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THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL 2012 EDN.

Contents

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the first annual publication of CCDA's theological journal.

Considering the immense complexities of Christian Community Development, our belief is that ongoing theological engagement is a critical discipline. We must wrestle at a deep theological level with these complexities in order to do faithful, effective ministry.

One of the strengths of CCDA is our diverse membership, which includes both practitioners and scholars. Our hope is that this journal can provide space for both to dialogue theologically, always with the intent of fostering more faithful, effective action. This integration of both theological reflection and active ministry captures the essence of what we are calling "theological engagement."

In Section One, writers elaborate on the need for theological engagement, approaching this often challenging task from historical, biblical, and practical perspectives.

Vince Bantu's article explores the history of the early church's attitude toward theological education. Bantu is particularly focused on resisting the perception in our modern world that the pursuit of theological knowledge is reserved for the "ivory tower" and is therefore a hindrance to faith and mission. He shows us that throughout church history: "(1) secular education was highly valued, (2) even familiarity with pagan philosophy came to be seen as useful, and (3) the formal study of the Scriptures was a value consistently upheld." Bantu's perspective reminds practitioners and the academic community that – as the old saying goes – "all truth is God's truth" and therefore should be used in our spiritual and missional formation as such.

Soong-Chan Rah's article reminds us of the recent history of the divide between theology and faith, thought and practice, among American evangelicals. Rah attempts to draw out the connections between this divide and the history of evangelicalism's divide between evangelism and social action/justice. Rah contends that the crucial link between the two divides is a myopic theological engagement with culture. In the end, Rah challenges the recent renewal of interest in justice in the evangelical community to attend to the sources of its energy and conscience. Will this be another example of cultural captivity? Rah ultimately emphasizes the need for social ministry that is theologically deep enough to challenge such captivity.

Danny Carroll investigates the tension between practitioners and academics through surveying ancient and contemporary models of theological education and the Old Testament's perspective on the nature of knowledge. Carroll disrupts this tension by showcasing the ways in which several models of theological education have not been exclusively focused on theory within the ivory tower, but in conversation with the concerns of the church, the society, and the streets. He further disrupts the theory/practice dichotomy by elucidating the Old Testament's focus on education outside of formal schools as well as its definition of knowledge as one which weds knowing and doing. Carroll encourages practitioners and academics to allow this heritage to inform a commitment to always hold ministry and learning together.

Chris Jehle offers a narrative approach in arguing for the importance of theological engagement among ministry practitioners. Chris tells his own story of being propelled into urban missions by a theological perspective which emphasized the salvation of souls and general compassion for others. He explains that this theology was too shallow to interpret and navigate his experiences with widespread poverty and oppression in an inner-city context. He narrates his four-year journey of theological reflection whereby he discovered a more holistic theology of the gospel, one which was deep enough to attend to the systematic nature of the brokenness

within his ministry context. Finally, Chris shares the practical ways in which his theological development has informed the church plant and several of the community development projects for which he provides leadership.

Section Two, in conjunction with the theme of the 2012 CCDA National Conference, delves into the value and practice of reconciliation.

Curtiss DeYoung highlights the radical nature of reconciliation among the early church as recorded in the New Testament by honing in on the biblical grammar of reconciliation as the exchange of places with the other. Under this grammar, reconciliation is a thoroughly political practice whereby allegiances to former identities are disrupted. DeYoung raises the readers' sensitivity to the early church's communal life which brought together "colonized and colonizers, rich and poor, women and men, slaves and free, those with privilege and those without, and a great range of ethnic groups." In the end, he challenges the assimilation and majority-culture captivity that often attend contemporary models of multiethnicity, models that ultimately fall short of the biblical ethic of reconciliation.

Chanequa Walker-Barnes' article offers an insightful challenge to CCDA's philosophy and practice of racial reconciliation. With the story of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician woman as a guiding framework, Walker-Barnes unearths the complex internal oppression among minorities even as they are involved in practices of reconciliation across ethno-racial boundaries. She contends that CCDA has tended to focus on this latter form – between-group reconciliation – at the expense of reconciliation within ethnic groups. Walker-Barnes ultimately challenges those who work and reflect in the area of racial reconciliation to attend to the damage that racism has done to minorities' own self-perception and to develop a healthy ethic of self-love which factors into their work and reflection.

Through a conversational tone, Randy Woodley's article uncovers the bible's emphasis on shalom (or peace) as central to the mission of God. Woodley focuses in on the Prophets, several New Testament passages, and Jesus' usage of the grammar and imagery of shalom. He then locates the ministry of reconciliation within the very fabric of shalom by setting forth the communal nature of shalom. Ultimately, Woodley challenges us to grapple with God's vision of shalom, one that does not simply seek the absence of conflict, and to pursue this vision daily within the context of community across ethno-racial boundaries.

Sydney Park reflects on the biblical priority of reconciliation, especially racial reconciliation. Park contends that though secular initiatives for racial reconciliation are often helpful, they are short-lived and lack the power and vision that the biblical infrastructure for reconciliation sets forth. Through surveying the NT literature, Park shows that reconciliation is at the heart of atonement, "God's identity as creator, ecclesiology, missiology and eschatology." Her analysis destabilizes the common perception of racial reconciliation as identifiable with the socially liberal or only with ethnic minorities. Rather she situates it as part and parcel to the church's mission and the gospel message itself.

The Editorial Team:

Chris Jehle
Soong-Chan Rah
Brandon Wrencher—a Master of Divinity degree student at North Park Theological Seminary pursuing the paths of pastoral ministry and further post-graduate studies. He is interested in the connections between Christian theology and modern/post-modern identity constructions (eg. gender, race, sexual orientation).

A LETTER FROM DR. JOHN PERKINS

Introductory Letter to CCDA's Theological Journal.

Congratulations on the first annual publication of CCDA's online theological journal. This journal is not only timely, but also the possible completion of our longstanding motivation to pull together the holism that is essential to the Gospel message.

From its beginning, CCDA intended to bring together biblical reflection and compassionate, justice-oriented action. Our CCDA movement now includes on-the-ground practitioners and academics, leaders of institutions, inner city pastors, seminary professors and street workers leading kids out of gangs and into a relationship with Jesus Christ—in short, the full range of the action-reflection spectrum.

This journal will serve to continue to cement the unity between biblical reflection and gospel-centered community action and development.

In his Gospel, John described the Lord's miracles and then explicated them in terms of their social and spiritual power. The miracles were the fulfillment of what the Messiah would do and teach - as in the case of the man healed from blindness in John 9 where after Jesus circles back around to explain to the man who he was, the Son of Man, the man falls to his knees in worship. Our action and reflection are rooted in Jesus Christ and ultimately both lead to facing Him, the source of our salvation and inspiration to do good in the community.

We in CCDA think of ourselves as bringing back some of the signs of the authentic church which when worked out in healing, transformative action in the community

lead to social change, and when unpacked and reflected upon in relationship become powerful evangelistic fuel for personal salvation and spiritual transformation.

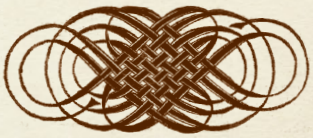
This is what theological engagement is at its best: word and deed, the gospel's demonstration and expression, together forever.

This first issue also includes an emphasis on reconciliation. And there is no better way to do that than to pay tribute to my good friend Glen Kehrein, who before his passing was a trailblazer in Christian Community Development in Chicago and a champion for how the power of the gospel can burn through the toughest racial, cultural, and economic barriers. I loved Glen and am so grateful for our decades of friendship.

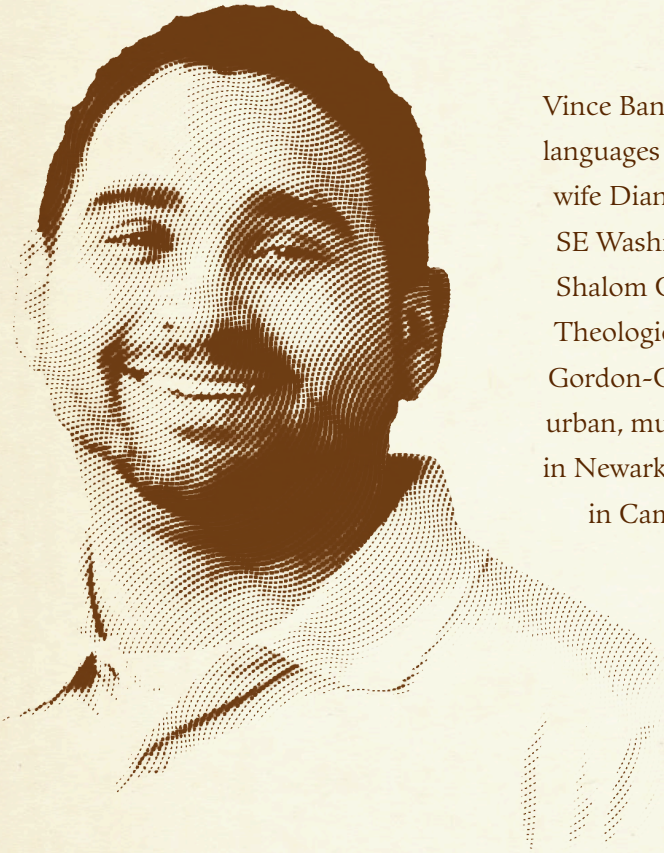
May God bless this online journal! May it be a source of deeper reflection rooted in sacrificial action and an inspiration to gospel-centered community development driven deep by biblical reflection.

John Perkins

SECTION I: THE CASE FOR THEOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT



Vince Bantu



Vince Bantu is a graduate student in Semitic & Egyptian languages at The Catholic University of America. Vince, his wife Diana, and their daughters Taína and Naniki live in SE Washington, DC where Vince and Diana pastor DC Shalom Church. Vince has completed a ThM from Princeton Theological Seminary in Church History and an MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Vince has served in urban, multi-ethnic pastoral ministry through World Impact in Newark, NJ and Cambridge Community Fellowship Church in Cambridge, MA. Vince's primary interests include racial reconciliation, non-Western Christianity and theological education in under-resourced communities.

A VIEW OF ATHENS FROM JERUSALEM: THE ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

What was the early Church's attitude toward theological education? Did they view it as an irrelevant, ivory-tower pursuit that hindered faith or as a vital component to spiritual formation? As is the case whenever a question steeped in modern concerns is asked of the early Church, the only source in which to find answers lies in the texts that have been preserved from antiquity. While the issues addressed in early Christian texts often do not directly relate to the concerns of modern Christians, the question at hand is a pleasant exception. The value of education (secular and Christian) is clearly articulated by early Christians in every time and place; questioning the value of theological education is a modern peculiarity. A brief survey of some of the most prominent Christian thinkers of Late Antiquity reveals three fundamental truths regarding the attitude of early Christians toward education: (1) secular education was highly valued, (2) even familiarity with pagan philosophy came to be seen as useful, and (3) the formal study of the Scriptures was a value consistently upheld by the early Church.

Early Christian Attitude toward Education in General

In addition to extensive education in theology and philosophy, the value of education in general is evidenced in early Church fathers such as Tertullian. Tertullian was a Christian theologian from the second and early third centuries who was one of the first leaders in the early Church to write extensively in Latin. He was from a wealthy military family in Carthage, capital of the Roman province of Africa (which was then only a portion of the modern nations of Algeria, Libya and Tunisia). Tertullian's writings are evidence that early Christians valued basic education, as he was trained in rhetoric at the highest level; this meant that he had more familiarity

with classical literature than most of his contemporaries.[1] It is commonly believed that Tertullian's vast rhetorical and literary knowledge is evidence that he previously had a career as a lawyer (although this view is challenged by some).[2] What is beyond dispute is that Tertullian was an extremely learned man who used his education to provide the early Church with some of its most important texts.

Another example of the value placed on education is the academic career of Basil of Caesarea. Basil, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus are known as the Cappadocian Fathers (because they were all from Cappadocia, a region of central Turkey). The Cappadocians were the primary supporters of the doctrine of the Trinity and specifically the defense of Jesus' divinity and that of the Holy Spirit at the second ecumenical council in Constantinople in 381 CE. Basil is a celebrated Church father in every major branch of Christianity and he also made a big impact on the monastic movement of his day. Basil spent his early years studying rhetoric and philosophy in the intellectual center of the Greco-Roman world, Athens. Basil's Athenian education afforded him the opportunity to study among some of the most prominent thinkers of his time such as Himerius and Prohaeresius. The school of Athens also had a close alliance with local civic leaders, adding to the breadth of experience Basil gained during his time there.[3] Basil received an extensive education composed of writing, grammar, rhetoric and philosophy, a multi-step process of education in the Greco-Roman world called *paideia*.

As in our time, this type of education was expensive and usually only available to the wealthy, thus socially stratifying the elite from the poor. Augustine, who was a North African bishop during the fourth and fifth centuries and had an extensive

1. Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 5.

2. Ibid, 4.

3. Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 29; Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 9.

rhetorical education and teaching career, talked about his family's financial difficulties in supporting his education in his Confessions: "Everyone of course praised my father because, although his means did not allow it, he had somehow provided the wherewithal for his son to travel so far for the sake of his studies. Many a very much richer citizen did no such thing for his children."[4]

Early Christians' valuation of education in general even extended to medicine as many of the theological students of the School of Nisibis in northern Mesopotamia began studying medicine during the sixth century.[5] However, the primary subject outside of the Bible in which early Christians displayed the greatest interest was philosophy. Interest in Greek philosophy, however, challenged the Church to judge the philosophical and mythological elements of *paideia* that were at odds with Christian belief. Contrary to the view that the early Church was hostile to Hellenistic culture, Christians of Late Antiquity were highly educated in Greek philosophy and, for the most part, maintained an attitude of openness to incorporating philosophy into the teachings of Christianity.

Early Christian Attitude toward Paideia

One of the earliest theologians who addressed the issue of Christianity and philosophy was Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr was a Christian writer during the 2nd century who was sentenced to death by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius for his defense of Christian theology against Stoic philosophy.[6] While this may suggest that Justin had a negative outlook on Greek philosophy, this is not the case. During

4. F. J. Sheed, *Augustine: Confessions Books I-XIII* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), 25.

5. Adam H. Becker, *The Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia (*Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2.

