SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SCHOOL *of* CHURCH MUSIC

Artistic THEOLOGIAN

Journal of Ministry and Worship Arts

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 1 • 2012

The Artistic Theologian

ISSN 2324-7282
Published by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 22390
Fort Worth, TX 76122

DESCRIPTION

The Artistic Theologian (ISSN 2324-7282) is an evangelical theological journal published annually at www.ArtisticTheologian.com by the School of Church Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. It focuses on issues of worship, church music, aesthetics, and culture for Christian musicians, pastors, church music students, and worship leaders.

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Book reviews for the journal should be between 700 and 900 words and should be submitted to the Managing Editor.

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The Artistic Theologian 1 (2012): 1–2

Introducing *The Artistic Theologian*

John E. Simons[1]

The Artistic Theologian is designed to provide a place for publication, research, discussion, and resources for those engaged in worship and artistic ministry. We hope it will create points of connection between worship leaders, pastors, church music scholars, theologians, and students preparing for ministry. The journal and its allied resources support the point of view that a church musician should be an artist and a theologian, and it addresses the need to increase dialogue between pastors and church musicians. The peer-reviewed articles will examine in detail crucial topics. The book reviews will heighten awareness of recent publications in the field. The online posts are intended to encourage interaction and discussion of current issues. The professors' corner on the website features syllabi from church music classes from various institutions. The peer-reviewed articles and selected book reviews will be published annually each fall, discussions will be posted each week, and the website will be continually updated with supplemental research and resources between journal editions.

This first edition of *The Artistic Theologian* consists of four peer-reviewed articles and several book reviews. The subject matter of the four articles reflect the variety the reader will find in each edition. Topics for this edition include worship leadership preparation, aesthetics, congregational song, and culture.

Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, uses a series of propositions to discuss the role of the pastor in the worship life of a local congregation. He asserts that poetry and music are integral parts of worship and require understanding and preparation on the part of the pastor. A companion article will be featured in the second edition of the journal titled, "Why Church Musicians Should be Learned in Theology and Pastoral Care."

T. David Gordon, Professor of Religion and Greek at Grove City College, frames a discussion of the biblical foundation of aesthetics with the creation account in Genesis. He asserts that just as God is the foundation of justice and truth, so too is he the foundation for beauty. Readers will appreciate his insights as in his books, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* and *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*.

Jonathan Blackmon, Associate Professor of Church Music and Worship Arts at Missouri Baptist University, writes a timely congregational song article about Scripture, Shekinah, and sacred song. He asserts that God's Word and God's Presence should directly shape the song of God's people. Concluding the article, Blackmon analyzes

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three hymns. Church music scholars, worship leaders, and students will be able to use his analysis technique as a model for evaluating hymns.

Scott Aniol, Instructor of Church Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of *Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship*, seeks to define culture from a New Testament perspective. Aniol compares popular anthropological and evangelical definitions of culture to New Testament Scripture, and he asserts that behavior or the way of life most closely resembles a Biblical definition of culture. This study has numerous implications and applications for ministry and worship.

I invite you to submit an article for our next edition. The selected articles will form the flow and direction of each edition rather than a pre-designed theme. Specific format and submission information are listed on the journal's web site. The entire issue can be downloaded as a PDF file, or each article can be downloaded and used as needed. The journal is designed and numbered for ease of academic citation. Please join us, make a significant contribution to worship and artistic ministry, and engage in the tasks God has given to every believer.

The Artistic Theologian 1 (2012): 3–15

Why Pastors Should Be Learned in Worship and Music

Kevin T. Bauder[1]

This essay addresses the following question: Should pastors be learned in worship and music? My answer offers a perspective arising from my experience and theological reflection upon ministry (over thirty years, about evenly divided between ministry as a pastor and as an academic theologian). My initial answer to the question is that a pastor certainly does not need to be a skilled musician in order to enjoy an effective ministry. Nevertheless, since right affection (including right worship) is at the heart of the Christian faith, and since right affection is both expressed through and evoked by the arts, and since the church is biblically required to employ certain arts in the execution of its ministry, then pastors should possess sufficient learning to lead the church wisely and knowledgably concerning the artistic productions that the church adopts in worship. I shall present my observations in a series of nine propositions.

Proposition One: Pastors Lead by Example and Teaching

Pastoral ministry involves multiple emphases, the most important of which are reflected in the names given to the pastoral office. A pastor feeds and protects the flock. A bishop oversees the ministry. An elder is a spiritual adult who nurtures the saints to maturity. While a pastor possesses authority (1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:7, 17), the nature of that authority does not consist in making decisions that are binding upon others (1 Pet 5:3). Rather, pastoral authority consists primarily of two elements.[2]

One of those elements is the pastor's example. In his first epistle, the apostle Peter contrasted fiat authority with pastoral example (1 Pet 5:3). Similarly, the writer to the Hebrews commanded Christians to follow the example of those who lead, paying attention to the result of their conduct (Heb 13:7). The apostle Paul regularly appealed to his own example to reinforce what he taught in the churches (e.g., 1 Cor 4:17). Example is an im-

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[2]In this discussion, my own ecclesiastical bias will be evident. My tradition is regular Baptist, which believes that the Bible does not distinguish the offices of pastor, bishop, and elder (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1–5; Titus 1:5, 7). Baptists do not normally recognize monarchial bishops, nor do they distinguish teaching elders from ruling elders.

portant element because it helps people to see biblical principles being applied. It is the necessary, moral foundation for a pastor's authority.

The other element is the pastor's teaching. The ability to teach is one of very few functional qualifications that Scripture lays down for bishops (1 Tim 3:2). Paul emphasizes that double honor goes to elders who labor in preaching and teaching (1 Tim 5:17).[3] Indeed, in his list of Christ's gifts to humanity, Paul names "pastors and teachers" as a single category (Eph 4:11). If pastoral example is the moral foundation of pastoral authority, teaching is the means through which it most regularly and obviously reaches the congregation.

Pastoral authority is mediated through teaching. The New Testament never envisions non-teaching pastors, but it says much about the shape their teaching should take. Pastoral teaching must focus upon the persistent proclamation of the Word, even at times when this proclamation does not appear to be effective (2 Tim 4:1-2). Good pastors labor at this task (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17). Furthermore, pastoral teaching involves practical activities such as warning (1 Thess 5:12), exhorting and refuting (Titus 1:9), reproving, rebuking, and instructing (2 Tim 4:2), and preparing others to teach (2 Tim 2:2).

Proposition Two:
Pastors Must Teach the Whole Faith

In the New Testament, elders rule by teaching. The New Testament also discloses what they are supposed to teach. Most likely, the apostle Paul was speaking about elders in 2 Timothy 2:2. According to this verse, Timothy was supposed to teach what he had learned from Paul to other men, and they in turn were to teach it to still others. Evidently this transmission of teaching was supposed to go forward through the generations of church leaders. Significantly, Paul exempted nothing in his message from this pattern. The entire body of Pauline instruction was to be passed along intact, apparently including all that was discussed in Paul's written works.

This broad focus is in keeping with Paul's own habits as a teacher, as can be seen in at least two ways. The first involves Paul's Thessalonian ministry. Even though his work in Thessalonica was relatively brief because it was interrupted by opposition, the content of the Thessalonian epistles displays remarkable theological breadth and diversity. In these letters, Paul referred to topics that he had already discussed with the church in Thessalonica. These include not only basic truths such as the gospel and its effect upon Christian living (1 Thess 2:11–12), but also instruction in perseverance through tribulation (1 Thess 3:3–4), exhortation regarding sexual purity (1 Thess 4:1–5), some rather advanced lessons in eschatology (1 Thess 5:1–2; 2 Thess 2:5), and instruction about labor and finance (1 Thess 4:11–12; 2 Thess 3:10). Especially notable is Paul's repeated appeal to his own example, which provided both an illustration of and moral grounding for his instruction (2 Thess 3:7–9).

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[3]Many denominations find in this verse a justification for distinguishing teaching elders from ruling elders. In contrast, Baptists generally believe that the distinction in the verse is between elders who rule by *adequately* teaching and preaching and elders who rule well by *laboring* in teaching and preaching.

Second, in his farewell address to the pastors from Ephesus (Acts 20:17–35), Paul summarized the content that he had taught them. He stated that he had kept back nothing that would be profitable (20:20). While his teaching included repentance toward God and faith toward Christ, the text does not limit Paul's teaching to these themes. Furthermore, Paul insisted that he had proclaimed all the will or counsel of God (20:27). He also claimed that he had shown them "all things" (20:35), mentioning specifically his example of personal financial responsibility and charity. The scope of Paul's teaching in Ephesus seems to have included at least some discussion of the entire system of faith and practice.

Paul's teaching comprised matters that were theological and matters that were practical. Indeed, much of his teaching drew out the links between theology and practice. In its fullest sense, the word *doctrine* refers to this union of intellectual reflection and practical implementation. Apostolic doctrine ties theology directly to life.

Pastors receive their instruction from the very chain of teachers that was initiated by Paul and the other apostles during their ministries. Part of pastoral responsibility is to initiate church members into this body of teaching so that it is transmitted intact to the next generation. Pastors have a duty to ensure that nothing is lost of Christianity's theological propositions or moral demands.

Proposition Three: The Faith Centers upon the Greatest Commandment

In Mark 12, a scribe approached Jesus and asked him to identify the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28). Surely the scribe did not believe that any commandment of Scripture was unimportant. Nevertheless, his question implies that some commands are more important than others.

Jesus' reply acquiesced in this assumption. He not only told the scribe which was the most important commandment, but also specified which was the second most important. Furthermore, Jesus' reply reinforced the strong connection between theology and obedience, for his statement of the commandment began, not with the commandment itself, but with a theological proposition. As Jesus stated it, the affirmation that "the Lord our God is one Lord" led directly to the requirement that "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."

The scribe understood the connection immediately. To him it was obvious that Yahwistic monotheism led directly to the great commandment. If Yahweh alone is God, then obviously one's core duty is to love Yahweh with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. For the scribe, as for Jesus, the core doctrinal affirmation of biblical religion and the core duty of biblical religion were inextricably connected.

They are still linked. The Shema and the Great Commandment were aspects of the Mosaic economy, and Christians disagree about the relationship of believers today to Mosaic commandments. Some, such as Reformed believers, take the moral law as a rule of life leading to progressive sanctification. Others, such as dispensationalists, may insist that the Spirit rather than the law is the mechanism of sanctification (2 Cor 3:6–11), but even they acknowledge that the sanctification produced by the Spirit results in the fulfillment of the righteousness of the law (Rom 8:4). Either way, God's purpose for the believer is to produce exactly what the Great Commandment describes.

The oneness of God is the central theological insight of the Bible. Without this starting place, the rest of the Bible simply falls apart. If this insight remains true (and it does), and if the Great Commandment grows out of this insight (as Jesus said it did), then the Great Commandment remains highly relevant for Christians today. Inasmuch as God's unity (as stated in the Shema) remains the core affirmation of Christianity, then something like the Great Commandment must remain a core duty.

Proposition Four:
The Great Commandment Is About Worship

The Great Commandment requires love. The reason for this requirement becomes clear from the connection of the Great Commandment with the Shema, which affirms that the Lord alone is God. By definition, a god is an object of worship. A thing is constituted as a god when someone treats it as an object of worship. Lumps of rock and bits of wood become gods when people worship them. The sun, moon, and stars become gods when people worship them. Anything that people worship becomes a god.

The point of the Shema is that only one Being truly deserves to receive worship. To say that the Lord alone is God is to say that the Lord alone merits worship. Idols are false gods: they do not deserve to be worshiped because they are not God. They are merely created things among other created things, while no one is like the true and living God (Ps 86:8; Isa 40:25–26).

What is worship? Both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament employ a variety of terms that can be rendered with the English word *worship*. Some of these terms have the idea of bowing, others of showing respect or fear, and yet others of engaging in divine service. Yet the Bible also shows people bowing, respecting, and serving in ways that do not constitute worship.

The same is true of the term from which the English word *worship* derives. The Anglo-Saxon *weorðscipe* has the idea of ascribing value to a thing, but not every ascription of value is an act of worship. That being the case, how can anyone know when a bow, a demonstration of respect, an act of service, or an ascription of value constitutes an act of worship?

The answer lies in the distinction between ends and means. If one values a broom because it sweeps well, one values the broom merely as a means and not as an end. The broom derives its value from something else, namely, clean sweeping. If the broom stops sweeping cleanly (if it stops serving the end or goal), then it loses its value.

By the same token, clean sweeping is not an end in itself. It is valuable only as it contributes to some greater *telos*, perhaps safety or hygiene. Where the need for the end does not exist, the means loses its value. No one tries to sweep an entire forest.

One thing derives its value from another, which derives its value from still another. This kind of value could be called *instrumental* value. To recognize the instrumental value of an object is not to worship it. An infinite chain, however, is not possible. At some point, all instrumental values must derive their significance from some value that cannot be justified in terms of anything greater. This thing is valued, not as a means, but as an end. It is no longer an instrument, but the goal or *telos* from which the instruments derive their values.

Such an end or goal can be described in various ways. In distinction from instrumental value, it possesses *absolute* value. It is a center of value that imparts value to all instruments as they are related to it. For the person who recognizes such a value, it becomes an integrating point of life. It is the thing in which a person delights and finds satisfaction, the thing in which one takes pleasure. In a very real sense, it forms the identity of the person who values it.

People are never able to define themselves by themselves. If they are asked who they are, they may state their names, but names are only labels. If they are pressed to go further, they invariably define themselves in relationship to things outside of themselves. They are the spouses of such-and-such a person. They are the mothers or fathers of these children. They pursue this or that vocation (or, in some cases, avocation).

Ultimately, the most important things by which people identify themselves are their centers of value. Whatever they recognize as ends or goals becomes their ultimate identity. These are the things that they live for. Any challenge to these ultimate ends or goals becomes a personal assault. For any person, the removal of one of these centers of value is really a kind of death, for its absence leaves one's identity shattered.

Every person recognizes at least one such end. Without such a center, nothing has value or meaning. Without at least one such absolute value, people literally do not know who they are. Lacking such an ultimate value, the first thing that any person will do is to try to discover one, or, failing that, to create one. The attempt to create or invent such a center is idolatry, and it is no accident that those who worship idols become like them (Ps 115:8).

These absolute values—these centers from which other things derive value—are gods. To recognize a thing as an absolute rather than an instrumental value is to worship it. To constitute a thing as a center of value is to submit one's self to it, to delight in it, to find pleasure and satisfaction in it. When one finds such an ultimate end or *telos*, one begins to define one's identity in relationship to it. In the end, such a center of value (because it is absolute and ultimate) demands unconditioned loyalty and absolute trust.

The Shema states that the Lord alone is God. In other words, in all the universe only one Being exists who deserves to be treated as an end rather than as a means. Only one being can rightly be recognized as a center of value from which *all* other things derive their values. Only one being is capable of bearing the weight of the human soul in its anxious search for a center of delight, pleasure, and satisfaction. Only one being has the right to tell people who they really are, and he requires them to find their identity in him. Only one being merits unconditioned loyalty and absolute trust. Only one being is worthy of worship, and he is the Lord.

Proposition Five: Worship Involves Affection

As the foregoing has shown, worship is the ascription of absolute value to something. As such, worship implies that the worshiper finds the utmost delight in what is worshiped. Worship involves the recognition of and submission to a supreme value from which other things derive their values. The worshiper finds delight, satisfaction, and pleasure in the object of worship. Ultimately, worshipers even derive their identities from the thing or things that they worship.

These descriptions of worship can be summed up in a single word: *love*. What else could love mean except to recognize the ultimate value of a thing, to delight and take pleasure in it, and to give one's self to it in loyal trust? To worship a thing is to love it. Consequently, it is neither surprising nor accidental that the Great Commandment follows and derives from the Shema. The worship that the Shema implies is precisely the love that the Great Commandment requires.

Certainly the scribe grasped this insight (Mark 12:28–34). "What is the greatest commandment?" he asked. Jesus replied by citing Deut 6:4-5. The scribe's reply could be paraphrased, "Of course! There is only one true God. Therefore, loving God is the most important duty." The scribe did not say that "Worshiping God is the most important duty." He did not need to. To worship God is to love him, and to love him is to worship him. The scribe was, indeed, "not far" from the kingdom of God.

The core of biblical religion is the same in both Testaments. Whether for Israel or for the Church, true worship begins with the recognition that the Lord alone is God. Both in the Old Testament and in the New, this recognition implies that the Lord alone is worthy of worship. At all times, in all places, and for all peoples, the true worship of God means loving him with all of one's heart, soul, mind, and strength. Right feeling (ordinate affection[4]) is the heart of all biblical religion.

Of course, none of us actually does love God this way. This failure is what dooms us. The Great Commandment is, after all, law and not gospel. No one can be saved by keeping the Great Commandment because (Jesus Christ excepted) no human has ever kept it. This failure is what we need to be saved from.

When we are saved, however, the Great Commandment is what we are saved *to*. With regeneration, God begins a process of reshaping us. In keeping with God's purpose, true love of him is born in the heart of everyone who is called (Rom 8:28). God has created in his worshipers a new self that manifests righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24). This new self is being constantly renewed in full knowledge according to God's image (Col 3:10). Though we cannot save ourselves by loving God, we can now love God because we are being saved. In other words, God saves us in order to make us his lovers and worshipers.

Nevertheless, every one of us struggles to love God. God has created a new self, but we must still put off the old self and put on the new (Eph 4:22–24). Every true believer loves God to some degree, yet we love God less truly and purely than we think we do. Surely we love God less truly and purely than he deserves. The forces of false love (inordinate affection) are arrayed against us.

Certainly we violate the Great Commandment whenever we love something more than we love God. The problem is that we often deceive ourselves about the relative strength of our loves for God and for other things. In order to disabuse us of this self-deception, God may permit temptations, for in every temptation we are forced to choose between our love of God and our love of some instrumental good. We sin whenever we ele-

[4]Among Christians, the expression *ordinate loves* or *ordinate affections* traces to Augustine, who says that even good things may be loved in evil or disordered ways (*City of God* 15.22). For a recent discussion of ordinate affection, see the chapter, "Men without Chests," in C. S. Lewis's little book, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1943).

vate instrumental values into the position of ends or goals, and our sin always reveals to us where our true loves lie.

Alternatively, God may permit afflictions that threaten to take away things that we value. In those moments, we discover whether we have been worshiping and serving an instrument as if it were a center of value. We either find that God is enough and that we are satisfied in him, or else we become bitter at the loss of one of our other gods.

Indeed, whenever we pursue something other than God as an end in itself (i.e., whenever we love something alongside of God), we reveal ourselves to be idolaters and polytheists. God alone is worthy of being loved for himself. God also commands us to love other things, such as neighbors (Mark 12:31), wives (Eph 5:25), husbands and children (Titus 2:4), and even enemies (Luke 6:27), but we should experience a qualitative difference in the way that we love these things. We must love God for his own sake, as an end or center. We must love these other things, not for their own sakes, but for God's sake, as instruments to his greater glory.

We often deceive ourselves about such matters. We believe that we love God when in reality we love what God can do for us. We treat God like a celestial vending machine into which we drop a quarter's worth of worship, and in return he repairs our broken relationships, financial hardships, employment difficulties, eating disorders, and codependences, perhaps delivering health and wealth into the bargain. Under such circumstances, however, we are no longer worshiping God. We are really worshiping the thing that God gives us, and we are treating God as the means rather than the end. We actually force him to serve our idols, which is terrible impiety. We must love God for who he is, not for what he gives (though his gifts, seen rightly, also illuminate his person and may lead us to love him more).

We also become idolaters when we love God with the wrong loves. Loves *are* different, and we must learn to love each thing with a love that is suited to its nature. We ought to love our parents and we ought to love our wives, but we should not love them in the same way. Our love for our children ought to be different than our love for a pet dog or cat. These should all differ from our love of a game or a particular cuisine. Confronted with many objects of love, we ought to practice many ways of loving.

We love God when we find our satisfaction in him, but God grants only certain kinds of satisfactions. A man who finds satisfaction in pornography cannot find the same kind of satisfaction in God. If his understanding of satisfaction is limited to what he has found in pornography, and if he is trying to find that kind of satisfaction in God, then he will inevitably distort God's character whenever he tries to love and worship God. His worship will become terrible impiety—indeed, it will become blasphemy. Such a man needs to receive instruction both in who God is and in what loves are ordinate.

To worship God is to love him supremely. To worship God is to love him rightly. If we demote God in our loves or if we love him wrongly, we become idolaters.

Proposition Six: Affection Grows from Imagination

All that we know, we know by imagining it. Brute objects or events are of little real meaning to us—indeed, our minds simply filter out most of our sensations as irrelevant and uninteresting. We notice things and they become meaningful to us when we construe

or interpret them by relating them both to other things and to the values that we hold. In other words, we know by interpreting and we interpret partly by valuing.

Knowing is always imaginative. Furthermore, knowing is always connected with feeling. How we feel toward a thing is both cause and the effect of what we imagine it to be.

Suppose two people notice a brightly-colored, banded snake in the barnyard. One perceives a threat to her children, while the other perceives a way of controlling the rodent population. Each perceives the snake differently because each construes or imagines it differently. Each responds affectively to the snake in a different way—one with fear, the other with benignity or even gratitude. The affect may contribute to the way that each imagines the snake, or it may come from the way that each imagines it. Most likely, it does both.

How we love God is a function of what we imagine God to be. What we think of when we think of God will determine what we feel when we think of God. It is possible to love God as a child loves a fuzzy kitten, as a fan loves a sports legend, as a teenage girl loves a rock star, or as a preschooler loves an indulgent grandparent. It is also very wrong.

Nothing is more important than imagining God rightly. Indeed, wrong imaginations of God are the heart of every form of idolatry. Not only God, but all spiritual truths must be imagined in order to be understood and loved rightly.

Scripture itself presents an astonishing selection of images for spiritual truths. In the Bible, God is imagined as a shepherd, a tower, a farmer, a rock, a king, a warrior, a jilted husband, a home, a flag of war, a shield, and a father. Christ is imagined as a branch, a stone over which someone trips, a lamb, a lion, a nesting bird, a character witness, a cornerstone, and a good shepherd. Sin is imagined as straying from a path, crossing a boundary, and missing a target. Salvation is imagined as freedom from slavery, payment of a debt, birth as a child, adoption as an heir, a peace treaty, and a judicial pronouncement. The church is imagined as a flock, a bride, a nation, a priesthood, a temple, and a body.

Scripture even imagines God in bodily terms so that readers might envision him more truly. He opens his hand, puts his feet on a stool, throws his shoe, inclines his ear, writes with his finger, wins a victory with his arm, hides his face, and opens his eyes. He rides on a cloud, casts a shadow, girds himself, lays a foundation, changes his vesture, fights the sea-monster Rahab, sings with joy, and walks on the wings of the wind. These descriptions are all metaphorical, to be sure—but every one of them helps us to imagine God more truly.

Knowing God begins, not so much by learning accurate propositions about God (important as that is), but by imagining God rightly. In fact, most of Scripture is written as imaginative literature. With the exception of some legal material, virtually all of the Old Testament consists of stories, poems, apocalypses, and the like. Similarly, most of the New Testament—the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the book of Revelation—is imaginative in nature. Only the epistles are explicitly discursive, and they draw deeply from the imaginative sections of the Bible for their theology. Most of the Bible has been designed, not simply as a source of propositions about God (though it is that), but as a means of helping people to see God in action or to picture him analogically. God could have given his people a textbook in systematic theology, but instead he chose to reveal himself through a text that helps people to imagine him rightly.

These imaginative descriptions help the believer, not only to think rightly about God and holy things, but also to feel rightly toward them. They both instruct the pious heart and

evoke from it the sort of responses that are ordinate. Through the imagination the devout believer learns to know and love God.

