimination*; see also BWA General Council Resolution 1981.1 *United Nations Declaration Concerning Religious 'Intolerance and Discrimination',* and BWA General Council Resolution 1982.3 *Fundamental Freedoms*.

[42] BWA World Congress Resolution 1975.1 *Religious Liberty*.

[43] BWA World Congress Resolution 1980.4 *World Peace and Disarmament*. This was followed up by BWA General Council Resolution 1984.1 *Nuclear Arms*, which stated: 'WE SUPPORT the proposal of non-governmental organizations represented at the United Nations in calling for a peace conference for the Middle East, to which all parties to the conflicts should be invited.'

[44] BWA World Congress Resolution 1980.6 *Refugees*.

Meeting in between Congresses, the Baptist World Alliance's General Council penned some 215 resolutions and statements between 1981 and 2020. During these four decades, several expressed the concern Baptists felt toward the Israeli-Arab conflict. Continuing the trend of not explicitly mentioning Israel by name, the Council in 1981 presented an even-handed but general statement summarising 'its concern and position regarding multiple but interrelated crises in the Near and Middle East in the following expressions':

> 1. We express our profound concern regarding the blatant disregard for human rights, civil liberties and national self-determination.
>
> 2. We express our resistance to the pattern whereby powers outside the Near and Middle East manipulate the geo-political situation for national advantage.
>
> 3. We express our commitment to the pursuit of peace, liberty and social justice simultaneously.
>
> 4. We call on Baptists in every land to pray for peace in the Near and Middle East.[45]

Terrorism (1982–1989)

As acts of Palestinian terrorism became more common, the BWA sought to oppose terroristic violence without appearing to explicitly support Israel. Perhaps unintentionally, this quest for balance enabled the BWA to avoid the issue of whether attacks against Israeli and other Jews constituted a manifestation of antisemitism.

In 1982, the General Council noted its 'concern over acts of terrorism, assassinations, and the taking of hostages all of which have posed potential threats to peace and stability, as well as being unconscionable assaults upon the individuals concerned'.[46] In like manner, the Fifteenth World Congress in Los Angeles in 1985 expressed opposition to terrorism, naming specific forms of violence it abhorred, including 'indiscriminate attacks against civilians through bombing of airplanes, hijacking, kidnapping, harassment and murder'. However,

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[45] BWA General Council Resolution 1981.4 *Crisis in the Near and Middle East*. This balance may reflect internal division within the BWA. On the one hand, the Southern Baptist Convention was pro-Israel, while the three small Baptist conventions of Israel, Jordan and Lebanon (with a total membership in 1980 of 25 churches and 1,308 members) would have been more sympathetic with Arab and Palestinian concerns.

[46] BWA General Council Resolution 1982.6 *Peace and Peaceful Change*.

even while acknowledging that some forms of terrorism may have religious origins, it framed the problem in political terms and did not identify Jews as specific victims of terrorist attacks: 'We deplore the destruction of human life and the deliberate infliction of human suffering upon innocent people.'[47]

Hostage taking had been a feature of Palestinian insurgency since 1968, when an Israeli El Al plane was hijacked and sixteen people were held hostage. This was followed up by the 1972 Munich Olympics attack on Israeli athletes. In 1985, the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise liner by the PLO off the coast of Egypt, which featured the execution of a disabled American Jew, Leon Klinghoffer, was notorious. During its 1987 session, the BWA General Council specifically addressed this issue. Affirming the value of human life and rejecting turning people into 'commodities for bargaining', the Council blandly noted that hostage taking 'feeds a cycle of hostility and makes a mutual desire for peace, justice and reconciliation more difficult to achieve'. It urged Baptists to pray for hostages and 'the resolution of the problems leading to violence', advised member unions to 'appeal through the media to persons of good will to reject violent means of securing good purposes', and curiously appealed to hostage takers to treat their prisoners in a 'just and humane way'.[48]

In two other resolutions, the 1987 Council praised host country Jordan for practising 'religious toleration' and prayed that the country might serve as 'an instrument of just and lasting peace in the Middle East'.[49] The Council specifically thanked Marwan Doudin, Jordanian Minister of Occupied Territory Affairs — namely, the Israeli held West Bank.[50]

Even though Israel celebrated its fortieth anniversary in May 1988, the General Council did not see fit to congratulate or even acknowledge the anniversary. Instead, it reaffirmed its commitment to a cessation of 'hostilities between and within countries in the Middle

[47] BWA World Congress Resolution 1985.6 *Terrorism*.
[48] BWA General Council Resolution 1987.1 *Hostages*.
[49] BWA General Council Resolution 1987.2 *Religious and Racial Minorities*.
[50] BWA General Council Resolution 1987.6 *Appreciation*. See also <http://www.marwandudin.org> [last accessed 5 March 2020].

East'.[51] The next year, it succinctly chose to 'deplore every incident in which persons and groups are subjected to actions which contradict the divine intention for personhood and human dignity, in particular, human rights abuses in the Middle East'.[52]

Israel and the Palestinians (1990–2013)

The 1990s were a period of intense peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The Bush and Clinton administrations repeatedly sought to provide opportunities for Israel and the Palestinians to reconcile and end their hostilities, based on what became known as the 'two state solution'. There were some notable successes, such as the Oslo Accords (1993, 1995) and a peace treaty between Israel and Jordon (1994).

Throughout the decade, the BWA General Council repeatedly commented on the peace process in the absence of new World Congress resolutions. Following the Gulf War and Desert Storm (August 1990–February 1991), the Council urged Baptists to 'pray unceasingly and to work earnestly for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and not least for a strong and mutual commitment on the part of Israel and the neighboring states to find a solution to the situation of the Palestinian people'.[53] This appears to be the first time Israel is specifically mentioned as a country in a BWA resolution.[54]

In 1994, the General Council approvingly recognised the 1993 Oslo 'accords between the Israelis and Palestinians'.[55] Three years later, the Council reaffirmed support for the Oslo peace process and for the mediation efforts of the United Nations.[56] However, the Camp David Summit in July 2000 was not a success and its failure threw the Oslo process into a tailspin. The second Palestinian Intifada began in September 2000 and lasted for almost five years. In 2002, the General

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[51] BWA General Council Resolution 1988.5 *Peacemaking*.

[52] BWA General Council Resolution 1989.2 *Human Rights*.

[53] BWA General Council Resolution 1991.3 *Middle East Situation*.

[54] The two references to Israel in Gartenhaus's 1947 resolution were religious in nature, not political. Jesus was a 'Child of Israel', or in another words a Jew; the Great Commission applies to sharing the gospel with 'the people of Israel'. (BWA World Congress Resolution 1947.3 *Concerning the Jews*.)