6. Molly Whitaker, *Tatian Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 19:1.

an apologetic debate with a Jew named Trypho, Justin talks about his extensive education in Greek philosophy:

> Thus it happened that I spent as much time as possible in the company of a wise man who was highly esteemed by the Platonists and who had but recently arrived in our city. Under him I forged ahead in philosophy and day by day I improved. The perception of incorporeal things quite overwhelmed me and the Platonic theory of ideas added wings to my mind, so that in a short time I imagined myself a wise man.[7]

Justin also studied with other philosophical groups such as the Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, and Stoics; however, it wasn't until God led Justin to a Christian along the seashore who shared the Gospel with him that Justin found the truest philosophy in the teachings of Scripture.[8] Justin did not see philosophy as an opponent to Christian theology but an integral part of it: "Philosophy is indeed one's greatest possession, and is most precious in the sight of God, to whom it alone leads us and to whom it unites us, and in truth they who have applied themselves to philosophy are holy men."[9]

Justin is careful to criticize philosophy where it contradicts Scripture: "'Do you affirm,' Trypho asked, 'that the universe also is unbegotten?' 'There are some who hold that opinion,' I replied, 'but I don't agree with them.'"[10] However, Justin makes use of philosophy when it is in agreement with Scripture: "'Plato truly states,' I retorted, 'that the eye of the mind has this special power, which has been given to us in order that we may see with it, when it is pure, the very Being who is the cause of everything the mind perceives.'"[11] Justin ultimately sees philosophy as a worthwhile

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7. Michael Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 6-7.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid, 5.

10. Ibid, 11.

11. Ibid, 9.

pursuit that should be criticized where it conflicts with Scripture and used to point others to Christ.[12]

Justin had a student and colleague in Rome named Tatian who was also a prominent Christian from the second century. Tatian was a Middle Eastern Christian apologist, biblical scholar, and theologian who was from the Roman province of Syria and was educated in Greek philosophy.[13] After becoming a Christian, Tatian came to view Greek philosophy as completely inferior to the teachings of Christianity:

> Therefore when I had seen these things and had also taken part in mysteries and had scrutinized the rituals conducted everywhere, I began to seek by what means I could discover the truth. I happened to read some barbarian writings, older by comparison with the doctrines of the Greeks, more divine by comparison with their errors. The outcome was that I was persuaded by these because of the lack of arrogance in the wording, the artlessness of the speakers, the easily intelligible account of the creations of the world, the foreknowledge of the future, the remarkable quality of the precepts and the doctrine of a single ruler of the universe.[14]

The above quote is from Tatian's treatise *Oration Against the* Greeks in which he proves Christianity's ultimate superiority to Hellenistic teaching. Tatian does this by pointing out the inherent inadequacies and contradictions in Greek philosophy: "Moreover, how can we pay respect to those whose doctrines are so contradictory? Rhea, whom the hillmen from Phrygia call Cybele, has prescribed castration on account of her beloved Attis, while Aphrodite finds joy in the bonds of marriage."[15] Tatian attacks other elements of Hellenistic culture such as medicine[16] and gladiatorial games.[17] Tatian argues that Christianity is better than Hellenistic wisdom because

12. Ibid, 15.

13. Whitaker, 42:1.

14. Ibid, 29:1.

15. Ibid, 8:2.

16. Ibid, 18:1.

17. Ibid, 23:1.

it is preceded by the wisdom of Moses: "It will be found that this Moses I have mentioned earlier was not merely many years older than the actual fall of Troy, but even antedated the foundation of Troy, and Tros and Dardanus. Need I say more?"[18]

Tatian frequently refers to the wisdom of Moses and of Christians as "barbarian;"[19]; while Tatian knows that teaching and culture that originated outside the Greco-Roman world was seen as barbarian, he intentionally takes on this descriptor as he proves the "barbarian" teaching of Christianity to be ultimately superior to Hellenism. While it may appear that Tatian recommends throwing out Hellenistic philosophy altogether, it must be understood that Tatian's harsh words regarding Greek *paideia* come out of a concern regarding Christian persecution: "What harm do we do you, men of Greece? Why do you hate those who follow God's word as if they were the last word in abomination? We do not practice cannibalism-that is a lie of you educated people."[20] The second-century was a difficult time for many Christians living in the Roman Empire and Tatian's *Oration Against the Greeks* should not be seen as a rejection of Greek philosophy, but an argument for its subordination to Christianity.

It is also in this way that we should understand the most famous statement in the entire early Church on this subject: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?"[21] This question was asked by Tertullian in his *Prescription Against Heretics.* It is important to understand that Tertullian was not questioning the validity of academics, but accusing Greek philosophy as being the primary root of the heretical Christian teachings of his day: "Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy. From this source came the Aeons…in the system of Valentinus, who was of Plato's school. From the same

18. Ibid, 36:1.

19. Ibid, 35:1.

20. Ibid, 25:3.

21. Peter Holmes, *The Prescription Against Heretics* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004), 11.

source came Marcion's better god, with all his tranquility, he came from the Stoics."[22] As is the case with Tatian, Tertullian writes negatively regarding Greek pagan culture in a context of persecution of Christians.

It is therefore Tertullian's primary objective not to reject Hellenistic culture, but to provide a defense of oppressed Christians who were, in fact, often more loyal to the empire than pagans.[23] The early Christians were not afraid to engage with Greek philosophy, but were cautious to avoid its teachings where they contradicted the Scripture. In the second and third centuries, when Christian persecution was rampant in the Roman Empire, Christians such as Tertullian and Tatian offered defenses of Christians' right to maintain their beliefs in the face of oppression. Henry Chadwick argues that "from the time of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria the Christian programme had been to accept and uphold the positive value of the best of Greek philosophy and of the peace-keeping Roman government, but to be vehemently opposed to pagan cult and myth."[24]

In 313 CE the Roman emperor Constantine, the first emperor to convert to Christianity, declared through the Edict of Milan that Christians in the Roman Empire would no longer be persecuted and that their confiscated property would be returned. This turning point in Church history made a decisive impact on how Greco-Roman Christians talked about Hellenistic culture. The fourth and fifth centuries represented an era in the early Church where Greek language and culture were creatively adapted and absorbed into the Roman imperial Christian tradition. This process is seen most vividly in the ecumenical councils of Nicaea (325 CE), Constantinople (381 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE) where non-biblical, Greek terms and phrases were adopted to express belief about God the Father, Jesus the Son, and

22. Ibid, 12

23. Dunn, 39.

24. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1967), 153.

the Holy Spirit. As the Roman empire introduced a political, linguistic, and cultural unity unprecedented in world history, the Greco-Roman Christians took advantage of the opportunity to express their faith in a manner that was accessible to their pagan neighbors: "But, if the Word of God was to make itself at home in a world in which Greek was the universal medium, it could do so in no other way than by teaching itself to think and speak in Greek."[25]

Perhaps the best example of this new, more moderate approach to pagan philosophy was given by the fourth-century bishop Basil of Caesarea. Basil wrote a short letter for his young students called "To Young Men on How they Might Derive Profit from Pagan Literature *(hellenikon logon)*." In this letter Basil exhorts his students to take advantage of Hellenistic teaching while avoiding that which contradicts Scripture:

> Consequently we must be conversant with poets, with historians, with orators, indeed with all men who may further our soul's salvation. If, then, there is any affinity between the two literatures (Greek philosophy and Christian Scripture), a knowledge of them should be useful to us in our search for truth; if not, the comparison, by emphasizing the contrast, will be of no small service in strengthening our regard for the better one.[26]

The modern saying, "All truth is God's truth," reflects the heart of Basil's thinking on this issue; namely that Christians should prudently adopt that which harmonizes with the Gospel and spurs one on to spiritual maturity while discarding everything else in the manner of a bee discriminating among the flowers:

> After the manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to

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25. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (New York, NY: Penguin Books 1964), 42.

26. Frederick Morgan Padelford, "Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry by Plutarch and Basil the Great," Yale Studies in English 15, (1902): 101.

> their needs, they let the rest go. So we, if wise, shall take from heathen books whatever befits us and is allied to the truth, and shall pass over the rest.[27]

It is clear that early Christians thought it wise to make use of a Greek philosophical education in so far as it advances Christian virtue: "The evolution of classical education in late antiquity was not propelled by a steady empire-wide intellectual and political movement against pagan teaching. Instead, it occurred within a cultural environment typified not by Christian opposition to pagan teaching but by almost constant mainstream Christian support for traditional education."[28] The Christian Scriptures were the core of all learning for the early Church while *paideia* offered an effective method of study.[29]

Early Christian Attitude Toward Biblical and Theological Education

The study of the Bible as an academic pursuit was strongly encouraged in the early Church; the concept that theological education is irrelevant to the mission of the Church was wholly absent from the writings of the Church fathers. There were numerous schools devoted to the sacred study of theology and the Scriptures in the early Church; the earliest and most prominent example was the theological academy of Alexandria often called the Catechetical School. According to the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, the school was founded by a man named Pantaenus who passed the leadership of the school to Clement of Alexandria in the late second century.[30]

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27. Ibid, 102.

28. Watts, 21.

29. Becker (2006), 7.

30. Paul L. Maier, *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 166.

The school was designed to provide basic theological education *(catechesis)* for Christians, which was becoming increasingly difficult to acquire as the second and third centuries were troubled by Christian persecution. Before the organization of this monumental school, such theological education usually occurred on an independent basis.[31] When Origen took over the leadership of the school, he added a program for more theologically advanced students; this upset the Alexandrian patriarch Demetrius who felt that the school should be strictly for elementary education in theology. After Origen left Alexandria for Palestine, Demetrius placed Origen's former pupil Heraclas both as patriarch of Alexandria and leader of the catechetical school.[32] The practice of the Egyptian patriarch also serving as leader of the catechetical school was a practice that continued throughout the fourth century and represents the Egyptian church's high value placed on its leaders being learned in theology.

While the monastic communities that developed in Egypt are typically characterized by their intense spiritual devotion and rigorous labor in communal living, these communities were also deeply committed to the study of the Word. This is evidenced in that the majority of the information available on the White Monastery, a Coptic monastic complex of approximately four-thousand monks and nuns founded in the mid-fourth century in Southern Egypt, comes from the monastery's own library. Shenoute, the monastery's most prominent leader, left numerous volumes of sermons and theological treatises illustrating the monastic value on theological learning.[33]

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31. Stephen J. Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004), 24.

32. Ibid, 25-27.

33. Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus: Volume 1* (Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 6.

Another prominent academy of biblical and theological studies was the School of Nisibis. Nisibis (modern Nusaybin) is a city in modern southeastern Turkey and was a prominent center of early Christianity. The theological school was started in the mid-fourth century by Mar Jacob of Nisibis. The school's name changed to the School of the Persians when the Sassanian shah Shapur II captured Nisibis and the school was moved to Edessa under the leadership of Ephrem the Syrian. A century later, christological controversies caused the school to be moved back to Nisibis.

This center of theological study served as a vehicle for spiritual formation as it was closely modeled after the monastic structures of its time.[34] The school year calendar in Nisibis was based on the liturgical cycle indicating that studying itself was seen as a form of spiritual devotion.[35] The church historian Barhadbeshabba wrote the *Cause of the Foundation of the School*s as a speech addressing the incoming class of the School of Nisibis in the late sixth century. Barhadbeshabba sought to encourage his students in their academic pursuits by illustrating to them how instrumental theological reflection is in the life of the Christian. In this speech, Barhadbeshabba goes through the history of the world as presented in the Bible and compares it to one big school with God as teacher and his creation as students.[36] In this text, Barhadbeshabba encourages his students to pursue God through study by referencing the Parable of the Lost Coin (Lk. 15:8-10) and comparing the human mind to a lamp:

> Nevertheless, although everything that exists is divided into all these distinctions, learning about the creator and creation is only found in these two orders, I mean angels and human beings. But because these are too weak to consider that divine essence, he has established for us an invisible lamp, the soul within us, and he has

34. Becker (2006), 2.

35. Ibid, 20.

36. Adam H. Becker, *Sources for the History of the School of Nisibis* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 86.

> filled it with the oil of immortal life, and he has placed in it continuous wicks with intellectual thoughts, and he has caused to be grasped in it the light of the divine mind, by which we are able to see and to distinguish, as that woman who lost one of the ten zuz (drachma), the hidden things of the creator, and to go around all of the rich treasury of his kingdom, until we ourselves also find that zuz (drachma) upon which is stamped the glorious image of him, the eternal King of Kings.[37]

It is befitting to conclude with this excerpt from a work whose core purpose is to encourage Christians on the value of theological education. Just as the students of Nisibis viewed education (secular and religious) as an integral component of their Christian discipleship, we should also wholeheartedly embrace academic study into the life and ministry of the Church. We cannot allow the Enlightenment's dichotomy between faith and knowledge to rob us of our rich heritage of theological reflection. While the early Church was not free of many of the difficulties that divide the Church and the academy today, the early Christian voices surveyed above reflect the Lord Jesus' prayer in John 17:3 that His disciples might *know* God. It is to this end that we must apply the divinely-endowed faculty of knowing to our eternally knowable Father in heaven.

37. Ibid, 108.

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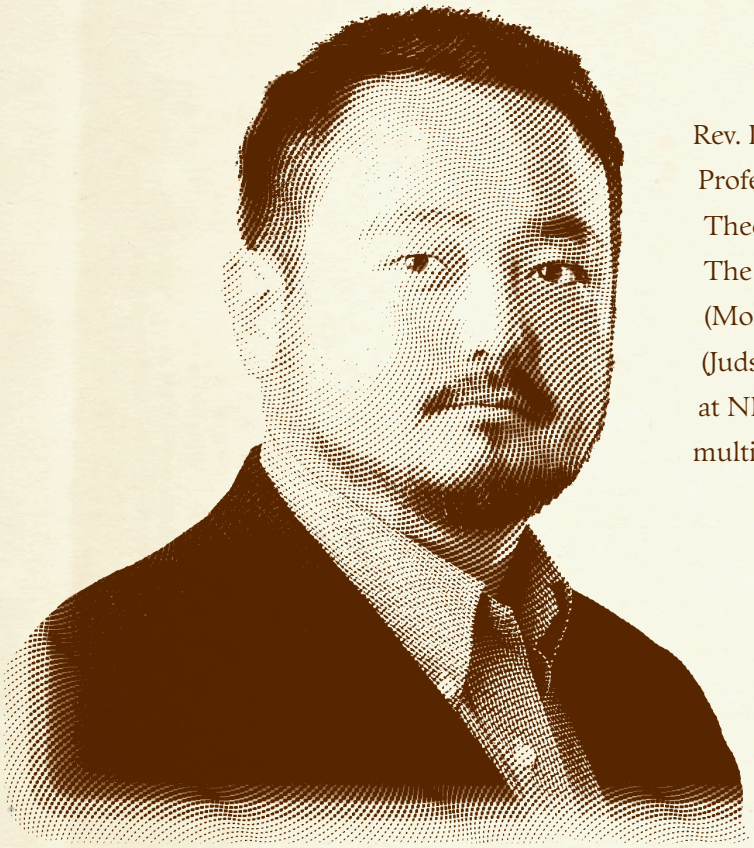
Soong-Chan Rah



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THE ONGOING SCANDAL OF THE EVANGELICAL CONSCIENCE AND MIND

Throughout the twentieth century, American evangelicalism[1] struggled with its place in the larger culture. This ambivalent relationship found two key expressions: (1) a rift between proponents of personal evangelism and proponents of social justice and (2) a growing suspicion and lack of engagement with academic endeavors. Both of these expressions have impacted evangelical engagement with social issues. In the first case, evangelicals prioritized personal evangelism at the expense of social engagement and in the second case, evangelicals failed to develop a robust theology capable of a healthy engagement with culture. In this essay, I attempt to understand the connection between a bias against academic engagement and a suspicion of engagement and concern for social issues.