Proposition Seven: Affection Results in Expression

What we love, we enjoy. What we enjoy, we praise. When we praise, we break our silence—of what use is silent praise? Praise (as C. S. Lewis argues) is not separate from enjoyment.[5] On the contrary, praise is part of enjoyment and completes it.

What we love, we wish to share. We do not love and admire a thing without wishing others to admire it. Even when we are possessive of that thing, we can hardly resist bringing it to the attention of virtually anyone who will listen. Admiration is never as satisfactory as when it is shared.

Affection eventuates in both adoration and expression. So it is with love of God. Those who love him wish to extol his virtues in praise. They adore him and they desire to say why. They yearn for the company of other admirers so that personal adoration is absorbed into and expressed by corporate worship. Along with the psalmist, they long and faint for the house of the Lord (Ps 84:1–2). They want to hear God praised in the entire congregation of the saints (Ps 149:1). Indeed they hunger and thirst for the day when the ranks of worshipers will swell to include all lands (Ps 100) so that everything that has breath will praise the Lord (Ps 150:6).

God has created the church to be such a company. Like a building erected upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets—and upon Christ as its chief cornerstone—it is being framed together as it grows into a temple of the Lord (Eph 2:20–22). Each individual congregation is a temple or holy place—a *naos* (1 Cor 3:16). Every church is a dwelling place of God (Eph 2:22) in which God lives and walks among his people (2 Cor 6:16, cf. Rev 2:1). As a people of God, the church has the privilege and responsibility of reporting or proclaiming the virtues of the one who has called them (1 Pet 2:9).

In short, every church is a company of worshipers who gather to express corporately their adoration of God. Worship is not simply one of the things that the church does. It is what the church is. More than anything else, the church exists as the assembly of those who have been redeemed so as to bring glory to God as their admiration of his perfections spills out of them and into the entire world.

Corporate worship is not merely an inner act, though it must be that. It is also an act that occurs through outer expression. Corporate worship is more than a group of Christians worshiping privately in the same place. Rather, corporate worship occurs when an entire congregation joins together in the expression of adoration. The awareness of participation in a greater expression—the sense of solidarity with an entire people or even an entire moral universe—is what sets corporate worship apart. It is an expression *together* in which

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[5]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1958), 90–98. In general, Lewis is one of my most important influences in these reflections, though he is by no means as important as Jonathan Edwards. Other influences include Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, and, in a different way, H. Richard Niebuhr. Many of the same ideas can also be found in the writings of John Piper, though I suspect that Piper would not approve of all of my applications and conclusions.

the worshipers are very much aware of one another. Even though public worship is directed toward God, it is also meant to be heard by fellow believers and overheard by the entire world.

Proposition Eight:
Worshipful Expression Employs Music

God authorizes humans to worship him in a number of ways. Worship may involve the preaching and hearing of the Word, the offering of prayers, the public reading of the Scriptures, the observance of the ordinances, and the presentation of material goods for the furtherance of the ministry and the relief of the poor. Among these modes or "elements" of worship, God also requires that his people employ certain arts.

Two arts are both practiced in the Old Testament and commanded in the New. They are the arts of poetry and music, and both are necessary for singing. That these arts are present in the Old Testament requires little demonstration. Entire books are filled with poetry, including one book that is full of poems written to be sung (Psalms). Old Testament Israel certainly incorporated singing and the use of musical instruments into the worship that occurred in the temple (1 Chr 15:16–22). An entire detachment of Levites was devoted to the music of worship (1 Chr 9:33). Indeed, the Hebrew writers enjoined the use of music in worship upon all humanity (Ps 66:4; 67:3–4; 150:6).

Both the visual arts and architecture were also used in Old Testament worship. Both the first and second temples were splendid architectural displays, and both employed significant elements of sculpture. Examples included the cherubs over the mercy seat, the oxen that supported the bronze sea, the pomegranates on the chains, and the great pillars named Boaz and Jachin. Of course, Christians have argued (and sometimes shed blood) over the use of images in worship. As long as they erect buildings to meet in, however, most Christians will have to make decisions about church architecture.

Christians may or may not be permitted to employ dance or visual arts in worship—that question need not be settled here. Architecture, while not specifically mandated, seems inescapable. Poetry and music, however, are specifically commanded to the New Testament church. We are to teach and warn one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Col 3:16). We are to sing and strum in our hearts to the Lord (Eph 5:19). This singing, which draws upon the two arts of poetry and music, is not optional for Christian congregations. It is a biblical duty.

To repeat, poetry and music are not merely *authorized* elements of New Testament worship, but *commanded* elements. A church that does not sing in its worship is disobeying its Lord. Church music is not merely the preliminary for the serious part of the service. It does not merely set the mood for the preaching. It is not an appendage or an option. Music is a key element that is capable of expressing worship and instructing the saints. It must be taken as seriously in its own right as praying or preaching.

Proposition Nine: Worship Music Must Be True

God is looking for people to worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23–24). Clearly, worshiping God in spirit means to worship him from the heart. Religious rituals that are performed without any inner engagement are worse than worthless. God takes them as an insult (Isa 1:10–15). Unless our worship is sincere, it is an offense.

Not all sincere worship, however, is acceptable worship. One might presume that Uzzah was sincere in his handling of holy things, but God killed him nonetheless (2 Sam 6:7–8). More than being sincere, worship must correspond to God's worthiness. This correspondence is what we call *truth*.

Worship corresponds to God's worthiness when the worshipers' offerings correspond to God's specifications. Corporate worship always includes an external aspect. It always involves actions. God is the object of our worship, and as long as we are worshiping him, our only concern should be with what he wants to receive and not with what we want to give. If he has not said that he wants us to present a particular thing as part of our corporate worship, then we have no reason to suppose that it will please him. If we proceed to offer it anyway, we are not acting out of a concern for God's pleasure, but for our own. This is precisely the kind of self-assertion that undermines true worship and turns it into idolatry, for in this kind of "will worship" (as it has been called) we are more concerned with the gratification of our own desires than we are with pleasing God.

Worship also corresponds to God's worthiness when our statements correspond to God's person and mighty deeds. We must not attribute to God any features or acts that are not his. Granted, our statements about God will always be partial because they can never exhaustively describe his character. Even limited statements, however, can be true as far as they go. Worship is the adoration of God for his perfections and deeds. Corporate worship cannot occur without some description of his perfections and deeds—the description is what focuses the worship of the congregation and distinguishes it from an aggregation of individuals, each of whom is worshiping God separately. Some statements about God are necessary for worship, but whatever is stated about God for and by the congregation must correspond to what God actually is and has done. Otherwise, it is not worship in truth.

Worship corresponds to God's worthiness when it expresses ordinate responses. Corporate worship requires a description of God's person or works, but it must go further. It must respond rightly to who God is and what he has done. This response involves two sides: an inner engagement and an outer expression. Both worshipers and worship leaders are responsible to be sure that the inner and outer aspects of response are fitting or suitable for the aspect of God's character or work that is under consideration.

This evaluation is certainly necessary for the music of worship. Good hymnody performs two functions for the assembled congregation. First, it gives God's people a medium of communication that allows them to articulate right sensibilities that they might never otherwise be able to express. Second, it has the power to evoke right sensibilities that the worshiper has never previously experienced but should. In order to perform these functions, however, it must itself reflect right feeling.

Different features of God's person and work require different responses. We respond in fear to God's transcendent holiness. We respond in gratitude and love to the salva-

tion that Christ has provided. We respond in sorrow when we realize the magnitude of our sins and the sufferings that they cost our Savior. We respond in joy to the privilege of standing in God's presence. We respond in hope to the prospect that Jesus is returning.

Each of these responses can and must be further refined. A devout person fears God—so far, so good. But what does the fear of God look like? How is it expressed? Do we fear God like we fear spiders? Precipices? Mad dogs? High-voltage electricity? In corporate worship we must not only evoke the right fear, we must find a way to express it rightly.

We rejoice in our God, but what ought to be the quality of our joy? Should we rejoice like the drunkard who has just discovered an unopened bottle? Like the gambler who has just won the lottery? Like the bridegroom on his wedding day? Like the mother who first holds her new infant? Like the patient who has just learned that the lump is not cancer after all? These are utterly different qualities of joy, and not all of them can rightly be directed toward God.

The arts in general, and poetry and music in particular, enable us to draw such distinctions. Judgments about worship and music are not simply a matter of preference and intuition, but also a matter of learning and skill. Some judgments are better and some are worse. Some are devastatingly bad, for worship that is not according to truth is simply idolatry.

Conclusion

Pastors bear a heavy responsibility. They oversee the flock of God (Acts 20:28). They participate in building God's temple (1 Cor 3:10). They labor in God's field, the church (1 Cor 3:8–9).

Pastors lead churches. Their tools of leadership are their example and their teaching. As they teach, they must neglect nothing of God's counsel, but must communicate his entire purpose to their churches.

God's ultimate design—his purpose in both creation and redemption—is to fill the moral universe with worshipers. The true worshipers of God are those who come to love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. In order to love God so fully, they must imagine God rightly.

True worshipers must also express their worship ordinately. One of the principal mechanisms through which right responses are both shaped and expressed is hymnody, which combines the arts of music and poetry. Hymnody is a powerful tool of teaching and response.

All of these matters fall under the pastor's purview. He cannot simply shrug off the responsibility by asking someone else to assume it. Since he is responsible for the church's worship, and since the church's worship is so greatly influenced by its music and poetry, the pastor must be sufficiently learned to make discerning judgments about these areas. A pastor who cannot judge these matters wisely will not be able to lead his flock to love God rightly. He will be like the preacher who never studied Greek or Hebrew—always forced to rely upon somebody else's work, and always at the mercy of somebody else's opinion. His ministry will always be secondary and derivative. He can hope only to be a faithful echo rather than a thoughtful voice. Useful as such echoes may be in some settings, pastors need to

find their own voices. Let them be learned men: learned in Scripture, learned in theology, learned in worship, and learned in poetry and music.

The Artistic Theologian 1 (2012): 16–24

Finding Beauty Where God Finds Beauty: A Biblical Foundation of Aesthetics

T. David Gordon[1]

Framing the Question

Philosophically, we are at a new moment in history. Today, most people are post-Realists, or Nominalists. Prior to Nominalism, the prevailing philosophies in the West were all variations on Realism. In those systems, Reality is a given, and perception is viewed as the ability to observe, in varying degrees, what is Real. Nominalism (from the Latin *nomen*, "name"), as a philosophy, suggests that there is no Reality, or that if there is Reality, it has no *inherent* meaning.[2] To the contrary, what a realist calls "meaning" is his or her *imputation* of value onto an otherwise meaningless universe, somewhat analogous to how a critic might impute meaning to a canvas randomly covered with paint. As its own label suggests, "Nominalism" implies that words are mere "names" that humans give objects, but these names only reveal information about the "namers" and nothing about the objects so named.

Not surprisingly, all aesthetic theory within a Realist framework is therefore entirely different from such theory within a Nominalist framework. Within a Realist framework, aesthetic theory is a discussion about how and why Reality (or parts thereof) actually *is* beautiful (or enticing, captivating, sublime, pleasant), and how/why we are able to *perceive* (αἰσθάνομαι)[3] that beauty (enticement, sublimity, etc.) and/or develop our abilities/sensibilities to *describe* such beauty. Within a Nominalist framework, there is no beauty within Reality itself; "beauty" is a mere *name* employed to impose meaningful structure onto a Reality that has none. Aesthetic theory within this framework is the discussion of how/why so many individuals and cultures have found it necessary to impose such meaning, and how/why they have done it in a particular manner.

Thus, at the basis of aesthetic theory is this great divide between Realism and Nominalism: Is Reality itself meaningful (in which case, our perceptive faculties are to discover or perceive or experience such meaning and attempt to articulate it), or is Reality in itself not meaningful (in which case, all "meaning" language is merely our discussion of ourselves, individually or culturally understood)? When I say "the Grand Canyon is beautiful,"

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[2]Nominalism does not deny the existence of matter. It affirms that material reality exists and that it can be measured, but it can be measured only by the objective measures of such instruments as rulers and scales. We can weigh an alligator and report its weight (in pounds or kilograms), but we cannot speak of its purpose or character, its "meaning."

[3]The English word "aesthetic" comes from αἰσθάνομαι (*aisthanomai*).

is this a meaningful statement about the Grand Canyon itself (the Grand Canyon really *is* beautiful), or is it merely a statement about Gordon (Gordon *regards* the Grand Canyon as beautiful)? This great divide is often spoken of in other terms, as objective/subjective or absolute/relative, but beneath those categories is the broader metaphysical question of Realism and Nominalism.

As shall be seen, Christian Theism is unabashedly Realist, and that so from the opening words of the Bible. As Christians, we refer to Reality as "creation," indicating our belief in an intelligent Creator; for us, Reality/Creation reflects or displays the intelligent intention, purpose, or meaning of the One who made it: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Ps 19:1).[4]

Further, in some prominent biblical texts that describe the process of creation, this Creator is referred to as *Logos* ("reason," "meaning," "word," "language"):

> In the beginning was the Word (ὁ λόγος), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος). He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him (πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο), and without him was not any thing (οὐδὲ ἕν) made that was made. (John 1:1–3)

The statement is comprehensive, both positively (πάντα, "all things") and negatively (οὐδὲ ἕν, literally, "without him, not even one thing was made"). Thus, all that *is* has been *made*, and all that has been made, without one exception (οὐδὲ ἕν), is made by this God who, in his Second Person, is titled ὁ λόγος (*ho logos*).

This Creator, who makes all of reality that exists outside of himself, *perceives* and *names* the reality he makes: "And God *saw* (וירא)[5] that the light was good. . . . God *called* (ויקרא) the light Day, and the darkness he *called* (קרא) Night" (Gen 1: 5, cf. also 1:8, 10). In *perceiving* and *naming* what he makes, God recognizes and confirms his creational intent, or meaning. God perceived/saw that "the light *was* good" before he "*called* the light Day." What was (in this case light) preceded his naming it; the reality existed before the name. For the creature made in God's image, then, the goal of all *human* perceiving and naming is to approximate, as closely as is humanly possible, the *divine* perceiving and naming of what is actually there. That is, we are not free to misconstrue God's creation, to perceive it differently than God does, or to name it differently than God does.[6] We are not morally free, for

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[4]And, of course, there are reflections of this in human creative acts. Renoir's paintings disclose something about Renoir; they are his creative products that reflect, insofar as he was a skillful artist, his creative intentions, wishes, or purposes. This is why the aleatoric artists were not rebelling against a particular *school* of art, but against the concept of meaningful art *itself*. Musicians who pulled musical notes out of a box, pasted them to a sheet randomly, and played whatever came out, or painters who threw buckets of paint against a wall, were not opposed to a particular school of art in their respective fields; they were expressing opposition to the notion of meaningful creation *per se*. They were, in this sense, true Nominalists. For them, beauty does not exist; therefore the artist need not attempt to create (or re-create) it, and it is illusory to think one can or should.

[5]The expression, "and God saw" appears seven times in the creation narrative of Genesis 1, at verses 4, 9, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31.

[6]Ironically, we seem to intuitively grant this when dealing with human creators. If an acquaintance says that "Good fences make good neighbors," citing Robert Frost ("Mending Wall"), we good-naturedly dis-

instance, to *perceive* the darkness *as* light, or to *call* it "light." If God the Creator orders his creation in certain ways, for instance, it is our duty to perceive and label that order as correctly as we can. If the Creator orders it in a manner that the first or second laws of thermodynamics express it, it is our duty to perceive it and name it as such. We are not free to say that matter *can* be created or destroyed, if matter can*not* be created or destroyed. If reality has the characteristic of entropy that Carnot (1796–1832) said it has, it is our duty to recognize this characteristic and to name it as properly as we can.

Significantly, in God's case naming *precedes* creating; meaning *precedes* reality: "And God *said*, 'Let there be light,' and there *was* light" (this pattern recurs through the rest of the creation narrative). Meaning/definition/naming actually precedes the existence of the created thing itself; it is not a mere interpretation after-the-fact. Before a particular aspect of what we call created reality exists, it exists in the mind and speech of God; *what* it is (light) precedes *that* it is. Note then the four-part progression: naming–creating–perceiving–naming: "Let *light* be . . . and there was *light* . . . and God saw that the *light* was good . . . and God called the *light* Day." The meaning-ascribing language brackets the creation of reality itself. Before making, God *expresses* (verbally/linguistically) what he will make; he then *makes* it; he *perceives* that it is "good" (טוב, i.e., that it corresponds to his creational purpose);[7] and he *calls* it what he originally intended it to be (in this case, "light").

Nominalism reduces this four-part progression to two parts: the existence of something and the naming of it. However, Nominalism denies that any meaning precedes existence, and therefore denies any objective truthfulness to the naming that is attached to reality.[8] It is *mere* naming that humans attribute to reality, but such naming cannot make any claims of correspondence to the actual nature of reality. For Christian Theistic Realism, by contrast, there is naming/meaning *before* there is created reality, and naming/meaning *after* there is created reality. Futhermore, in the case of God, the two namings, *and the reality they name*, correspond. There is a true correspondence, such Realism would say, between *naming* and *nature*. The truthfulness, then, of all human naming/meaning is dependent on, reflective of, and *responsible to* the divine naming/meaning. If God names/describes his creation as orderly, we are not free to name/describe it as disorderly; if God

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pute the statement, arguing that Frost put this statement (twice) in the mouth of the dull-witted and parochial neighbor of the poem (not in the mouth of the narrator); that the narrator says the only other repeated line in the poem ("Something there is that doesn't love a wall," which is also the opening line); and that the narrator says, "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know/What I was walling in or walling out,/And to whom I was like to give offence." Oddly, perhaps, we seek to find Frost's own meaning in his art, but do not seek to find God's meaning in his.

[7]And this approving adjective "good" appears seven times in the creation narrative, as each aspect of creation receives this divine expression of approval and creative satisfaction. In its final appearance, the modifier is heightened, "And God saw *everything* that he had made, and behold, it was *very* good" (מאד טוב).

[8]Students of philosophy will note that Existentialism is in this sense a revival of, and a particularly-nuanced expression of, Nominalism: essence does not precede (human) existence; existence precedes essence.

names/describes his creation as harmonious, we are not free to name/describe it as in-harmonious.[9]

For aesthetic theory, then, the specifically Christian Theistic branch of Realism will suggest that, if God actually created the universe with the intent to make it beautiful, then it is our duty to recognize that it is beautiful; we can no more call the beautiful "ugly" or "inconsequential" than we can call the darkness "light." So the question to raise of Holy Scripture is whether the Creator invested his created order with the property that we call the "beautiful" or the "sublime" (or other synonyms). Beauty, for such Theistic Realism, is not "in the eye of the *beholder*"; it is in the eye of the *Maker*, and it is in the *mind* of the Maker and on the *lips* of the Maker before it is in his eye or ours.

The Creational Reality as Described in Genesis 1 and 2

Without repeating what was said above about divine meaning preceding creational reality, note the sixth and final creative day, in which the human was made:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our *image*, after our *likeness*. And let them *have dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own *image*, in the *image* of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and *have dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen 1:26–28)

The entire Mosaic narrative of creation is remarkably brief: the two distinct narratives of the creation of all things in Genesis 1 and 2 comprehend only 56 verses. Needless to say, the narrative might have been substantially longer. In this abbreviated narrative, repetition is not only mnemonically important but also intellectually significant. What is repeated carries special weight (such as the repetition of "And God saw that it was good"). Note in this three-verse narrative of the creation of humans two ideas are repeated: that the human is made in God's image or likeness, and that the human is given a mandate to fill the created order and exercise dominion over it (each of which is italicized above). The two are not unrelated: Who, but a creature analogous to God in important ways, could possibly exercise intelligent and responsible dominion over the rest of God's created order? The traits that are distinctively human (such as personality, creativity, language, rationality, imagination, morality, and aesthetic sensibility) are necessary to the task of exercising responsible stewardship over the created order.

The image of God has broader consequences, however. Implicit in what the theologians call *Imago Dei* (being made in the image of God) is *Imitatio Dei* (the duty to imitate God). Thus, the distinctively human traits mentioned above (personality, creativity, lan-

[9] I am not saying here that God *does* so describe the present created order; after the Fall and the curse of Genesis 3, the created order reflects both the original divine order and the disorder of his just curse; it reflects both the original created harmony and the disharmony of human rebellion and his curse thereon.

guage, rationality, imagination, morality, and aesthetic sensibility) should be cultivated and developed. A newborn infant, for instance, enjoys these human distinctives only in their latent form; the remainder of life is opportunity to develop these potential capacities that reflect the divine image. But God's works are also to be imitated, albeit on a creaturely scale. And what works has God done prior to Genesis 1:26? If the Bible stopped at the end of Genesis 1, what work of God would we imitate? Creativity. The only express activity of God recorded before the record of the creation of the human is creativity; God is a maker. If the Bible ended here, we would know that the human is, in the essence of his being, analogous to God in whose image he is made, and that the human will devote himself to creativity, to making things.

Genesis 2 presents a second account of creation, a more human-centered one, with more detail about the making of the human. This second narrative augments the one in Genesis 1:

> When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and *there was no man to work the ground*, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed the man *of dust from the ground* and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is *pleasant to the sight and good for food*. . . . The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden *to work it and keep it*. . . . Then the LORD God said, "*It is not good* that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." . . . So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

In this richer, more-detailed narrative of the creation of humans, we cannot observe every important matter but restrict ourselves to those that are most pertinent to our concern. Three ideas in the narrative demand brief attention.

First, note the remarkably close relation of the human to the material earth. *Terra firma* is not only his home; it is indeed his womb. Note that before the creation of the human "there was no man to work the ground," as though the ground itself were defective without the presence of the human. And then "God formed the man *of* dust *from* the ground," and put him in the garden "to work it and keep it."[10] The human is created for the

[10]English translations commonly refer to the man "working" or "tilling" the ground or garden, but the original is different. In verse five, and in the first verb in verse fifteen, the verb is *avad* (לעבד), ordinarily translated "serve." The second verb in verse fifteen is *shamar* (ולשמרה), ordinarily translated "guard." When employed together, the two verbs commonly describe priestly activity, in texts such as these: "They shall keep guard (*shamar*) over him and over the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister (*avad*) at the tabernacle. They shall guard (*shamar*) all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over (*shamar*) the people of Israel as they minister (*avad*) at the tabernacle" (Num 3:7; cf. also Num 8:26; 18:7).

purpose of working, tilling, or keeping the very ground from which he was made. This is the Genesis 2 version of what Genesis 1 was called exercising dominion over the created order.

The second component we observe in Genesis 2 is that the responsibility to till/keep/work (serve/guard) the ground is corporate. After the appearance of the adjective "good" seven times in Genesis 1, the language of Genesis 2:18 is strikingly different: "It is *not good* for the man to be alone." Plainly this communicates the creational inadequacy of a single human or even of a single sex within a multiplicity of humans. Genesis 1 associated the two-sexed complexion of the human race with the image of God: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male and female* he created *them*. And God blessed *them*." Both Genesis 1 and 2 present the human as a social being, not a solitary one; and each presents humanity as a complementary community of male and female, a community which, in all its plurality and diversity, together enjoys the responsibility of exercising dominion over the earth or tilling/keeping the garden.