[55] BWA General Council Resolution 1994.5 *The Ministry of Reconciliation*.

[56] BWA General Council Resolution 1997.2 *Peace in the Middle East*.

Council passed a balanced and carefully worded resolution which, while deploring 'violence', did not condemn either Palestinian terrorism or Israeli military activity. It merely supported 'all efforts to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians and to promote initiatives between Christians, Jews and Moslems in the common concern for peace'.[57] A year later, Ariel Sharon became the first Israeli leader to be mentioned in a BWA resolution that lent support to President Bush's 'Road Map to Peace'. It praised the 'cooperation of the Israeli and Palestinian Governmental Authorities' in working 'toward the cessation of violence and a just and lasting peace for all peoples'.[58]

The Arab Spring, with its pro-democratic aspirations, erupted in December 2010 in Tunisia and spread to Egypt by February 2011. In July 2011, the Council responded with a resolution that covered the protests, the status of Middle Eastern Christians, violence, religious freedom, the plight of refugees and Baptist-Muslim dialogue. The resolution also included a statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that, as was the standard approach, sought to balance the perspectives of both parties. Baptists were asked to 'work and pray for a just resolution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, one that balances Israel's need for security with an end to oppressive policies inflicted on the Palestinian people, and to be a strong support to the Israeli (Arab) and Palestinian Baptist Churches in the many pressures and challenges that they face'.[59]

Within two years, it became clear that many of the aspirations of the Arab Spring movement would not be actualised, and in fact, political conditions deteriorated in several countries impacted by the upheavals. In July 2013, the General Council expressed concern for 'an increase in the persecution of minorities, including Christians' and condemned 'attacks by Islamic extremists'.[60] Although United States Secretary of State John Kerry was preparing to initiate a new round of

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[57] BWA General Council Resolution 2002.5 *The Middle East*.
[58] BWA General Council Resolution 2003.5 *Middle East*.
[59] BWA General Council Resolution 2011.4 *Resolution on the Middle East*.
[60] BWA General Council Resolution 2013.10 *Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa*. The Council also remembered English Anabaptist Richard Overton who 'argued for religious liberty for Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims' (BWA General Council Resolution 2013.15 *Human Rights Based on the Work of Anabaptist Richard Overton*.).

peace talks later in the month, Israel was not mentioned in this resolution.

Confronting Contemporary Antisemitism and Prejudice

The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, signalling the collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European alliance. At the same time, actions by both the United States and Soviet Union greatly impacted the lives of Soviet Jews. In October 1989, the Bush Administration capped Soviet refugee immigration at 50,000 applicants (it had previously been unlimited), while 'events in the Soviet Union threatened the stability of the country, and rumours of pogroms spread. Soviet Jews and their family members, both Jewish and Gentile, flocked to Israel in unprecedented numbers: 181,759 in 1990.'[61] The cover of the 7 May 1990 issue of *Newsweek* warned of 'The Long Shadow — New Fears of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union'.

On 14 May 1990, *The New York Times* reported on massive protests against antisemitism in France sparked by the desecration of thirty-four graves in Carpantras and other acts of vandalism. The French Government 'blamed the extreme rightist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and his National Front for inciting racial hatred by calling for the eviction of 3.4 million Arab immigrants and for regularly sniping at France's 700,000 Jews'.[62] The Associated Press noted Le Pen's antisemitism and indicated that about 200,000 French protesters had demonstrated against antisemitism, 'including Holocaust survivors and President Francois Mitterrand'.[63]

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[61] United Nations High Commission for Refugees gives this information at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a7fd8.html>, citing from a document prepared by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Jews from the Soviet Union* (2 November, 1994), paragraph 1 [accessed 12 November 2020]. Regarding the plight of Soviet Jews in this period, see Zvi Gitelman, 'Glasnost, Perestroika and Antisemitism', *Foreign Policy* 70, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 141–159.

[62] Alan Riding, 'Thousands in France Rally Against Anti-Semitism', *The New York Times* (May 14, 1990), <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/05/14/world/thousands-in-france-rally-against-anti-semitism.html> [accessed 12 November 2020] (p. 3).

[63] Patrick McDowell, '200,000 March in Anti-Semitism Demonstration in Paris', *The Associated Press* (May 14, 1990), <https://apnews.com/article/e6c96df3bfbabcdc4f8f120642de92de> [accessed 12 November 2020].

Meeting in Seoul, South Korea in August 1990, the BWA expressed its concern over the wave of antisemitism the world was experiencing. Referencing the Berlin Wall's collapse,[64] the resolution on 'Religious Persecution' applauded new 'opportunities of freedom' and then specifically condemned antisemitism: 'We particularly decry the use of religion to justify intolerance and persecution; and further we are appalled that anti-Semitic practices and slogans have again surfaced. We therefore declare our opposition to all forms of religious intolerance and persecution.'[65] This was the first specific mention of antisemitism by a World Congress since Rio de Janeiro in 1960, and it would turn out to be the last time a World Congress would address antisemitism by name in resolution form.

In 2008, the BWA revisited the horror of the Holocaust for the first time since 1950 in a General Council resolution focused on the Italian Government's efforts to fingerprint Roma people. Following trends in Holocaust research that sought to recognise non-Jewish victims, the resolution 'recalls that the Roma people were targeted and persecuted many times in history leading to the genocide perpetrated against them by the Nazi regime'. Although the statement maintained that Baptists 'stand against all forms of discrimination and for the safeguarding of the dignity and human rights of all human beings',[66] the centrality of Jewish suffering under the Nazis and antisemitism were not specifically recalled.

In July 2019, the General Council considered a draft resolution on 'Current Manifestations of Anti-Semitism and Religious Intolerance'.[67] The Resolutions Committee expanded its scope to include intolerance and violence against persecuted Muslims in Myanmar and China as well as Christians in Nigeria, Cameroon and India. The final version, renamed 'Current Manifestations of Religious

[64] 'The world has recently experienced the blessing of the destruction of walls and divisive restrictions which have separated nations and families' (BWA World Congress Resolution 1990.3 *Religious Persecution*).
[65] BWA World Congress Resolution 1990.3 *Religious Persecution*.
[66] BWA General Council Resolution 2008.8 *Involuntary Fingerprinting of Roma People in Italy*.
[67] For the purposes of full disclosure, the author of this article drafted the submitted proposed statement.

Intolerance and Religiously-Motivated Violence',[68] retained most of the text of the original draft in regards to antisemitism. Citing antisemitic violent 'attacks against synagogues in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA; and Poway, California, USA', the resolution lamented 'the well-documented rise of anti-Semitism around the world, for instance the marked increase in anti-Semitic crimes in western and central Europe'.