The Great Divorce

The first stream involves the disengagement of twentieth century evangelicals from American society. This disengagement took the form of separating the act of personal evangelism from acts of social action and social justice. Twentieth century evangelicalism's disengagement with the culture reflects a significant departure from the social-cultural engagement and activism of nineteenth century evangelicalism. Timothy Smith in *Revivalism and Social Reform* argues that "far from disdaining earthly affairs, [nineteenth century evangelicals] played a key role in the widespread

1. Throughout this essay, the term evangelicalism will be used to describe the larger movement of theologically conservative Protestantism of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century. Fundamentalism will be considered a subset of evangelicalism that had a particular expression in contention with the modernism of the early twentieth century. Neo-evangelicalism refers the movement that emerged out of the context of fundamentalism in the middle of the twentieth century. Further clarification and defining of the different threads of evangelicalism will be offered throughout the essay.

attack upon slavery, poverty, and greed."[2] In the nineteenth century, Christianity in America exhibited significant concern for social issues. Revivalism and social justice were joined in holy matrimony. Nineteenth century evangelicalism embodied this union. Twentieth-century evangelicalism witnessed a painful divorce.

This split mirrored a theological rift that developed in American Christianity. George Marsden reveals that a "deep crisis was brewing over theological issues. . . . Twentieth century American Protestantism began to split into two major parties . . . between conservatives and liberals in theology."[3] The widening rift between the theologically liberal and the theologically conservative segment of the American church resulted in a divergence of emphasis between the two groups. Theologically conservative fundamentalists prioritized individual spirituality over social transformation preferred by the theologically liberal modernists. Suspicion of theological liberalism and its link to the social gospel resulted in personal evangelism becoming the primary expression of Christian outreach for fundamentalists.

The theological contention between fundamentalists and modernists reflected a growing fissure in how Christians viewed the church's relationship to the larger culture. The fundamentalists viewed the world as a hostile and evil place, worthy only of rejection and damnation. Spurred by a growing mistrust of the world, fundamentalists rejected the trappings of modern culture. In the language of H. Richard Niebuhr,[4] fundamentalists took on the posture of Christ against the culture. Meanwhile, the modernist branch of American Christianity saw culture through a more optimistic point of view, believing that Christ could be of the culture. This disparate framework of how the church relates to the culture yielded the creation

2. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 8.

3. George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 30.

4. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*.

of two camps: the personal evangelism camp and the social justice camp, the Christ against culture camp and the Christ of culture camp.

Fundamentalists were disheartened by a perceived sense of rejection by American society (particularly following the public embarrassment of the Scopes Trial). Dispensational eschatology provided additional fodder for fundamentalist separatism. As Randall Balmer posits: "Evangelicals suddenly felt their hegemonic hold over American society slipping away . . . The teeming, squalid ghettoes, . . . festering with labor unrest, no longer resembled the precincts of Zion that postmillennial evangelicals had envisioned earlier in the century. . . . Faced with this wretchedness, American evangelicals looked to alter their eschatology."[5] Dispensational eschatology fit this burgeoning worldview. The world had become uninhabitable for the good Christian. A drastic change from above would be required to stop the flood of secularism and societal decay. "With their embrace of dispensationalism, evangelicals shifted their focus radically from social amelioration to individual regeneration. Having diverted their attention from the construction of the millennial realm, evangelicals concentrated on the salvation of souls and, in so doing, neglected reform efforts."[6] Theologically conservative Christians moved increasingly towards a rejection of social transformation efforts drawing from a dispensational eschatology and a Christ against culture perspective.

Theological liberals embraced a contrasting position on the relationship between the church and the culture, which resulted in a contrasting view on the role of the church in the world. Theological liberalism moved away from personal conversion and stressed social transformation.[7] In 1932 Harvard professor William Hocking

5. Randall Balmer, *The Making of Evangelicalism*, 33.

6. Ibid., 36.

7. Robert Wuthnow notes that "the question of whether to engage in direct action or to try to influence individual consciences was inevitably associated with differences in theological orientation — and here it did parallel to some extent the earlier division between modernists and fundamentalists." Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 148.

spearheaded a research report called Rethinking Mission, which launched rigorous debate among the mainline churches. "The report proposed that the . . . missionary 'will look forward, not to the destruction of these [non-Christian] religions, but to their co-existence with Christianity."[8] Rethinking Mission proposed a departure from traditional forms of mission that sought conversion of non-Christians, but instead reflected the belief in the pursuit of righteousness within every religion. The Hocking Report sent reverberation throughout mainline denominations. The implication for missions for theological liberals was the prioritization of works of social justice. Missions would be the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God in the human realm through good works.

In contrast, early twentieth century fundamentalism prioritized individual spirituality over social transformation. While fundamentalists did not shy away from the exploitation of cultural tools,[9] they emphasized engaging the culture for the sake of saving individuals. Personal evangelism became the primary expression of Christian faith at the expense of concern for social problems. David Moberg labels this development as the great reversal. Moberg asserts that "there was a time when evangelicals had a balanced position that gave proper attention to both evangelism and social concern, but a great reversal early in [the twentieth] century led to a lopsided emphasis upon evangelism and omission of most aspects of social involvement."[10] Marsden notes that the "the 'Great Reversal' took place from about 1900 to about 1930, when all progressive social concern, whether political or private, became suspect among revivalist evangelicals and was relegated to a very minor role."[11] American Christianity experienced during this time a split between evangelism and social justice.

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8. Gerald Anderson, "American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission: 1886-1986," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (July 1988), 106.

9. See Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again* and Matthew Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America*.

10. David O. Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, 25-26.

11. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 86.

The roots of American evangelicalism are found in the theologically conservative fundamentalism arising out of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the early part of the twentieth century. Evangelicalism, however, held to a less antagonistic relationship towards culture and did not operate in the extreme separatism endemic to fundamentalism. Strident fundamentalism with separatist tendencies shifted to a more user-friendly and culturally engaged neo-evangelicalism, which we now more commonly identify as evangelicalism.

American evangelicalism continued this disproportionate emphasis on personal evangelism inherited from fundamentalism. Many evangelicals continued the belief that involvement in social concerns would distract from the important work of personal evangelism. "There was a deep, deep individualism that lay at the heart of the evangelical project. This individualism is best exemplified in the doctrine of personal regeneration . . . When translated into a social ethic, this meant that the conversion of individuals led to the transformation of society."[12] Both fundamentalism and evangelicalism failed to integrate a healthy and just engagement with the culture and displayed an inability to move beyond the strictly individual expression of the gospel. The Great Reversal resulted in the Great Divorce.

Academic Disengagement[13]

Fundamentalism's rejection of secular culture and the eschewing of social action arose from anxiety regarding changes that occurred in the early part of the twentieth century. Fundamentalists felt that they were under siege from secular society. Marsden states "fundamentalism was the response of traditionalist evangelicals who

12. Peter Goodwin Heltzel, *Jesus and Justice: Evangelicals, Race and American Politics*, 138.

13. For further discussion on how Protestant Christianity is shaped by cultural forces interacting with seminaries see: Mark Noll, editor, *The Princeton Theology* and Gregory Wills, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*.

declared war on these modernizing trends. In fundamentalist eyes the war had to be all-out and fought on several fronts. At stake was nothing less than the gospel of Jesus' blood and righteousness."[14] Fundamentalism, therefore, took seriously the perceived challenge from the academy. Darwinism, scientific challenges to the Bible, and a modern worldview were seen as originating from the academy and providing fierce opposition to assumed Biblical norms and values. Withdrawal from the academy and the larger culture seemed to be an appropriate response. Fundamentalism's withdrawal opened the movement to charges of anti-intellectualism. Fundamentalism would be unable to provide answers to society's questions, furthering its alienation from society and furthering the perception of anti-intellectualism.

While neo-evangelicalism would engage the culture in ways that would trouble fundamentalists, evangelicals would continue to exhibit aspects of fundamentalism. A key carryover from fundamentalism would be the focus on individual salvation over social transformation. Marsden notes "evangelicals emphasized that the church was made up of individual converts."[15] Therefore, in order to reach the individual with the good news, evangelical Christians would be more willing to engage the culture. Studying, interacting, and even marketing to the culture for the sake of effective personal evangelism became an acceptable practice. For example, evangelical Christianity would employ the tools of secular culture to delve into the academic study of church growth. As Marsden summarizes "individualism, then, combined with the spirit of American free enterprise, has shaped trans-denominational evangelicalism's distinctive institutions"[16]

While evangelicalism and evangelical scholarship attempted to break from the anti-intellectual tendencies of early twentieth century fundamentalism, it still held

14. George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 4.

15. Ibid., 2.

16. Ibid., 2.

to a strident individualism that prioritized personal evangelism. Suspicion of the larger culture and the possibility of transforming the larger society remained even in the transition from fundamentalism to evangelicalism. Ultimately, an excessive individualism reflected a form of cultural captivity.[17] This cultural captivity was revealed in a hyper-individualism that led to an exclusive emphasis on personal evangelism and a shallow academic engagement that failed to equip evangelicalism for the myriad of challenges in the twentieth century.

The assumed anti-intellectualism of fundamentalism gave way to a more culturally-astute evangelicalism. However, despite evangelicalism's ability to tap into contemporary culture for the sake of personal evangelism, evangelicalism still had difficulty finding an academic voice in response to the changes occurring in American society. Mark Noll notes that the growth of evangelicalism in the twentieth century faced many challenges.

> Within a generation, the cities had mushroomed; older churches no longer seemed able to preserve a vital witness in those cities; immigration brought vast numbers of new Americans and great problems of social cohesion; mammoth factories sprang up and their owners achieved unrivaled influence in public life; freed slaves were forced back in the South and allowed a mere subsistence in the North.[18]

Noll recognizes that evangelicalism lacked intellectual resources to deal with these seismic changes in American society. "When Christians turned to their intellectual resources for dealing with these matters, they found that the cupboard was nearly bare. . . . almost no one had been engaged in . . . a process of consistent Christian thinking."[19] For decades, fundamentalism and evangelicalism had focused on an

17. Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*.

18. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 106.

19. Ibid., 106.

individual spirituality for the sake of personal evangelism. When American society required a deeper theological response from theologically conservative Christianity, the answer provided by evangelicals proved to reflect anti-intellectualism, a theological shallowness, or a hyper individualism. As Noll notes that "the descendants of orthodox evangelicalism . . . did hold on to basic Christian truths, but in order to do so they fled the problems of the wider world into fascination inner spirituality or the details of end-times prophecy."[20] While a broken society sought answers for a broken system, evangelicalism provided shallow theological answers focused on the individual.

Moving Forward

Evangelical Christianity has often defined itself over and against culture while often still being defined by the culture. That is, evangelicalism eschewed cultural influence, while at the same time being captivated by its charms. In order to develop a healthy relationship with the culture and offer the possibility of social transformation, a robust theology of social-cultural engagement is needed. In CCDA we see Christians embody their faith through both personal evangelism and social justice. In order to deepen our impact as an evangelical movement in a complex and fallen world, CCDA must engage in a robust theological discourse that reflects and informs our ministry practices.

For most of the twentieth century, among evangelical Christians, there was a conspicuous divorce between social justice and personal evangelism. In the twenty-first century, many Christians are attempting to reverse "the great reversal." More and more Christians are seeking to integrate justice into the life of the church. While this desire is noble and well-intentioned, even the best of intentions can go awry. The renewal of interest in justice should not be rooted in a political correctness that

20. Ibid., 107.

comes from the trendiness of justice issues in the world (even WalMart can now claim to be "green"). Instead, justice needs to be situated in our biblical-theological reflection – leading to an authentic socio-cultural engagement by the church leading to God's justice. In other words, our justice needs to go theologically deeper.

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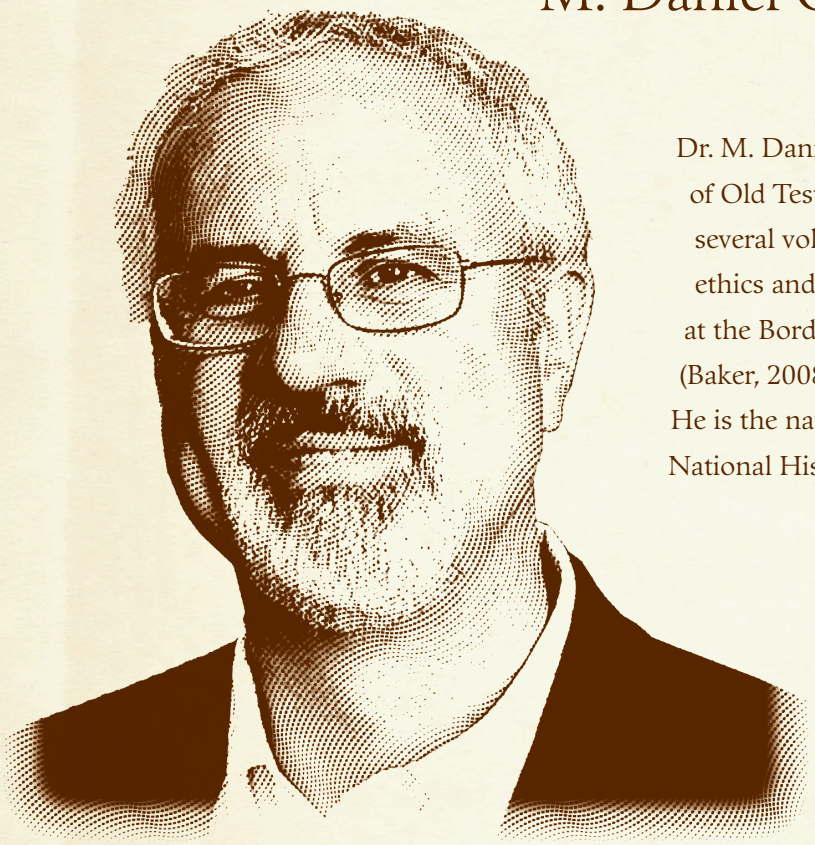

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWING AND DOING: INSIGHTS FROM THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE BIBLE

Introduction

There are always tensions in the Christian faith. These tensions arise quite naturally because the faith has many facets and dimensions. Different individuals or groups are drawn to a particular feature due to the needs of their context, the impact of their backgrounds, and the formative influence of their experiences. This rich variety of emphases and initiatives reflects the diversity that is the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12) and is one of the beauties of the worldwide Church.