The third important concept to note in Genesis 2 is the two properties of the garden where the human was placed: "And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." Notice the ground from which the human was made is not itself designed to sustain him; to the contrary, *other* things spring *from* the ground (as the human did), things that are necessary to the human's continued existence and well-being. The vegetation which, like the human, ultimately comes from the ground, is well-suited to sustain and bless the human. And of all its rich and multiform excellences, Genesis 2 mentions two: that this vegetation is "pleasant to the sight and good for food." Further, the text here is anthropocentric: the vegetation is pleasant to *human* sight and good for *human* food. Surely Moses was not affirming that the created order would feed Yahweh. As American pragmatists, whose bookstores groan beneath the burden of "how-to" manuals, we may overlook that there are two traits, not one, and we may forget the order. The garden is both beautiful *and* practical, both lovely *and* life-sustaining, both pleasing *and* functional. The garden reflects the reality that God, the paradigm of all human creativity, is both Artist and Artisan. Notice, therefore, that a truly thankful human will be grateful for both properties, not merely one, especially in light of Romans 1, wherein Paul describes rebellious humanity by saying, "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him" (Rom 1:21). We teach our children to thank God daily for their food ("God is great, God is good, and we thank him for this *food*; by his hands we all are *fed*, give us, Lord, our daily *bread*"), a prayer entirely justified by the Genesis 2 reality that the vegetation is "good for food." But why do we not teach our children to thank God for those things that are beautiful, equally justified by the same text that also affirms that the vegetation is "pleasant to the eyes"? Are we unintentionally teaching them to be ungrateful for one of the two great properties of the created order? Does not Romans 1:21 urge us to thank God for all of his good gifts? If God chose to make the world not only practical but also beautiful, is it not ungrateful not to thank him for the second trait?

Humans, then, till/keep/work the garden by cultivating these two latent properties and by continually developing them. In their plurality, in their male-and-femaleness, in their communal and social nature, humans will develop both the creative capacities of the

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Adam had the priestly duty of "serving" and "guarding" God's temple/earth, a duty that should have caused him to banish the unholy serpent from the garden.

artisan, whose works serve a utilitarian or practical purpose, and the creative capacities of the artist, whose works bring pleasure or delight. And, if there is any significance to the order of the two (and I do not insist that there is), the artist ("pleasant to the sight") is mentioned *before* the artisan ("good for food"). Most interpreters who address the matter regard each of these expressions ("pleasant to the sight" and "good for food") as synecdoches, figures of speech in which a part is intended to express the whole. The garden was not only pleasant to the sight; it was pleasant to the other four senses as well—aromas of honeysuckle wafted through the air, the delicate texture of the trillium pleased the fingers that held them, the nectar of fresh pears delighted the palate, and the birds inhabiting the branches cheered the first humans with their care-free chorus. Similarly, the garden was not merely good for food; it was good for shelter, for clothing, for tool-making, and many other human necessities.

God, in whose image the human was made, created an inhabitable world that was both beautiful and practical. As Maker, God was and is both Artist and Artisan. The world that he instructed those made in his image to rule over, to till and keep, was and is a world replete with both the potential for beauty and the potential for utility. While some humans develop their creativity more in the arena of the useful (e.g., engineers, carpenters), others do so more in the arena of the beautiful (e.g., playwrights, poets); each benefits from the labor of the other and should be appreciative of the other's efforts. For our purposes, however, we note that the aesthetic impulse is built into the created order. The yearning either to make or to appreciate what is beautiful is part of the image of God, who was pleased (saw that it was "very good") when what he had made was both beautiful and useful.

When Christian Theists refer to "beauty," then, they regard themselves as speaking objectively, about the nature of Reality itself, rather than speaking merely subjectively, about *themselves*. No one would deny that the world is "good for food"; all would regard this as an objective statement, not about our feelings but about reality itself. But Genesis 2 affirms equally that this created order is "pleasant to the sight." It is just as objectively true that the creation is beautiful as it is objectively true that it is useful. Beauty is not an attribute that we impute *to* Reality; it is an aspect *of* Reality, which we develop the capacity to perceive (αἰσθάνομαι), enjoy, and express. We acknowledge that others (Nominalists) perceive the matter differently, and we can enjoy sharing the world with them. We even enjoy listening to symphonies with them, but we *describe* the satisfaction we derive differently than they do. They are satisfied that they can *regard* as beautiful something that actually *isn't*; we are satisfied that we can *perceive* as beautiful something that actually *is*.

The New Testament is, of course, deeply informed by the realities of the Old Testament, including the creation narrative. So informed, Paul exhorted the Philippians: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely (προσφιλῆ), whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (ταῦτα λογίζεσθε)" (Phil 4:8). Did Paul command the Philippians to think about fictions, or about realities? Is "whatever is just" merely in the eye of the beholder, or does justice actually exist? Are some things objectively "true" or "honorable"? Virtually all orthodox Christians affirm that everything in this list is objectively real except one: "whatever is lovely." But Paul regarded "whatever is lovely" as worthy of our consideration, and indeed, just as worthy of our consideration as "whatever is true." Paul was a Realist, not a Nominalist. For Paul, all of reality has been created purposefully by a God who assigned meaning verbally to that created order even be-

fore he created it. He created the world to be a setting in which whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, or worthy of praise could be displayed. Do human societies ever achieve perfect justice in this life? Obviously not, but it is a worthy goal. Do our artists achieve perfect loveliness in this life? Probably not, but it is appropriate to pursue.

Further, our theistic Realism drives us to treat the matter of aesthetics with greater significance than some do. We resist the notion that what is practical/useful is more important than what is beautiful/pleasant, because the Genesis narrative requires that we do so. The ability to make, enjoy, or speak about what is beautiful is every bit as important and humane as the ability to make, enjoy, or speak about what is useful.[11]

By returning the discussion of aesthetics to a more significant role, we are acting counter-culturally. Our culture, insofar as it is driven by academic concerns, is largely nominalist. The empirical sciences (which receive the lion's share of the academic treasury) do not study the aesthetic quality of the material world; they measure the length of soundwaves or the degree of refraction of light rays, for example. They can explain, neurologically, why the human brain can detect musical intervals,[12] but they cannot explain how/why this was useful or necessary in their evolutionary approach to human development, and they surely would not be willing to admit that it is simply a gift from God so that the creation of melody and harmony would be possible and pleasant for humans made in God's image. It is not their provenance, as empirical scientists, to address such matters as what the Greeks called "the good and the beautiful" (καλὸν κἀγαθὸν).

Similarly, insofar as our culture is driven by commercial concerns, it is also nominalist. One can sell more music by deferring to the preferences or tastes of the consumer—however uncultivated those tastes may be—than by attempting to produce music (or other art) that conforms to the highest standards of musical art, and might, therefore, be beyond the present reach of the would-be consumer. Commerce wishes to sell products now to a purchasing market that may have very undeveloped sensibilities; it does not wish to wait until the consumer develops its aesthetic sensibilities before it sells to it. Commerce has nothing to gain from a conversation about whether beauty exists, and how to develop one's sensibilities to perceive it. Unquestionably, it has everything to gain from saying it is just a matter of a consumer's preference. Commerce, for this reason, is enthusiastic about the latest pop star, but indifferent towards the Rachmaninov Piano Concerto no. 2.

If Romans 12:1-2 calls us to resist conformity to "this age," then Christian Realists will need to resist our age's aesthetic relativism, the Nominalist notion that "beauty" is

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[11]We could entertain a conversation about whether, in our fallen condition, "the useful" is a more *pressing* concern than "the beautiful," and I believe such a conversation would be fair. But I don't think the answer to that conversation is self-evident. It may very well be that, in a fallen world of scarcity, the scarcity of beauty is as burdensome as the scarcity of the useful. Who can forget that the character of Andy, in the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, endured the dehumanized nature of prison life by humming Mozart?

[12]Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Penguin, 2006). Without the ability to detect intervals, creating or distinguishing melody is not possible. When an infant recognizes a tune sung by a parent, even if the parent sings it in different keys from night to night, it is because the intervals (the distance between notes, which can be measured mathematically) between the notes are the same. Similarly, harmony cannot be detected (for the same reason) without the neurological ability to detect interval.

merely something humans impose on created reality. Our Christian transformation, in part, requires us to confirm what God affirms about his created order, including his statement that the creation around us is objectively both "pleasant to the sight and good for food." Indeed, a Christian perspective obligates us to treat with equal seriousness the efforts of scientists to comprehend and harness the functional elements of creation and the efforts of artists, critics, and aesthetic theorists to develop the ability to create, discover, and understand the beauty that the created order so generously models and provides.

The Artistic Theologian 1 (2012): 25–39

Scripture, Shekinah, and Sacred Song: How God's Word and God's Presence Should Shape the Song of God's People

Jonathan Blackmon[1]

The song of God's people plays a crucial role in the faith formation and doctrinal understanding of the church because the content of worship shapes the worshiper's view of God. The content of congregational song must therefore be carefully scrutinized so that the songs on the lips of God's people do not promote vain or even false worship. The words must be doctrinally sound, so they must reflect biblical truth in all that they teach. Christian worship proclaims, celebrates, and enacts the gospel of Christ, so congregational songs must present the truth of God's goodness in all that he says and does. The most outstanding feature of God's people at worship actually has nothing to do with the worshipers themselves, but is instead the presence of God among them. Therefore, the words and music of corporate worship should reflect the truth of God's beauty, for, as J. I. Packer so eloquently stated, "knowing God is a relationship calculated to thrill a person's heart."[2]

In this paper I will argue that God's Word and God's Presence should directly shape the song of God's people in at least three specific ways. First, the words and music of corporate worship songs should be biblically based and should therefore reflect God's truth; they should be Christ-centered and so should reflect God's goodness;[3] and they should be skillfully crafted and performed as an offering in God's holy presence and should therefore reflect his beauty. Section one of the paper explores the relationship of Scripture and shekinah to Christian worship, section two explains how the truth, goodness, and beauty of God ought to be reflected in congregational song, and section three provides an analysis of three hymns in light of the truths presented in the paper's first two sections.

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[2]J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 36.

[3]I am not suggesting that every hymn or praise song must be specifically about Jesus. Rather, if we understand the Scriptures as all pointing to Christ (Luke 24:44) and all of history unfolding around his gospel (Rom 8:19–23; Col 1:15–20), then the overall thrust of the songs we sing in worship will be Christ-centered.

God's Word and Presence in Worship

All truth about worship resides in God's Word. In the Old Testament, to ignore God's commands through his Word brought disastrous consequences.[4] For example, King Rehoboam abandoned God's law and God abandoned him to the Egyptian army (2 Chr 12:1–8). Worse, when the leaders and priests of Israel did not continue in obedience to God's Word, the Israelites were left without teaching or direction and became a stench in God's nostrils (2 Chr 15:3–6; Jer 2; Mal 2). Their worship inevitably suffered (Amos 5:21).

Likewise today, worship frequently seems to conform more to the spirit of this age than to the decrees of almighty God. Too often, biblical worship is something to which evangelicals pay lip service rather than something that is a passionate pursuit. Evangelical worship often fails to be saturated or even to be shaped by Scripture.[5] In the name of "reaching people," all manner of forms and content are incorporated into public worship without considering whether they will please Jesus Christ, the one through whom all true worship is offered. Sociologist Christian Smith has labeled the prevailing religion of America "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism," and his study and others like it suggest that most young people (and by extension their parents), do not believe in absolute truth or conform their lives to the teachings of Scripture because the true gospel is not being preached, taught, or sung even in evangelical churches.[6] Regarding the state of evangelical worship William Willimon commented some thirty years ago, "Rather than calling such worship idolatry or apostasy, all too many of us label it 'contemporary' and 'relevant.' At least no one calls it faithful."[7] In contrast to worship that reflects *culture*, worship that pleases God reflects the *glory of God* through fidelity to his Word.

The Bible is not only authoritative for Christian living, it is also sufficient for Christian worship. The Bible essentially fulfills two primary functions in the life of God's people: it reveals who God is, and it calls people to obedience. Scripture opens with the declaration that God existed before all things and that he created all things (Gen 1–2). He spoke the world into existence that all of creation would magnify his great and awesome name (Ps 19:1–4, Rom 1:18–32, Ps 95:1–6; Luke 19:37–40). Through his Word God reveals his divine attributes, including his holiness, righteousness, omniscience, omnipotence, goodness, and beauty. He manifests his Divine authority as sovereign King over all that he has made and he demands a response of obedience to his revealed will in his written Word. "To disbelieve

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[4] See, for example, Deut 27:26; 28:58–63; 29:21.

[5] Reggie Kidd, "10 Words: Worship Practitioners Are Always Theologians," *Worship Leader* 21:3 (May 2012), 23; cf. Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for This Urgent Time*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 3–4, 17ff., 41–42, 279–85, and Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 35–40.

[6] Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); see also Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

[7] William H. Willimon, *The Bible:A Sustaining Presence in Worship* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1981), 15.

or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God himself."[8] The good news for God's people is that "the secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut 29:29, ESV).

Through the Bible, God reveals himself and commands a response of obedience. Those two functions of Scripture also form the basic definition of worship. At its heart, Christian worship is communion with God in which God reveals himself to his people and they respond in loving obedience. This two-fold action of God's self-disclosure as God, the only acceptable object of worship, and his graciously calling people to himself that they might love and obey him is at the heart of the covenant formula expressed throughout the Old and New Testaments: "I will be your God and you will be my people."[9] No wonder that James B. Torrance concluded, "The Bible is supremely a manual of worship, but too often it has been treated, particularly in Protestantism, as a manual of ethics, of moral values, of religious ideas, or even of sound doctrine."[10] God's written Word ought to form the foundation for all Christian worship, including the content of our songs and the manner in which we use those songs because the Bible is sufficient to address the church on this and every other issue we may face.

Rather than looking to culture or even to other churches for guidance in how to worship God, worship leaders must look to the fount of wisdom that is God's Word and use scriptural norms to choose and evaluate every element of corporate worship. Such a point should not need to be made in evangelical churches, which often claim to be "people of the Book," but my experiences as a worship and music minister and as a worship and church music professor convince me otherwise. One objective of this paper is to contend for the truth of God's unchanging Word and to make an appeal to pastors, church musicians, and congregants to take seriously their responsibility to worship under the Word and to evaluate every worship service and every song in worship by the Bible.

To evaluate congregational songs according to biblical norms, pastors and other worship leaders must not merely know the Bible, they must know God. The objective of Scripture is not simply an intellectual assent to its claims about God or about worship, but a living relationship with the Triune God to whom it all points.[11] God's Word is like a skeleton that provides the proper framework for Christian worship, but it is God's Spirit that gives life to what would otherwise be the dry bones of religious observance (John 5:39–40; Ezek 37:14). Once, the church was not God's people, but by the blood of Christ and the Spirit who

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[8]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 81–82.

[9]See, for example, Exod 6:7, Jer 7:23, 11:4, 30:22, Ezek 36:28; 2 Cor 6:16, Heb 8:10; for a fuller treatment of the relationship of the covenant formula to the worship life of God's people, see Jonathan Blackmon, "Revelation, Response, and Relationship in the Covenant Life of the People of Yahweh: Worship as Metanarrative" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007).

[10]James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 9.

[11]Packer, 23, 37.

gives new birth, the church has become the people of God (1 Pet 2:9–10). Without the sustaining, evaluative structure of the Bible, however, a congregation is like a dismembered body whose every prayer and every song is an abomination to God (Prov 28:9; Amos 5:21–23).

The presence of God defines the worshiping congregation more than any other feature. It is not the people themselves, nor any external rites that they perform (including songs), and certainly not their own righteousness that makes them fit to worship as citizens of God's kingdom, but the glory of God that dwells in their midst sets God's people apart, demonstrates his favor, and sanctifies their communion with him (Exod 25:8, 33:16, 40:35). The term shekinah stems from the Hebrew word "*shakan*," meaning to settle or reside, abide, continue, dwell, or inhabit,[12] and it refers to a special manifestation of the glorious presence of God.[13] The shekinah glory was present with Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exod 24:16) and with the children of Israel in the pillar of fire by day and the cloud by night (Num 9:17–22). So crucial was God's indwelling presence to the identity of the Hebrews as God's chosen people that Moses prayed that God would not even bother to lead them out of the wilderness into the promised land if his presence did not go with them (Exod 33:15). Yet the shekinah glory also raises important questions about the identity of Yahweh, the nature of biblical worship, and the role of congregational song.

God's indwelling presence, the shekinah glory, manifests itself in the context of covenant because God only tabernacles with his own people. The people of Israel met with God on the mountain where he covenanted with them through Moses (Exod 19–24), took them as his people, and became their sole object of acceptable worship. "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. They shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God" (Exod 29:45–46, NASB). The purpose of Israel's redemption from Egypt was so that they would become a people for God's own possession and glory and therefore worship the one, true God who came to live in their midst (Ps 74:2).

The shekinah glory revealed important truths about the character of God to his people. When God manifested his presence to his people by dwelling in their midst through cloud and fire, he guided them to the promised land, the place where he caused his name to dwell (Deut 12:5).[14] God's name and presence were often intertwined in his dealings with his people because the name of God speaks to his identity, as, for example, when God made his glory to pass in front of Moses:

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[12]Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson, Study edition, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), II:1496–99; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 1014–15.

[13]Victor P. Hamilton, "Shakan," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980), II:925; Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), II:1943-44; cf. George Foot Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron," *Harvard Theological Review* 15:1 (1922): 41–85, 55–57.

[14]Cf. Deut 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2; Jer 7:12; Ezek 43:7.

> The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (Exod 34:6–7, ESV)

God, whom the highest heavens cannot contain (1 Kgs 8:27), revealed his immanence and lovingkindness through his divine presence.[15]

The shekinah also showed God's holiness and glory. When the Israelites built the tabernacle, they had to cleanse the holy place with a blood sacrifice prior to its use as a place of worship (Lev 16:16), and the inner sanctuary where the ark resided was called the holy of holies because God's presence was there. At the dedication of the tabernacle (Exod 40:35) and again at the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:10–11), God's presence was so holy, glorious, and powerful, that no one was able to come near it. When Moses saw the mere remnants of the shekinah, described as "God's back," the luminosity of his face was such that it frightened the people (Exod 34:30). The divine presence among the community of faith was no cute thing and certainly not to be taken for granted because God's holiness and glory require humble worship from his people, as Moses demonstrated when he quickly bowed to the ground in humble homage to the Lord (Exod 34:8).

The shekinah glory signified God's presence, proclaimed God's name and character, and demonstrated his holiness and glory, but it culminated in communion between God and his people that was characterized by God's glory on the one hand and the spiritual cleanliness of God's chosen people on the other. The psalmist asked who may ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in his holy presence; the answer—the person with clean hands and a pure heart (Ps 24:3-4). Remarkably, the shekinah glory gave the covenant community the opportunity to see the invisible God,[16] but not in visible form. God prohibited graven images of any kind and did not allow Israel to use them in their worship because they did not see any kind of physical form in the fire on the mountain (Deut 4:14–20).[17] Rather, their vision of God and their communion with God were spiritual in nature.

God blesses the pure in heart with spiritual vision to behold his glory through the eyes of faith. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the shekinah was a special manifestation of the presence of God, but the light and glory were not God himself.[18] In Jesus, however, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form (Col 1:19; 2:9; Heb 1:3). The shekinah glory now resides permanently in Christ, the light of God, who is full of grace and truth (John 1:1–5, 14; 2 Cor 4:4–6). God still tabernacles with people in the context of the covenant com-

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[15]Hamilton, 925–26; see also Leonard S. Kravitz, "Shekinah as God's Spirit and Presence," *The Living Pulpit* 5:1 (Jan–Mar 1996): 22–23.

[16]See, for example, Exod 19:16–20; 24:9–11; 34:5–8; Acts 9:3–6; 2 Pet 1:16–18.

[17]David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 31.

[18]Hamilton, 925; Peterson, 32–33; Foot, 57.

munity (2 Cor 6:14–18) but acceptable worship now takes place only through Jesus Christ, the mediator and perfect reflection of God's glory. As the shekinah, Jesus is the tabernacle of God, the light of God, and the voice of God to his people.

When God's manifest presence fills the community of faith, their worship takes on several important characteristics. Christian worship must be characterized by holiness and purity because God's presence requires it. The objective of Christian worship ought to be the glory of God and its outcome joyful obedience that grows from the knowledge of God. Since Jesus is the both the Word of God made flesh and the light of God dwelling among his people, true worship should be Christo-centric. In such a context, the word of Christ indwells believers who cannot help but burst forth into jubilant song (Col 3:16).

Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in the Song of God's People

The music churches use in their corporate worship ought to reflect the truth, goodness, and beauty of God both in terms of the content of the lyrics and the construction of the music. The composition, selection, and performance of music for Christian worship merits serious and careful reflection because it is intended as a musical offering for almighty God.[19] God's Word and presence ought to fill and shape the music of worship because the Church is the temple of the living God (1 Cor 3:10–17; 2 Cor 6:14–18) and it matters what kind of offerings we present to the Lord, music included.

Whether we realize it or not, all of creation, and all forms of media within creation, communicate something. God created them to proclaim his glory, but creation groans under the curse caused by the Fall and is subject to misuse. Music, as an act of creation and as a form of media, communicates through the way in which a composer treats the elements of pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and timbre and certainly through the text. It also communicates through the manner of performance. Music is an emotive art form designed to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions both for the composer and the performer. Music, especially music for worship, may express the beliefs of the congregation that participates in it, but it also shapes them.[20] Part of the pastoral task in selecting music for worship lies in putting appropriate songs on the lips of worshipers that will not only express their hearts and minds, but will also help to form them into biblical Christians who are transformed more and more into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

Music in worship ought to reflect the truth of God. The Word of Christ is the true word, the right word, and the sanctifying word that ought to fill the music of corporate worship (Col 3:16; Jn 17:17, 2 Tim 2:15, Jas 1:18). The corpus of Psalms, hymns, and canticles recorded in Scripture persistently testify to who God is and what he has done on our behalf. Psalm 95 opens with an exhortation to sing for joy to the Lord. Why this joyous strain? Verse three provides the answer: "For the Lord is a great God And a great King above all gods." In Psalm 48 the psalmist declares, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be

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[19] T. David Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 25–27.

[20] John D. Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 231.

praised." Corporate worship music functions in part as a proclamation of God's attributes and actions by people who delight in him.[21] God is majestic and glorious (Isa 24:14–15), mighty (Isa 42:13), redeemer (Isa 44:23), a strong fortress (Ps 59:16–17), faithful (Ps 71:22), savior (Ps 98:1–3), righteous and just (Ps 67:4; 95:13), powerful (Ps 21:13), and awesome in holiness (Ps 68:4–5, 32–35). The musical sources in Scripture indicate that the subject of worship is God. Churches desiring to follow biblical norms in their worship music will choose songs that reflect the truth about God and make much of him—and not just some of the truth, but the whole counsel of God.

Music in worship ought to reflect the goodness of God. Music for worship that follows biblical standards consistently strikes a tone of joyful trust in a sovereign God no matter what the circumstances of life may be. The Psalms do not take a glib or superficial approach to happiness in God, yet even when crying out to God in lamentation the psalmists almost always turn to praise.[22] The psalmist may be surrounded by people who are like lions and fiery beasts (Ps 57:4), with seemingly no way out of difficulty (Ps 59:1–3, 6–7), but the psalms consistently turn to praise because of God's great lovingkindness.[23] Christians can rejoice in the Lord always and in all circumstances because God is good and his steadfast love never fails. Musical sources in the Bible teach worshipers to meditate on God's greatness and goodness, on his unsearchable attributes and his acts of lovingkindness toward his people and to do so as an act of worship in response to him (Ps 145:5–7). The music of corporate worship should provide the body of believers with an opportunity to respond to the acts of God. "O sing to the Lord a new song, For he has done wonderful things" (Ps 98:1a). Whenever the Israelites experienced deliverance, they sang. Even Jonah, who prayed from the belly of the great fish, sang a song of thanksgiving for deliverance (Jonah 2:1–9). The Bible repeatedly speaks of singing with thanksgiving in your heart to God because he is good.

The days may be evil, but God's chosen people must sing with thankfulness in their hearts to God. Not only can believers thank God for his numerous acts in history and his countless blessings in their own lives, they should always celebrate Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross and his ongoing high priestly ministry (Heb 7:24–27). "Whatever else our worship is, it is our liturgical amen to the worship of Christ."[24] In corporate worship, the community of faith responds to God through Christ and extols him for his mighty deeds; music is an appropriate tool for such a proclamation. As the musical material in the Scriptures demonstrates, biblical worship celebrates the truth of God's goodness through song.