The 2019 resolution quoted in full the text of the 1934 World Congress's protest against Hitler's antisemitism. The extended quote was not gratuitous. It signalled that the BWA possessed a historically consistent tradition of opposing antisemitism, going as far back as the Nazi period. The Resolutions Committee also added a reference to the very beginnings of the Baptist movement, citing Thomas Helwys who, 'in 1612, made his famous plea for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to be allowed to worship in freedom and so live at peace together in the same geographical space'. Freedom for people of all faiths constituted a fundamental Baptist core conviction, thus necessitating unequivocal opposition to antisemitism, no matter what its origin or form.

The BWA and the Jewish People: Past, Present and Future

As a collection, the past resolutions, statements and messages of the Baptist World Alliance indicate that the Jewish people were given only minimal attention until the rise of Hitler and Nazism. Responding to that challenge, antisemitism as a manifestation of racism became a recurring theme in Baptist pronouncements. After the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel, the BWA strove to articulate a balanced and nuanced position concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians (and terrorism), while avoiding any consideration of how antisemitism might play a role in the conflict. With the rise of twenty-first century antisemitism, in 2019 the BWA returned to its historical roots and once again expressed friendship with the Jewish people and opposed antisemitism.

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[68] BWA General Council Resolution 2019.2 *Current Manifestations of Religious Intolerance and Religiously-Motivated Violence.*

The 2019 General Council Resolution encouraged Baptists to demonstrate their opposition to antisemitism and other forms of prejudice by expressing 'solidarity and sympathy' with people of other religions and by 'living in peace with everyone'. Beyond mere acceptance or tolerance, the resolution furthermore called upon 'BWA member bodies to offer the hand of sincere friendship to our neighbors of other faiths, as an expression of biblical teaching that all human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and as a prophetic response of God's love against all manifestations of terrorism, violence, and religious intolerance (Romans 12:21)'. It was J. H. Rushbrooke, as BWA General Secretary, who initially offered the Baptists' 'hand of sincere friendship' to the Jewish world at a meeting in London in April 1935. Rushbrooke linked opposition to antisemitism with Baptist friendship to the Jewish people during their dark night:

> When […] as spokesman of my own communion at Berlin, I condemned in that city 'the placing of a stamp of inferiority upon an entire race,' it was not merely as a Baptist, but in the name of all instructed Christians that I spoke, and when our Congress passed its resolution—unanimously, in Berlin—deploring and condemning 'as a violation of God the Heavenly Father all racial animosity, and every form of oppression or unfair discrimination towards the Jews,' we expressed a judgment that, while we would apply it to men of every race, carries with it that special application a unique warmth of sympathy and a unique strength of just resentment, evoked by the knowledge of recent and continuing oppression and suffering. To my Jewish brothers and sisters under such conditions I extend the hand of sincere friendship.[69]

In 2021 (and beyond), how might Baptists 'extend the hand of sincere friendship' to Jews in their neighbourhoods, countries and across the globe? Here are three suggestions, among the many available options.

First, the Baptist world might consider studying and endorsing the working definition of antisemitism created by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: 'Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish

[69] Original quote from 'The Evils of Arrogant Nationalism', *The Jewish Chronicle* (April 4, 1935), p. 30, cited in Spitzer, *Baptists, Jews, and the Holocaust,* p. 3.

community institutions and religious facilities.'[70] As of the writing of this paper, thirty-four countries, along with dozens of municipalities, universities and organisations have endorsed the legally non-binding working definition.

Although the BWA has an admirable track record of opposing antisemitism, its resolutions do not provide an adequate definition of the term or its features. The IHRA definition could be discussed and endorsed by local Baptist churches, denominational judicatories and ministries. The IHRA website suggests examples of antisemitism that are worthy of reflection by Baptists. Some Baptists may find a few of the examples to be controversial, such as those regarding criticism of Israel. Baptists are not strangers to political differences, and the BWA has often been a forum where thorny issues have been addressed.

Second, the Baptist world, on all of its levels of life, might seek to be more intentional in expressing friendship by relating to the Jewish community through activities such as faith-based dialogues, social gatherings and cooperative endeavours that express both communities' justice values. In 1935, Rushbrooke declared that Baptists were in the Jews' debt because of their gift of the Jewish Scriptures; serious joint study of the Torah, Writings and Prophets could serve to build lasting bridges of understanding and deeper relationships between Baptists and Jews.[71]

Third, the 100th anniversary of the Fifth World Congress and its Racialism resolution will be in 2034. This might be a most appropriate occasion to bring Jewish and Baptist communities together for a celebratory reflection and forward-looking conversation.

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[70] The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism?focus=antisemitismandholocaustdenial> [accessed 12 November 2020].

[71] A precedent for this took place two decades ago. A group of Jewish Scholars published *Dabru Emet*, to which American Baptists responded. See <https://www.baptistholocauststudies.org/dabru-emet.> [accessed 12 November 2020].

Book Reviews

Jens Holger Schjørring and Norman A. Hjelm (eds.), *History of Global Christianity, Vol. II: History of Christianity in the 19th Century* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 526 pages. ISBN: 9789004352803; Jens Holger Schjørring, Norman A. Hjelm and Kevin Ward (eds.), *History of Global Christianity, Vol. III: History of Christianity in the 20th Century* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018), 346 pages. ISBN: 9789004352810.

Reviewed by Henk Bakker

Prof. Dr Henk Bakker holds the James Wm. McClendon Chair for Baptistic and Evangelical Theologies at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is a lecturer at the Dutch Baptist Seminary and IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
h.a.bakker@vu.nl | http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7313-1760
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.705

These two books are volumes II and III of the three-volume work on the history of global Christianity from c. 1500 to the end of the twentieth century. For a general introduction to the project, see my review of Volume I in *Baptistic Theologies* 10:2 (2018) pp. 129–130. The volumes take a fresh approach in presenting historical research from a global angle, so as to not be constrained by the typical European ethnocentric tunnel vision. Too often Church history was written and prescribed from a Eurocentric perspective, which is as much apparent in its terminology (e.g. Middle East, Near East) as in its proportional selection (more attention for the Atlantic axis). In this regard the series is a 'Fundgrube' of data, narratives, and historical reflections not hindered by cultural biases given with the false assumption that modernity and civilisation only started with the wake of Europe.