At the same time, these many approaches can be frustrating! They foster all sorts of debates because each viewpoint tends to see itself as *the* correct way of thinking about a topic or *the* right way of doing ministry. So, there are always pendulum swings between the two sides of these debates. This phenomenon of back-and-forth disagreement is always there; the only thing that changes is the issue!

There are two particular tensions that characterize those of us who are committed to social justice. One is the longstanding question about the relationship between evangelism and social action: How do we define these terms? Which of the two has priority? Are they mutually exclusive? If not, how can they be brought together in a manner faithful to the Scriptures? The second tension is that between ministry and theological reflection. That is the topic of this essay.

It is not uncommon for ministry practitioners to minimize the need for theological education, particularly in formal institutions like seminaries. It is considered to be out of touch with the real world and incapable of properly equipping men and women headed into ministry, especially ministry related to social justice and community

transformation. As a seminary professor, I have heard these criticisms many, many times. I have heard them not only in this country, but also at the seminary in Guatemala City where I taught for over a decade. Some negative evaluations of theological education are valid and well deserved. The finger pointing also comes from the other direction. From the institutional side, the observation can be that practitioners work with 'theology-light' and distort the Bible by reducing it to their favorite themes.

Critique—from both sides!—is easy. The problem is that it is too generalizing. We need to move beyond simplistic labeling. It is time to appreciate the important contribution that theological education can make to practitioners, even as educators take on constructive observations from practitioners. I divide the following discussion into two parts. The first section surveys how theological education responds to the needs of ministry. The second explores how the Bible interconnects knowing with doing.

The Shifting Concerns in Theological Education

Theological education has a long history. Over the centuries its shape and emphasis have been modified to respond to the realities of the world of a given time. I will not go into any detail here, others have done this elsewhere.[1] The more significant models have concentrated on specific matters. These have been tagged in the following manner:

- Athens: The key is character formation, grounded especially in knowledge of God drawn from the Scriptures. Personal, transformational.

1. For good surveys (each with their own agenda), see Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Raleigh: Lulu Publishing, 2006); Brian Edgar, "The Theology of Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 3 (2005): 208-17.

- Berlin: Education in critical thinking within a university format along with the aim of training clergy for the vocation of effective church ministry. Ecclesiatical, functional.
- Jerusalem: The centrality of the mission of the kingdom of God in all of its dimensions to impact the world. Global, praxiological.

The Athens model was the approach of the first centuries of the Church. Berlin was the primary model of many seminaries over the last couple of centuries, whereas the Jerusalem focus is more recent. Each, of course, highlights an important aspect of the faith.

My goal is not to provide a study of the history of theological education! The point is to demonstrate that it has always been in conversation with the times, in conversation with the church, ministries, and practitioners. Both sides need each other in order to contribute to the preparation of leaders and thinkers, each according to their strengths and expertise—all for the cause of the Gospel. Of course, there are mistakes and occasional misplaced efforts, both in education and ministry.[2] However, to focus on these is to miss the task of working together according to our common commitments.

Some newer pushes in theological education over the last decade are engaging what is needful today. These include: mentoring and spiritual formation, more interactive pedagogy, greater involvement in directed internships, cross-disciplinary studies (interaction with the social sciences, media, and the like), recent initiatives for wider access to education, and engagement with social issues.

Now is not the time for practitioners and educators to walk away from each other. The imperative is to work together to try to establish what would be the best model for our time and place.

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2. See, for example, the discussion in Christianity Today on the "Juvenilization of the American Church" (*Christianity Today* 56, no. 6 [June, 2012]).

Insights from the Bible

These efforts over hundreds of years to put education in touch with context find their roots in the Bible. There we do not find the dichotomy between doing and knowing that we see today. In the Scriptures they go hand-in-hand. I get tickled sometimes when I hear someone say that they just want to keep things simple like Jesus did. But this surely is to misread the Gospel accounts. Jesus was a first-rate theologian and biblicist, who argued over the fine points of Old Testament texts with Jewish rabbis and religious leaders, utilized first century Jewish hermeneutical techniques, constantly appealed to Jewish traditions, and was well-versed in the social and political realities of his day even as he dealt with people in need.[3] We could use more practitioners like Jesus!

I will limit my discussion to two points drawn from the Old Testament. The first observation is foundational. It is that in Hebrew the verb "to know" (yada‘) is not limited to the cognitive.[4] It is a common verb, appearing almost 950 times, and has a wide range of meanings. For example, it can be used of relationships, whether God is the subject (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 34:10; 2 Sam. 7:20; Amos 3:2) or humans (Gen. 4:1, 17). Closer to the concerns of our discussion, it is used of acquiring practical skills (1 Sam. 16:18; Prov. 27:23). Even more pertinent, however, is that it can be used in the sense of "cause to know" or "teach"—for example, Moses to the elders (Exod. 18:20), Samuel to Saul (1 Sam. 10:8), and parents to their children (Deut. 4:9; Josh. 4:22; Ps. 78:5). In each of these cases, this teaching comes from someone who grasps the things of God and passes on to others what God expects of them, with the

3. Note Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus in Context: Background Readings for Gospel Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Steve Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

4. Terence E. Fretheim, "yd," in New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, ed. V. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), vol. 2: 409-14. English versions do not always translate the verb as "know." Sometimes they will use other terms, like "choose" or "lay/sleep with."

expectation that those persons will act on what they have learned. The "knowledge" (da'at, from the same root) of God and his will and the wisdom gained from learning how and when to put it into practice require the wedding of knowing and doing. This will work itself out as obedience and faithfulness to God.

The second point builds off of the first. The Old Testament expresses a deep responsibility to teaching Israel about their God and his law, their traditions, and the history of the nation. In other words, education was very important.[5] Several mechanisms were put in place to pass all of this on: a comprehension of the person of God and his demands, an orientation about the theological dangers (and temptations) of competing religions and worldviews of that context, and an historical framework to provide both depth and perspective for their identity and mission.

To begin with, there was the setting of the home, where parents were to teach these things to their children through ceremonies, visual reminders, and questions and answers during the ebb and flow of life and at family gatherings and certain celebrations (Exod. 12: 24-28; Deut. 6:7-9, 20-25). The nation also was to gather for several feasts during the year (Lev. 23). These commemorated the blessings of God and his actions on their behalf. These feasts afforded opportunities to teach on these matters through participation in rituals, which would have engaged the people's minds and all of their senses. A periodic reading of the Law was mandated too, so that everyone would know and understand what God wanted (Deut. 31:9-13; cf. Neh. 8).

The Levites were assigned the task of teaching the people (Deut. 17:18; 33:10; 2 Chron. 17:7-9; Mal. 2:4-9) and were dispersed to different parts of the land for that purpose (Josh. 21). Scholars debate the existence of schools in ancient Israel, but

5. M. Daniel Carroll R., "Perspectives on Theological Education from the Old Testament," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 3 (2005): 228-39; cf. James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1998), pp. 29-49.

some passages do seem to allude to teacher-student relationships (Ps. 119:97-100; Prov. 5:12-13; 22:17-21; Isa. 50:4). There also are the groups of prophets who live with Elijah and Elisha (e.g., 2 Kgs. 2-6), Isaiah mentions disciples (Isa. 8:2), and Baruch is Jeremiah's scribe—all of which suggest some sort of training schemes.

In summary, what we have in the Old Testament is a broad appreciation of the concept of knowing, especially as it relates to God and his truth, as well as a variety of means to communicate that knowledge to the people. This learning had as its purpose to make them into the kind of community that God expected them to be, to reflect his holy character and be a blessing to the world (Gen. 12:1-3; Deut. 4:5-8; 1 Kgs. 8:41-43). These same concerns are evident in the New Testament, where the Gospels and the epistles are very concerned about the teaching of the truth of God by gifted persons appointed for that privilege, while at the same time warning about those that teach falsehood.

Conclusion

These are a few preliminary comments on a topic that has needed constant reflection throughout the history of the church. Much more could be said. Yesterday and today, Christians have needed to sort out the relationship between the street and academy. Sometimes it can be troublesome or contested, but it cannot be ignored or demeaned. There can be no divorce between the practice of ministry and the learning that must occur to give those efforts depth, theological parameters, and direction.

Our challenges are not exactly the same as ancient Israel's, but the issues to which we must attend remain constant: the person of God, the nature of his demands, the theological pitfalls of our context, and historical awareness. Israel had mechanisms

suitable to its time and place to educate its people. We have our own means of educating the people of God that range from informal family settings to communal gatherings and programs to more formal institutions with trained faculty. May we encourage all of these initiatives; all are necessary. Orthodoxy coupled with orthopraxis should always be the ideal. Let us keep both in conversation.

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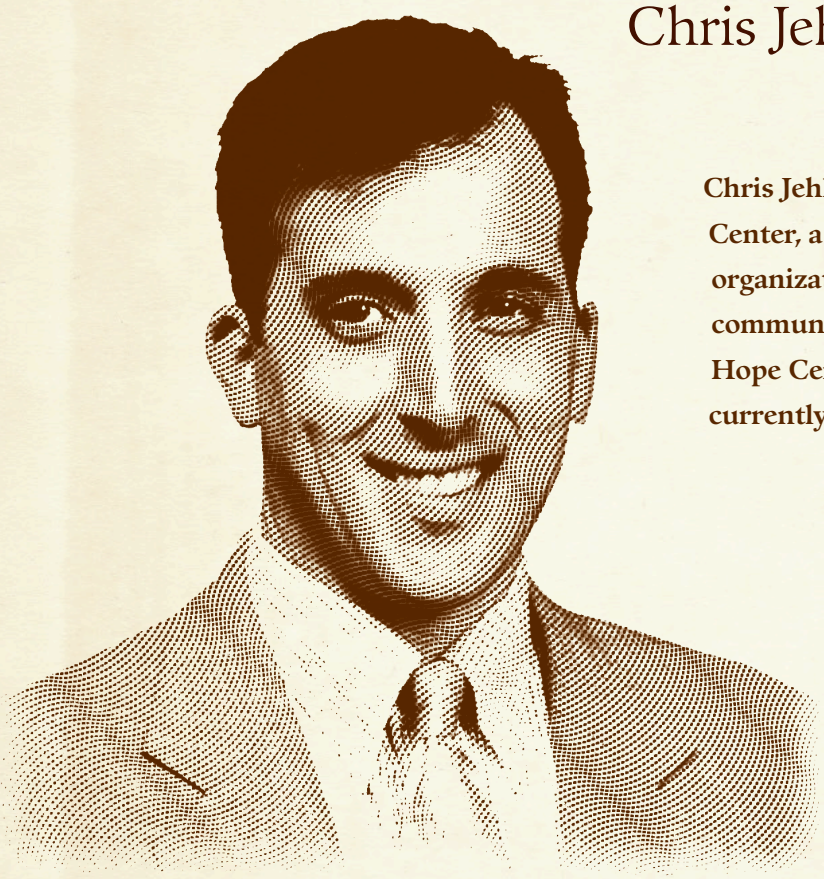
Chris Jehle



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A Shallow Theology Exposed

It was a Saturday morning and I had just returned from the local grocery store to my home in an abandoned, low income neighborhood in Kansas City. I was at my wits end. At the store I had encountered several moldy items of food and was acutely aware of the store's foul smell and dingy appearance. On the way to the store I had passed a group of homeless men that had recently begun congregating on a street corner. Along the way my car was severely jolted by oversized potholes on deteriorating roads. These experiences only exacerbated a severe internal dissonance which had already been developing. Soon after moving into this neighborhood I had walked outside one morning to the sight of a homeless man sifting through my garbage in search for food. He was gnawing on a half-eaten chicken leg and some crusty cornbread. It was a jarring experience that stayed with me. These types of jarring experiences, along with the events that Saturday, sent me over an emotional and intellectual cliff.

At the time I was a young, idealistic person who had followed a perceived call from God to relocate into the inner city to minister, love, and serve. After several years of active ministry I began noticing cracks in my theological foundation. What, if anything, did God have to say about the immense poverty and subpar living conditions that typified life in this area? Undeniably, a problem existed. Yet Kansas City and its churches were largely continuing on with life as normal. Was that okay? At a basic level, did God have anything to say about the moldy food, the presence of homeless men, the deteriorated streets?

I knew that God was committed to "saving people." I knew that Jesus was compassionate and that he called his followers to also express compassion for others. However, this theological framework began to feel very inadequate in light of the widespread poverty and oppression that provoked me. Though I was a committed Christian leading an urban ministry, I was brutally confronted with my own ignorance. The framework through which I read and interpreted the Scriptures did not provide the depth of knowledge to respond adequately to my questioning.

That Saturday I sat on my porch and began reading the Old Testament for hours. As far as I can remember, up to that point, it was one of the few times I read the Old Testament for any prolonged length of time. "Finding" the Old Testament Scriptures that day was like finding water in the desert. It was not that I had never read them before; I had. I had read them mostly as an old, outdated way of relating to God. The disorientation I was experiencing that day helped me to read the Old Testament with new eyes, creating a sense of desperation that allowed the Old Testament, especially the Torah, to be valued as God's words for shaping the theology, values, and actions of Christian communities. I was shocked and overjoyed to observe the ever-present *command* for the people of God to care for the poor and the oppressed.

"The faith that brings you to the city will not be enough to sustain you." These words of John Perkins perfectly described my situation. I thought I had been well-trained prior to serving and living in the midst of poverty and oppression. Though I was young and idealistic, I had spent almost ten years engaged in leadership for a growing suburban church and two local chapters of national youth ministries.

However, the training from these ministries almost exclusively centered on ministry techniques, which I readily embraced and taught to others. For example, I read multiple books and articles about developing one's leadership skills. Skills such as crafting an effective mission statement, teambuilding, and vision-casting

were emphasized. While I am grateful for these skills, they were grossly incapable of equipping me to respond to the complexities I was facing in the inner city.