The music of corporate worship ought to reflect the beauty of God, not just in its words but in the construction and performance of the music. The prevailing thought in modern Christianity seems to be one of aesthetic relativism, that music is merely a matter

[21]Paul Westermeyer, *The Heart of the Matter: Church Music as Praise, Prayer, Proclamation, Story, and Gift* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2001), 31–33.

[22]The only exception of which I am aware is Psalm 88.

[23]The references in the Psalms to God's lovingkindness are too numerous to list here, but see the following for example: Ps 57:7–10; 69:16–17; 89:1; 90:14; 101:1.

[24]Torrance, 14.

of taste. This paper rejects such a notion as unbiblical. Jesus proclaimed, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6a). Absolute truth resides in God and in his Word: God is truth and therefore there are objective standards of truth. The psalmist exclaimed, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps 34:8a). The measure of what is good resides in the Lord whose lovingkindness never fails: God is good and therefore there are objective standards of goodness. In Scripture, the closer that worshipers drew near to God in faith, the more intense was their desire to behold his glory (Exod 33:18, for example). No one can see God and live (Exod 33:20; 1 Tim 6:16), but Creation silently proclaims God's glory and bears witness to his beauty (Ps 19:1–4). "If the world is indeed created, it follows that the beauty, goodness and wisdom of its creator are reflected, however dimly, in the world around us."[25] From the manifold truth and wisdom of the Scriptures to the rationality and aesthetic beauty of the universe, the beauty of God is evident: God is beautiful and therefore there are objective standards of beauty. Music in worship ought to reflect biblical norms for beauty just as it reflects God's truth and goodness.

Since the Enlightenment, people have thought about beauty in very different ways than they did previously.[26] Before, art for its own sake did not exist; artists were skilled craftsmen who created what we call "works of art" for functional purposes.[27] Beauty was not something that was simply pleasing to the eye or judged according to personal taste.[28] On the contrary, beauty was understood in terms of how well the art—whether painting, sculpture, music, metalwork, *et cetera*—fulfilled its function and followed the rules for working skillfully in a given medium.

Music or other works of art may be pleasing to the eye in the sense of being pretty (at least on the surface), but that does not make them beautiful. Christians need to come to terms with beauty from a biblical perspective (which may be closer to the pre-Enlightenment view than post-Enlightenment), because without a theological conception of beauty,

> [People] will see in the Christian faith only what strikes them as flat, moralistic and platitudinous compared to the troubling, haunting depths of Mahler or King Lear. Unless the experience of beauty in nature and the arts is encompassed and affirmed the Christian faith will seem to have nothing of interest or importance to say. This is not, however, just a tactic to win the allegiance of the lost. The fact is that God is beautiful and the Church is hiding this. . . . For without a positive theological evalua-

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[25]Alister McGrath, *Glimpsing the Face of God: The Search for Meaning in the Universe* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 51; see also McGrath, The Passionate Intellect: Christian Faith and the Discipleship of the Mind (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 74–75.

[26]H. R. Rookmaaker, *Art Needs No Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 5–12; cf. Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, first Perennial ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 68–71; Rookmaaker and Barzun both argue that the transition to the Enlightenment view of art began sometime during the Renaissance.

[27]Rookmaaker, 7; Barzun, 70.

[28]Rookmaaker, 9; Barzun, 71.

tion of beauty there is no motive to delight in God and no compelling reason to love him.[29]

Beauty, as it relates to corporate worship music, requires skill, craftsmanship, attention to detail, and an understanding of how to work with the essential elements of music in a way that ignites the imagination of worshipers. Perhaps the quintessential example is Johann Sebastian Bach.[30] Bach understood music as the living voice of the gospel and wrote music that did more than just accompany the text: his music consistently provided a theological commentary on the text in ways that were both intellectually stimulating and emotionally powerful.[31] Isaac Watts crafted hymn texts that were accessible to the congregation yet stand out for their rich theological metaphors, structural integrity, and poetic beauty. If one takes creation as reflective of God's beauty and how it demonstrates that order is good, then it may be wise to rethink our conception of beauty as it relates to music for worship in terms of integrity of form and structure, skillful use of the essential elements of music and language, and quality of craftsmanship.

In the last several decades, the style of musical forms in worship has been at the heart of many conflicts and divisions in both the church universal and individual congregations. Everyone has an opinion. Unfortunately, pastors, worship leaders, and congregations too often choose sides and make choices without giving serious considerations to biblical norms for music in corporate worship. In reality, style should be a peripheral issue when it comes to congregational song and larger issues should take precedence, such as the theological and liturgical purposes for which the music is written.[32] Without a solid foundation for music in worship, the people will be tossed about with every wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14). Consequently, pastors and pastoral musicians must first establish a theology of music in worship based on scriptural truth and instruct the congregation in it. Then they can consider what musical forms to use, but style is not the real issue and it never will be. A better approach would be to choose music that reflects the beauty of the Creator, whatever the style of music may be.

When God's people gather in worship, their music expresses a common faith and helps them to vocalize their collective praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, and trust.[33] Many congregational songs contain great theological truths, but even the ones that teach falsehood have formative capacity. Pastors ought to make sure that the musical diet of the congrega-

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[29]Richard Harries, *Art and the Beauty of God: A Christian Understanding* (London: Mowbray, 1993), 5–6.

[30]A fuller treatment of all of the musical implications of this study needs to be done, especially as it relates to cross-cultural and cross-historical ramifications, but is beyond the scope of this paper.

[31]Robin A. Leaver, "Motive and Motif in the Church Music of Johann Sebastian Bach," *Theology Today* 63 (2006), 39–40, 47; Leaver gives several specific examples of how Bach's theology informed his compositional techniques.

[32]Leaver, 39.

[33]Brian Wren, *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 90.

tion builds them up to full maturity in Christ (Eph 4:12–13) both in terms of music and text. Writing, selecting, and performing music that is beautiful, in the sense of being well-crafted and artfully composed, requires a great amount of training, skill, and work. "Cliché, whether verbal or visual, takes what is unthought out, unfelt, in short, acceptable at a superficial level. But all apprehension of beauty involves a struggle to apprehend the truth and all artistic creation involves a struggle to express it."[34] It is much easier to bypass the way of the cross in our corporate worship music, but we must not offer unto God that which costs us nothing (2 Sam 24:24).

True worship always involves a response of the believer to God. Luke 19:10 states that Jesus came to *seek* and to save sinners. John 4:23 clarifies that mission by explaining that the Father is *seeking* true worshipers. Jesus' mission is to turn sinners into true worshipers. Therefore, God is the initiator of all true worship and Christian believers respond to his initiative.[35] Music can be a powerful medium through which the congregation responds to God in worship when it reflects the truth, goodness, and beauty of the God to whom all worship is due.

An Analysis of Three Representative Hymns

In the interest of promoting biblical music-making in churches, this paper provides a brief analysis of three hymns that reflect the truth, goodness, and beauty of God in terms of their content and craftsmanship. Since Christianity centers on the gospel of Jesus Christ, I chose one hymn each on the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ: "Glory Be to God on High" by Charles Wesley, "How Shallow Former Shadows Seem" by Carl P. Daw, Jr., and "The Lord Is Risen Indeed" by Thomas Kelly. For the purposes of this study, only the texts will be considered.[36]

Glory be to God on high
And peace on earth descend!
God comes down; he bows the sky
And shows himself our friend;
God the invisible appears!
God the blessed, the great I AM,
Dwelling in this world of tears—
And Jesus is his name.

[34] Harries, 11.

[35] Bruce H. Leafblad, *Music, Worship, and the Ministry of the Church*, 3d printing (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1979), 42.

[36] Analyzing only the texts is incomplete at best and problematic at worst because joining words to music to make a song changes the way in which worshipers experience the texts. The liturgical and congregational setting of a hymn may also contribute to or detract from the meaning of a congregational song. Analyzing the text is at least a start, however, and will hopefully spur greater depth of thought in this area on the part of theologians and musicians.

He whom angels all adored,
Their maker and their king,
Is their news, the humble Lord
Whose name to earth they bring.
Emptied of his majesty,
Of his dazzling glories shorn,
Being's source begins to be
And God himself is born!

See the eternal Son of God,
A mortal Son of man,
Set to walk this earthly road
Whom heaven cannot contain!
Stand amazed, you heavens, at this;
See the Lord of earth and skies,
Humbled to the dust he is
And in a manger lies.

We, the earthborn tribes, rejoice,
The Prince of peace proclaim,
Joining heaven to lift our voice
And shout Immanuel's name.
Knees and hearts to him we bow;
Of our flesh and of our bone,
Jesus is our brother now
And God is all our own.[37]

"Glory Be to God on High" presents a magnificent picture of the incarnation of Christ through the use of poetic device, stanzaic structure, and the crafting of language. The hymnic meter is 76 76 77 76. The extra syllable in the fifth line of each stanza (at approximately the golden mean), serves to heighten the tension and provide a greater sense of fulfillment as each strophe comes to its denouement. Wesley used mixed poetic meters, primarily trochaic and iambic, alternating line by line. Trochaic meter is generally used with more forceful or commanding texts, such as "Glory be to God on high" or "God comes down; he bows the sky."[38] Iambic meter, on the other hand, conveys pleading, questioning, or supplicatory texts, such as "and peace on earth descend!" or "and shows himself our friend."[39] The incarnation of Christ is perhaps the greatest paradox in human history—Jesus came as fully God and fully human. The trochaic lines mostly emphasize the glory, majesty, and divine nature

[37]Charles Wesley, "Glory Be to God on High."

[38]William J. Reynolds and Milburn Price, *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*, 4th ed., rev. and enlarged by David W. Music and Milburn Price (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1999), x.

[39]Ibid.

of Christ, while the iambic lines generally speak of Jesus's humanity, humbling, or of the meaning of the incarnation for the human race. The juxtaposition of trochaic and iambic meters captures beautifully the message the hymn conveys.

Wesley used several poetic devices that can deepen the worshiper's understanding of the profound mystery embodied in the Christmas message and thereby heighten their love for God. Antithesis appears throughout the text, but especially in stanzas two and three, where nearly every line contrasts dramatically with the one that came before. Paradox and metaphor also help to capture the meaning of the text and fire the imagination. The first stanza states, "God the invisible appears!," which recalls the shekinah glory of God now dwelling with believers through Jesus, the Light of the World. Stanza two declares that the good news is to be found in the identity of the baby who is the "humble Lord." Then, in stanza three, Wesley wrote the poignant lines, "See the Lord of earth and skies, humbled to the dust he is and in a manger lies." Not only are the Gospel writers in view here, but also Philippians 2:5–11. What a paradox! Christ laid aside his glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, and took on the dust of human form and lay helpless in a dusty stable for the sake of sinners. Wesley's hymn makes a powerful impression on the imagination of worshipers because it articulates biblical truth about the incarnation in a way that makes this hymn a beautiful work of art.

"How Shallow Former Shadows Seem" paints a vivid picture of Christ on the cross:[40]

How shallow former shadows seem[41]
    Beside this great reverse
As darkness swallows up the Light
    Of all the universe:
Creation shivers at the shock,
    The Temple rends its veil,
A pallid stillness stifles time,
    And nature's motions fail.

This is no midday fantasy,
    No flight of fevered brain.
With vengeance awful, grim, and real,
    Chaos is come again:
The hands that formed us from the soil
    Are nailed upon the cross;
The Word that gave us life and breath
    Expires in utter loss.

Yet deep within this darkness lives
    A Love so fierce and free

[40] Carl P. Daw, Jr., "How Shallow Former Shadows Seem."

[41] ©1990 Hope Publishing Company. Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

That arcs all voids and—risk supreme!—
  Embraces agony.
Its perfect testament is etched
  In iron, blood, and wood;
With awe we glimpse its true import
  And dare to call it good.

Daw's portrayal of the crucifixion draws on the accounts of the Gospel writers as well as references to English literature in a way that brings together the doctrines of creation and redemption and captures many of the ironies in Christ's death for sinners. Daw used three primary metaphors for Christ: Light, Word, and Love. Stanza one refers to Christ as the Light of the world, the one in whom is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). John 1:5 states that the Light came into the world, shining in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it; and yet, as Daw's hymn puts it, when the sky went dark as Jesus died, "darkness swallowed up the Light of all the universe." Daw used personification of the Temple and of creation in order to emphasize the point.

Stanzas two and three refer to Jesus as Word and Love, respectively, and Daw linked the ideas in these two stanzas through the use of irony and metaphor in a single line. The hymn pleads with the worshiper throughout to consider the awesome mystery embodied at the cross by its use of iambic meter—except for one line. At exactly the midpoint of the hymn, Daw inserted the verse, "chaos is come again," which is in trochaic meter. Through the change in poetic meter, the line communicates its message through form. Daw borrowed the line from Act III of *Othello*, where Othello tells his wife, "But I do love thee! and when I love thee not, Chaos is come again."[42] Through instruments of hatred, we crucified the Lord of glory, but God will not have wrath or hatred be the last word; the last word is reserved for his steadfast love as Daw points out so vividly in stanza three.

Daw's hymn culminates with the final line of the hymn, which calls attention to the fact that Christians can call the day of Christ's death "Good Friday" because they understand its true meaning. Through form, structure, poetic device, and the crafting of language, Daw captures the mystery and irony of the crucifixion in a way that helps worshipers to meditate on God's great love for his people.

Thomas Kelly's hymn impresses worshipers with a profound sense of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection:

The Lord is risen indeed!
  And are the tidings true?
Yes, we beheld the Savior bleed,
  And saw him living, too.

The Lord is risen, indeed!
  Then Justice asks no more;

[42]Carl P. Daw, Jr., *A Year of Grace: Hymns for the Church Year* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1990), 70.

Mercy and Truth are now agreed
Who stood opposed before.

The Lord is risen indeed!
Now is his work performed;
Now is the mighty Captive freed,
And death's strong castle stormed.

The Lord is risen indeed!
The grave has lost its prey;
With him is risen the ransomed seed
To reign in endless day.

The Lord is risen indeed!
He lives, to die no more;
He lives, the sinner's cause to plead,
Whose curse and shame he bore.

The Lord is risen indeed!
Attending angels, hear!
Up to the courts of heaven with speed
The joyful tidings bear.

Then take your golden lyres,
And strike each cheerful chord;
Join, all ye bright celestial choirs,
To sing our risen Lord.[43]

Kelly's hymn recalls the words of 1 Corinthians 15, where the apostle Paul makes the case that without the resurrection, the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ would be meaningless and so would be the Christian life. Just as at the angels' announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds, the good news of the resurrection seems unbelievable at first, but the eyewitness accounts of the disciples proclaim the power of the gospel of God. The repeated refrain, "The Lord is risen indeed!," relentlessly impresses on the minds of believers the truth of the Easter message.

Kelly also used paradox and antithesis to balance the incomprehensible tidings. The atonement brought together mercy and truth, conquered death, and purchased sinners for God. The hymn emphasizes Christ's role as prophet, priest, and king through references to tidings, reigning in endless day, and interceding for the saints. The hymn ends with a charge to the angelic choirs to sing Jesus' praises just as they did at the announcement of his birth. Kelly's craftsmanship conveys the message of the resurrection in vivid terms that bring together Christ's identity, work, and the whole of the gospel story.

[43]Thomas Kelly, "The Lord Is Risen Indeed."

These three hymns serve as examples of how hymn writers can proclaim the truth of God's Word and celebrate his goodness in a manner that glorifies him through the beauty of language. Would that all pastors, worship leaders, and congregations desire and select biblical songs for worship that fire the imagination of worshipers and ignite their love for God with truth in artistic form.

Conclusion

Congregational songs should be evaluated by the truth of God's Word and by how they will sound as musical offerings from the hearts of worshipers in God's presence. Congregations at worship need songs that are biblical in content and artistically excellent so that they will have appropriate sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to offer unto God that will, in turn, encourage their joy and progress in the faith. Churches need songs that reflect the truth, goodness, and beauty of God in their content and in the way they are constructed and, thankfully, many such songs exist in a variety of musical styles from traditional to modern. If churches will be faithful to preach and teach the true gospel of Christ and if theologians and musicians will think and work together to realize the implications of the gospel for congregational song, then perhaps God's people will begin to expect a more healthful musical diet when they come to worship in God's presence.

The Artistic Theologian 1 (2012): 40–56

Toward a Biblical Understanding of Culture

Scott Aniol[1]

The missional church movement has significantly influenced evangelical churches in recent years, especially through its philosophy of evangelism and worship. Missional advocates argue that the church is part of the *missio Dei*—the mission of God—and thus it must see its ministries as fitting within that mission. Essential to the accomplishment of that mission is embedding the church in its target culture, which missional authors call "incarnation." In order to evangelize a culture, they argue, churches must contextualize the message of the gospel in the culture. According to the grandfather of the missional movement, Lesslie Newbigin, contextualization is "the placing of the gospel in the total context of a culture at a particular moment, a moment that is shaped by the past and looks to the future."[2]

This thinking influences the missional philosophy of worship as well. While missional advocates reject the "attractional worship" model of the church growth movement, they nevertheless insist that since believers are part of the culture in which they live, worship also must be contextualized to that culture. For example, Ed Stetzer argues that "worship must take on the expression that reflects the culture of the worshiper if it is to be authentic and make an impact."[3] Contextualization is a significant emphasis of Alan Hirsch as well, who argues that "worship style, social dynamics, [and] liturgical expressions must result from the process of contextualizing the gospel in any given culture."[4] Mark Driscoll based his entire church planting strategy on the principle of contextualization, arguing that churches must be willing to change regularly their worship forms "in an effort to effectively communicate the gospel to as many people as possible in the cultures around them."[5] Likewise, according to Jon Paul Lepinski, "The need for the Church to remain effective in speaking the 'current language' and to successfully engage all people and age groups is a

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[1]Scott Aniol is Instructor of Church Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

[2]Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 2.

[3]Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 100.

[4]Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 143.

[5]Mark Driscoll, *The Radical Reformission: Reaching Out without Selling Out* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 80.

practice that can be seen in the life of Jesus. Christ's earthly life manifests the importance of relevancy."[6]

Essential to the missional church movement's philosophy of evangelism and worship is their understanding of culture. Since they articulate incarnation and contextualization as important postures for accomplishing the *missio Dei*, missional proponents consistently discuss the importance of understanding culture, reaching culture, engaging culture, and redeeming culture. Therefore, an investigation into what they commonly mean by "culture" is necessary in order to evaluate their incarnational philosophy. This paper will synthesize the missional understanding of culture, reveal influences leading to this understanding of culture, and compare this contemporary idea of culture to categories of thought within the New Testament, revealing the appropriate biblical response toward the idea of culture.

Common Missional Definitions of Culture

Likely the most influential early evangelical definition of culture comes from Lesslie Newbigin, who claims that culture is "the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another."[7] Darrell Guder cites this definition early in *Missional Church*,[8] thus revealing its impact upon later missional thinking in the Gospel and Our Culture Network[9] and beyond. Other later definitions reflect similar thinking. For example, Alan and Debra Hirsch maintain, "Culture is a complex jungle of ideas, history, language, religious views, economic systems, political issues, and the like."[10] Kathy Black defines culture as "the sum attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art forms from one generation to the next."[11]

Important to recognize is that none of these definitions draws its understanding of culture directly from Scripture but rather assumes the validity of the contemporary idea of culture on its own merits. Furthermore, beyond these few definitions, other missional au-

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[6]Jon Paul Lepinski, "Engaging Postmoderns in Worship: A Study of Effective Techniques and Methods Utilized by Two Growing Churches in Northern California" (D.Min. thesis, Liberty Theological Seminary, 2010), 6.

[7]Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983), 5.

[8]Darrell Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9.

[9]Newbigin's influence spread to North America in the 1980s, leading to the formation of the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) under the leadership of George Hunsberger; see www.gocn.org.

[10]Alan Hirsch and Debra Hirsch, *Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 25.

[11]Kathy Black, *Culturally-Conscious Worship* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 8.

thors seem to assume the idea of culture without even defining it, revealing that they utilize the prevailing contemporary notion of culture by default in their emphases upon incarnation and contextualization. This in itself is not necessarily problematic, but in order to understand what missional proponents mean by "culture," this requires further research into what led to the development of the idea as it exists today.

The Historical Development of the Missional Idea of Culture[12]

Historically, the term "culture" did not emerge in its common use until the late eighteenth century. The term itself is much older, its Latin roots centering squarely in discussion of agriculture. As early as 1776, however, the term began to be used metaphorically to describe what Matthew Arnold would later call "the best which has been thought and said in the world."[13] The term used this way first entered German philosophy in Johann Gottfried Herder's *Reflections on the Philosophy of History* (1776), in which he argued that each civilization progresses through a process of enlightenment at which point it begins to produce "culture." Thus the term was first used to describe what would today be more commonly called "high culture" or "the arts." This introduced a new vocabulary for describing differences among people groups, but it was not until the rise of the formal discipline of cultural anthropology that the broader idea of culture took its present form.

Darwinian evolutionism influenced all aspects of human inquiry in the mid-nineteenth century, including explanation of cultural differences. For example, Edward Tylor, the founding father of British anthropology, developed a theory of cultural evolution that describes stages of human history from primitivism to advancement. Tylor's attempt to explain differences among various people groups led to the formation of the discipline of cultural anthropology. This new discipline involved "the description, interpretation, and analysis of similarities and differences in human cultures."[14] Tylor's ideas reflect Herder's, but his understanding of culture was much broader. Instead of defining culture as the more advanced achievements of a society, Tylor defined it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired

[12]This survey is necessarily simplistic and notes only the three most significant stages in the development of the contemporary idea of culture. Historians usually note at least four and as many as seven stages. For a more thorough discussion, see Ernest Lester Schusky, *The Study of Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975); Merwyn S. Garbarino, *Sociocultural Theory in Anthropology: A Short History* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1983); Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); Roger M. Keesing and Andrew Strathern, *Cultural Anthropology: A Contemporary Perspective* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998); Jerry D. Moore, *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists* (Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira, 2009); and Jenell Williams Paris and Brian M. Howell, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

[13]Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1869), viii.

[14]Paris and Howell, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 4.

by man as a member of society."[15] Important to this definition is that everything in human society is a subset of the broader idea of culture, even religion; the subtitle to Tylor's monumental book reveals different aspects of what he understood as culture: "Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom." Schusky explains how this all-encompassing definition of culture developed to form the field of anthropology:

> Scholars recast the history of marriage, religion, politics, the family, mythology, and other social forms, speculating on their origin and stage of evolution. Because such a wide variety of forms were examined, some intellectuals concluded that all aspects of human behavior were valid fields for study. Organization of the study should fall to anthropology, and its concept of culture should be such as to allow investigation of all these facets of human activity.[16]

Tylor was also an early advocate of cultural relativism, "the judgment of a practice only in relation to its cultural setting."[17]

The anthropological notion of culture took a third step in America with Franz Boas, whom Jerry Moore calls "the most important single force in shaping American anthropology."[18] Boas shifted cultural anthropology from an evolutionist position to what is called Historicism, which argues that cultures are not progressive advancements of one continuous evolutionary development, but rather that each distinct culture is a product of very specific historical contexts and thus can be understood only in light of those contexts. He was among the first to speak of plural cultures that share no direct connections; similarities that exist between cultures, Boas argued, are purely arbitrary or at most due to similar historical situations, an idea called Particularism. This further reinforced the notion of cultural relativism, denying any universal laws of culture and advancing the idea that cultures with different historical backgrounds may not be compared at all. Every cultural expression is learned within a particular historical setting; nothing is innate. This view of human culture became widely established, especially in American anthropology, becoming the *de facto* explanation for differences among civilizations.

The missional idea of culture, then, took shape within this anthropological climate. Charles H. Kraft acknowledges that the missional idea of culture draws from cultural anthropology: "When it comes to the analysis of such cultural contexts, however, it is likely that contemporary disciplines such as anthropology and linguistics, dedicated as they are to a primary focus on these issues, may be able to provide us with sharper tools for analysis than the disciplines of history and philology have provided."[19] Even if not deliberately,

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[15]Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: John Murray, 1871), 1.