Nevertheless, the nineteenth century (Vol. II) is called 'the long century', because of the leap it takes in processing the aftermath of the Enlightenment into upcoming modernity and secularisation. As a consequence, the century also gave birth to new forms of re-Christianisation, such as revivalism and nineteenth century 'innere Mission', as it also had to deal with revolutionary changes in social and economic realms (industrialisation, democratisation, Zionism), and, how sad, with the reinforcement of European colonialism. Very interesting are the sudden challenges the Western Church saw itself faced with in dealing with the results of the changing times it witnessed. The challenges were at least four: (1) 'All men are created equal' and are

endowed with 'unalienable Rights', stated the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, so what effects did the statement have on churches in the century after?; (2) rapid social changes associated with urban industrialisation yielded into existential issues at the address of Christendom; likewise (3) were the effects of The Great Revolution in France (1789); and (4) the rise of the enslaved people of Haiti against the French rulers (1791), and their claim to have their share in 'liberty, equality, fraternity'.

So, it is obvious why nineteenth-century Church history focuses for the greater part on Europe and America, because this is where the majority of the world's Christians still lived. At the same time Christianity was divided in itself, with Roman Catholics and Protestants and Eastern/Western Christianity, and was about to face even more controversy during the nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, Enlightenment and rationalism were prone to erode the privileged positions of most churches in both Europe and the Americas. Christianity stood under heavy intellectual and political attack, and simultaneously was preoccupied in spreading its ideas far beyond its Western boundaries. Moreover, the circumstances under which Christians lived in countries where they formed a minority, were almost the same as those of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hinduists, or atheists living in Christian countries.

McLeod's first chapter in Volume II on 'revolutions, the Church, and the new era of modernity' is in every respect preparatory for understanding the subsequent contributions on Roman Catholicism and the First Vatican Council; the Protestant Missionary Movement; Christianity in Russia, in North America, in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in the Middle East, in Asia; and Christianity in the context of other world religions. In particular the paragraphs on 'Ultramontanism' and 'Missions and Colonialism' are illustrative of the disturbing dynamics of the turbulent nineteenth century. For example, for the issue of race, Gospel and colonialism stuck like a fish-bone in the throat of Atlantic churches, because the freedom the Gospel promised did not altogether materialise into freedom in the Church and between Christians.

Volume III consists of three subdivisions: Decades, Themes, and Continents. The first mainly centres around The First World War; The Interbellum; The Second World War; The Cold War; and for that matter concentrates (again) on Europe and North America. As of consequence, the continents have to be covered once again, in the third and last subdivision (Part 3, pp. 273–516). The second subdivision, the Themes, is revelatory as regards the reorientations global Christianity went through during the 20th century: e.g. human rights; socio-ethical reorientations; the Ecumenical Movement; Vatican II; anti-Semitism and the Holocaust; world religions and interreligious dynamics.

The twentieth century was marked by dramatic turning points with far-reaching consequences, such as 'a thorough revision of the global map of Christianity that is now dominated by increasing diversity', and in particular 'a constant movement away from the so-called "first world" towards the Global South' (p. 1), Schjørring asserts. For that matter, deeper confrontations between socio-political developments and the politics most Europeans and North Americans fostered seemed inevitable. Therefore, Schjørring, Hjelm and Ward have inserted a paragraph on 'The Church's rejection of human rights', saying that 'the pathway followed by the Christian churches in Europe to the acceptance of human rights as an ethos compatible with the Catholic or the Protestant faith was a long one', and that it 'was based on deep-rooted mistrust of the Enlightenment and of the secular notions of freedom since the French Revolution of 1789' (p. 128). Average Christian churches only reluctantly followed politico-cultural changes and innovations, especially if they dealt with human rights (cf. 'Protestantism and human rights', pp. 137–142). Of course, all these burdens and confusions resulted in all sorts of secular reactions, such as the decrease of church attendance, upcoming diversity, and differing perspectives on the place of Christianity in culture and society (pp. 489–498). Surprisingly, Europe does not seem to have a forerunner's position anymore.

I wholeheartedly recommend this series as a fresh and scholarly approach to Church history for the twenty-first century.

Helen Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflection: Starting with Scripture* (London: SCM, 2020), 256 pages. ISBN: 9780334058564.

Reviewed by Fran Porter

Dr Fran Porter is a member of the Adjunct Faculty at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
fran.porter@me.com | https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3433-3116
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.717

It is a bold thing to challenge the dominant norms within a theological field but that is just what Helen Collins does in this book about theological reflection. Responding to the difficulties experienced particularly by evangelical and charismatic ministerial students in theological college when encountering theological reflection, which often seems 'as if it is giving students answers to a problem they do not have' (p. 5), she proposes a model that 'coheres with their already familiar processes of theological refection' (p. 5), one which foregrounds Scripture. Further, her argument is that her 'scriptural cycle' model is more suited than current models for everyone who engages in theological reflection as part of their ministerial formation — ministry broadly understood as 'God's ministry in Christ' and therefore potentially involving everyone equipping themselves to serve God.

She constructs her argument logically. She offers a critique of theological reflection education (particularly the critical correlation method and pastoral cycle model) before making her argument for the Bible as the starting point for any theological project, defending this 'evangelical faith conviction' (p. 18) against possible objections from within the practical theology field. Her chapter on the place of the Holy Spirit critiques Don Browning's *Fundamental Practical Theology* and Elaine Graham's *Transforming Practice,* both which she argues disadvantage divine agency. She contends that experience has been understood too broadly within practical theology, and that other academic disciplines are tools rather than sources in the work of theology. She describes the proposed scriptural cycle model (as one model for applying her method), countering potential criticisms of it, and offers four case studies of the model along with a guide for facilitators using it.

Helen Collins's proposal for there to be 'greater engagement within the discipline [of practical theology] over the role of the Bible, the Holy Spirit and Christian experience' (p. 225) is carefully argued and this is a beautifully written book, easy to read, critical, constructive, and

delicately nuanced. Throughout, her conviction that 'God can be encountered as a present, active agent in the world and as something ontologically distinct from ourselves' (p. 97) shapes how she understands the work of practical theology, and her final chapter includes five far-reaching implications of her method for Christian theological education more broadly, one of which questions theological education's engagement with higher education systems. This particular suggestion is one of a number of instances that gave me cause for concern that the corrective wisdom of voices from outside the church, in practice, would risk being muted in her model. While the potential for misuse inherent in her method is acknowledged, for example, because of 'the manifold oppressive ways in which this grand story [of the Bible] has been told and used' (p. 214), it seems to me that these ways have been and still are more influential than her model allows. Nevertheless, without doubt, the book deserves its place alongside other methods of theological reflection, fostering attention to the implicit theological and epistemological assumptions of existing more familiar models and methods.

Nigel G. Wright, *How To Be A Church Minister* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 190 pages. ISBN: 978532665875.