My problem was not a lack of leadership techniques, but something much deeper. My problem stemmed from a shallow understanding of the Scriptures. This shallowness resulted in a thin theological framework that was not capable of guiding me through the complexities of living in a low-income, African American neighborhood as a white male from a suburban neighborhood. Despite the heavy demands of leading a recently founded ministry, I committed that day to invest a significant amount of my time to theological studies.

The Wrong Gospel?

I had no idea what I was in for as I began to read theologically. The American theological landscape, it turns out, is guided by two predominate visions of the gospel, neither of which fully capture the story found in the Scriptures.[1] One gospel focuses on the forgiveness of individual sins. In this gospel, individuals are saved by Jesus from eternity in hell and will someday be admitted, by the atoning blood of Jesus, into a disembodied heaven to forever worship Jesus.

The second gospel vision focuses on establishing a just community which allows all individuals to flourish in this life. Jesus is a valuable guide and ethicist in this endeavor, yet this gospel can be pursued with "no reliance on a present God or a living Christ at all."[2]

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1. This observation is noted by both Dallas Willard and N.T. Wright, each of whom describe the two predominate gospels similarly. In addition to describing Western Christianity's two predominate gospels, both authors superbly describe a more complete gospel. To read further: Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 35-55; N.T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 110-118.

2. Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 51.

I was trained in the first gospel, which Dallas Willard calls "a gospel of sin management."[3] This gospel of sin management is by far the dominant gospel in my context. It shapes and guides the majority of individuals and churches I interact with. While it was this gospel that propelled me from the suburbs into the urban core, it did not fully capture the primary story found in the Scriptures and therefore offered minimal guidance once I began life and work in a low-income neighborhood.

However, capturing a more complete view of the Scriptures did not come easily. It took over four years of theological study and reflection in order to replace this gospel of sin management with a more complete gospel. To reorient my theological framework, the writings of Christian scholars such as N.T. Wright and Dallas Willard were absolutely essential. A thorough reorientation has also required the pursuit of a seminary degree in theology, regularly seeking out other Christian leaders for theological reflection and dialogue, and employing the discipline of writing, which forces me to crystallize my thoughts.

My understanding of the gospel now more fully captures the grand narrative found in the Scriptures.[4] A more comprehensive understanding of the gospel includes the restoration of life in God's good creation to his original intent, achieved through Jesus Christ. As displayed in Genesis, God sees his creation as extraordinarily good and despite humanity's propensity to sin, God is committed to seeking his creation's redemption. This redemption will come through God's people Israel, of whom Abraham is patriarch. Israel's covenanted relationship with God and each other was to be marked by fidelity, justice, and righteousness. Israel's life was to image God to the world, resulting in an ingathering of the nations. Though Israel was largely unfaithful in this role, out of Israel was born Jesus the Christ. Through the life,

3. Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 41.

4. Any attempt to distill the gospel down to a paragraph risks reduction, yet is an important exercising in declaring what one believes the overarching narrative of the Scriptures to be.

teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God is reconciling his entire creation to himself. The great enemies of humanity, sin and death, have been soundly defeated through Jesus. The resurrected Jesus has returned to God and will someday return to formally place all of the creation under the loving and just rule of God. In that day, a bodily resurrection of all humanity will occur. God's wonderfully good creation will finally be fully freed from sin and death, and will fully flourish as God originally intended. Life in the coming age will be intimate and robust. In the meantime, all peoples are invited to join the people of God, the Church, who together submit to his loving and just rule. All who do so will, as the Church, by faith, embody the resurrected life in the here and now. The Church is empowered by God's Holy Spirit, as they faithfully await the promised return of their God and King.

Theological Reflection

As I reflect on this message of good news, several aspects stand out.

Life. God values life. He is actively working to restore life in his creation to its original intent. My long immersion in the gospel of sin management diminished this emphasis on God's longing for flourishing life to be restored. By inordinately focusing on the individual forgiveness of sins as a way to avoid eternal death, I captured little of God's acute desire for life to flourish in his creation. A solid grasp of this vision of flourishing life is essential for living faithfully.

The Scripture's description of the age to come reinforces God's commitment to restoring life to his original intent. The resurrected life will occur here, on earth. Under the gospel of sin management, however, I was trained that God would destroy the earth and that those who were saved from their sins would enjoy life in a disembodied heaven. Life in that disembodied heaven was described in ways that resembled a blissful, unending vacation with God. Living with this picture of the

future restricts motivation to seek the restoration of the creation in the present life. I remember sitting with a friend in college mulling this over. We were both Christians who were weary from trying to follow Christ while living amongst a majority of students who were not attempting to follow him. We "comforted" ourselves by reminding ourselves that this evil world would someday be burned up and then we would not have to deal with its challenges. However, the future of God's creation has a much different, more hopeful future. God will purge his creation from sin and death. In the resurrected life, humanity will finally live in perfect communion with God. Humanity will finally assume the place of righteous and just governance God originally envisioned humanity to carry. In the age to come, life will be active, challenging, and robust.

When this picture of the future guides Christians we can be motivated to actively embody that life of the future now. We do so because it is the life we will live in the age to come. Dallas Willard describes this as "training for reigning."[5] N.T. Wright describes life in this vision as "future-shaped character."[6] Christians, empowered by the Holy Spirit, work hard to embody the life they will actively live in the age to come.

It is this picture of the future that brings the teachings regarding a just society for the poor and oppressed to bear on our present life. We desire to be transformed into the people of God who possess and embody the character God desires humanity to utilize when governing his good creation. While evil still wreaks havoc throughout the creation, Christians can bear witness to the loving, just rule of God by embodying the life of the age to come in the present. When Christians do so, the poor and oppressed are given all that they need so that they too can live flourishing lives.

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5. Dallas Willard, "Spirituality and Ministry" (Doctor of Ministry class, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA, June 7-18, 2010).

6. Wright, *After You Believe*, 57.

The People of God. My re-oriented understanding of the grand narrative displayed in the Scriptures moves the focus away from an individual emphasis to the central importance of God's formation of a covenanted people. "God is not just saving individuals and preparing them for heaven; rather, he is creating a *people* among whom he can live and who in their life together will reproduce God's life and character."[7] Examples exist all throughout the Scriptures of this collective expression of life with God. Deuteronomy 21:1-9 instructs Israel how to respond when a murder is committed and the perpetrator cannot be identified. To remove the sinful stain of murder, a corporate ritual must be undertaken. Even though the guilty individual has not owned responsibility for the crime, the people of God are not absolved of responsibility. The nearest town, on behalf of all of Israel, is responsible to respond. Individual sin affects the entire community.

The biblical term "covenant" indicates a collective understanding of life with God. The formation of a covenanted relationship, complete with mutual obligations, is how God establishes a relationship with his people. In this covenant, an individual follower can only be bound to God by also being bound to others. Based on this bounded nature of relationship it is only natural for Jesus to respond that one must fully love both God and neighbor when asked to sum up the covenantal commands.

Jesus' selection of twelve disciples also indicates his emphasis on the formation of a people. By forming "the twelve," Jesus is announcing a reconstitution of Israel. As Jesus proclaims the availability of the kingdom of God, he is not merely offering individual salvation. He is offering entrance into his father's kingdom. Those who wish to submit and enter God's kingdom do so by joining a people, who together live as faithful citizens.

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7. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 66.

Additionally, English translations often hide the plural language of the Bible. In many instances, when the Bible uses "you," it is not as a second person singular pronoun, but rather a second person plural pronoun. In these instances "you all" more accurately captures the plurality of the original languages. "Hallelujah" is another good example of this plurality. It originally comes from the Hebrew language and is a second person plural command to praise God. Thus it could be translated as "Praise God you all!"

Implications for Ministry

As a senior leader of a growing Christian Community Development ministry, using my time well is critical. Numerous tasks, opportunities, and distractions confront me daily and force me to prioritize well. To ensure our ministry is well-grounded theologically, it is essential to protect ample time for theological reflection. The discipline of theological reflection is crucial in order to faithfully reflect the teachings of the Scriptures.

The amount of time to reorient an organization's focus around a different narrative should not be underestimated. Correspondingly, the task is not accomplished through mere transfer of information. Further, the process done well will not result in immediately usable information for participants, including Christian teachers and pastors. "A steady, patient, intentional articulation" must be undertaken.[8] People must be given the opportunity to reflect deeply. Questioning and due process must be accounted for. In our context, this process has taken over five years. The emergence of a new narrative has not been linear. Several crises created the conditions for growth to accelerate, crises we did not anticipate, but did seek to facilitate theological dialogue when they emerged.

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8. Walter Brueggemann, "2004 Emergent Theological Conversation with Walter Brueggemann," Internet, available from http://ebookbrowse.com/walter-brueggemann-19-theses-transcript-doc-d98417216, accessed 15 June 2012.

At times this process has not been well received by key stakeholders. For some the amount of time spent on this process was too extensive because it pulled busy people away from important tasks. For others it seemed unnecessary; finding best practices and copying their methods seemed a more effective use of time. However, by staying the course, our organization has a depth it did not possess before. Out of our new narrative, we have a solid theological framework to guide decision making.

Integration

One activity we are implementing from within our new theological framework is the formation of a neighborhood church. The intention to do so existed well before this process of theological reflection began. In fact, we expected to have launched this neighborhood church many years ago. Thankfully though, the church formation process did not happen then, as it would have been formed based on a gospel of sin management. Many voices and models vie for influence when it comes to church planting. Prior to cultivating the discipline of theological reflection, best practice and strategic value would have influenced the shape of the church as much as theology. Now however, the church is being formed from a deeper, more reliable framework.

The effects of this new narrative are observable throughout the budding church. Because of the intimacy God desires with his people, times for prayer are held throughout the week. Even the type of prayer is different. Emphasis is placed on praying through the Psalms and seeking to hear God's voice, in addition to interceding for others. As our small church community gathers at established times throughout the week we seek to reflect the collective nature of the people of God (most of the prayer is common). This format for prayer has offered more depth, nourishment, and community building than our previously exclusive reliance upon individual devotions guided by prayer acronyms such as *ACTS*.

In light of the future restoration of all of God's creation, Easter is practiced as the most important Christian celebration of the year. After practicing our developing Easter traditions over the past several years, I observe a deeper appreciation for Jesus' resurrection and its implications within our fellowship. This has generated a deeper sense of hopefulness, a steadfast belief in the goodness of God, and a genuine longing to live redemptively, all wonderful attributes for navigating through life in a violent and abandoned neighborhood.

Our other Christian Community Development efforts are experiencing a similar metamorphosis. Whether it is our current housing projects, our public safety efforts, or our youth discipleship programs, they are being conducted from a strong foundation. We are glad to do our best to embody God's commitment to the full restoration of his entire creation, especially doing so in ways that allow the vulnerable to flourish. While the work of Christian Community Development continues to be extraordinarily hard, it is satisfying to endure the challenges from a well-grounded theological position.

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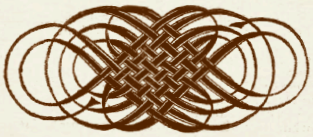
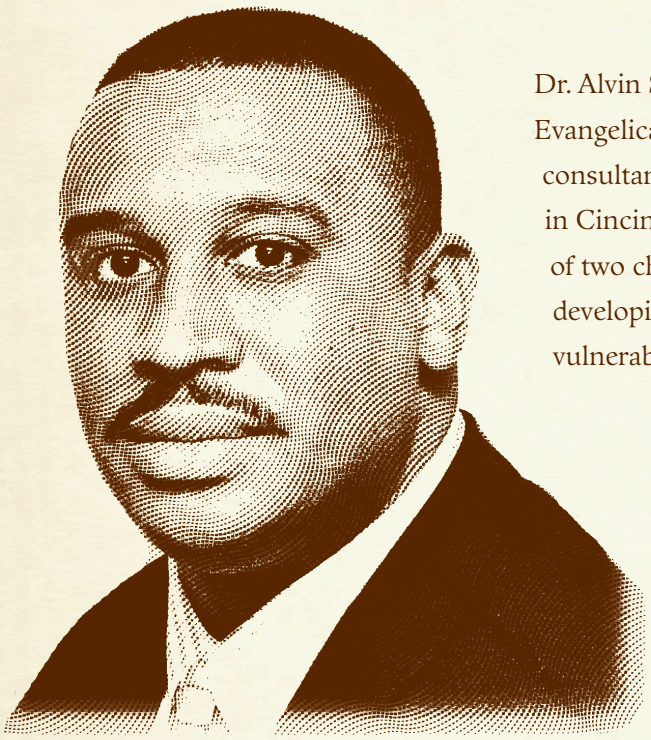


Alvin Sanders



Dr. Alvin Sanders serves as an Executive Director with the Evangelical Free Church of America. In addition he is a consultant, speaker, author, and adjunct professor. He resides in Cincinnati with his wife Caroline and is the proud father of two children, Hannah and Gabby. Alvin's passion is developing, empowering, and releasing leaders to serve the vulnerable

LIFE LESSONS: A TRIBUTE TO GLEN KEHREIN

In August of 1998 I walked into the office of the former president of Circle Urban Ministries of Chicago, the late great Glen Kehrein, and began to rant. I was in a stage in life where I viciously attacked the motives of anybody in authority. I had my reasons.

I was fresh off of an intense episode of "church abuse" where for 3 years I served my heart out for a leader, only to realize said leader was manipulating me for personal gain. When it became apparent the manipulation no longer could happen, I was unceremoniously dumped and my reputation slandered throughout the community. The rant was the first of many I would lay on Glen over a 13 year period. I remember one day at lunch we debated over the term racial reconciliation. I thought it was a terrible term to be honest.

At that time my premise was that to be reconciled insinuates that the entities were together at some point. The races have never been together I reasoned, so I did not think it was a very useful term. Really I was in need of a solid theological understanding of reconciliation for both my personal and vocational life.

The role that Glen played for me was to give me those lessons. Through friendship he taught me reconciliation was a thorough understanding of the gospel, having authentic relationship, and serving the vulnerable of our society.

Reconciliation 101

I learned from Glen that true reconciliation had both individual and institutional components. Maybe the most important lesson he taught me was how to handle life when it comes undone. He gave me a living theology of brokenness as I watched him handle one family and ministry crisis after another with grace, dignity, and truth.

He was a role model for all to follow, as I see many who preach and teach about practicing reconciliation in the public sphere but do not work very hard to put their personal home life in order. There is something inauthentic about operating like that.

Institutionally he taught me reconciliation means correcting misuse of culture, power, and ethics within the body of Christ and our society, working for the fair treatment of all humanity regardless of their social status. He taught me to see repairing a sin- sick, broken world as an opportunity to advance the Kingdom of God.