[16]Schusky, *The Study of Cultural Anthropology*, 10.

[17]Ibid., 15.

[18]Moore, *Visions of Culture*, 42.

[19]Charles H. Kraft, "Interpreting in Cultural Context," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 4 (December 1978): 358.

however, most missional authors adapt the view of culture held by cultural anthropologists. For example, one cannot help but notice the similarity between Tylor's influential definition of culture ("that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"[20]) and Newbigin's definition ("the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another"[21]). Yet the connection runs deeper than similarities between definitions. Like cultural anthropology, the missional church views the idea of culture and particular cultural expressions as neutral. Cultures develop independently of each other and may not be compared. Evangelical authors may cite specific content as sinful, but no cultural expression is unredeemable. For example, Stetzer states that "there is no such thing as Christian music, only Christian lyrics" [22] and that "God has no preference regarding style,"[23] implying that cultural forms in general are neutral and only lyrics may be judged as moral or immoral. Driscoll argues for the neutrality of culture by insisting that "it was God who created cultures,"[24] thereby rendering various cultural forms intrinsically good. Stanley Parris gets to the root of the issue by stating that since "a single biblical style is not commanded in Scripture,"[25] cultural styles are amoral. Mark Snoeberger helpfully summarizes a common evangelical view of cultural neutrality:

> There is a general assumption that culture is neutral, and either independent of or essentially in harmony with God: just as man retains the image of God in microcosm, so culture retains the image of God in macrocosm. As such, culture possesses aspects and attributes that escape, to a large extent, the effects of depravity. The Christian response to culture is merely to bridle various aspects of culture and employ them for their divinely intended end—glory of God.[26]

Most importantly, like cultural anthropologists, missional advocates understand religion as but one component of culture rather than the other way around. For example, the Hirsches list "religious views" as one element of culture,[27] and Newbigin himself states un-

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[20]Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1.

[21]Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984*, 5.

[22]Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 267.

[23]Elmer Towns and Edward Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 43.

[24]Driscoll, *Radical Reformission*, 80.

[25]Stanley Glenn Parris, "Instituting a Missional Worship Style in a Local Church Developed from an Analysis of the Culture" (Ph.D. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2008), 2.

[26]Mark A. Snoeberger, "Noetic Sin, Neutrality, and Contextualization: How Culture Receives the Gospel," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 9 (2004): 357.

[27]Hirsch and Hirsch, *Untamed*, 25.

equivocally, "Religion—including the Christian religion—is thus part of culture."[28] This position is also clear in their discussion of the relationship between culture and evangelism. According to missional authors, the gospel must be "contextualized" in a given culture so that the recipients will accept the message and change their religion, but the culture itself must not change. John Stott insists that conversion will not mean a change of culture: "True, conversion involves repentance, and repentance is renunciation. Yet this does not require the convert to step right out of his former culture into a Christian sub-culture which is totally distinctive."[29] Additionally, Driscoll explains that the gospel "must be fitted to" culture.[30] New believers are thus encouraged to worship using the cultural forms most natural to them. For example, Guder argues that "our changing cultural context also requires that we change our worship forms so that Christians shaped by late modernity can express their faith authentically and honestly,"[31] which follows the same line of reasoning as Hirsch when he claims that "it is from within their own cultural expressions that the nations will worship."[32] Kimball also affirms this idea: "Since worship is about our expressing love and adoration to God and leaders teaching people about God, then of course the culture will shape our expressions of worship."[33] Religion changes while culture remains unchanged, signifying that religion is only one element within the larger idea of culture.

This idea of culture is an essential component of the missional approach to all aspects of church ministry, including evangelism and worship. The modern definition of culture developed out of relatively recent ideas about anthropology. Prior to the Enlightenment, people groups were differentiated primarily by their religion; later, the way to account for differences was "culture." Neither New Testament authors nor pre-Enlightenment Christian authors discuss "culture" as such.

However, the fact that the contemporary idea of culture emerged from twentieth-century cultural anthropology does not necessarily imply that it is an invalid or unbiblical idea. Many complex ideas take on contemporary articulations. The important question for a biblical evaluation of the common missional understanding of culture is to determine if there is a scriptural parallel to the contemporary notion of culture.

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[28]Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984*, 5.

[29]John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 181.

[30]Driscoll, *Radical Reformission*, 20.

[31]Darrell Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 157.

[32]Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 138.

[33]Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 298.

New Testament Parallels to the Missional Idea of Culture

Since cultural anthropology formulated the common understanding of culture, and since the term "culture" is not a biblical one, there is little reason to debate the definition itself. Rather, what is important for Christians concerned with culture is to determine, taking for granted the anthropological definition of culture, what ideas in Scripture may inform our understanding of culture. At least three separate categories of NT Greek terms possibly parallel the more contemporary idea of culture.

Terms Associated with Ethnic Identity

The first grouping includes terms translated with the English words "race," "tribe," "nation," "people" or "languages." These ideas are probably the most commonly cited by missional authors who are seeking to justify cultural neutrality. For example, Driscoll equates "race," "nation," and "culture," alluding to Revelation 7:9 when he insists that "God promised that people from every race, culture, language, and nation will be present to worship him as their culture follows them into heaven."[34]

The term representative of this group that Christian anthropologists mostly cite is ἔθνος (*ethnos*). For example, in commenting on Matthew 28:16-20, Christian cultural anthropologists Paris and Howell explain that "the word translated 'nations' here (*ethnos*) refers to the culture of a people, an ethnic group."[35] They directly equate ἔθνος with culture and insist that "cultural anthropology helps us fulfill the Great Commission by preparing Christians to go to all *ethnē* and speak and live effectively."[36] Additionally, the popularity of terms such as "enthnodoxology" among missional worship advocates reveals the assumption that this NT term proves the necessity of a multicultural approach to worship.

Of the 164 times it appears in the NT, ἔθνος is translated in the ESV as "Gentile" 96 times, "nation" 68 times, "pagans" three times, and "people" two times. Lexicons[37] define

[34]Driscoll, *Radical Reformission*, 100.

[35]Paris and Howell, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 23.

[36]Ibid.

[37]While lexical definitions of terms are helpful in determining their meaning and use in the NT, it is important to recognize that authors of lexicons themselves often fall prey to contemporary reorientation of ideas. This is especially a potential problem in this area of cultural neutrality. If authors of a lexicon have been influenced enough by cultural anthropology so that they embrace its conclusions about culture and race, their definitions of terms such as ἔθνος may reflect a colored interpretation. Vern Poythress exposes this very sort of influence in "How Have Inclusiveness and Tolerance Affected the Bauer-Danker Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (BDAG)?" (*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 4 [December 2003]: 577–88). He argues that differences in the third edition of BDAG from previous editions "raise questions about political influence on lexical description" (574). Danker himself addresses the issue in the preface to the third edition:

> Also of concern are respect for inclusiveness and tolerance. But a scientific work dare not become a reservoir for ideological pleading, and culture-bound expressions must be given their due lest history be denied its day in court. It is an undeniable fact that God is primarily viewed patriarchally in the Bible, but translation must avoid exaggeration of the datum. "Brother" is a legitimate rendering of many instances

the term as "a multitude (whether of men or of beasts) associated or living together, . . . a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus, . . . a race, nation, people group,"[38] or even specifically link it to the idea of culture: "a people, a large group based on various cultural, physical or geographic ties."[39] Lexicons do not define ἔθνος as culture itself, however, but rather identify culture as one element that unites an ἔθνος, as in Bullinger, who defines the term as "a number of people living together bound together by like habits and customs; then generally people, tribe, nation, with reference to the connection with each other rather than the separation from others by descent, language or constitution."[40]

Indeed, the term is used to designate groups of people who identify with common values. Missional authors assume that NT authors use ἔθνος as a parallel to "culture," yet this correspondence falls outside the common usage of the term. An ἔθνος may be united by shared culture, but it is not the same as culture. Hiebert agrees: "*Nation* (*ethnos*) means a community of people held together by the same laws, customs, and mutual interests."[41] The term refers to the group of people, not to the culture around which the group unites.

Furthermore, use of the term in the NT is normally intended to *blur cultural differences* rather than to highlight them. For example, the two passages cited above by missional writers use ἔθνος most clearly to signify something broader than the contemporary notion of culture. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands his followers to "teach all nations [ἔθνος]." Carson suggests that Matthew "uses *ethnē* in its basic sense of 'tribes,' 'nations,' or 'peoples' and means 'all peoples [without distinction]' or 'all nations [without distinction].'"[42] The point of the command is not, necessarily, to emphasize the cross-cultural reality of evange-

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> of the term ἀδελψός, but when it appears that the term in the plural includes women (as in a letter to a congregation) some functional equivalent, such as "brothers and sisters," is required. (*BDAG*, viii)

However, Danker clearly begins with an *a priori* acceptance of the contemporary anthropological notion of culture when he speaks of "culture-bound expressions," and Poythress reveals several examples where political correctness influences changes in definitions. This is why although the lexical definitions are helpful, investigation into the contextual uses of each term is also important in determining their range of meaning.

[38]James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order, Together with Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words of the Original, with References to the English Words* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004).

[39]James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997).

[40]Ethelbert William Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament: Together with an Index of Greek Words, and Several Appendices* (London: Longmans Green, 1908), 316.

[41]D. Edmond Hiebert, *First Peter* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 134.

[42]Frank E. Gaebelein, gen. ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 596.

lizing each distinct cultural group as Engle insists;[43] rather "the aim of Jesus' disciples . . . is to make disciples of all men everywhere, without distinction."[44]

The other passage often cited by missional authors to prove that every culture is legitimate since people from every nation will be admitted into heaven is Revelation 5:9: "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe [φυλῆς] and language [γλώσσης] and people [λαοῦ] and nation [ἔθνους].'"[45] Here John uses four terms related to ethnic identity, but once again, John uses the terms not to emphasize cultural distinctions between various people groups but rather to signify all peoples without national or cultural distinctions. For example, Mounce states of the terms in this verse, "It is fruitless to attempt a distinction between these terms as ethnic, linguistic, political, etc. The Seer is stressing the universal nature of the church and for this purpose piles up phrases for their rhetorical value."[46] Likewise, Thomas argues, "The enumeration includes representatives of every nationality, without distinction of race, geographical location, or political persuasion."[47] These conclusions regarding the use of ἔθνος apply equally to nearly synonymous terms in Revelation 5:9 such as φυλή (*phulē*; "tribe"), γλῶσσα (*glōssa*; "language"), and λαός (*laos*; "people").

Indeed, the NT perspective on race seems to be that of eliminating racial distinctions rather than highlighting them. The use of another term related to race, Ἕλλην (*Hellēn*; "Greek"), illustrates this point. According to Paul, in Christ there is not distinction between Jew and Greek (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; 1 Cor 12:13). Rather, all are united into one newly distinct body.

This leads to a final passage of note, 1 Peter 2:9, which uses ἔθνος in a slightly different manner: "But you are a chosen race [γένος], a royal priesthood, a holy nation [ἔθνος], a people [λαὸς] for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Peter calls the church a holy nation, here used metaphorically to describe the new people God has created in the church. Hiebert explains:

> The term was also used at times of Israel as the people of God united by their covenantal relation to him, making them distinctly his nation. It is in that latter sense

[43]"The cross-cultural phenomena implicit in worldwide evangelism are strikingly embedded in the four-fold societal factors, repeated three times in Genesis 10. The LXX specifies the *land* (γῇ), the *language* (γλῶσσαν), the *people* (φυλαῖς, i.e., *ethnic group*), the *nation* (ἔθνεσιν, i.e., "The multitude bound together by like habits, customs, peculiarities," in brief, perhaps a *political entity*). The geographical, linguistic, ethnic, and political factors are emphasized in Gen 10:5, 20, 31. The root ἔθνος- is the same as the one attributed to Christ in Matt 28:19" (Richard W. Engle, "Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal," *Grace Theological Journal*, no. 4 [1983]: 94).

[44]Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, 596.

[45]These same four terms appear also in 7:9, 11:9, 13:7, and 14:6.

[46]Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 136.

[47]Robert Thomas, *Revelation 1-7 Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 401.

> that Peter applied the term to the church, which forms a unique international nation having a common spiritual life from God and committed to his rule. *Holy* indicates its separation from the nations of the world and consecration to God and his service. Its position of separation demands that the members must not, like Israel of old, stoop to the sinful practices of the world (1:15-17).[48]

The same is true for γένος (*genos*; "race"), which has a similar meaning: "The word *race* (*genos*) denotes the descendants of a common ancestor and thus designates a people with a common heritage, sharing the unity of a common life."[49] And once again, "people" (λαὸς) describes a group united by a similar ancestry.

These examples of the use of terms related to ethnic identity by NT authors indicate that the terms signify distinct groups of people that unify around common heritage, geographical location, language, and/or custom. "Culture" as defined by contemporary anthropologists may be one of the elements around which an ἔθνος unifies, but an ἔθνος is not "culture" itself. Similarly, φυλή is not a lineage, it is a people united by lineage; likewise, although γλῶσσα is often used to specifically designate languages, in these cases it is used metaphorically to signify people united by a common language; in the same way λαός and ἔθνος identify groups united by politics or culture, but they do not equal culture itself.

The implication here is twofold. First, the "culture" of a people is not arbitrary; groups unite around shared beliefs, values, and lineage, which in turn produce a culture that is characteristic of the group. Second, contrary to some missional authors, the NT does not indicate that all *cultures* will be present in the eschaton but rather that all *kinds of people regardless of distinctions* will be present. This alone does not discredit the position of cultural neutrality, but appealing to terms of ethnicity and their relationship to salvation and the life to come cannot prove the position.

Terms Related to "the World"

The second category of NT terms that may indicate a parallel with the contemporary idea of "culture" includes words related to the "world order." These terms include αἰών (*aiōn*; "age," "world") and κόσμος (*kosmos*; "world"). They can refer to the physical earth, people in general, or a period of time. However, at least three passages in particular use these terms in ways that might be construed as parallel to the anthropological idea of culture, especially by those who consider culture to be an inherently evil influence.

The first is John 17:14–16:

> I have given them your word, and the world [κόσμος] has hated them because they are not of the world [κόσμου], just as I am not of the world [κόσμου]. I do not ask that you take them out of the world [κόσμου], but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world [κόσμου], just as I am not of the world [κόσμου].

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[48]Hiebert, *First Peter*, 134.

[49]Ibid., 132.

Here κόσμος is being used to identify an identifiable world-system. In this context John asserts several conclusions about the "world": (1) Christ is not "of" it, (2) believers are not "of" it, but they are "in" it, and (3) the "evil one" is in some way related to it. While this seems to have a connection with the contemporary idea of culture, this system includes the values and orientation that create culture but does not appear to identify culture itself as defined by anthropologists.

A related passage is 1 John 2:15–17. Here κόσμος is treated decidedly negatively:

> Do not love the world [κόσμον] or the things in the world [κόσμῳ]. If anyone loves the world [κόσμον], the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world [κόσμῳ]—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world [κόσμου]. And the world [κόσμος] is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Barket notes that John uses κόσμος here far differently than he did in John 3:16: "Here, however, the world is presented as the evil system totally under the grip of the devil (cf. 1 John 5:19; John 12:31; 14:30). It is the 'godless world' (NEB), the world of 'emptiness and evil,' the world of enmity against God (James 4:4)."[50] Once again, however, this world-system does not appear to be the same thing as what anthropologists call culture. Not all of what mankind produces is godless, empty, or at enmity with God.

The final passage is Romans 12:2. This time the term in question is αἰών, and once again this term is treated negatively:

> Do not be conformed to this world [αἰῶνι], but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The term appears to be used nearly synonymously here with how John used κόσμος in John 14 and 1 John 2; it describes a world-system to which believers are not to be conformed. But once again, the term appears to signify an ordered system of values alienated from God rather than signifying culture itself. David Wells defines at least one use of the term κόσμος as "the ways in which fallen aspirations are given public expression in any given culture."[51] He argues that when used in this sense, the NT "is speaking of that system of values which takes root in any given culture, the system of values that arises from fallen human nature, and which for that reason marginalizes (pushes to the periphery) God, his truth, and his Christ."[52] He continues:

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[50]Frank E. Gaebelein, gen. ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 12: Hebrews through Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 321.

[51]David F. Wells, "Marketing the Church: Analysis and Assessment," *Faith and Mission* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 15.

[52]Ibid.

> Worldliness is all in a society that validates the fallenness within us. Worldliness is everything in our culture that makes sin look normal and which makes righteousness look strange and bizarre. Worldliness is that which says it's okay to be self-righteous, self-centered, self-satisfied, self-aggrandizing, and self-promoting. Those things are all okay, our culture says. Then it says that those who pursue self-denial or self-effacement for Christ's sake are stupid. That is worldliness—how life appears from this fallen center within myself, this center which has taken the place of God and of his truth. That, I take it, is what the New Testament has in view when it speaks about worldliness. It is talking about a cultural phenomenon, about the public environment by which we are surrounded, that which validates all that is fallen within us. It is what we encounter in movies, in television, in the workplace, in the people with whom we rub shoulders. We hear it in conversations; we see it in advertisements; it is in the air all the time.[53]

Therefore, assuming the anthropological definition of culture as the entire way of life of a people, the idea of "world" does not directly apply in these cases since "world" is something entirely hostile to God in every case, while certainly not everything a people does is evil.

Terms Related to Behavior

A third category of NT terms that could parallel the contemporary concept of culture relate to behavior, including words most often translated as "behavior, "conduct," or "way of life."

Among these, NT authors most often use ἀναστροφή (*anastrophē*) in this manner. Bullinger defines the word as "life, as made up of actions; mode of life, conduct, deportment."[54] The Apostle Paul uses it to describe his behavior in his previous existence: "For you have heard of my former life [ποτε ἀναστροφήν] in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it" (Gal 1:13). Boice notes of Paul's use of the term here:

> The word Paul used for his former "way of life" (*anastrophē*) is singularly appropriate to the Jewish faith. Judaism was not a mask to be donned or doffed at will, as was the case with so many of the pagan religions. Judaism was a way of life, involving all of life, and Paul is correct in describing it as his exclusive sphere of existence before his conversion.[55]

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[53]Ibid.

[54]Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, 186.

[55]Frank E. Gaebelein, gen. ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10: Romans through Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 433.

Paul understood his way of life as flowing directly and necessarily from his religious convictions and values. Because of this perspective, Paul insisted that one's conduct must change with conversion:

> Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles [ἔθνη] do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life [προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν] and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:17–24)

Here Paul distinguishes between behavior of the ἔθνη and the behavior of Christ-followers. He notes that their values ("futility of their minds," "darkened understanding," "alienation from the life of God," "ignorance," and "hardness of heart") lead to sinful behavior ("sensuality," "greed," and "impurity"). He describes this once again as their "former manner of life," using the term ἀναστροφή. In contrast, the new values of Christians ("renewed in the spirit of your minds") produce a new way of life ("put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness"). Paul communicates a similar sentiment to Timothy when he admonishes, "Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct [ἀναστροφῇ], in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim 4:12). Paul clearly uses ἀναστροφή, therefore, to describe a particular way of life, whether good or evil, that flows from religious beliefs and values. Boice summarizes:

> Paul now gives the content of the teaching his readers received, though the verb is not actually repeated. Their previous life style was to be discarded completely. They must forsake their old behavioral haunts (*anastrophēn*; NIV, "your former way of life") and indeed lay aside the costume of their unregenerate selves.[56]

The most prolific use of ἀναστροφή occurs in Peter's writings. Forms of the term appear three times in 1 Peter 1:13–19:

> Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct [ἀναστροφῇ], since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds [ἔργον], conduct yourselves [ἀναστράφητε] with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways [ματαίας ἀναστροφῆς] inherited from your forefa-

[56]Frank E. Gaebelein, gen. ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians through Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 62.

> thers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Like Paul, Peter contrasts a former way of life with that of a new behavior. Howe asserts of Peter's use of ἀναστροφή, "The word 'behavior,' which translates ἀναστροφῇ, corresponds to the word 'lifestyle' and covers all actions, thoughts, words, and relationships."[57] Peter characterizes the former behavior as flowing from ignorance, leading to "futile ways inherited from your forefathers." The new way is to be characterized by holiness and fear. Here Peter uses the verb form of ἀναστροφή, ἀναστρέφω *(anastrephō)*, to command his readers to live a certain way since they have been ransomed from the former life. Peter also uses a nearly synonymous "behavior"-related term, ἔργον (*ergon*; "deeds"), to describe their lifestyle.

Later in 1 Peter 2:12 Peter admonishes his readers, "Keep your conduct [ἀναστροφὴν] among the Gentiles [ἔθνεσιν] honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds [καλῶν ἔργων] and glorify God on the day of visitation." Notably, this command is in the context of Peter using terms related to ethnicity to call believers in Christ a "chosen race [γένος]," "a holy nation [ἔθνος]," and "a people [λαὸς] for his own possession." This, then, reveals a connection between the terms related to ethnicity and those related to behavior. Γένος, ἔθνος, and λαός identify groups of people who unite around common ἀναστροφή. This common behavior stems from shared values and beliefs. Christians, according to Peter, are members of a new race who possess common values and beliefs that result in a new way of life. This pattern of conduct is distinct from their former behavior, the conduct of unbelievers. Indeed, the metaphorical use of ἔθνος in several passages, including 1 Peter 2:9, indicates that the Christian community forms a new "nation" distinct from earthly nations. David Wright explains the significance of the terms related to ethnic identity in 1 Peter 2:

> Each of these four designations is pregnant with suggestiveness of its own, but they all express the important early Christian conviction that Christians in any one place or region belonged to a people, the people of God, which constituted a new corporate presence. This self-consciousness became a significant feature of the remarkable confidence of the Christians in the first three centuries.[58]

Wright argues that the early church saw itself as a "third race," distinct from other earthly races, and thus it rejected the behavior of those races. Christians are a new race, not because they happen to choose a new way of life; rather, they have a new spiritual genetic heritage that produces a distinct conduct.

1 Peter 2:12 also reveals another important aspect of a believer's conduct—it has potential evangelistic impact upon unbelievers: "They may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." Peter reiterates this emphasis in 1 Peter 3:1-2: "Likewise,

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[57]Frederic R. Howe, "The Christian Life in Peter's Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157, no. 627 (July 2000): 306–7.

[58]David F. Wright, "A Race Apart? Jews, Gentiles, Christians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160, no. 368 (April 2003): 128.

wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct [ἀναστροφῆς] of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct [ἀναστροφὴν].” Also important to note is that Peter describes this “pure conduct” in terms of particular ways of adorning themselves in jewelry and dress, i.e., “cultural” products (vv 3–6). Finally, Peter further describes the importance of a believer’s way of life for its significance in evangelism in 1 Peter 3:15–16:

> But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior [ἀναστροφήν] in Christ may be put to shame.

A New Testament Understanding of Culture

This study reveals that the NT terms most closely resembling both cultural anthropologists’ and missional authors’ definitions of “culture” are those related to behavior. While both the terms related to ethnic identity and those related to “the world” demonstrate relationship to the contemporary notion of culture, they do not identify culture itself. Ethnic groups unite around common culture, and the sinful world-system affects unbelieving culture, but these terms are not the same as culture. Rather, behavior-related terms like ἀναστροφή—which describe complete ways of life, conduct, and behavior—most closely identify “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor)[59] or “the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another” (Newbigin).[60]

If there is any concept of the anthropological/missional idea of “culture” in the NT, it is the idea of “way of life.” A people’s culture is their behavior and their conduct. Several important implications may be drawn from this analysis. First, NT authors explain cultural differences between various people groups as differences of belief and value. They highlight differences of belief and religion that produce the behavior and conduct of a people. This is important because it contradicts the idea of cultural neutrality. Since values and beliefs are not neutral (i.e., they are either good or evil), the culture produced from values and beliefs is likewise not neutral. Furthermore, this also contradicts the notion that religion is a component of culture. Rather, culture is a component of religion. So while “behavior”-related terms resemble anthropological/missional definitions of culture, the use of such terms in the NT should reorient the missional understanding of culture such that it is seen as flowing from religious values and worldview. Thus every culture and particular cultural expression must be evaluated based upon what religious values it embodies.