Reviewed by David Dunlop

David Dunlop has been involved in pastoral ministry for over 25 years, and for the past 12 years has served as pastor of Windsor Baptist Church in Belfast.
david@windsorbaptist.org
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.707

As a 'reluctant' church minister, with a slight aversion to any book with a title that begins, 'How To', I approached reading/reviewing this book with a certain degree of nervousness, apprehension, and even suspicion. But having read it through (twice), I found it to be an informative, insightful, and generally helpful book (or instruction manual), despite being under 200 pages long.

Wright, who is a (now retired) church minister, bible college lecturer and principal, approaches this subject as a practitioner and educator, and therefore brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to bear on a whole range of issues and important factors in being (and forming) a local church minister. From the outset, Wright recognises

that there are numerous books written within this well-trodden territory, but believes another contribution by a 'reflective practitioner' is valid, and I would agree. In addition, Wright acknowledges that there are many new perspectives on church ministry, but clearly states his intention 'to show that there is much in the older traditions that can inform the practice of mission and ministry today'. In terms of a target audience, again, Wright aims (and hits) broadly. He attempts to address those from different church traditions (free, catholic, and episcopal), plus he hopes this book will be of value to those exploring church ministry, those in the process of preparing for it, those involved in it for many years, or now retired from it. As someone who has been a church minister for a number of years, I found the fourteen aspects he identifies, highlights, and considers to be relevant and instructive.

As this is a relatively short book, Wright obviously does not mine too deeply into each area, and at times I wish he had, but there is enough practical wisdom, challenging material, guiding principles, and personal advice in each chapter, to make this book a recommended resource for someone who falls into any of the above four categories. My favourite definition of church ministers comes in chapter 9 ('Have The Courage to Lead'), where they are described as 'active catalysts', and I was also struck by Wright's desire to maintain the primacy of the ministry paradigm rather than the leadership paradigm, in providing a framework for understanding what church ministers must primarily do and are called to do. Towards the end of the book, Wright reflects on the overall picture he has painted of church ministry, and in summary suggests that 'it involves a fair share of wrestling of one kind or another'. Wright has clearly grappled biblically, and at many other levels, with what he believes is involved in being a church minister, and for those who want to join in (or have already done so), this book will be a good partner and trainer.

Paul W. Goodliff, *Shaped for Service: Ministerial Formation and Virtue Ethics* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 313 pages. ISBN: 9781498291231.

Reviewed by Henk Bakker

Prof. Dr Henk Bakker holds the James Wm. McClendon Chair for Baptistic and Evangelical Theologies at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is a lecturer at the Dutch Baptist Seminary and IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
h.a.bakker@vu.nl | https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7313-1760
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.708

Paul Goodliff has written a notable book on spiritual formation of pastors, which topic is altogether imperative, urgent, and also quite complicated. Goodliff, himself a Baptist minister and Associate Research Fellow at Spurgeon's College, has been Head of Ministry and General Superintendent of the Baptist Union's Central Area (England), and knows about the ups and downs in ministry, in particular the proficiency regarding psycho-hygiene (emotional self-regulation) with which ministers have to be equipped.

Goodliff signals the necessity for pastors to generate more realistic expectations and gratification in their hard labours, as he noted earlier in his book on *Ministry, Sacrament and Representation: Ministry and Ordination in Contemporary Baptist Theology, and the Rise of Sacramentalism* (2010). Ministers perceive their mission as a vocation, as something holy, and precisely for this reason he opts for a sacramental approach to the practice of ordination. On that account *Shaped for Service* more or less explores the ministerial consequences of a high estimation of the ministerial office. What kind of spiritual training should pastors acquire and elaborate in subsequent years?

Here Goodliff takes sides with Alasdair MacIntyre — and for that matter also with Stanley Hauerwas, Tom Wright, Glen Stassen, David Gushee, and others who rekindle interest in Aristotelian virtue ethics for civic purposes — and convincingly proposes not to settle for general spiritual comprehension, but to specifically train sustainable formative habits. The book aims at coaching pastors to the 'habits of facing Christ in daily prayer, corporate worship and fellowship' (p. 69). Here pastors should 'exercise' themselves in order to develop mental and emotional susceptibility to wisdom (*phronesis*) and sound work ethic.

Hence the book opens with a sort of 'state of the art' (Part 1: Formation and Virtue Ethics), consequently discusses models of

ministerial formation (Part 2) and the qualities of a virtuous life (Part 3: intellectual, spiritual, and character formation), and closes with the formation of the practices of ministry (Part 4: the practitioner: liturgist, pastor, guide, missionary, administrator, leader). The main strength of this virtue-ethical perspective is the natural way it fits into human life and, above all, the individual life as enveloped in communal life. On top of that, it also fits the mindset of the apostle Paul and other New Testament authors. However, Goodliff's effort to balance 'virtue ethics (…) primarily derived from Aristotle' with the beginning and ending of salvation history (creation, eschaton) is rather weak, and unnecessary, I think (pp. 42–43, 56–69). But, by all means, I advise pastors to delve into this fine book on the art of ministry (Aristotelian *technē*).

David W. Gill (ed.), *Should God Get Tenure? Essays on Religion and Higher Education* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 262 pages. ISBN: 978172526549313.

Reviewed by Edwin Ewart

Edwin Ewart was involved in pastoral ministry for over 20 years across Ireland and is currently principal of the Irish Baptist College.
edwin@thebaptistcentre.org
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.709

This provocatively titled collection of essays addresses the reality that, during the twentieth century, theological and religious perspectives 'have been marginalised, if not utterly excluded' (p. 2) in the sphere of higher education. In this short volume the thesis is promoted that theology and religion ought to occupy a central and not peripheral place in the university and college. Stand-out chapters address the following:

A fascinating discussion on the nature of professorship, which espouses the concept of professorial 'enabling' through which students may arrive at open-minded and carefully reasoned positions of their own.

The presentation of an holistic vision, in keeping with Christian identity, for the notion of academic excellence, which sits in contrast to the view that associates such excellence with attendance at, or placement in, prestigious institutions.

The question of intellectual culture is addressed in a chapter which posits the argument that there are three such cultures in modern America (representative of the Western world): science, humanities, and religion. The deduction here is that education should restore religion into the public sphere as a legitimate conversation partner, in an age which has seen it relegated to the realm of private opinion.

A significant chapter on religious toleration and human rights sets out a classical definition of tolerance, in contradiction to the popular understanding of this today, and shows how true tolerance undergirds the handling of difference in any civilised society. This essay finds support in another on the question of evangelical civility and academic calling. Here the author advocates a linkage between civility and conviction — making our defence 'with gentleness and reverence' (I Peter 3:15 ff.) — and applies these appositely to the context of academic debate.