Many make a big deal about Ephesians 2:8-9, stressing the implications of the "not by works" phrase. Glen celebrated 2:10, stressing operating in the good works we were created to do. The message was: to not be so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good.

We shared the same denomination (Evangelical Free Church of America) and I watched him hold our senior leaders' feet to the fire at board meetings. He constantly agitated the national leadership to not contain all old white males, and to care for justice issues. He also was a multiplier as most of the first urban ministries started within the denomination had a direct tie to Circle Urban.

Graduation Day

Maybe the best way to display how the teachings and example of Glen have guided me in my efforts at reconciling is to tell you a part of my journey. After 2 years of working for Glen at Circle I moved to Cincinnati to take the lessons I learned and plant River of Life Church in the poorest neighborhood of the city.

Within the early stages of the ministry our neighborhood suffered a traumatic event. Timothy Thomas, a 19-year-old African-American with a history of non-violent misdemeanors, was shot and killed by a white Cincinnati police officer. His death caused outrage in the neighborhood resulting in millions of dollars of damage due to rioting.

It was in this environment that we established a church displaying CCDA principles, becoming a tangible demonstration of what God can do when people from all walks of life live in unity for the advancement of the kingdom.

In spite of our tumultuous beginning, the first 3 years were going extremely well. We were growing numerically, obtained an old "big box" hardware store to renovate, and were well on our way to success. Or so I thought.

In a six-month period we lost 35% of our people. I began to do exit interviews and could not believe my ears as to the reasons people left. "We don't believe the races should worship together; I don't want my kids involved with poor kids; black people are too loud; your wife shouldn't be on stage opening up the service because a man should do it." Those exit interviews pretty much destroyed my paradigm of success.

I was in a place of despair. Here were people in whom I had invested in for years and they basically bailed on me and the reconciliation vision. To be honest, my spirit was weak, my will failing, and I was ready to resign. But I did not because I had the life lessons that Glen had instilled in me concerning reconciliation.

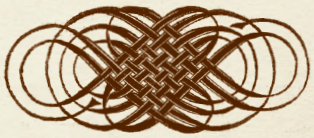
In leading that wonderful ministry for 7 years I learned reconciliation is a verb and is much bigger than merely achieving harmony. I have come to believe it is a bridge to fulfilling the Great Commission. It is impossible to fulfill it without following the first and second greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40).

When I pastored River of Life, 70% of those who joined had not previously had a church home. Most told me one of the big reasons they came was the fact that everybody was accepted there, regardless of their cultural background.

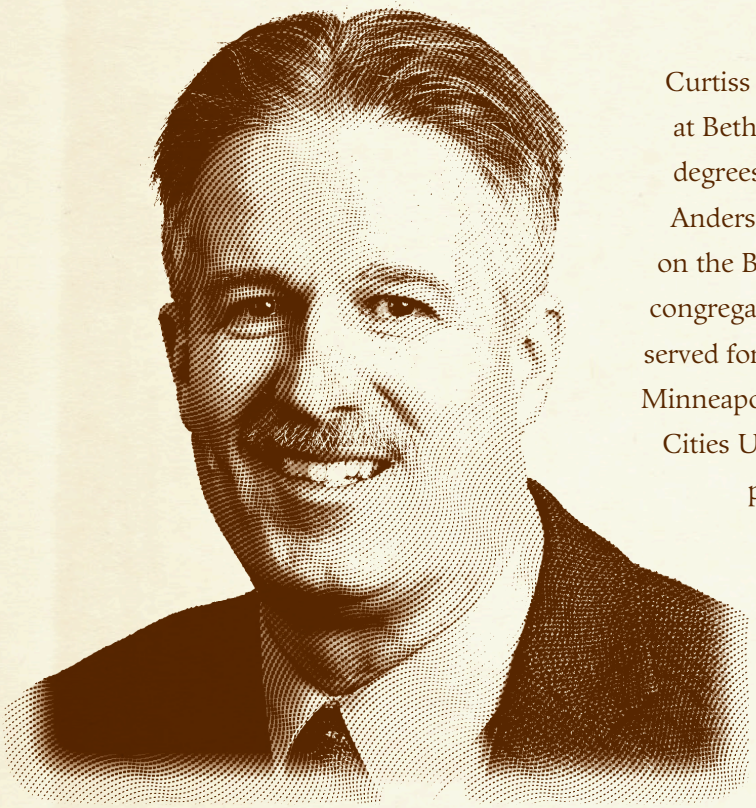
The journey begins within. We cannot lead anybody anywhere we have not been. At the core, reconciliation is an expression of God's work within you. The world is spiritually broken and the tangible expression of brokenness is oppression and injustice. How broken is your heart over this? Maybe a more important question is: what are you willing to lead others to do about it?

Glen Kehrein was a man whose heart was broken by the brokenness he saw in this world and he dedicated his life to doing something about it. Of the Christians I know, I would honestly say that maybe only 5% of them I have modeled my life after. These are people who have a genuine faith worth having and have shared that faith generously. At the top of the list is Glen Kehrein, former president of Circle Urban Ministries and present resident of heaven. Thanks Glen Kehrein for the gift of you. You will be greatly missed.

SECTION II: EXPLORING RECONCILIATION



Curtiss Paul DeYoung



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PRACTICING BIBLICAL RECONCILIATION IN MULTICULTURAL CONGREGATIONS [1]

Congregations can be demographically diverse and yet not exhibit reconciliation. Therefore, this article reexamines the first century congregations described in the Bible with a particular focus on the reconciliation process that ensued amidst a communal life that brought together rich and poor, women and men, slaves and free, those with privilege and those without, and a great range of ethnic groups. These biblical insights are then applied to the communal formation and leadership practice of multicultural congregations in the 21st century. Since these congregations were formed in the context of the Roman Empire, they would also be a mix of colonized persons and those who were colonizers (or beneficiaries of colonization). Examining this colonial context offers some fresh insights for understanding the reconciliation process in multicultural congregations.

The lives of Jews, like Paul and the early disciples, were shaped by the daily reality of the military presence and political domination of the Roman Empire. Jews experienced significant bias and suffered the brutally violent oppression of Rome. The Roman Empire used crucifixion to terrorize subject peoples. Crucifixion was a constant symbol of Roman rule as thousands of Judeans were executed on crosses. The crucifixion of Jesus was a public spectacle of cruelty meant to terrorize his followers and any potential sympathizers. So, when Jews saw Roman soldiers worshipping in their congregations they remembered their oppression. When Jews sat next to Gentiles who benefitted from Roman rule they were painfully aware of their low social status. Every time these assemblies spoke of Jesus crucified they were reminded of the Roman state-sponsored terrorism used to kill Jesus and intimidate Jewish people. Given the brutality and bigotry experienced by Jews as subjects of the Roman Empire it is difficult to believe that Romans (and others benefitting from

their position in the Empire) would be invited into Jewish faith communities. But this is what happened in the first century church.

Reconciliation

According to the apostle Paul, the glue that held these congregations together was the process of reconciliation (Eph 2). Our English word *reconciliation* translates several related Greek words[2] that mean literally, "to change, or exchange; to effect a change."[3] According to theologian John de Gruchy, when we are "reconciled" we exchange places "with 'the other,' and (are) in solidarity with rather than against 'the other.'" Reconciliation is a process that causes us to overcome "alienation through identification and in solidarity with 'the other,' thus making peace and restoring relationships."[4] Biblical scholar James Earl Massey writes, "A new disposition is exhibited, a new stance is assumed, a new framework is established granting a rich togetherness where enmity and distance previously were the order."[5] Reconciliation can be understood as exchanging places with "the other," overcoming alienation through identification, solidarity, restoring relationships, new frameworks, and a rich togetherness.

Paul's social location as a colonized person shaped his perspective on life and on what he meant when he used the word *reconciliation*. Over time the self-definition of oppressed people can begin to mirror more and more of the colonizer's perspective. Colonized people feel pressured to assimilate—to assume the posture and perspective expected of them by their oppressors. Eventually the identity of colonized people can be so diminished that they internalize the viewpoint of the oppressor and see themselves, others, and even their oppressor through the lens of colonization.

Paul's declaration of reconciliation through the cross and resurrection of Jesus was a bold claim that liberation was available from the effects of colonialism. A

damaged, enslaved, and colonized identity was restored to its original design as a human identity created in the image of God. The logic of Paul's proclamation was that because Jesus' death by Rome was reversed through resurrection by God, the death of one's identity could be revived and returned to full humanity. All identities—ethnic, gender, religious, and the like—were reframed. One's colonial identity was switched to an identity in Jesus Christ. In order to announce this new identity, the language used for Caesar—"Son of God," "Lord," "Redeemer," "Savior," "Liberator," "God"—Paul used for Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, "we regard no one from a human point of view" (2 Cor 5:16)—that is, as colonizer or colonized. Paul's words could be rephrased to say: we regard no one from a dominant, Roman Empire point of view; we regard no one from the colonizer's point of view.

The Formation of 1st Century Biblical Congregations

These early followers of a crucified and resurrected Jesus went first into oppressed Jewish communities preaching the healing word of reconciliation. The embryonic congregations they established were healing laboratories for oppressed and colonized Jews. Communities of healing were created in the midst of an oppressive society to counter the harmful effects of colonialism. This ministry of reconciliation healed bruised and crushed psyches where oppression had been internalized and identities had been demeaned and diminished. What makes the first century church truly amazing is what happened next. After establishing a healing process for fellow members of the oppressed Jewish community these early Jewish followers of Jesus then invited persons of power and privilege to be reconciled.

As Romans and Greeks embraced the reconciliation process they replaced their loyalty to the empire with an "in Christ" consciousness. Caesar was no longer their Savior. Jesus was their Redeemer. They rejected the privileges that go with power

and position and joined with those who were colonized. As the biblical definition of reconciliation implies, persons with much power and privilege *exchanged places* with persons of little privilege and power. Theologian Willie Jennings notes that after Peter's encounter with the Roman soldier Cornelius, Peter was invited by the Roman to stay for several days at his home (Acts 10:48). Jennings declares, "If a centurion and his household could be drawn into a new circle of belonging, then its implications for challenging the claims of the Roman state were revolutionary."[6] This was a clear demonstration of the healing power of reconciliation. A Roman soldier invited a Jew to stay in his home—Peter was a Jew who the Roman was under orders to keep oppressed. When Cornelius returned to his work as a soldier he could no longer allow for the mistreatment of Jews. In fact, the more he communed with people who were oppressed the more he was internally required by the Spirit of God to challenge the claims of the Roman state, even the very legitimacy of the Roman Empire.

In the midst of Roman colonial realities the church in Antioch was developed by Jews, members of an oppressed ethnic minority, who welcomed dominant culture Greeks (and likely Romans as well) into their fellowship under the leadership of Jews (Acts 11:19-26, 13:1). Paul and his co-workers used a similar strategy to establish congregations by going first into Jewish communities who were ethnic minority oppressed subjects of the Empire. Once a core community was established, they invited Romans and Greeks from the dominant culture to join. The primary biblical model of congregations was one where members of an oppressed minority community welcomed people from the privileged dominant culture into the local church.

Peter's welcome by Cornelius into the Roman's home was significant. Even more monumental was when Romans and Greeks were invited into the homes of Jews as guests and as equals—which is what happened when small Jewish home-based

congregations invited Gentiles into their fellowship. Romans and Greeks entered the homes of Jews for worship and fellowship as sisters and brothers. As Romans and Greeks reconciled (exchanged places) with Jews who were oppressed, privileged perspectives and positions were discarded and replaced with true familial bonds.

The fact that the leaders in the first generation of the Christian church were Jews was perhaps even more disruptive for the social status of Gentile Christians. Empire privileges ceased to be acknowledged in the church. In society Jews were socially beneath Greeks and Romans. In the church Jews were in leadership. This was a reversal of social expectations. Biblical scholar Tat-siong Benny Liew notes that Gentiles "experienced a status inversion in joining a religious minority" and they experienced the social effect of submission to a leader with a "Jewish body within the imperial ideology of the Roman Empire."[7] Throughout Acts and the letters of Paul it is evident that a status inversion occurred in the first century church as a result of the centrality of reconciliation between Gentiles and Jews. When Romans and Greeks joined congregations they became identified with a socially stigmatized people. They were adopted by marginalized people—becoming family with Jews who were oppressed by Rome—as well as expressing faith in Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified as an enemy of the state. This had life altering repercussions for their lifestyles and social statuses in the Roman Empire.

For Gentiles to fully reconcile with Jews they had to learn firsthand the effects of marginalization from those who understood it best. We see this in Paul's commitment to mentoring Gentiles in preparation for leadership. Paul mentored Titus, Luke, Epaphras, and many other Greeks for leadership. They were mentored side-by-side with Jews, thereby gaining the same training under the same circumstances as others oppressed by Rome. In other words, Gentiles were mentored for leadership as though they were Jews.

Reconciliation in Twenty-First Century Congregations

Throughout its history the church in the United States has produced segregated congregations defined by race and ethnicity.[8] Rather than transforming society through a process of reconciliation, congregations have mostly conformed to a racialized, patriarchal, and class-based society. Theologian Soong-Chan Rah goes so far as to speak of "the white captivity of the church (that) yields a theology focused on furthering and affirming the existing power paradigm."[9] This is counter to and opposite of the focus of the first century church which was deconstructing the existing power paradigm of the Roman Empire, liberating both the marginalized and the privileged, and reconciling them into a new community. Given the divide imposed by a racialized church, we also find African American congregations, ethnic immigrant congregations (immigrants and refugees from Asia, Latin America, Africa, etc.), and a small number of Native American congregations. In many cases these congregations exhibit the first phase of the reconciliation process—they are communities of healing for people who are oppressed and marginalized. Unfortunately, few whites have ventured into these faith communities.

With the onset of multiracial and multicultural congregations it would seem that they would naturally adhere to the first century biblical model. Yet even multicultural congregations committed to reconciliation often find their vision and ministry shaped by a dominant culture perspective. Sociologist Korie Edwards reminds us, "Interracial churches are not immune to white privilege and the normativity of white culture and beliefs. … I propose that interracial churches work, that is, remain racially integrated, to the extent that they are first comfortable places for whites to attend."[10] This is the complete opposite of first century church expectations which were focused on making their congregations *first* comfortable places for members of ethnic minority and oppressed communities. Biblical congregations invited colonizers and privileged persons to join churches comprised of folks from oppressed

communities who were engaging in a process of healing and reconciliation. Today white congregations invite persons of color into privilege—a process that often is more about assimilation than reconciliation—rather than asking whites to dismantle racial privileges and join with persons of color. Or leaders of color in multicultural congregations adapt to white models in order to attract whites, thereby losing the core of the healing and reconciliation DNA found in many congregations of color. Today's models of multiracial and multicultural congregations are too often born in the womb of privilege.