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[59]Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1.

[60]Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984*, 5.

Second, NT authors identify people groups (ethnicities, tribes, nations, etc.) as those of common ancestral heritage who share common culture flowing from common values. They do not think about "culture" as such; rather, they think about behavior, and they believe that the gospel changes behavior—it changes a person's culture. Since culture is a component of religion, where religion changes, so changes culture. This creates a reorientation of race for Christians; since a race is a group that shares common values and practices, Christians will find themselves increasingly alienated from the race into which they were born and drawn into a new race united around biblical values.

Third, NT authors demand that the culture of Christians be holy, pure, and distinct from the culture of unbelievers. Rather than understanding culture to be neutral, NT authors judge unbelieving culture as worthy of condemnation. They expect Christians, therefore, to reject the culture shaped by the world's systems and to form a new way of life impacted by biblical values. The culture produced from unbelief is not neutral; it is depraved. As Snoeberger notes, "Cultural neutrality is a myth and culture is hostile toward God; just as man is individually depraved in microcosm, so also culture is corporately depraved in macrocosm."[61]

Fourth, NT authors proclaim Christianity as a new and distinct people group that shares new values and thus new culture. Peter in particular identifies Christians as a "chosen race," a "holy nation," and a "people for [God's] own possession" distinct from other races, nations, and peoples. Howe summarizes the important relationship between terms related to ethnicity behavior in Peter's writing:

> The word ἀναστροφῆς, "way of life," is a key word in Petrine theology, for it occurs eight times in Peter's epistles (1 Pet. 1:15; 18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16; 2 Pet. 2:7; 3:11). The contrast of lifestyles of believers before and after they trusted Christ as their Redeemer is vividly displayed by seeing how the same word is used to describe their former way of life ("your futile way of life [ἀναστροφῆς]," 1:18) and their new life in Christ ("be holy yourselves also in all your behavior" [ἀναστροφῇ]," 1:15).
>
> This contrast serves as evidence that Peter sought to relate the theological significance of the death of Christ to the ethical dimension of the lives of those who trusted his finished work for their salvation.[62]

Fifth, NT authors insist that a clear distinction between the culture of believers and unbelievers will have evangelistic impact. Missional authors, however, argue that in order to reach the culture, believers must be incarnate in the culture, that is, they must resemble the culture around them. Unbelievers will be evangelized only as they recognize the presentation of the gospel in their own cultural language. The advocacy of contextualization by missional authors flows directly from their understanding of culture as something entirely involuntary and neutral. Evangelism cannot occur, they argue, without cultural contextualization. In contrast, NT authors insist that only when the culture of believers

[61]Snoeberger, "Noetic Sin, Neutrality, and Contextualization," 357.

[62]Howe, "The Christian Life in Peter's Theology," 194.

changes as a result of transformed values will unbelievers "glorify God on the day of visitation." Snoeberger explains this more biblical approach to evangelizing the culture: "The proper response of the Christian to culture is to expose its depravity, demonstrate that it has illicitly borrowed from the Christian worldview, and show that its adherents cannot live within the implications of their own worldview."[63]

Snoeberger's comments lead to one final conclusion that must be drawn as a result of synthesizing what the NT authors reveal about pagan and Christian culture: where similarities do exist between the behavior of unbelievers and the conduct of believers, such behavior by unbelievers is due to the fact that on that particular issue they are working with what Greg Bahnsen calls "borrowed capital"[64]—unbelievers borrowing biblical values in certain areas of their lives. Snoeberger explains:

> Some cultures borrow substantially from the Christian worldview (sometimes consciously and deliberately, but more often in subconscious response to the latent influence of common grace that envelopes all of God's creation) and others do not, and this factor is singularly vital in determining how a Christian is to relate to culture.[65]

This reality explains why the culture of Christians may at times resemble the culture of unbelievers in some respects. However, this understanding also sets the believer's initial response toward an unbelieving culture as one of suspicion until he can determine which aspects reveal a borrowing from biblical values. Furthermore, when certain aspects of an unbelieving culture and a biblical culture resemble one another, it is because the unbelievers look like Christians in those instances, not the other way around.

Christians in the twenty-first century will not be able to escape wrestling through matters of culture and contextualization as they seek to accomplish the mission God has for them. Yet rather than adopting the understanding of culture developed by secular anthropologists, Christians should be willing to reorient that viewpoint to fit within the biblical categories of behavior and conduct, applying all that the Scripture has to offer about those categories to cultural matters. Only then will they be equipped to appropriate a truly biblical perspective on culture and contextualization for world evangelism, worship, and the entirety of church ministry.

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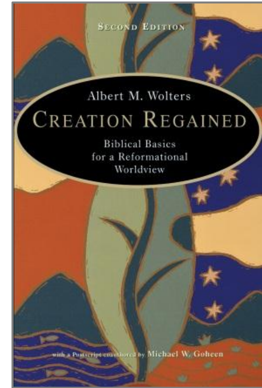
[63]Snoeberger, "Noetic Sin, Neutrality, and Contextualization," 357.

[64]"The unbeliever lives on borrow capital; that is, he knows the truth deep down and even secretly assumes it, but he has no right to believe it on his own presuppositions—he must borrow from the Christian worldview" (Greg L. Bahnsen, *Pushing the Antithesis: The Apologetic Methodology of Greg L. Bahnsen* [American Vision, 2007], 103).

[65]Mark A. Snoeberger, "D. A. Carson's Christ and Culture Revisited: A Reflection and a Response," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 13 (2008): 100.

Book Reviews

***Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, by Albert M. Wolters. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 143pp. $14.00.**



Post-Christendom approaches to culture generally fall into two broad categories that find their source in Reformation thinking—so-called "two kingdom" doctrine and what has come to be called the "transformationalist" view. Traditionally, the two kingdom view represents the thinking of German reformer Martin Luther, while transformationalists trace their lineage to French reformer John Calvin mediated through the teaching of Dutch-reformed theologian Abraham Kuyper. This is particularly true for the so-called Neo-Calvinists. Among such theologians is Albert M. Wolters, who seeks to articulate a "reformational worldview" in *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. Wolters is Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. He is a student of Henry Stob, former professor at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a bastion of Neo-Calvinism. *Creation Regained* was originally published in 1985, having been translated into eight different languages, and its second edition appeared in 2005.

Wolters very much reflects Kuyper in the aim of his book, which he says "is an attempt to spell out the content of a biblical worldview and its significance for our lives as we seek to be obedient to the Scripture" (1). This is not just any "biblical worldview," however; Wolters specifically calls it "reformational" and in particular ties his understanding to the Dutch reformed movement. Before he articulates exactly what this worldview is Wolters sets out to define the concept of worldview as "the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things" (2), exploring each of the elements of this definition in the first chapter. He argues that one's worldview "speaks centrally to *everything* in our life and world, including technology and economics and science" (8), again reflecting the teaching of Kuyper.

After defining worldview this way, Wolters asks the question, "What is distinctive about the reformational worldview?" (11ff). Essential to his "reformational worldview" is the idea that all of the scriptural concepts of salvation apply not just to individuals, but to the entire creation:

> The reformational worldview takes all the key terms in this ecumenical Trinitarian confession in a universal, all-encompassing sense. The terms "reconciled," "created," "fallen," "world," "renews," and "Kingdom of God" are held to be cosmic in scope. In principle, nothing apart from God himself falls outside the range of these foundational realities of biblical religion. (11)

He repudiates what he calls the "dualistic worldview," which distinguishes between "sacred" and "secular." Instead, Wolters's primary thesis is that "the redemption in Jesus

Christ means the *restoration* of an original good creation" in its entirety (12). Thus, Wolters is clearly setting out to defend a transformationalist approach to culture as opposed to the two kingdom doctrine.

In his next three chapters, Wolters explores the transformationalist motif of creation (Chapter 2), fall (Chapter 3), and redemption (Chapter 4), developed first by Herman Dooyeweerd, a disciple of Kuyper. Creation, Wolters argues, is "the correlation of the sovereign activity of the Creator and the created order" (14), and thus it is intrinsically good. This truism extends beyond simply what God has directly created to "the structures of society, to the world of art, to business and commerce. Human civilization is *normed* throughout. . . . There is nothing in human life that does not belong to the created order" (25). In fact, the original creation was essentially empty, and "people must now carry on the work of development: by being fruitful they must fill it even more; by subduing it they must form it even more. Mankind, as God's representatives on earth, carry on where God left off" (41). This objective is known as the "creation mandate." Wolters argues that the history of mankind has been a progressive "unfolding" of God's desire for the universe (44ff). He asserts that despite sin, man's cultural production will climax one day in "a new heaven and a new earth" that will maintain an "essential continuity with our experience now" (48). Thus Wolters reasons for an essential goodness of creation, including later human cultural developments.

Although creation itself—and by extension culture—is inherently good, mankind's fall into sin did have certain consequences, what Wolters describes as "catastrophic significance for creation as a whole" (53). Sin created the possibility of perversion of God's creation. However, he is quick to insist that "sin neither abolishes nor becomes identified with creation." Rather, it "introduces an entirely new dimension to the created order" (57). In order to explain the relationship between the intrinsically good creation and the effects of sin, Wolters introduces the ideas of "structure" and "direction." Structure "refers to the order of creation," the natural creation of God (59). Direction is a relationship toward or away from God. "Anything in creation," according to Wolters," "can be directed either toward or away from God—that is, directed either in obedience or disobedience to his law" (59). The structure of creation itself presents limits as to how warped it can be turned, which is what Wolters describes as "common grace" (60).

This framework allows him to discuss elements in culture that in themselves are rooted in the created order (structure) but nevertheless have been used in ways contrary to God's will (direction). Creation, Wolters insists, was made good, but since the fall mankind has directed various elements of creation away from God. God's desire is to redeem these elements and redirect them. He argues that "dualists" often reject the structure instead of simply dealing with its direction.

The "reformational worldview," according to Wolters, seeks to redeem elements whose structures are rooted in the created order and thus good, but whose direction has been warped by fallen mankind. "The original good creation is to be restored" (71). This, according to Wolters, extends to all realms of human development including marriage, emotions, sexuality, politics, art, and business. This is God's plan, according to Wolters, and it is also the mission of all Christians: "The obvious implication is that the new humanity (God's people) is called to promote renewal in every department of creation" (73).

In his final chapter, Wolters explores how this approach will affect Christian living. He makes clear that redemption implies fundamental transformation or "inner revitaliza-

tion" (89), and that this involves every area of life. Here he specifically applies Kuyper's principle of "sphere sovereignty," in which this renewal occurs within its original context. This means that in order to redeem all of creation, Christians must be active in all spheres so that true transformation can take place, and in the rest of the chapter he explores several specific test cases including aggression, spiritual gifts, sexuality, and dance.

Wolters's perspective has an overall ring of truth to it, but he nevertheless fails to recognize several key distinctions in his argumentation. First, Wolters fails to distinguish between God's creation and man's creation. He often conflates the two categories, equating the intrinsic goodness of God's handiwork with that which mankind produces. He is correct that everything God creates is intrinsically good and that even the act of human creation is a good thing. However, to insist that the product of man's hand is therefore also always intrinsically good is to slide dangerously close to Pelagianism.

Second, Wolters fails to distinguish between what might be called elements and their forms. He may be correct in that the basic elements of human civilization are good, but the forms they take may be intrinsically evil. His structure/direction categories are actually very useful and have the potential of helping to distinguish between elements (structure) and forms (direction), but he often fails to do so by miscategorizing forms as elements. He lists several different "structures" that Christians may face, but some of what he lists is actually the form (the direction) of a more basic element (structure). For example, he lists technology as a structure, but technology is actually already a direction itself; it is a form of the more basic element of communication. The same is true for dance. In short, Wolters's structure/direction categories are a good starting point, but the situation is actually often more complex.

Finally, Wolters's descriptions of the two kingdom perspective are often quite caricatured, not to mention the fact that he calls his position "*the* reformational worldview" even though the two kingdom doctrine could rightly be called reformational as well. Wolters is not unique in this hyperbole, however, considering that Kuyper himself called this worldview true "Calvinism," even though many Calvinists insist that Calvin articulated more of a two kingdom perspective himself.[1]

Nevertheless, *Creation Regained* does provide a clear and engaging portrait of the Neo-Calvinistic transformationalist approach to culture.

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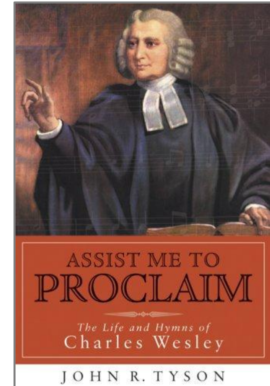
[1]For example, David VanDrunen argues that Calvin essentially agreed with Luther on the two kingdoms and natural law, contrary to the Neo-Calvinists who insist that their transformationalism comes from him: "Though John Calvin is not often associated with the two kingdoms doctrine, he affirmed it from the beginning to the end of his theological career and put it to work when addressing various topics, perhaps most notably Christian liberty and the respective authority of church and state" (David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought*, Emory University Studies in Law and Religion [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 69). In fact, VanDrunen argues that H. Richard Niebuhr miscategorized Calvin as a transformationalist in his influential taxonomy in *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

***Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley*, by John R. Tyson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 356 pp. $17.50.**



John R. Tyson is currently Visiting Professor of Church History and director of United Methodist Studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. He graduated from Grove City College with the Bachelor of Arts and from Asbury Theological Seminary with the Master of Divinity degree. Tyson earned the Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Drew University. He has written and spoken extensively on the life and works of John and Charles Wesley. Dr. Tyson is an Elder and full member of the Upper New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Tyson's *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* is the most recent biography on the younger Wesley brother and co-founder of the Methodist movement. Tyson's biographical work of Charles Wesley posits that Wesley's reaction to the world around him was to compose poetry for sanctification and praise: "Wesley's hymns were born of his Christian understanding of life. They were the expression of his poetical muse and his remarkable ability to see all of life as an area of God's activity and an opportunity to respond in faith and praise" (viii).

The author traces themes throughout Wesley's life, relating Wesley's circumstances, growth, and poetic responses. These episodes are not necessarily chronological and often overlap in time. The opening three chapters are the most chronological and inclusive of all events, describing Wesley's rearing, his schooling, home life, relationships, and religion. These chapters are of primary importance because they lay the foundation via education, relationships, and religion, for how Tyson will frame Wesley's poetic reaction to the world around him. Chapter one closes as Charles earns his Bachelor of Arts degree and master's degree from Oxford. Following the first chapter, Tyson launches into the varying facets of Wesley's life, beginning with his ordination and trip to America. After returning from America and following a great deal of spiritual and physical struggle, Wesley places true faith in God, and he is converted. In chapter four, Tyson highlights major themes in Wesley's life, including his traveling evangelism, preaching, and teaching ministry. In these chapters that illuminate the ongoing life of Wesley, Tyson describes the many circumstances that are common to most of humanity: sweetness of love, joys of parenthood, sting of controversy, straining of friendships, loyalty to a cause, and art of self-expression.

Tyson's consistent course of action in his work focuses upon how the events in Wesley's life moved him to write poetic verse that would be sung. A corresponding theme that recurs is the fact that most of these life experiences are common and easily related to many followers of Christ. Early in the work, Tyson tells of Wesley's struggles in rugged colonial Georgia ministering to parishioners and how those experiences produced early hymns: "Charles was beginning to see his ministry in Frederica as part of the refining process involved in Christian Discipleship . . . Charles also began writing poetry during these trying months in Frederica" (33). Tyson highlights the personal strain of Wesley's trip to America and postulates that this experience was a catalyst for hymn development. One of the milestones of Wesley's life is his conversion in 1738; the author relates the hymn composition that corresponds to this event:

> This act of faith and self-commitment took expression in what would become a familiar devotional act for Charles—the writing of a hymn. “At nine,” he wrote, “I began an hymn upon my conversion but was persuaded to break off, for fear of pride. Mr. Bray coming, encouraged me to proceed in spite of Satan. I prayed Christ to stand by me, and finished the hymn.” (48)

The author continues to explain and list hymns that find their genesis in Wesley’s contemplation on his own conversion, personal Bible study, and devotional time. These life experiences enriched Wesley’s own poetic composition and relate to those Christian readers for which the author writes (57). Tyson moves forward with his examination of Wesley’s life by noting the Christian friendships he had and the hymns that were produced as a result of them. Tyson states that “friendship was a fundamental aspect of Charles Wesley’s life and personality. . . . Over the course of more than a decade Charles Wesley wrote fifty-five ‘Hymns for Christian Friends’” (117). Further noting Wesley’s spiritual reaction through poetry to his life experiences, the author reflects on Charles meeting and courting Sally Gwynne and the hymns that flowed from this joyous time in the life of the Methodist leader.

Tyson progresses to assert his view that most of Wesley’s hymns were birthed from common Christian experience when he details Charles as husband and father. Tyson notes, “On September 4, 1749, Charles wrote to his friend Ebenezer Blackwell and quoted part of his first family hymn. It evidences Wesley’s desire to merge the private and professional aspects of his life into a whole fabric of Christian service” (199). Wesley also wrote hymns for birthdays and anniversaries of family and friends. Tyson chronicles the expanse of Wesley’s experiences and emotions as he catalogues the impetus behind such a great body of hymns. He gives an example of the weary Wesley who was weighed down with the threat of separation from the Church of England, stating that “Charles Wesley’s fullest report of the impact of the 1780 conference is encapsulated in a poem. . . . The poem is dipped deep in sadness and disappointment. Its singer is weary of contending against impossible odds, he is tired of being a ‘prophet of ills’” (284). Tyson highlights the experiential struggles of Wesley here; though turbulent and difficult, these types of struggles are common to readers and promote empathy. Tyson uses these instances and a host of others to assert that the themes of Wesley’s life were causes that gave rise to the immense repertoire of poetic texts that he penned.

Tyson’s work is an interesting addition to the body of literature on the subject of Charles Wesley. It is of particular value because of the nature of its composition; it almost functions as an interlinear volume with frequent interjections of hymn texts as the author recounts the major life events of Wesley that surround their composition. Tyson’s writing style is straightforward without the use of technical jargon or extremely scrupulous intricacies of detail. As a result of the format that Tyson uses, layering chapters of episodes of Wesley’s life that often overlapped or were chronologically concurrent, ascertaining the full context of each time period in Wesley’s life proved difficult at times. This work is primarily profitable to readers who are interested in Methodist or Wesleyan studies, students of hymnology, pastors, and lovers of Christian biographies. The work provides many questions for further research in the development of Wesleyan hymns and hymn collections.

Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley does provide a thorough background on the life of hymn writer and Methodist leader Charles Wesley and the experiential context in which his poetry was composed.

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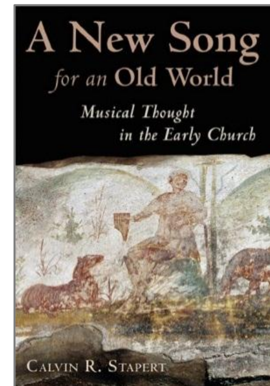
***A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church*, by Calvin R. Stapert. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 232 pp. $18.00.**



In his book *A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church*, Calvin R. Stapert, who taught for many years at Calving College in Grand Rapids, sets out to bring to the fore early Christian understanding regarding music (4). Stapert's contention is that since the time of the enlightenment, the church has deviated from the traditional views of the early church fathers and other pre-enlightenment Christian figures (5–6). He calls Christians of the post-modern era to hearken once again to the voices of those who have gone before, particularly to those of the patristic period, in order to "enrich, broaden, and correct our thinking" (4).

Stapert's book consists primarily of examples and excerpts from the writings of early church fathers along with his own commentary highlighting or expounding upon their ideas. After setting the stage for the remainder of the book in the first chapter by stating his purpose and outlining how he plans to develop that purpose, he turns the reader's attention in chapter two to what the New Testament reveals regarding the church's song in the first century (1–28). In subsequent chapters, Stapert examines the thoughts of the periods that followed the New Testament era all the way through the fourth century, ending with the writings of St. Augustine (29–193). In his final chapter titled "Postlude: What Can the Early Church Teach Us about Music?" Stapert draws inferences regarding what the early church fathers have to say to modern Christians in the area of music and worship, thus providing the reader with some concluding thoughts to ponder (194–209). As an added resource, the author includes in the appendix examples of some of the hymns of the early church (210–16).

At the beginning of his book and at various points throughout, Stapert refers to the "new song," which "referred to Christ, the Word of God, or to the Christian life" (2). The "new song" is that which is sung by the church as "a joyful response to the works of God, stimulated by the Word and the Spirit. It is sung by humans to God and to each other, with the saints and angels and all creation" (28). He contrasts the "new song" with the song of the world throughout the book by showing how the church fathers differentiated between the song of the church and the song of pagan society. Although differences of opinion existed among early church leaders regarding the degree of separation from the world Christians should have, Stapert quotes early writings, showing indications of the development of an overall "patristic polemic against pagan music" (41). This polemic, claims Stapert, came to a "peak in the fourth century" with St. Augustine (41, 181).

Clement of Alexandria is the first of the church fathers which the author turns to for insight regarding music (42). Stapert points out that Clement affirmed music that is "sober, pure, decorous, modest, temperate, grave and soothing over against music he describes as licentious, voluptuous, frenzied, frantic, inebriating, titillating, scurrilous, turbulent, immodest, and meretricious" (54). Clement used the latter style of music to describe the pagan music of his day. The author explains how Clement, the other church fathers, and many of the ancients all believed music was "involved in shaping a person" (55). In Clement's thinking, music could not be separated from its occasion; Stapert contends that "Christians make music because they are thankful" (57). He continues, "But if music fulfilled its primary function of being a part of a thankful, sober revelry, it would also contribute toward shaping sober and joyous character" (58).

Following this, Stapert draws attention to Clement's contemporary Tertullian. The author highlights Tertullian's vehemence against the "public spectacles" and consequently the pagan music connected with them (70). Commenting on Tertullian's stance on pagan rituals and music, Stapert notes, "The music that accompanied them belonged to them and could not be torn from them and placed in a different context" (71). Stapert shows how Clement and Tertullian, though very different in many ways, shared remarkably similar opinions in their abhorrence of pagan music and their love of psalmody and hymnody (74–75).

Moving into the time frame of St. Ambrose of Milan and St. John Chrysostom, Stapert sets out to show the commonality between the views regarding music of these two church fathers and those who preceded them (92–130). St. Ambrose, the author points out, was probably the only church father who "was not squeamish about bringing popular dance music off the street and using it to enliven the stodgy chant that dominated church services" (92). However, Stapert notes that Ambrose, in harmony with the other church fathers, "railed against the pagan music of his day and lavished unstinting praise on the psalmody of the church" (101). The author concludes from Ambrose's writings that "the 'new song' sung by the redeemed creation could not be part of the sensual, frenzied music of an old world" (108). In his handling of Chrysostom's writings, he points to the church father's disdain for the music which was a part of the pagan ceremonies and theatres of his day. Chrysostom was addressing the problem of Christians participating in these pagan activities, activities that were incongruous with their identity as followers of Christ (122–23).

The music condemned by the early church fathers, says Stapert, was, "the music of the popular public spectacles, the music associated with voluptuous banqueting, the music associated with pagan weddings, and the music of pagan religious rites and festivities" (145). He also points out that "the early Christian writers aimed no polemic at the nobler art music or the folk music of their day" (145). The music they collectively affirmed was that of hymnody and psalmody (149). In the chapter devoted to St. Augustine, Stapert shows how Augustine, along with the earlier church fathers, affirmed psalmody and hymnody but also cautioned against delighting in these forms of music more than God himself (180-93). Summarizing Augustine's words, Stapert writes, "Delight in eloquence and music should never be an end in itself" (193). Rather the music of psalmody and hymnody should serve to increase one's love toward God (193).