The editor's chapter on ethics with and without God, makes a compelling case for the inclusion of the religious and/or Christian perspective in thinking about moral judgements.

These essays will resonate with many who teach in the general context of higher education and the specific setting of the theological college. The concerns articulated in this collection are precisely those with which educators constantly struggle. Some of these themes are addressed elsewhere, for example, Mark Noll's (1994) *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*; more recently, D. A. Carson's (2013) work, *The Intolerance of Tolerance*; and George Marsden's (2018) *Religion and American Culture*. However, the strength of this book is that the orientation is towards those who teach and study in higher education, the themes are interrelated and freshly articulated, and the invitation to self-critical reflection for teachers and institutions alike is compelling. The basic premise of the book (that God should get tenure!) is, on the whole, successfully argued. These essays mark an important juncture in an ongoing discussion about the role of faith in Western intellectual culture.

Jacques Ellul, *Presence in the Modern World.* Trans. by Lisa Richmond, foreword by Ted Lewis, and an introduction to Ellul's life and thought by David W. Gill (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2016), 128 pages. ISBN: 9781498291347.

Reviewed by Lina Toth

Revd Dr Lina Toth is Assistant Principal and Lecturer in Practical Theology at the Scottish Baptist College, University of the West of Scotland. She is a member of the Adjunct Faculty at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
lina.toth@uws.ac.uk | https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0194-7573
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.710

Presence in the Modern World was one of the first works of this French Protestant lay theologian (1912–1994). A longtime professor of social history and the history of law, Ellul was a prolific author, writing on a wide range of subjects. Conceived in 1946, this short volume reflects Ellul's key concerns: the ideology of unchecked technological advance, or 'la technique'; the use of propaganda; and the radical, 'revolutionary' nature of the Christian call and witness. Such witness, in Ellul's understanding, is incompatible with Christians siding with a particular secular ideology, whether on the left or on the right. Instead, they are called to live in a creative, and at times painful, tension: 'We need to understand that there are no Christian principles. There is the person of Christ, who is the principle of all things' (p. 33). That is what 'presence' entails as a way of witnessing to the modern world.

One of Ellul's key concerns is the ever-extending reach of *technique* under the service of which humans increasingly find themselves. Indeed, the human intellect and human spiritual problems have also become, he argues, the means of mindless consumption, resulting in a growing distance between people's lived experience and the account of that experience they are provided with by the media. And if this sounds familiar in relation to our own time, then it is a reflection of the significance of Ellul's work more than sixty years on. In his Introduction to Ellul's life and thought, David W. Gill notes that Ellul was not a systematician, but 'a kind of a prophet' (p. 110). This refers not simply to Ellul's ability to recognise the likely future from his vantage point of mid-twentieth century, but also to stimulate Christian minds so that they do not shy away from inconvenient, complex, perhaps unresolvable, yet livable questions.

Having first appeared in English in 1951 as *The Presence of the Kingdom*, the book has now been newly translated by Lisa Richmond. Its

inclusive language is a welcome update, though otherwise the translation keeps close to Ellul's text, as reflected in the way the prose tends to follow French language structure, punctuation, and phraseology. This particular volume also includes explanatory footnotes. Some of these, prepared by David W. Gill, provide helpful context and commentary to Ellul's thought, whilst others, supplied by the translator, comment on linguistic issues or offer explanations of various movements or personalities referred to by Ellul, such as Marx, Weber, or Lenin. The latter type of footnote seems to be largely superfluous, given Ellul's dense prose and the target readership of 'Christian intellectuals'.

Those already familiar with Ellul's thought and *The Presence of the Kingdom* may enjoy a fresh rendering of this classic piece. New readers may need patience as they get used to Ellul's language and dialectical argument, but they will be rewarded with a stimulating invitation to 'read' the modern world in a way that searches for an authentic Christian presence and witness to the gospel.

Kate Bowler, *The Preacher's Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019), 338 pages. ISBN: 9780691179612.

Reviewed by Laura Dijkhuizen

Laura Dijkhuizen is research community co-ordinator at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
dijkhuizen@ibts.eu | https://research.vu.nl/en/persons/laura-dijkhuizen
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.711

'In almost every spiritual empire, there was a she' (pp. 1 and 238).

Historian Kate Bowler describes in this book the public lives of America's Christian female celebrities. She interviewed over one hundred women in order to paint a picture of the search for their role within ministry and the marketplace in the context of a complementarian view on gender relationships.

Bowler wrote the book while fighting severe cancer and discovered that her interviewees were very open to show their vulnerability because she was vulnerable. I cannot imagine a bigger contrast between a deathly ill woman having chemotherapy and a perfectly dressed and styled celebrity who arrived in her private

aeroplane to grant an interview. I have great admiration for the perseverance of this researcher.

Her style of writing is refreshing and humorous. The choice to thematise the content into five major subjects: The Preacher; The Homemaker; The Talent; The Counsellor; and The Beauty demonstrates the impact of the development of female influence and leadership on different areas in life and ministry.

Bowler looks behind the scenes of internationally famous Christian women like Beth Moore, Victoria Osteen, Beverly LaHaye, and Joyce Meyer and describes their challenges, worries, and successes. The 'dance' between submitting to husbands and having their own successful ministries is both cringing and fascinating. Although, in recent decades, the dance has changed, when it started around the 1980s the subject of submission did these women no harm. They flourished from under the umbrella of their husbands and often their popularity, including their bank accounts, rose higher than that of their spouses.

Personally, I found it very interesting to read about the shift from the admiration of female missionaries — seen as heroines in long, old-fashioned skirts, wearing no makeup, and doing 'man's stuff' — to CEOs from mega ministries in designer clothes, having their own makeup or clothing brands and an apparently non-ageing skin. These new female heroines within the evangelical, Charismatic, and, yes, also Baptist denominations in the United States, lived the dream of every Christian housewife, mother, and employee. And, no small detail, where the missionaries looked old in their forties, these faces of mega ministries still look young at eighty!

This book is a product of the context of the United States, which is far from the European context. But considering that theologically (and not only theologically) we do lean on the developments of denominations like the Southern Baptist, there is a lot to profit from this work, especially in the difficult area of gender dynamics within church leadership. Besides the theological and historical value, the book is very accessible and opens a world we might not be familiar with but through which we are influenced, willingly or not.

Gea Gort and Mats Tunehag, *BAM Global Movement: Business as Mission, Concepts and Stories*. Theology of Work Project (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2018), 223 pages. ISBN: 9781683070870.