Implementing a Process of Reconciliation

Congregations must be places of healing for persons marginalized in society. This was central to first century churches and is nonnegotiable. For multiracial and multicultural congregations this means that persons of color will experience a community where they can recover from society's racism and enjoy the fullness of their racial and cultural identities. Many African American, ethnic immigrant, and Native American congregations are places of healing. People with privilege and power need congregations where they can exchange places (reconcile) with people who have been marginalized. They must experience the healing possibilities of real relationships and status inversion. Often whites want to engage in reconciliation on their own terms. They want people of color to come to them in places where they feel comfortable and in control. The temptation is to proceed directly from segregated mono-cultural congregations to multicultural churches without going through a process of reconciliation. This is made easy by just attending diverse Sunday services without actually engaging in deep intimate relationships where you are transformed by the other person's reality. For true reconciliation, whites need places where they are challenged to depart from privileges inherent to whiteness in the United States.

When Gentiles joined a congregation in the first century they entered a Jewish world. Many whites have never been to a church in a different cultural or racial context. One of the greatest challenges for multicultural congregations is the gap in cultural understanding and lived experience between whites and persons of color. Persons of color often live and work in a society dominated by whites and white cultural ways. Few whites have a deep knowledge of other cultures or have experiences that create an understanding of racism and prejudice. Most do not know the ways of African American, ethnic immigrant, or Native American churches (except for some stereotypes). Another challenge for white congregations attempting to become diverse is that they do not know how to create healing communities for people of color. Therefore, people of color can experience unintentional slights and racism due to ignorance and white privilege in congregations becoming "reconciled" and multicultural.

As in the case of first century congregations, status inversion is an important part of reconciliation for privileged people. Soong-Chan Rah states, "If you are a white Christian wanting to be a missionary in this day and age, and you have never had a nonwhite mentor, then you will not be a missionary. You will be colonialist. Instead of taking the gospel message into the world, you will take an Americanized version of the gospel."[11] Paraphrasing Rah, if you are a white person wanting to provide leadership in a multiracial or multicultural congregation, and you have never had a mentor of color, you will be a colonialist reproducing a U.S. white culture version of the church. Whites need to be mentored for leadership by persons of color. Paul mentored Gentiles side-by-side with Jews, training them as though they were Jews. Whites desiring to provide leadership in diverse congregations need to be mentored by leaders of color side-by-side with African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Latinas/os, Africans, and Arabs. Perhaps all seminarians should be required to have an apprenticeship in an African American, ethnic immigrant, or Native American congregation.

A final word … reconciliation is always about more than race. What we have noted above about relationships, status inversion, and mentoring also applies to gender, class, and the like. The first century church turned class status upside down and also empowered women into church leadership. Congregations that become successfully multicultural and multiracial are not fully reconciled unless they are addressing other places of alienation, marginalization, and injustice. Congregations can be racially reconciled but not fully reconciled if they do not include and empower other marginalized persons in their life and leadership as a congregation. There are no shortcuts to reconciliation. We must commit to the long haul.

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1. This article is adapted from chapters one and five in Allan Aubrey Boesak and Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012).

2. For a good overview of the verbs katallassō and apokatallassō and the noun katallagē see James Earl Massey, "Reconciliation: Two Bible Studies," in *A Mighty Long Journey: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation,* eds. Timothy George and Robert Smith Jr. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 199-210; Corneliu Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation in Paul's Theology: Narrative Readings in Romans* (London: T & T Clark International, 2010), 25-31.

3. Massey, "Reconciliation," 204.

4. John W. de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 51.

5. Massey, "Reconciliation," 205.

6. Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 269.

7. Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Redressing Bodies in Corinth: Racial/Ethnic Politics and Religious Difference in the Context of Empire," in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes,* ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 133.

8. For discussion of the racial segregation of the church in the United States see Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2003), 42-61.

9. Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2009), 22, 147.

10. Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial* Churches (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 35, 6.

11. Rah, *Next Evangelicalism,* 162.

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INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION AND THE CHALLENGE TO CCDA'S THEOLOGY OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION

> [Jesus] said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."
> (Mark 7:27-28, NRSV)

The Biblical narrative of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician woman is a troubling gospel passage.[1] Jesus and his disciples are hiding out in a house in the region of Tyre and Sidon, likely weary and looking for solace from the crowds. Somehow, though, this unnamed woman finds out who and where Jesus is. She comes to him begging for healing for her daughter, who is suffering from an unclean spirit. At this point in the narrative, readers of the New Testament are quite aware of Jesus' bent toward compassion. It makes us profoundly uncomfortable, then, that Jesus first ignores the woman and then rejects her with a harshness that he has previously reserved for the privileged and hypocritical religious leaders.[2]

We could imagine all manner of motivations and justifications for Jesus.[3] But to focus exclusively on Jesus' intentions in labeling the woman a dog obscures an important element in this text, namely, the Syrophoenician woman's participation in her own subjugation. Why was the woman willing to accept being labeled a dog? Was it solely because she was desperate to have her daughter healed? Or could it

1. Cf. Mark 7:24-30; also Matthew 15:21-28.

2. As David Rhoads notes, ancient Jews considered dogs to be unclean because they were scavengers, that is, they "had contact with and ate things which were unclean. It is for this impurity that Jews referred to Gentiles as dogs. Clearly this was meant as an insult" [David Rhoads, "Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman in Mark: A Narrative-Critical Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (Summer 1994): 356]. Moreover, whereas Matthew's gospel identifies the woman as Canaanite, Mark is explicit to denote that she is a Gentile of Syrophoenician origin, a designation that emphasizes her role not only as an outsider, but as a member of a despised group. Thus, it was a racial insult.

3. For further discussion of these, see Poling Sun's concise review of traditional theological approaches to this text, which range from interpreting the language metaphorically to psychologizing Jesus [Poling Sun, "Naming the Dog: Another Asian Reading of Mark 7:24-30," *Review and Expositor* 107 (Summer 2010): 381-394].

have been because she had been called a dog for so long – personally as well as culturally – that she had come to accept and believe her own unworthiness?

Practitioners in CCDA ministries encounter Syrophoenician women and men everyday – individuals who have been marginalized on the basis of their race and who have been bombarded with so many messages about their unworthiness that they have internalized them.[4] Yet CCDA's theology of racial reconciliation, with its focus on between-group processes, has inadequately addressed the reality and depths of internalized oppression among people of color.

The Dynamics of Internalized Racism

Racism does not simply declare that whiteness is better than all other races. It declares that every facet of whiteness – physical features, cultural expressions, religious customs, neighborhoods, schools, and so on – is better than those of African-, Asian-, Hispanic/Latino-, and Native-American identities. Since European colonialism's earliest encounters with people of color throughout the world, white supremacy has declared this message so unceasingly – and often surreptitiously – that people of color have come to believe it. Many people of color, then, experience what Cornel West describes as an "existential angst [derived] from the lived experience of ontological wounds and emotional scars inflicted by white supremacist beliefs and images permeating U.S. society and culture. These beliefs and images attack black intelligence, black ability, black beauty, and black character daily in subtle and not-so-subtle ways."[5] While West's statement is pointed at the Black experience in America,

4. Obviously, race is not the sole basis upon which people in the United States experience marginalization. Discrimination and oppression also occur on the basis of class, gender, disability status, national origin, religion, and sexual orientation. Given its desire for wholeness for all of God's children, CCDA must necessarily be concerned with each of these forms of systemic sin. Given the constraints of this paper, however, I will focus on racial oppression.

5. Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 27.

it is also true for people of color broadly. Further, when racism is internalized, White people do not have to overtly oppress people of color because the latter "carry the oppressive system in their psyches."[6] Indeed, the privileged can then point to the effects of internalized oppression as justification for racial inequities.

Internalized racism reveals itself in myriad ways. It is exhibited whenever people of color label their cultural expressions, institutions, and capabilities as inherently inferior to that of Whites. During my first months at a small, private university, for example, I was frequently shocked when members of the university community blamed every institutional shortcoming on its status as a historically Black school. Whether the problem was a lack of chalk in a classroom, the unavailability of class texts in the bookstore, or faculty salary compression, they would state emphatically, "Well, this is a *Black* school," as if only Black colleges experienced those issues (which, in fact, are fairly common across institutions). Often, though, the cultural comparison is subtler. An unstated belief that "what's White is right," for example, may underlie the decision of many Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Americans to distance themselves from their native languages and traditions in order to better assimilate into "mainstream" (read: White) culture.[7]

Alternatively, internalized racism occurs when people of color consciously or unconsciously embody stereotypes of their racial/ethnic group. When "video vixens"

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6. Homer U. Ashby Jr., "Is It Time for a Black Pastoral Theology?," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* (1996): 2. See also Edward Wimberly, "Black Pastoral Theology as Psychological Liberation," in *The Quest for Liberation and Reconciliation: Essays in Honor of J. Deotis Roberts*, ed. Michael Battle (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 141-152.

7. Forced cultural alienation has been an explicit strategy of affirming White supremacy. For example, from the 1870s to 1940s, masses of Native American youth were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in boarding schools with the aim of "Christianizing" and "civilizing" them by removing all traces of their indigenous cultures, including names, languages, and traditions and practices. For a brief summary of the Native American boarding school movement, see United Nations, "Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study," prepared by Andrea Smith, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Eighth Session, Official Records, Internet, available from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/E_C_19_2009_crp1.pdf, accessed 18 June 2012.

appear in music videos and pose for photo shoots with ample, thong-clad posteriors facing the camera, they recapitulate the shame inflicted upon Saartje Bartman[8] and breathe new life into the controlling image of the jezebel, the manipulative and sexually-insatiable seductress.[9] And when African-, Asian-, Hispanic/Latino-, and Native-American youth pejoratively label their high-achieving counterparts as "oreos," "twinkies," "coconuts," and "apples," they unwittingly co-sign the notion that academic achievement and intellectual superiority are the domain of Whites. Even seemingly positive stereotypes such as the "strong Black woman" and the "model minority" are weighted with racial baggage.[10]

Further still, internalized racism occurs when survivors of oppression turn the rage of historical and contemporary trauma against themselves, their families, and other members of their racial/ethnic group. While violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide are not problems exclusive to people of color, their disproportionate rates among many African-, Hispanic/Latino-, and Native-American youth and adults have prompted many scholars and activists to view these issues as evidence of anger turned inward. Among women of color, I would further add to this list the problems of obesity, HIV/AIDS infection, and other stress-related illnesses that

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8. Saartje Bartman was one of two Khoisian women (what is now South Africa) who were exhibited throughout Europe in the 19th century as the "Hottentot Venus." Baartman was often featured semi-nude in a cage in order to showcase her large buttocks. Following her death, she was dissected and her body parts were displayed in various museums. Her skeleton and a cast of her body remained on display in a Paris museum as late as the 1980s. See Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1815-1817," in *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture*, ed. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 66-95.

9. Originating during slavery, the jezebel stereotype was one of two predominant images (the other being Mammy) used to justify the enslavement and sexual assault of Black women by White men, who often claimed that enslaved Black women "tricked" them into having sex. The myth played an important role in supporting the American slaveocracy in that it raised expectations of Black women's fertility, and consequently their value as property. For an extensive review of these stereotypes, see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

10. Chanequa Walker-Barnes, "The Burden of the Strong Black Woman," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 19 (Summer 2009): 1-21; and Frieda Wong and Richard Halgin, "The 'Model Minority': Bane or Blessing for Americans?" *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 34 (January 2006): 38-49.

decrease quality of life and shorten life expectancies.[11] Howard Thurman described it as the tendency of the oppressed to follow the example of their oppressors in taking their own lives lightly.[12] Dr. John Perkins explains it this way:

> Our poor, young men don't know why they're angry. They just are. Kids in our neighborhood have lived such a segregated life that they don't know any white people to be mad at. But they have internalized this rebellious anger, and it has turned into an unrecognized self-hatred. They kill the people they love most because they don't know what to do with the fact that they've been taught to hate themselves.[13]

Perhaps one of the most widespread, and pernicious, forms of internalized racism is colorism. Aptly described by a Washington Post staff writer as "the crazy aunt in the attic of racism,"[14] colorism is the phenomenon by which people within a racial group attribute value to one another based upon their complexion and other features (e.g., hair texture, nose shape, and eye color). Light-skinned individuals are judged to be more beautiful, more intelligent, and more desirable than individuals with dark skin.[15] The dirty offspring of white supremacy – colorism – impacts nearly every racial/group that has suffered European colonialism or enslavement. It persists despite the unprecedented access to dolls, toys, books, television and film characters,

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11. These statements are not intended to imply that health disparities are solely, or even primarily, the result of internalized racism. There are a multitude of factors responsible for racial disparities in health, most notably issues such as poverty, environmental pollution, lack of health insurance and access to adequate medical care, and diminished access to nutrient-rich foods.

12. Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949; reprint Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), 70 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

13. John M. Perkins and Charles Marsh, *Welcoming Justice: God's Movement Toward Beloved Community* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 39.

14. DeNeen L. Brown, "The Legacy of Colorism Reflects Wounds of Racism That Are More Than Skin-Deep," *Washington Post*, July 12, 2009, Internet, available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/10/AR2009071000022.html, accessed 6 June 2012.

15. As Kathy Russell, Midge Wilson, and Ronald Hall describe in *The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color Among African-Americans* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), colorism is often a two-way interchange. On the one hand, dark-skinned individuals may be spurned and labeled as unattractive, unintelligent, or undesirable. On the other hand, fair-complexioned individuals may be rejected by their darker-skinned counterparts as having insufficient ethnic authenticity (p. 2; see also Hunter, p. 35-37).

and public role models enjoyed by people of color in the "post-racial" twenty-first century. Discussions of colorism often center upon its intragroup manifestations and implications. Yet it is vital to understand that colorism is a direct descendant of white supremacist racial ideology that establishes metrics of aesthetic and cultural value by which individuals and racial/ethnic groups are evaluated based upon their closeness to whiteness. As Margaret Hunter notes, "Whites, as well as people of color, act in ways that maintain white and light skin privilege, and continue to devalue dark skin."[16] The fashion and beauty industry is a prime example. A studied look at the supermodels of color reveals that, regardless of their national origin, many share a similar facial profile: large, almond-shaped; straight, thin noses; high forehead; small chin; and high cheekbones. It is no wonder, then, that women are especially hit hard by colorism, as attested by the unrelenting popularity of skin-bleaching creams, eyelid surgery, hair straighteners, wigs, and hair extensions.