In the final chapter, Stapert offers some suggestions about the bearing which the writings of the early church fathers regarding music have upon the church today. He urges his readers to make use of the "whole Psalter" and "the best of their hymns" (194). He also

recommends "making psalms and hymns a part of our daily life" (194). Stapert says Christians should be ready and willing to condemn the music of their society just as the early church fathers condemned the music of their Roman society (196). "The early Christians can inspire and encourage us by their courageous and unwavering posture against the corrupt and very popular culture of their day," writes Stapert (200). However, the author points out, the early Christians cannot show present-day Christians where the line should now be drawn between the church and popular culture. This is left for the reader to decide by the guidance of the Holy Spirit (200). Finally, Stapert cautions the reader to be careful not to sing the tune of the "old song" of this world but rather to sing the "new song" of heaven (208–9).

By gathering together the writings regarding music of the early church fathers Stapert effectively demonstrates the need for present-day Christians to examine whether or not they are compromising by participating and adopting the unbiblical practices of pagan or secular society. Against the argument that churches must "adopt the music of the ambient culture" in order to reach the world, Stapert points out that the early church fathers "never sacrificed their essential countercultural stance in order to entice people into the faith" (199). This point is well made and in need of hearing by those in the church who are attempting to attract converts to Christianity by using the things of the world to "entice" them.

Elsewhere Stapert says, "I believe that there would be a marked difference in the church's music if Christians truly recognized to whom and with whom they are singing" (202). Much of what is called "worship" today lacks the essential reverence and awe for God clearly portrayed through the writings of the early church fathers. He urges the reader to remember the One who is the primary audience of church music (202).

Stapert rightly points out the truth that similarities exist between the Roman culture in the time of the church fathers and the culture of the present. What he does not adequately recognize and address in the book are the differences that exist between the pagan cultural practices of the first few centuries and the popular cultural practices of today. For example, in chapter nine titled "Rejection: The Music of a Pagan World," the author gives specific examples of pagan religious rituals and other events in which music was utilized (131–48). One example given of music's improper use was for the purposes of child sacrifice (133). Another example involved the worship of pagan gods (136). These uses of music were clearly wicked—there can be no mistaking—and the early church fathers were right in condemning music associated with these practices. Though similar in some ways, issues surrounding music in present-day culture are arguably more complex and intricate than the issues that surrounded music in the time of the early church.

A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church is an interesting volume and offers understandable, valuable insight into what the early church fathers thought about music. Every Christian stands to benefit as a result of reading this book, and most especially those who are involved church music ministry. Stapert poses important points to consider as the church presses onward in today's ever-changing world.

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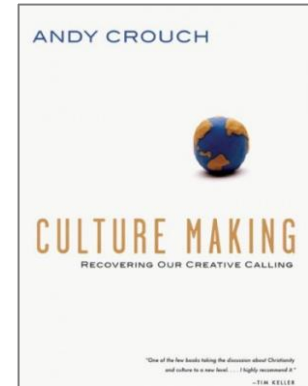
***Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, by Andy Crouch. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008. 284 pp. $26.00.**



Andy Crouch is an influential evangelical, as his résumé plainly reveals: long-time InterVarsity campus minister at Harvard, former editor of *re:generation quarterly*, editorial director of the Christian Vision Project at Christianity Today International, board member for Fuller Seminary and for *Books & Culture*. Crouch's book *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* may be the most important part of that résumé, because Crouch has written an important book deserving a careful reading.

Toward the end of the book, Crouch points out that "changing the world" is a peculiarly turn-of-the-21st-century phrase; multiple recent book titles contain it. Christians in particular have become fascinated with the idea that they can "engage the culture," transforming it for the better. Crouch is skeptical of that fascination. His book is not merely a pep talk for Christians engaging the culture. Crouch is far more balanced because he is far more scriptural. If he is on a bandwagon, he is at least playing a well-tuned instrument and standing squarely over the center of gravity.

The heart of the book comes in a taxonomy of ways one can approach any given cultural artifact, from highways to ham radios. Crouch distinguishes between "gestures and postures": one cannot keep the same posture toward all offerings of culture, he says. One cannot condemn everything or consume everything. Crouch suggests instead that we should view his characteristic responses to culture as gestures, something you do depending on the occasion. He starts by describing four such gestures:

- Condemning culture
- Critiquing culture
- Copying culture
- Consuming culture

One or another Christian group has made each of these a consistent posture, Crouch says, and that concerns him. Some Christians characteristically *condemn* culture and withdraw from it. Heady evangelicals—Francis Schaeffer is Crouch's primary example—*critique* it. The Jesus Movement and CCM *copy* culture. And most modern evangelicals simply *consume* it. Crouch argues, however, that none of these gestures should become postures. Some cultural goods should be flatly condemned, others carefully critiqued, others copied, many just consumed. It was here that I read an extremely powerful passage I have thought of often:

> Most evangelicals today no longer forbid going to the movies, nor do we engage in earnest Francis Schaeffer-style critiques of the films we see—we simply go to the movies and, in the immortal word of Keanu Reeves, say, "Whoa." We walk out of the movie theater amused, titillated, distracted or thrilled, just like our fellow consumers who do not share our faith. If anything, when I am among evangelical Christians I

> find that they seem to be more avidly consuming the latest offerings of commercial culture, whether Pirates of the Caribbean or The Simpsons or The Sopranos, than many of my non-Christian neighbors. They are content to be just like their fellow Americans, or perhaps, driven by a lingering sense of shame at their uncool forebears, just slightly more like their fellow Americans than anyone else. (89)

Picking up the argument again: we can't stop with these four gestures, and here Crouch gets to his major contribution by adding two more C's. Christians should have the ongoing *postures* of:

- Creating culture
- Cultivating culture

We should care for, preserve, and develop what is good in the cultural traditions we have received (97). Within the space created for us by previous generations, we should add to those traditions by creating new cultural goods. This, Crouch argues, is something God designed us to do from the beginning.

Crouch spends part two of his book telling the story of God's world from that beginning to its intended end—and you may be surprised to find what the Bible says about the culture(s) of eternity. Part three provides practical warnings (a great deal of them) and suggestions for working with God to carry out the culture-making commands of Scripture.

I have a few complaints about Crouch's work: he wastes three pages needlessly dismissing a straightforward reading of Genesis 1–2 which he elsewhere relies upon, and he makes a few minor overstatements. But I do not think these errors affect the substance of his argument.

This is not a book full of vague platitudes about "engaging the culture" or "redeeming" it. It is a careful scriptural study. Crouch is not a theonomist; he does not ever recommend the violent takeover of public institutions. His ambitions seem a good bit more realistic.

In the period since I read Crouch's work, I have found that "creating" and "cultivating" culture are important ideas with real biblical weight behind them. If you want to take your liberal arts education seriously and Christianly, read this book.

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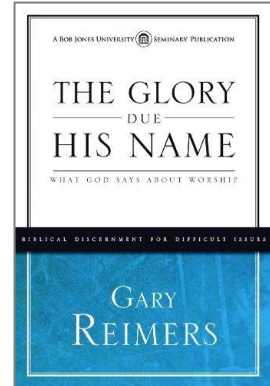
***The Glory Due His Name: What God Says About Worship*, by Gary Reimers. Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2009. 100 pp. $9.95.**



The Glory Due His Name by Gary Reimers is a welcome addition to the Bob Jones University Seminary "Biblical Discernment for Difficult Issues" series. Gary Reimers is the senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Greenville, SC and Professor of Theology at Bob Jones University Seminary. Reimers teaches worship theology to both undergraduate ministerial students and in the seminary, speaks on the subject in pastors' meetings around the country, and made the subject the focus of personal study for many years, well-equipping him to write on this important topic.

Running throughout this short volume is the overarching theme that worship is about God, for God, and determined by God. This refreshingly God-centered, Scripture-rooted emphasis is a much-needed one in worship discussions. Reimers begins by looking to Scripture to determine "true worship's essence and elements" (4ff). He starts by describing what he considers "the essence of right worship," in which he seeks to "present the key principles that form the heart of true worship" (5).

His first principle is that "right worship must focus on the right person," a principle he develops from Psalm 135:1–6. He concludes, "Worship is an event where God should be the center of attention and the guest of honor. To accomplish the goal, churches should be designing their worship services with the focus on him" (5).

His second principle is that "right worship must accomplish the right purpose," and this purpose, according to Psalm 96:7–8, "is the process of declaring, by whatever means God ordains, that the Lord is full of glory" (7–8). Reimers bemoans the fact that, for many people, worship is about what they can "get out of the service." Instead, Reimers argues that we should be asking, "Did *God* get anything out of your worship today?" (9, emphasis original). He explains that "churches may actually be contributing" to the thinking that worship is all about us by how they set up their services, stages, and terminology (9). Instead, churches should do whatever they can to demonstrate that God is the primary "audience" of worship (10).

Reimers' third principle, developed from John 4:23–24, is that "right worship must conform to the right pattern" (10). The "right pattern" in Reimers's view is "worship in spirit and truth" (12). "Spirit" indicates that "worship must occur with [an individual worshiper's] inner spirit" (12). "Truth" indicates that we must allow God's Word to regulate our worship (Ibid.). Reimers does not use the phrase, "regulative principle of worship" at this juncture, but the idea that our worship must be governed by Scripture characterizes most of what he writes throughout the book.[2]

Reimers then moves to a discussion of "the elements of right worship" (14ff). While he seems to have some familiarity with the regulative principle of worship, Reimers does not use the term "elements" in the traditional RPW way. Instead, what he sees as "five dis-

[2]"The so-called 'regulative principle' of worship, the concept that worship must follow the guidelines that God has established, is inherently biblical" (98).

tant elements that constitute true worship" are really five categories within which worship elements may be placed.

Reimers's first element is preparation. He helpfully encourages families to plan and prepare for worship prior to Sunday morning, and encourages pastors to give their people opportunity to prepare before the actual worship service begins (15–21).

His second element is praise (21ff). Within this category Reimers primarily places the music elements of the worship service. He encourages believers to sing with understanding and inward joy and thankfulness. He notes the acceptability of music prepared by skilled musicians, but insists that "the biblical emphasis, however, focuses primarily on congregational singing as the heart of this element of worship" (23).

His third element is prayer (27ff). He uses the Lord's Prayer and other passages as models for how we should pray in worship and encourages a deliberate corporate orientation for prayers in a worship service.

His fourth element is what Reimers calls "presentation" (36ff). Here he is writing specifically about giving an offering. He argues that Old Testament tithing presents a pattern for New Testament practice, distinguishes "offerings" from "tithes" as an unspecified amount given with regularity, and suggests that the biblically mandated element of an offering must be present in every worship service.

Reimers's final element is preaching (43ff). He presents helpful arguments to demonstrate that whenever the Word is preached, truth must be presented, and opportunity for response (from every Christian) must be provided.

The title of Reimers's second chapter (52ff) may perhaps be a bit misleading. "Multi-Generational Impact: Worship Style and Your Family" at first glance gives the impression that the chapter will be discussing family worship. On the contrary, however, this chapter warns about the far-reaching negative impacts of worshiping in an unbiblical manner, even upon one's children and grandchildren. The discussion centers primarily on the Second Commandment (Exod 20:4–5), a commandment that targets specifically worshiping the true God in the wrong way (53). Drawing from the two corollaries to this commandment at the end of verse 5, Reimers shows how God has promised to punish those who worship him wrongly "unto the third and fourth generation," and he has promised to bless them that worship him as he desires. He spends a considerable amount of time defending the view that God indeed does punish the children and grandchildren of those who worship wrongly, a topic that was the subject of his doctoral dissertation.[3] He uses several biblical examples to illustrate each of these promises, and insists that this one warning should cause us to think very carefully about how we worship.

In chapter three (70ff), Reimers discusses the "Dangers of Deviant Worship." Looking to scriptural examples again, Reimers demonstrates that God hates "Worship Based on Imagination (Exod 32:4–6)" (71ff), "Worship Based on Innovation (Lev 10:1–3)" (74ff), "Worship Like the World (Deut 12:29–32)" (77ff), "Worship Marketed for Convenience (1 Kgs 12:26–31)" (81ff), "Ritual Worship (Gen 4:1–16)" (88ff), "Token Worship (1 Sam 15:1–23)" (90ff), "Reluctant Worship (Mal 1:6–14)" (93ff), and "Pretentious Worship (Matt 15:8–

[3]Gary R. Reimers, "The Significance of the Visitation of the Sins of Fathers on Children for the Doctrine of Imputation" (Ph.D. diss., Bob Jones University, 1984).

9)" (95ff). In each of these cases, Reimers provides helpful modern day examples and advice for how to avoid them.

Reimers concludes with a summary chapter (98ff) in which he challenges the reader that "nothing is more important than worship, either now or in eternity."

In *The Glory Due His Name*, Gary Reimers provides a brief, readable, informative guide for biblical worship that would be helpful for a pastor, student, or Christian layperson. I have minor quibbles with a few statements throughout, such as Reimers's claim that "there is no biblical precedent" for reciting pre-written prayers (28). He argues that prayer in Scripture is "the product of the moment" (29), while singing pre-written texts is somehow more appropriate. Reimers seems to ignore the fact that the distinction between prayer and singing made today was not held so strictly in ancient times. However, neither this one point, nor other minor issues, weaken the strength of Reimers's overall argument concerning the need for God-centered worship.

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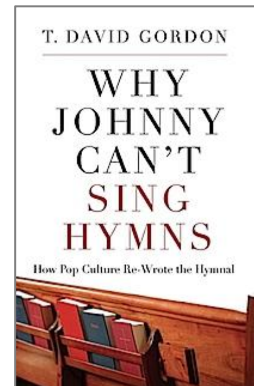
***Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal*, by T. David Gordon. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2010. 186pp. $12.99.**



T. David Gordon is Professor of Religion at Grove City College in Grove City, PA, where he has served in this capacity since 1999. He earned the Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree from Roanoke College and the Master of Arts and Master of Theology from Westminster Theological Seminary. At Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, VA, Gordon concentrated in Greek and New Testament studies and earned the Doctor of Philosophy in 1984. He pastored Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) Nashua, New Hampshire, from 1989 to 1998 while serving as Associate Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Gordon has published widely in the areas of the Pauline epistles and most recently worship practices. His first book, *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*, was published in 2009 by P&R, quickly followed by *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Re-wrote the Hymnal* in 2010 by the same company.

Gordon begins his recent work by making the case that music in the Holy Scripture is never used for entertainment but for the sole purpose of worship. He contrasts the scriptural view of music with that of modern culture, where music has inundated society for consumption, in restaurants, supermarkets, and media players. This constant consumption of music—and specifically music that has been produced within the last 60 years—has shaped the culture's perception of all that has come before this contemporary era. As a result of this jettisoning of the past, worship in a contemporary style has lost the texts and music (hymns) of the previous thousands of years of the Christian tradition.

Gordon continues his discussion of the culture's influence on the church's worship by engaging aesthetic relativism and the triviality of modern culture. He states that culture's relativity toward aesthetic standards goes against the character of God and the *Ima-*

go Dei placed within his human creation. Gordon argues that there are aesthetic standards that are found within the character of God, and just as God is unchanging, so are aesthetic standards. When addressing the trivial nature of the contemporary worldview, Gordon explains the views of current anthropologists who acknowledge that contemporary media is generally created to be disposable, and much of it is inconsequential. He then concludes that the lack of godly creativity and the constant bombardment of inconsequential media moves the church to think that her worship song is simply a matter of taste and consumption.

Gordon continues to argue that the "contemporaneity" of the culture has shifted the ideal of the church's song away from a complementary relationship between text and tune toward one that is more trivial and disunified. He also asserts that as a result of commercialism driving the culture's desires, there is no longer a distinction between that which is sacred and secular; therefore, the church's music has become mundane and less reflective of the deep nature of interaction between the human and divine. Gordon chose to conclude his work by arguing against the pragmatism of the contemporary worship movement; he addresses the notions of seeker sensitive services, seeking congregants "just as they are," and reaching younger people. Gordon concludes his analysis of culture's influence on congregational song by giving some comments to break the cycle of contemporary culture's influence on the church's worship.

Gordon's assertions can be summarized thusly: the commercially driven cultural norms that discard historical influence and uphold temporal immediacy have greatly influenced the contemporary nature of the modern church with its desire for novelty and flippancy, which leads to a disregard for the past and transcendence. He effectively communicates his assertions by systematizing the areas of greatest philosophical and practical influence that the culture has had upon the church. When engaging these matters, Gordon includes healthy insights and data from sociological authors whose research affirms the perils of the church's plight. In one particular category, he compares the discretion between contemporary song selection and hymn selection for congregational use; Gordon then gives a list of criteria for the selection of hymns for corporate worship. He explains that the result of his propositions for hymn selection will aid in healthy congregational worship of God, which identifies with the church's historical tradition and disciples the believer in his relationship with God.

This text would be profitable in a variety of scenarios. *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns* could be used as a textbook for a seminary class that considers current trends in church music and culture, as Gordon's interaction with modern philosophies is extremely pertinent in the conversation about congregational song. The text could also be used in a small group setting for a church discipleship class concerning worship in the church and is aided in this situation by discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Gordon does use a fair amount of jargon without explanation as well as an upper level vocabulary; the weightiest chapter is "Contemporaneity as a Value," which discusses philosophical influences on the contemporary worldview. The heavy content coupled with difficult vocabulary could be a deterrent to some readers. Gordon's wit and passion clearly outweigh the slight vocabulary difficulties and provide the reader with tools to investigate the topic at hand. Whether to a lay-person, seminarian, pastor, or musician, Gordon submits an impassioned call for the church to jettison the cultural mindset of "contemporaneity" and restore the glorious tradition handed down from the ancient church.

Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns is an eminent addition to the conversation about twenty-first century church music. Gordon, with the aid of others, engages the culture from a sociological perspective and analyzes its influence upon the worshiping church. His consultation of a host of current cultural scholars significantly bolsters his argument, and his healthy grasp and interjection of musical knowledge aids understanding. To improve this text, the author could have emphasized a greater sense of organic development between chapters and could have given greater care in explanation of vocabulary to appeal to a larger readership. Gordon's frequent use of parenthetical statements can become distracting and could be simply stated in subsequent editions for clarity and ease of reading. Nevertheless, this volume on the contemporary culture's influence on congregational song is a key tool in understanding one view on the current state of the church's worship and the mindset of the worshiper. It is a valuable book for pastor, seminarian, and church musician.

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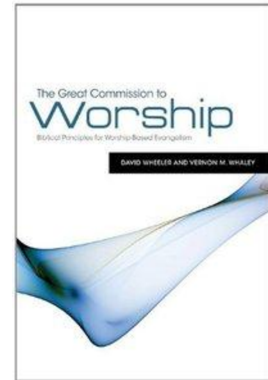
***The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism*, by David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011. 204 pp. $19.99.**



David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley, colleagues at Liberty University, combine their knowledge in the fields of evangelism and worship to pen a book that seeks to define the primary focus of the New Testament church. The first chapters of the book lay out the philosophical framework for the practical application that comes in the latter chapters. Those chapters seek to construct a model of worship that can be qualitatively evaluated.

The concept of Great Commission worship is that "many times in Scripture it appears that while God is always our object of worship, the concept of obtaining salvation (evangelism) appears to be the motivation" (11). From this supposition, the authors dispel common myths about evangelism and worship while giving scriptural support to better communicate how evangelism and worship are interwoven. The focus then shifts to becoming a Great Commission worshiper, which is "a person who is so much in love with Jesus, so committed to worship of Jesus, and so devoted to being obedient to every command of Jesus that he simply cannot restrain himself from telling others about his incredible relationship with the Son of God" (30). It is then necessary to construct a model for Great Commission worship influenced by our calling, experiences, education, and opportunities. The model should provide worship that is formational, transformational, relational, missional, and reproducible. Worship can then be further evaluated based on that model.

The desire of the authors is to inseparably pair worship and evangelism. "If the heartbeat of worship is obedience, then it is impossible to be a true worshiper without being directly involved in the command of evangelism as expressed in Acts 1:8" (13). Although discipleship is mentioned, emphasis is given to the insufficient link between worship and evangelism on the one hand, and discipleship on the other, as a primary purpose

of the Christian and the church. There is some confusion in the relationship of worship to evangelism that is prevalent throughout the book. Rather than letting John Piper speak for himself—"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man" (120)—the authors reinterpret his words because of a fear for misinterpretation. Worship, however, should be the foundation on which discipleship and evangelism are built; they are all objectives, but may be best understood when worship is the foundation.

The other confusion stems from the book's multiple thesis statements and multiple definitions of the same term. The introduction states the "aim of this book is to help God's people recapture their Great Commission calling to once again be like the early worshipers in Acts 17" (6), and they present a different thesis three pages later: "to address this most basic issue of interpretation in reference to worship and evangelism and how they impact our obedience to the Great Commission" (9). The authors define worship as "a lifestyle of walking in submission to God and walking with God" (vii), "an act of unbridled obedience even when rational explanations are hard to find" (12), to "Love God" (27), and "the natural response to God's revelation" (36). Although worship may be all of these things, it would be helpful to have a definition that encompasses all rather than different definitions for different situations. To communicate their principle effectively, the authors must be in agreement on the definition.

The book is relevant to Baptist life, particularly with the addition of the descriptor "Great Commission Baptists" to the Southern Baptist name in June, 2012. The authors describe hearing ministers "rationalize their disobedience to the Great Commission" (120) by placing worship as the ultimate goal of the church. This book is a reaction to that misapplication of biblical purpose rather than a call to correction. It uses copious Scripture proofs, which makes it easy to further research the truths derived from the Scripture passages. Each chapter includes questions for discussion and reflection. *The Great Commission to Worship* is a practical application book intended for use by ministers and their congregations.

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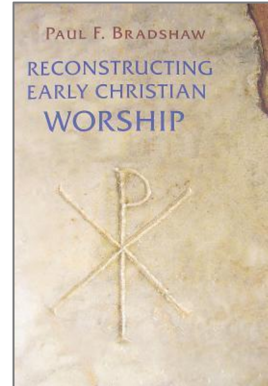
***Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, by Paul F. Bradshaw. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010. 151 pp. $19.95.**



Those who seek to look into the early Christian period's worship in detail would do well to consult Paul Bradshaw's book *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship.* Bradshaw, Professor of Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame and priest-vicar of Westminster Abbey, writes this book as an attempt to delve into various specific aspects of early Christian worship and challenge conventional understandings where he finds those understandings to be faulty (vii). While it is not a comprehensive look at all aspects of Christian worship, or even those aspects that would most interest evangelical Christians today, it does not claim to be such, and in the end it adequately accomplishes Bradshaw's stated goal.

The book is organized in three main sections dealing with the three aspects of worship Bradshaw has chosen to approach: Eucharist, Baptism, and Prayer. Each section is divided into three chapters that narrow Bradshaw's focus to specific aspects of each of those areas of worship.

In the Eucharist section, Bradshaw covers early Christian thought and practice regarding the relation between the Eucharist and the Last Supper, the way communion was received at that time, and early forms of the Eucharistic prayer. In several cases, he finds that Eucharistic practices in the earliest Christian centuries do not quite conform to conventionally held beliefs about the period (see, e.g., 38, 44, 52)

Discussing Baptism, Bradshaw focuses on catechumens and when they received the "gospel" in relation to their baptism, what a profession of faith would have been like and how it worked into the baptismal progression, and various types of anointing that took place in relation to baptism, whether it be pre- or post-baptismal anointing.