Reviewed by Jonathan Wilson

Revd Dr Jonathan Wilson is Senior Consultant for Theological Integration, Canadian Baptist Ministries, and Teaching Fellow at Regent College, Vancouver. He is a member of the Adjunct Faculty at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
jonathanrefordwilson@gmail.com | https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8001-8830
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.712

This is a multi-authored volume of short expositions of various concepts and vignettes of business as mission. BAM may be an innovative global movement toward a more faithful practice of the gospel, if it truly matures and remains faithful to 'a missional way of living out the *whole incarnated gospel* in our daily life, where we work and where we live' (p. 3).

The diversity of this volume defies a summary or comprehensive critical assessment. Instead, I will note some strengths and weaknesses and call for one step forward for BAM.

The brevity of the expositions and vignettes is both a strength and a weakness. As a strength, brevity makes the concepts and practices very accessible, which may fire the imagination of others. The brevity also enables a presentation of diverse concepts and practices. What readers may find missing in one place, they may find present in another.

As a weakness, the brevity means that there is a sense of fragmentation. What is missing is a consistent exposition of the congruence of the concepts and practices with the *telos* of BAM. Without this congruence, some who seek to emulate BAM in their contexts will have a practice without a vision, their story apart from God's story; they will lack a *telos* which holds vision and practice together. Without this, good practices easily go astray into "doing good" apart from Jesus Christ. The authors mitigate this danger in places, but I miss a conceptual exposition that brings this danger into clear focus and provides safeguards against this happening.

One way to address this concern might be to have an exposition and story that provides a counter-witness to the positive expositions and stories: what concepts undercut BAM? What kinds of practices are incongruent with BAM?

This volume is a well-conceived and executed call to BAM. May it ignite innovative, faithful witness to the good news of the redemption of all creation throughout the world.

Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution.* Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 234 pages. ISBN: 9780190912369.

Reviewed by Jan-Martijn Abrahamse

Dr Jan-Martijn Abrahamse is Tutor of Systematic Theology at Ede Christian University of Applied Sciences and the Dutch Baptist Seminary in Amsterdam.
jan-martijn.abrahamse@baptisten.nl | https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3726-271X
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.718

Bingham's book aims to reassess Baptist seventeenth-century history in light of the actual sources: 'one finds that the seventeenth-century 'Baptist story' is not nearly as neat and tidy as some authors would suggest' (p. 2). In this way, the author continues and modifies the path set forth by Stephen Wright (*The Early English Baptists*, 2006). Bingham's central argument is that in the context of the English civil war, a time in which 'the established church had effectively collapsed' (p. 2), giving space to novel ideas and public religious experimentation, there was no such thing as an accepted and defined theological identity that was distinctly '(Particular) Baptist'. This construction of a coherent Baptist identity is, he observes, a nineteenth-century invention, projecting self-evident denominational labels back onto a much more diffuse past.

Bingham builds his argument in five chapters. First, he discusses the so-called 'London Confession' of 1644. The seven churches behind this confession are all in some way related to Henry Jacob's earlier separatist congregation. Bingham suggests the term 'baptistic congregationalists' instead of using 'Particular Baptists' (pp. 8, 33, 153) to identify this loose group of independents that advocated believer's baptism. These baptistic congregationalists favoured Calvinistic soteriology above believer's baptism as an identity denominator. Hence, those commonly known as 'Particular' and 'General' Baptists could in no way be understood as one group sharing one Baptist identity, as eighteenth-century author Thomas Crosby and many subsequent Baptist historians have claimed. Conversely, more significant to these

people was the 'congregational way' of being church. In the second chapter, Bingham continues to investigate the relations between these baptistic and independent congregationalists. He shows how notable baptistic representatives, like John Spilsbery and Henry Jessey, were part of a larger network of congregationally minded pastors, who disagreed about the practice of baptism but shared a Reformed orthodoxy. In the third chapter, Bingham delves more deeper into the ecclesiological issues and especially the reasons behind the transition to believer's baptism. He highlights the strangeness of this move in the landscape of seventeenth-century puritan thinking, and locates the main source in the Protestant rethinking of sacramentology. Protestants placed baptism within ecclesiology rather than soteriology. So, with rejection of the *corpus permixtum* ('visible saints') among congregationalists, the adoption of believer's baptism became the logical next step as the mark of true believers. In chapter 4, Bingham takes an outside perspective by reviewing the bad image of Anabaptism in England up to the Cromwellian settlement and explains the remarkable tolerance toward believer's baptism only a couple of years afterwards. In the last chapter, he completes his book by offering evidence of friendly relations between paedobaptistic congregationalists and baptistic congregationalists, to further illustrate his case.

Bingham has written an excellent study and a must-read for everyone interested in seventeenth-century English church history and historiography, specifically regarding English nonconformity. It is a terrific example of historical investigation against the background of denominational identity construction. Strangely, in his first chapters, he continues to use the labels Particular/General Baptists which makes it somewhat confusing. Bingham's general argument demands substantial reflection by those calling themselves 'Baptists', both in the way they tell their ecclesial story and engage in ecumenical conversation.

Rein Brouwer (ed.), *The Future of Lived Religious Leadership.* Amsterdam Studies in Theology and Religion series, Vol. 7 (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2018), 258 pages. ISBN: 9789086597741.

Reviewed by Lina Toth

Revd Dr Lina Toth is Assistant Principal and Lecturer in Practical Theology at the Scottish Baptist College, University of the West of Scotland. She is a member of the Adjunct Faculty at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
lina.toth@uws.ac.uk | https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0194-7573
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.714

The Future of Lived Religious Leadership is a collection of essays on different contexts in which either some sort of a religious leadership is practised, or to which a theological approach to leadership can be applied. The chapters are written by twelve authors, coming from South Africa, the Netherlands, UK, Sweden, and Israel. Given the assortment of research interests and settings of the contributors, the volume aims to engage with three categories: Difference in Contexts; Lived Religion; and Engaged Research. These are presented as a way of structuring the collection, though they are not always discernible in the chapters.

The contextual nature of leadership comes across very strongly, reflected in the widely varied situations and perceptions of leadership explored in different chapters. These include postcolonial Africa; South African e-church; identity leadership in an emerging congregation in the Netherlands; the Texan 'pastorpreneurship' of pastor Joel Osteen; psychological health of Church of England ministers; and the 'leadership capital' of pre-military Zionist academies in Israel. Some of the authors consider professional or lay religious leadership, whilst some others look at larger environments of leadership in society and politics.

The 'Lived Religion' perspective is largely made evident by various empirical methods employed by different authors. Indeed, the volume represents a good sample of such approaches, and thus might be particularly useful for those who teach or study leadership. The third category — the 'authors' engagement with the future of leadership' (p. 6) — is perhaps the least developed. It would have been helpful to see an attempt by the authors to converse with one another, especially given that the collection grew out of several meetings over the course of three years. What provides coherence, as well as helpful insights into the future of the discipline in relation to religious studies, is the Epilogue.

Furthermore, the Introduction notes another meta-theoretical perspective that was to guide the writing of the chapters: namely, the movement between four paradigms which have been dominating the field of leadership studies. The first, and the oldest, paradigm is focused on leaders' personality — be it traits or skills. The second one has to do with the dynamics of relationships and communication between leaders and their followers. The third paradigm focuses on the visionary qualities of leadership. Finally, the organic paradigm is interested in the communal context in which leadership happens. All of these paradigms are quite clearly visible in the collection, although, again, it would have been both helpful and interesting to see a more explicit discussion along these lines as a way of cohering the collection.

Paul Beasley-Murray, *This is My Story: A Story of Life, Faith, and Ministry* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 254 pages. ISBN: 9781532647963.

Reviewed by Jonathan Wilson

Revd Dr Jonathan Wilson is Senior Consultant for Theological Integration, Canadian Baptist Ministries, and Teaching Fellow at Regent College, Vancouver. He is a member of the Adjunct Faculty at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.
jonathanrefordwilson@gmail.com | https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8001-8830
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.715

In this engaging autobiography, Paul Beasley-Murray (b. 1944), takes readers on a journey from life as the son of George and Ruth Beasley-Murray; through his own education; his teaching ministry in Congo-Zaire (1970–1972); his pastorate in Altrincham (1973–1986); his years as Principal of Spurgeon's College (1986–1992); his pastorate in Chelmsford (1993–2014); and his 'retirement' (2014–2018). Along the way, we also learn of his work (1) imagining and creating structures to strengthen and redirect the church's vision for mission; (2) innovating practices for better fulfilment of that vision; and (3) promoting the health of pastors who lead the church in mission. He also places his many publications within this journey, with the result that we can see the seamlessness of his writing and his calling.

In the midst of these various institutional settings, Beasley-Murray's story has two acts. The first act is his story from birth until his appointment as Principal of Spurgeon's College. In Beasley-Murray's

own telling, these years were 'relatively trouble-free'. The second act is his very difficult and stress-filled time at Spurgeon's; the early years of opposition and resentment in his church at Chelmsford; and the very fruitful years that followed during his continuing ministry in Chelmsford and into 'retirement'.

This, in brief, is Paul Beasley-Murray's story. Some readers will be more interested in certain scenes from his life: for example, many in the BUGB and even beyond will read with interest (for good and ill) his account of the years at Spurgeon's. And I imagine other accounts of those years will be forthcoming. But more important than any one scene is the whole of this story — the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ, minister of the gospel, and servant of the church who has remained steadfast and joyful through difficult years personally and ecclesially.

How has this been possible? Beyond, or perhaps in the midst of, the obvious — God's grace and Beasley-Murray's personality and temperament — we can identify three sources of faithfulness. The first source is attentiveness to God and Scripture. A second source of faithfulness is family and friends. A third source of joyful steadfastness is Beasley-Murray's 'innovation for mission' or 'missional innovation'.

In these three ways, Beasley-Murray's story is a testimony to his personal resilience in the midst of obstacles, mistakes, and failures; God's graciousness in these times and in times of flourishing; and an invitation for us to tell our own stories as witness to the work of God.

Martin Accad, *Sacred Misinterpretation. Reaching across the Christian-Muslim Divide* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019), 365 pages. ISBN: 9780802874146.

Reviewed by Bernhard J.G. Reitsma

Prof. Dr Bernard Reitsma is Professor by special appointment for The Church in the Context of Islam at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and Professor of Diversity and Professionalism at Jan Luyken Institute, Christian University of Applied Sciences, Ede in The Netherlands.
b.j.g.reitsma@vu.nl
https://doi.org/10.25782/jebs.v21i1.716

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

This benediction (Matthew 5.9) is an important inspiration for Martin Accad, Chief Academic Officer at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon, and Director of its Institute of Middle East Studies. The aim of IMES and Accad's passion is The Institute's objective to bring about positive transformation in thinking and practice between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and beyond.

An important objective for writing *Sacred Misinterpretation* is therefore 'to make a positive contribution to the history of theological dialogue between Christians and Muslims'. Accad acknowledges the deadlock in Christian-Muslim dialogue but sees possibilities to move beyond it by 'engaging in a text-based study of Christian-Muslim theological dialogue and its relation to the conflict between Islam and Christianity'.

He will present Christian doctrines 'to Muslims in a way that is faithful to the Christian tradition, while taking seriously Muslim theology and the history both of interpretation of key qur'anic verses and of Muslim interpretation of biblical texts'. He calls it a metadialogue. He describes the history of Muslim thinking on key themes in the Christian-Muslim dialogue and starts a conversation about how these ideas are present in classical, evangelical Christianity. That dialogue will reveal the crucial obstacles contributing to the present deadlock and highlight the positive and creative elements that could help us to move forward. Accad realises that there will be permanent differences between Muslims and Christians that will not be resolved; however, he sees possibilities for dialogue on faith issues.

After introducing his approach, and following a methodological chapter on hermeneutics and dialogue, Accad addresses four religious themes (in 7 chapters): God; Jesus; the (perceived corruption of the) Bible; and the prophet Muhammad. Every chapter contains a historical overview of Islamic thinking on these topics, specifically in the formative ages of classical Islam (8th–14th centuries AD). Accad also portrays how Muslims have read and interpreted the gospels in this context, to prove their qur'anic thinking. He then critiques the Islamic thinking in all its diversity from a Christian perspective and illustrates every issue with incidents from his own war-torn Lebanese history. He concludes with a chapter on how to progress beyond conflict.

Accad has written an excellent and well thought-through masterpiece of high academic quality. He targets teachers, professors, theologians, and theological students. Interested lay people and students of religion might also benefit from this work. It could also prove very helpful in interreligious dialogue and building bridges between Muslims and Christians. Accad hopes 'to reinforce positive constructive relationships between Christians and Muslims of good will through gracious dialogue on sensitive theological issues as a small contribution to thwarting religious fanaticism'. That is much needed in our present time of polarisation. The question remains if it is really possible to go back to the beginning of Christian-Muslim relations in order to create better understanding and relationships. There is a — not always positive — history of fourteen centuries of Muslim-Christian relations. And will Muslims be ready to accept Accad's suggestions for renewing the theological interaction? That remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the only way to find out is to engage in religious encounter and Accad's book is an impressive guide on that path.