In the third section of the book, Prayer, Bradshaw deals with the development of daily prayer, the role of the psalms, and penitential prayer in the early Christian period. He frequently comes to conclusions differing with those of mainstream twentieth-century thought, finding, for example, that the "cathedral" tradition of the daily offices was not, in fact, the sole authentic expression of early Christian daily prayer, but was merely one of several divergent streams of tradition that later converged.

Since the book is a compilation of a number of various articles and works by the author at different times, it does not end with a unifying, summarizing conclusion but concludes at the moment the final chapter on penitential prayer ends.

The book is strong for its intended purpose, which is to delve deeply into very specific aspects of early Christian worship and, if the evidence requires it, overturn commonly held scholarly beliefs about the period. Bradshaw relies heavily on primary sources, something of a requirement for a work on this subject, but still impressive. He even, at times, finds opportunity to question mainstream opinions on some of the primary sources themselves, such as a source's authorship (47–50). Bradshaw's in-depth analysis and treatment of a variety of primary sources is a major strength of the book.

The author acknowledges the importance of studying early Christian worship, highlighted by his inclusion of modern applications at the end of each of his chapters, but he does not fall into the trap of assigning too much weight to such early practices. He makes

the excellent point that "early Christians were just as capable of theological and liturgical distortions as their modern counterparts" (37).

Bradshaw's arguments in the book are largely strong and well-thought out, though he does at times accuse other scholars of jumping to unwarranted conclusions or assumptions (42) while making one or two of his own (57).

As this reviewer first approached the book as if it were a general overview of the main aspects of early Christian worship, it was frequently tempting to accuse the book of focusing too much on specific peripheral issues and ignoring the bigger picture. However, that is not what the book is meant to do, and it handily meets its actual stated goals. Bradshaw appears to approach his subject from the perspective of a Catholic scholar who is delving into the finer points of contention that he might have with other such scholars, focusing on specific rites like penitential prayer or the anointing of those who were baptized.

Reconstructing Early Christian Worship is a great book for those who are studying the finer details of early Christian worship that Bradshaw addresses. Being so narrowly focused in scope and so scholarly in language, the book seems to be aimed toward the author's contemporaries and fellow Catholic scholars, adding new thought and analysis to the field. As such, the book is not very appropriate for, or accessible to, the average evangelical reader who is interested in aspects of early Christian worship that are related to points of contention today, such as whether people in that period baptized through immersion or pouring, or what types of songs they might have sung in their worship. As for its stated purpose, the book succeeds resoundingly, proving itself a valuable contribution to the field of research into early Christian worship.

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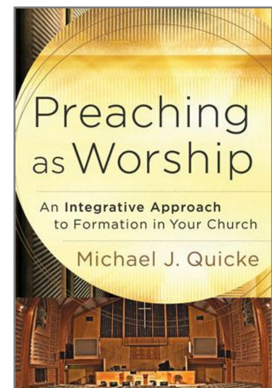
***Preaching as Worship: An Integrative Approach to Formation in Your Church*, by Michael J. Quicke. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011. 279 pp. $17.99.**



A common refrain among church musicians is the desire for their pastors to understand and employ many of the theological concepts regarding worship and music taught in seminaries and schools of music. One of the most important skills a church musician can learn is successful navigation of the often-challenging waters of the pastor-musician relationship. *Preaching as Worship: An Integrative Approach to Formation in Your Church* by Michael S. Quicke proves to be an important tool providing a common framework for such dialogue. Michael Quicke is the C. W. Koller Professor of Preaching and Communication at Northern Seminary near Chicago. He is also the author of *360-Degree Preaching* and *360-Degree Leadership*. He attributes many of the principles of biblical worship described in his book to the influence of Robert Webber, who taught at Northern Seminary from 2000 until his death in 2007. Any reader familiar with the work of Webber will see clear evidence of his influence upon Quicke's thought and writing.

Quicke divides *Preaching as Worship* into three sections, where he attempts to lead pastors from what he terms a myopic view of worship towards a rich picture informed by biblical principles, historical practices, and a balanced approach to the elements of corporate and private worship. His fundamental goal is to enable pastors to understand the place of preaching within the entire doxological life of the congregation. He provides helpful admonitions against pitting the sermon against other service elements, specifically music. Quicke's attitudes toward music, preaching, and the ordinances demonstrate considerable balance and thoughtfulness.

The author demonstrates his familiarity with notable worship theologians such as Harold Best, James Torrance, Don Saliers, and Marva Dawn. These influences become apparent in the fifth chapter titled, "Preaching in 360-Degree Worship." Adapting a model previously employed in his other books, the author diagrams the movement in worship on several levels. He emphasizes the Trinitarian relationship of love shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and demonstrates the influence of this dynamic upon corporate worship. The model continues by placing the role of proclamation within this self-perpetuating cycle of initiation, proclamation, and worship. "Preachers worship when they preach, hearers worship as they listen, and all participants worship as they respond. Worship is the primary dynamic in which preaching engages—the integrator of preaching within God's big picture" (89). His systematic approach enables preachers to understand the role of the sermon within the larger dynamic of revelation and response in corporate worship.

Theology plays a prominent role throughout the text, but not at the expense of praxis. Quicke attempts to provide a framework for practical application through the use of what he terms the "Question Toolbox." Found throughout the text, this series of six questions deals with the broader concepts of "gift, magnification, Scripture, audiences, community, and mission" (173). The author uses these questions to guide the development of a process of preaching that is theologically informed, shaped by a Trinitarian pattern, and doxologically rich. These practical applications are among the strongest contributions that this book will make to worship studies in general and homiletics in particular.

The author's task is ambitious and perhaps too large for a single volume. The same elements that make the book valuable—its grasp on biblical foundations and theological concepts—provide its greatest shortcomings. Quicke attempts to integrate and distill all of these concepts into one model for preaching. This effort fails on some level because of the inherent complexity in such a task. Specifically, his treatment of spiritual formation through proclamation perhaps would be best served in a separate work.

Preaching as Worship concludes with a description of a multi-phase process by which pastors and worship leaders can develop a pattern of worship and preaching that takes the shape of principles previously mentioned. Titled the "worship swim," Quicke describes this as the immersion "in the same spiritual reality of receiving and giving back within the grace and fellowship of God's three persons, growing together as his community" (180). This metaphor proves helpful in demonstrating how preaching should emerge from the congregation's ongoing engagement with Scripture and God's revelation through corporate worship. Pastors and musicians will find much benefit in working through the challenges of worship and sermon design by utilizing his "worship swim" methodology.

Michael Quicke largely succeeds in his task of developing a theology of preaching and worship based upon biblical principles. *Preaching as Worship* will prove to be a valuable resource for pastors and musicians alike. The text can serve as a source for joint study

and application and makes a significant contribution to the literature of preaching and worship studies.

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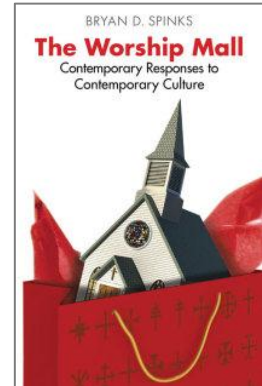
***The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture*, by Bryan D. Spinks. New York: Church Publishing, Inc., 2010. 242 pp. $28.00.**



Bryan D. Spinks is a priest in the Church of England and Goddard Professor of Liturgical Studies and Pastoral Theology at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and Yale Divinity School.

Spinks's goal is to present the reader with a panorama of the main trends in Christian worship in the so-called postmodern era. In the preface he acknowledges the fact that some of these forms try to be consciously postmodern, others are contemporary, and others are consciously countercultural. Both modern and postmodern cultures are linked with consumerism, electronic media, and globalization. It is because of this consumerism trait that current worship choices are compared to a shopping mall.

Other similitudes found with the commercial mall are that the mall, like the church, follows a calendar year (Halloween, Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, etc.), it is open on Sundays, and people visit not only to buy objects, but also form an identity.

In subsequent chapters the author provides definitions of the terms used in Christian lingo regarding worship such as blended, fusion, alternative, seeker, multisensory, high tech, emerging and liquid, among others. One of the new terms the reviewer found is "liquid worship." This refers to when the church is seen as a series of relationships and communications rather than a permanent gathering of people. In practice this occurs when there are worship stations in one building or location and people move from station to station. Other styles include "Celtic" worship, which the author wittily compares with contemporary medieval fairs because "they can be fun, people seem to enjoy them, and what is more, they also frequently make money" (181), rock band Eucharist services, jazz, hip-hop, and dancing liturgies. Samples of these worship formats are also included in the book.

As part of the "worship mall," Spinks includes some types of indigenous worship that he considers countercultural due to the influence of Western forms of worship around the globe. Among them is the worship practiced in the African Independent Churches (AIC) and the Korean Minjung and Kuh-ak worship. There are also two other forms practiced in North America: the Amish and the Appalachian snake-handling sects. Protestant mega churches and their style of worship, which consists mainly of contemporary Christian music, are also discussed. There is a section dedicated to the Praise and Worship movement, including a description of song collections like those from Hillsong and Darlene Zschech.

The author traces the development of worship as entertainment back to the nineteenth-century camp meetings, where the preaching of the Word was the most important element in the service, and singing was considered a preliminary activity. According to

Spinks, when these revivals moved to theaters, the church became theater-like. The concept of a spectacle rather than a worship service is seen in contemporary mega churches where many times they follow the TV talk show models. There is also a discussion in the book of the reforms in the liturgy of the Catholic Church.

Who plans the services is another concern for the author since in most non-traditional services there is normally a small group that designs the service and chooses the music. He also considers the limitations of implementing these models in other cultural settings, unlike the uniformity of liturgical forms in traditional denominations.

Since the discussion of these worship trends is framed in the postmodern era, Spinks poses the question as to whether these trends are really postmodern or if they are actually retro, since many of the proposed innovations were initiated in the modern era (the 1960s and 1970s), such as the use of audiovisuals, the use of props like scarves, banners, candles, balloons, and other arts. The author also asserts that the basic format of most "contemporary" services in evangelical churches follows the "third wave" movement of the 1980s. Perhaps the difference is that nowadays modern technologies, contemporary music originating in pop culture styles, advertising, and management techniques are the order of the day, but postmodern features are not necessarily seen in other parts of the service, like "modern" scriptural hermeneutics (critical rationality).

Another consideration when dealing with postmodern worship (contemporary or mega churches) is that large amounts of money are usually needed to have high tech worship services following the format of TV talk shows or rock concerts. The author poses the question of what happens when technology fails? Can meaningful worship take place only with this type of technology?

This book is reader-friendly, well documented, and practical for those who want to be informed of what is going on in worship practices in the United States and Great Britain. The comparison of the various brands and shops found in a typical mall in these two countries and the various worship offerings will be understood only by people who live in these cultural contexts.

Spinks's denominational background is evident when he discusses the planning of services and gives advantages to standardized liturgical forms that determine the order and format of services, as in the Anglican tradition.

A curious worship leader in an evangelical contemporary church will find revealing facts in this book about the origin of the services labeled as contemporary, blended, seeker, among others, and hopefully this will motivate him or her to consider the relevance and meaningfulness to their congregations of what takes place Sunday after Sunday.

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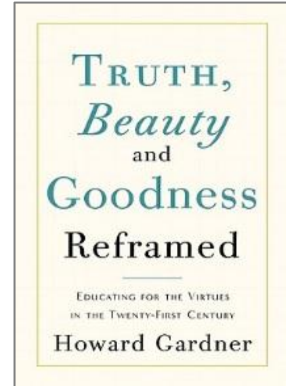
***Truth, Goodness, and Beauty Reframed: Educating for the Virtues in the Twenty-First Century*, by Howard Gardner. New York: Basic Books, 2011. 244 pp. $25.99.**



Howard Gardner is a developmental psychologist and professor at Harvard University. Gardner is best known for his work with multiple intelligences, but he steps aside from his magnum opus to consider the realms of truth, beauty, and goodness in light of a postmodern digital world. The journey to conceptualize this trio is essential, for "if we give up lives marked by truth, beauty, and goodness—or at least the perennial quest for them—to all intents and purposes, we resign ourselves to a world where nothing is of value, where anything goes" (7).

The first virtue Gardner examines is truth. Influencing his work on this virtue is his presupposition, "I do not believe that we can ever establish truth so reliable, that any statement, let alone any set of statements, can be ruled as inviolably true, for all time, and under all circumstances" (20). He states elsewhere, "The notion of a single truth, or a single standard of truth now seems hopelessly simpleminded" (34). Gardner examines how truth can be established in a postmodern digital age (35) and concludes, "The search for truth is fundamentally misplaced in the arts, but . . . the litmus test of authenticity, of feeling 'right,' may be appropriate" (36).

Gardner asserts that the virtue of beauty must be redefined because "our views of which experiences are beautiful, and why they are beautiful, have changed quite a lot" (41). Gardner casts his reconceptualization of beauty in the following three antecedent features, which are "symptomatic" of artistic beauty: "The object is interesting; its form is memorable; it invites further encounters" (49). The pursuit of beauty has become a personalized quest in which each person must determine the significance of these three features on an individual basis (55).

Gardner traces the conceptualization of goodness through historical communities of thought but shows a necessity to alter traditional conceptualizations because "the roles that are part and parcel of any complex society regularly produce quandaries that could not have been anticipated in earlier times" (82). In seeking to redefine goodness he juxtaposes morality and ethics, the former being a neighborhood concept and the latter a concept appropriate to complex societies (83). Good, as related through the concepts of ethics and morality, will continue evolving because of relativistic thought and the importance of digital media (105).

After examining each virtue individually, the focus of the book shifts to application of and instruction in these areas at different life stages. "As educators, we must help young people to discern the inadequacies of their earlier folk beliefs, and to construct better, more veridical accounts" (127). "Our goal in the arts should be the development, in each person, of a portfolio of personal preferences, and the reasons for them, and, as appropriate, a record of what seems beautiful, and why" (142). In his application of these virtues, Gardner explains that cognitive development does not end in late childhood as previously espoused but continues throughout much of adult life (158). The virtues will be viewed differently in each stage, but they cannot be of lessened importance at any stage in the current postmodern digital age.

Gardner's entire work must be called into question because it is written from a non-Christian worldview. He admits his bias, stating he is "not a religious person [himself]" (93). He adamantly rejects Scripture: "Human beings were not created on the sixth day" (22), "genocide with respect to 'the other' is a leitmotif of the Five Books of Moses" (81), and "I don't believe for a minute that pursuit of goodness is dependent on any particular religion" (94). It is, however, beneficial to acquaint oneself with his conceptions of the virtues, because they may be useful in understanding the secular society within which we live.

As a reader approaching this book from a Christian worldview, several additional cautions should be raised. The book itself contains a strongly objectionable reference to literature (102–3). Additionally, Gardner promotes evolution as the doctrine that governs the universe (22, 80). Most importantly, the reason these virtues can be redefined is his lack of adherence to their biblical definitions.

The greatest value in this book may be found in Gardner's application of these virtues to individuals in the latter chapters. Of particular benefit is the discussion of how digital media influences those in different stages within the context of the virtues (144–46). Also, Gardner explains, "Our era has ushered in a playing field that puts younger and older persons in an admirably complementary position" (184). These observations are not grounded in, and thereby not shaped through, his own worldview and thereby are worthy of reflection.

This work is directed toward the professional educator but is useful for the church educator and aesthetician as well. Improbably, the observation Gardner makes concerning religion in a negative sense would be beneficial for pastors and worship planners to consider, such as "the principle challenge to elders in such societies is to make sure that the young person's worldview remains sheltered during adolescence" (139). It is important to understand what the greater population believes about these virtues, and Gardner well encapsulates truth, beauty, and goodness from a secular worldview.

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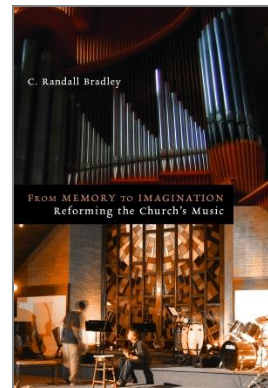
***From Memory to Imagination: Reforming the Church's Music*, by Randall C. Bradley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 235 pp. $25.00.**



Randall Bradley, Professor of Church Music at Baylor University, uses his years of ministry in a variety of contexts to craft a new lens to examine the worship of the church. The lens of "memory to imagination" (1) provides new insights into the philosophy of worship. "The importance of memory is not primarily in the accuracy of facts but in the connection of a story from individual to individual and community to community" (4). "Imagination is built on experience, on our story" (6). "Remembering the past is the key to building the future, for however the music of the church is shaped in times to come, it should somehow reference the past and the rich history on whose shoulders it stands" (218).

"The church's music is in need of prophetic re-imagination and re-formation. Because it has been subjected to years of wear and tear and hundreds of cosmetic updates, . . . a cover job will not suffice anymore" (9). A brief summary of church music from the 1950s to present day reveals the reason for the crisis. Bradley identifies that which is inhibiting the recovery from this crisis and the key players of the crisis.

Bradley constructs his solutions to the state of church music on the supposition that "God doesn't necessarily value one type of music more than another. While we may place different values on different types of music, we can never be fully confident of God's value" (48–49). With all musical forms acceptable, there are then two primary elements on which the church's music should be built: text and melody (79). The Bible is "remarkably silent on most specifics regarding the music of the church" (81). Bradley summarizes what the Bible explicitly states, dispels the myths of what it does not say concerning music, and gives the larger framework for church music. Summarily stated, "Christ came to redeem the world, and Christ can redeem any music" (109).

"The hope of the future church is in its ability to be ecumenical and work together for the kingdom of God" (118). The community, not just one individual, must make decisions regarding worship. The community will collectively seek to join God on him mission. "If the church is to be missional, its music must be noticeably linked to the music of the surrounding culture, its context" (189). As the community seeks to engage in true worship, "it involves our practicing hospitality as host, stranger, and guest" (158). "As hospitality, music seeks to minimize barriers to communication and vulnerability" (178). This may be achieved in different manners within different congregations. "Even though our musical preference may not match some of the preferences of our congregation, accepting their preferences will model genuine Christian community" (211).

An approach such as this diffuses the different sides of the worship battles with a recognition that they lie on different sides because of different experiences. Bradley identifies where the church is today and charts a course to emerge from the conflict of the past united. A vision is cast for a church that is less doctrinally and denominationally dependent, but rather is dependent on the core truth "Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again!" (56).

While Bradley's work is insightful, one criticism rests with his interpretation of Scripture. He states, "The Bible can be read and perceived differently by different individuals and faith communities" (50), and "The Bible isn't a unified text with a single voice; rather it 'speaks' with a myriad of voices that occasionally conflict" (88). This posture affects many of the claims Bradley makes concerning worship; nevertheless, the reasoning supporting his overall argument is sound and worth considering.

Bradley's contribution to the worship debate provides a welcome alternative to the militant language often used. This book may have tremendous impact on worship in the coming years because it encapsulates in a well-researched account the state of the church of today and its path to becoming the church of tomorrow. The first few chapters alone make this book an essential addition to the library of the church musician, but it should be read understanding the presuppositions of the author with regard to the Scriptures.

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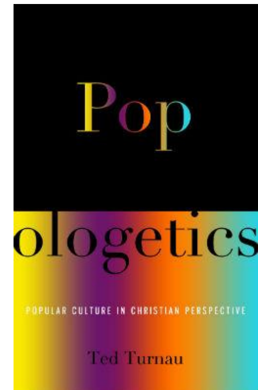
***Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective*, by Ted Turnau. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012. 346 pp. $19.99.**



Truly an international academic, Ted Turnau teaches at both the Anglo-American University and Charles University in Prague. Additionally, he is a teaching fellow at the International Institute for Christian Studies. He specializes in culture and religion, and *Popologetics* is the product of their combination.

In the introduction, Turnau argues that popular culture is both a powerful and widespread influence: "Popular culture has become not only a sign of the times, but also something of a rudder of the spirit, a touchstone for our deepest desires and aspirations" (xii). Then Turnau asks, "How should we as Christians engage non-Christian popular culture?" (xvii). The structure of the book is laid out to answer this important question. Part I, called "Grounding," defines the terms popular culture, worldview, and apologetics. Part II provides five Christian reactions to popular culture by weighing their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, in Part III, Turnau provides his system of examining popular culture, and to demonstrate this, he provides real examples put through this new paradigm.

Indeed, the book's structure is its greatest strength. Each part contains a clear, self-contained, purpose, building from the ground up and providing a comprehensive treatment of its subject. In Part I, Turnau defines his terms in a way that is both thorough and easily understandable. After wrestling with different definitions, Turnau arrives at a succinct definition of popular culture: "Popular culture is made up of cultural works whose media, genres, or venues tend to be widespread and widely received in our everyday world" (6). He defines worldview as "the perspective from which you understand reality, your 'view of the world'" (8). While this definition is simple, Turnau's explanation is quite profound as it describes and pieces together the role of presuppositions, narratives, and the application of beliefs. Turnau moves toward a Christian approach to popular culture by concluding, "our relationship to popular culture is rarely simple *because* it happens on the level of worldview" (23).

The irony of Turnau's title for Part II, "Some Not-So-Helpful Approaches to Popular Culture," is that his discussion of these approaches, indeed, are helpful. The first approach, "What, Me Worry?" ignores the importance of the issue altogether. Turnau refutes this by returning to a point from Part I, stating, "Popular culture is, at its core, religious. Being entertained by popular culture is, in a sense, participating in something religious. . . . But such participation in popular culture must always be done critically and reflectively" (85). The second approach, "Ew-Yuck," describes those that react negatively to all popular culture. Turnau argues that, "If we react only to certain elements . . . without understanding the context within which the contents have meaning . . . we have not really understood the popular-cultural text" (89).

The third approach, "We're-Above-All-That," is the tendency to reject popular culture from an elitist perspective. In Part I, Turnau examined the concept of common grace in culture and concluded, "We may take it for granted, but everything that is genuinely good in culture points to the reality of God, and not to our own inherent goodness or excellence"

(68). Therefore, he concludes that, in the elitist approach, "There is little room in this perspective, however, for any positive assessment of popular culture, no room for fragments of grace within popular culture" (109). This part felt the weakest in its approach. Rather than grappling with more specific arguments from major proponents of this view, Turnau favors generalizations like "the concept of high versus low cultures has been inextricably tied up with racism and class elitism in American history since the Victorian era" (114). Several of his points are well made, but it seems the intellectual rigor characterizing much of the book is lacking in this chapter.

"Imagophobia," the fourth approach, occurs when "cultural critics lament the rise of an image-based, image-driven culture" (136). Weighing both the positive and negative sides, Turnau states these critics often "vastly oversimplify and overstate the problem in order to support their rhetoric of woe" (139). Finally, Turnau challenges the postmodern approach that claims everything in popular culture is good. Having defended popular culture against its critics, Turnau is not afraid to acknowledge the real dangers inherent in popular culture. By pointing out the weakness in each of the five approaches, Turnau makes a strong case for his own method, which is unveiled in Part III.

The final section of the book provides the answer to the question posed in the introduction. This is Turnau's approach to popular culture from the Christian perspective: "Popologetics uses five diagnostic questions, five steps in thinking about a particular piece of popular culture" (215). The questions, "What's the story?", "Where am I (the world of the text)?", "What's good and true and beautiful about it?", "What's false and ugly and perverse about it (and how do I subvert that)?", and "How does the gospel apply here?", provide the reader with a comprehensive system to evaluate a popular culture "text" (Turnau's term for any example of popular culture) (215). Each question is thoroughly explained in a variety of contexts. This clear and effective method for engaging popular culture is reason enough to read this book. When Turnau provides his own examples of the system in the following chapter, the reader should feel the introduction's question is completely answered.

Popologetics is an excellent book in more ways than one. First, Turnau sufficiently knows and covers his subject. Second, the book offers a real and helpful solution to the problem it presents. Third, the book is easy to read and offers something for both the intellectual and the layperson concerned with popular culture. Although in some places Turnau might over-simplify or generalize to prove his points, this reviewer highly recommends this book. Just as popular culture is worth the effort of study, so this book is well worth reading.

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