In the trailer to producer Bill Duke's new documentary, *Dark Girls: The Story of Color, Gender, and Race,* dark-skinned Black women of various ages and backgrounds recount how they have been impacted by colorism. The women describe being taunted mercilessly by peers, who called them names such as "Blackie" or "Tar Baby." Even among the family members who were supposed to love them best, these women felt devalued because of their skin color. One woman, for example, described how her joy gave way to hurt as she overheard her mother talking about her: "My daughter is beautiful. She's got great eyelashes. She's got the cheekbones. She's got great lips…Could you imagine if she had any lightness in her skin at all? She'd be gorgeous."[17]

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16. Margaret Hunter, "Light, Bright, and Almost White: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Light Skin," in *Skin Deep: How Race and Complexion Matter in the "Color-Blind" Era*, eds. Cedric Herring, Verna Keith, and Hayward Derrick Horton (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 25.

17. Bill Dukes, "Dark Girls: The Story of Color, Gender, and Race," Film, available from http://officialdarkgirlsmovie.com/preview/, accessed 24 July 2012.

Duke's documentary comes just a few years after the 2007 viral video produced by Kiri Davis, a seventeen-year-old Harlem student who attempted to replicate the now-famous doll study originally conducted by Kenneth and Mamie Clark.[18] In the video of her experiment, Davis presents young children with two dolls that are identical except for their complexion: one is black and one is white.[19] She asks the children, "Can you show me which doll you like best, which one you want to play with?" Fifteen of the 21 children prefer the white doll. Then, Davis begins to name positive and negative attributes and to ask the children to identify which doll has that characteristic and why. Consistently, the children identify the white doll as nice because she is white. The film reaches the depth of heartbreak when a chocolate-complexioned girl identifies the black doll as the one who "looks bad;" seconds later, she reluctantly identifies that same doll as the one whom she most resembles.

Implications for CCDA

What good news does CCDA offer to those whose backs have become perpetually bent by the burden of oppression? Within CCDA, we often proclaim reconciliation as the core of the gospel message. According to the CCDA website: "Reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel. Jesus said that the essence of Christianity could be summed up in two inseparable commandments: Love God, and love thy neighbor."[20] The deep racial divides within America have been at the heart of CCDA's theology of reconciliation. But the call to racial reconciliation has overwhelmingly emphasized between-group processes, largely ignoring the depth and severity of internalized

18. For a description of the Clarks' work, see the Library of Congress online exhibit, "'With an Even Hand': Brown v. Board at Fifty," available from http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-brown.html, accessed 13 June 2012.

19. Kiri Davis, "A Girl Like Me," Film, available from http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/films/a_girl_like_me, accessed 11 June 2012.

20. Christian Community Development Association, "8 Key Components," Internet, available from http://www.ccda.org/about/philosophy, accessed 15 June 2012.

oppression among people of color. Consider, for example, our frequent repetition of the Great Commandment. While it is considered a Biblical cornerstone for reconciliation ministry, we usually omit a key portion of it. After all, Christ does not simply direct us to love our neighbor. He tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves. I dare to say that Christ assumes love of self to be a necessary prerequisite for loving our neighbor. If we extrapolate from 1 John, we might put it this way: "How can you love your brother or sister if you do not love yourself?" [21]

For many people of color, loving one's self cannot be taken for granted. Racism has not only damaged relationships between groups; it has distorted the self-perceptions of the oppressed. While CCDA organizations do much to affirm the inherent worth of members of oppressed populations, our theology of racial reconciliation has been relatively silent on the issue of internalized oppression. Like Christian theology broadly, we have failed to develop a theology of healthy and mature love of self, particularly one that is informed by the realities of racial oppression. Even as we critique the American dream, we have recapitulated its patriarchal gaze: Give a man the means to support himself and his family and you will raise his self-image. But reducing self-esteem to a matter of economics is short-sighted. After all, the Black hair care industry makes nine billion dollars annually. [22] And Black women spend three to four times more on hair care and cosmetics than White women.[23] And given that much of that is spent on chemical relaxers and hair extensions, we can assume that it is not because Black women are in love with their God-given textures.[24]

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21. "Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also" (1 John 4:20-21 [NRSV]).

22. Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden, *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 180.

23. Ibid.

24. It is incorrect to assume that a woman does not love herself simply because she wears makeup or alters her hair texture. However, the extent to which straightening one's hair or wearing wigs/extensions has become normative among African American women is highly problematic, particularly given their high rates of poverty.

Over time, experiences of dehumanization diminish the oppressed's capacity to recognize themselves as human and facilitate their self-destruction. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu states, "One of the most blasphemous consequences of injustice, especially racist injustice, is that it can make a child of God doubt that he or she is a child of God."[25] An important element of the work of reconciliation, then, is restoring the oppressed's image of themselves as being knit in the image and likeness of God. It is one thing for an individual to cross the dividing line of race and to learn to love a brother or sister of another race. It is another, though, for a person of color to learn to love him or herself. Further, we must ask ourselves: What is the quality of such barrier crossing love if it is informed by an anemic self-love?[26] It is a cheap reconciliation, a reconciliation that forgives the sin of white racism without liberating the oppressed from its consequences. It calls the victims of oppression to love, but not to repent.[27] As Miraslov Volf notes:

> The dominant values and practices can be transformed only if their hold on the hearts of those who suffer under them is broken. This is where repentance comes in. To repent means to resist the seductiveness of the sinful values and practices and to let the new order of God's reign be established in one's heart… [Repentance] "humanizes" the victims precisely by protecting them from either mimicking or dehumanizing the oppressors.[28]

When we issue the call to reconciliation without focusing attention upon internalized racism, we run the risk of encouraging people of color to turn an admiring gaze toward the whiteness that centuries of socialization have already taught them is superior. And we fail to undo the psychic wounds wrought by racism, wounds that will continue to affect relational, economic, and health inequalities.

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25. Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 197.

26. I am indebted to Brandon Wrencher for providing this phrase.

27. Miraslov Volf notes that "Jesus called to repentance not simply those who falsely pronounced sinful what was innocent and sinned against their victims, but *the victims of oppression themselves*" [Miraslov Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 114].

28. Ibid., 116.

Granted, there are no easy solutions here. It is beyond the space constraints of this paper to discuss specific program and policy efforts to address internalized oppression. More importantly, the final reconciliation is not a matter of theological articles, community development programs, or ecclesiastical practices. The final reconciliation belongs only to God.[29] Yet as we anticipate the final reconciliation, Christians are called to love God with all our hearts, all our minds, and all our strengths. We are called to love our neighbors. And we are called to love ourselves. The challenges for CCDA are to articulate a theology of reconciliation that takes seriously the sin of internalized oppression and to develop programs that call the oppressed to repentance, lest we recapitulate the very racial ideology against which we struggle.

29. Volf notes that the final reconciliation is a "messianic problem [that] ought not to be taken out of God's hands…We must engage in the struggle against oppression, but renounce all attempts at the final reconciliation; otherwise, we will end up perpetuating oppression" (109).

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SHALOM AND RECONCILED COMMUNITY LIVING

Introduction to Shalom

As a teen living near Ann Arbor, Michigan in the sixties, I cruised State Street, Main, and other byways mingling with an abundance of genuine hippies all around me. I freely admit that I was a part of the Woodstock generation. In those days images of the peace symbol could be seen on every storefront window and on most cars. It was that circle with the one line going down from the top merging with three prongs like a chicken's foot. This was our peace symbol. Did peace ever arrive? Not really, although eventually we did withdraw from Vietnam. Many of those same hippies still sport the peace symbol today, but it has changed a bit. They are driving cars and SUV's with the symbol on the hood, but the middle prong is now removed. Lord have merce[des] on us all; so what happened to peace? The kind of peace we wanted in the past was really three-fold: (1) we wanted love, not war; (2) we wanted racial harmony; and (3) We wanted a planet free of pollution.

Strange that, in those days, no one ever mentioned to me that God, the Creator of all things, wanted us to have the same peaceful, loving, racially harmonious, ecologically sustainable world that we wanted. In fact, within the Scriptures is found – what I understand as – God's deepest desires for a kind of peace that would have blown all of the hippies (and hippie wannabes like me) away! God's peace is often referred to in Scripture as shalom. Shalom or peace is what God intended for the whole world from the beginning. Shalom is a grand construct, running the length of the Scriptures, but difficult to try to define with any finality. This should not surprise us since God is not easily defined either.

The Words

Shalom is big. It is almost indescribable. Yes, it is peace, but also so much more. The kind of peace shalom represents is active and engaged, going far beyond the mere absence of conflict. A fuller understanding of shalom is the key to the door that can lead us to a whole new way of living in our world. As Terry McGonigal explains,

> Although the word 'peace' (Hebrew: shalom, Greek: eirene) appears over 500 times in scripture, this theme and its implications have been overlooked in biblical theology. God's design for and delight in diversity are embedded in the creation narratives, which describe order, relationships, stewardship, beauty and rhythm as the essential foundations for shalom, 'the way God designed the universe to be.'[1]

Examples of various aspects of shalom include:[2] completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. Another concordance lists the word origin of *shalom* from shalem, meaning completeness, soundness, welfare, peace and repayment. Words translated as shalem in the New American Standard Bible include: close, ease, favorable, friend, friendly terms, friends, greet, greeted, health, peace, peaceably, peaceful, peacefully, perfect peace, prosperity, safe, safely, safety, secure, trusted, welfare, well, well-being, and wholly.[3] These are a lot of words, to say the least.

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1. Terry McGonigal, *"If You Only Knew What Would Bring Peace": Shalom Theology as the Biblical Foundation for Diversity,* (Unpublished, 2010) p.2. Used with Permission.

2. James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible With Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries,* (Royal Publishers, 1979) Number 7965.

3. The NAS Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries, (The Lockman Foundation, 1981, 1998). See also, Köehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: The New Koehler and Baumgartner in English,* Translated by M. E. Richardson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993-).

Images of Shalom Among the Prophets

Now, maybe you see what we are up against. Because shalom is the very environment and economy of God, as represented in the community of the Trinity, it is almost as difficult as describing the wholeness of God. Fortunately, the prophets were good at creating word images for such occasions. The book of Isaiah records:

> Many peoples shall come and say,
> 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
> to the house of the God of Jacob;
> that he may teach us his ways
> and that we may walk in his paths.'
> For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
> and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
> He shall judge between the nations,
> and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
> they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
> and their spears into pruning-hooks;
> nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
> neither shall they learn war any more.
> (Isaiah 2:3-4 [NKJV])

Isaiah visualized a world where all the nations on earth would learn from the Creator how to engage in true peace. This means that peace is the norm in God's plan. This is so much the case that the world's weapons of warfare should be melted down into useful tools in order to be used for feeding people. Not only does shalom accomplish the task of ending bloodshed, but it uses former weapons of war to solve the problem of world hunger. In this world that God desires tanks, missiles, fighter jets, nuclear devices, drones, smart bombs, and all other military weaponry are recycled into useful, job producing and food producing implements. Can you imagine driving a tank into a processing line and watching the formerly unemployed people there transform it into a tractor? Isaiah continues his shalom vision later in the following passage.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
(Isaiah 11:6-9 [NKJV])

The prophet uses the image of children playing in the midst of wild animals and deadly snakes to make the point that shalom means both safety and security. Isaiah imagines the most deadly beast of his day and then places the people's progeny and their livelihood (sheep, goats and cattle) among the once deadly intruders.

Perhaps Isaiah is using hyperbole, but nothing could be more frightening or more real to people living in a pastoral based economy than exposing the things they value the most to the things that they fear the most. In such an economy the whole point of wealth is the ability to secure livestock and land for one's progeny. Isaiah's point is well taken; shalom's existence is based in a newfound security. In the shalom world God desires we neither have to war any more or exercise the daily worries over our children or our livelihood. In shalom, warring over turf, wealth or national security no longer exists.

New Testament Images of Shalom

The New Testament is full of ways of describing shalom. New Testament imagery includes descriptions of shalom as: a body, with each part serving the other; a building, with each brick fitting with the other; a new peaceable kingdom, with Jesus

being the fulfillment of former images, even to the point where he is named, not only as the shalom bringer, but as shalom itself –"for he himself, is our peace…" (Ephesians 2:14a NIV). Paul's logical reference in Ephesians 2 may be drawing from the background of Judges 6:24a (NLT): "And Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and named it Yahweh-Shalom (which means "the Lord is peace")."

In Colossians Paul makes the transcendent connection with shalom by sharing the ways that Christians should be treating one another in a shalom-based world. Paul's understanding of shalom is notable when one considers the ways he describes how followers of Christ should live.

> Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the shalom [sic] that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in shalom [sic]. And always be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15 [NLT])

Like the Ephesians 2 passage, the image Paul creates above is one where shalom comes from Christ and one where Christ empowers us to live out shalom. As a Jew, Paul understands the list of virtues not as abstract moral commands, but as ways of describing people living out a way of life reflecting shalom.

Jesus and His Shalom Kingdom

Jesus did not just appear in the abstract. He was born a poor, marginalized, insignificant Jew in a country occupied by the world's greatest superpower. He came from a tradition that was supposed to always be creating shalom. His ancestors were given the wisdom from God to be sure that shalom was practiced. How can you

know if shalom is being practiced? A society concerned with shalom will care for the most marginalized among them. God has a special concern for the poor and needy. How they are treated reveals our hearts, regardless of the rhetoric we employ to make ourselves sound just. Jeremiah 22:16 (NLT) equates the social task of caring to revealing a genuine relationship with God, "He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. 'Isn't that what it means to know me?' says the Lord."

Jesus appeared in the context of a nation that was given directives for living life in shalom. At his famous announcement at Nazareth he declared Jubilee was fulfilled (Luke 4:14-21)! Jubilee was the culmination of what I call "the law of sevens."[4] In scriptures such as Exodus 16 (provision) and Leviticus 25 (through the system of the *law of sevens*) Yahweh sets forth a way for Israel to ensure the principles of shalom are being observed. On every seventh day, every person and every creature that toiled for a living were required to cease from their labor and rest. On the seventh year fields were laid fallow to regenerate and to provide food for the poor and wild beasts. Every series of seven sets of seven years was called Jubilee. For the period of Jubilee (occurring every 50 years), slaves were freed, debts were cancelled and land was restored to its former owners.

During Jubilee, security, honor, fecundity, justice and blessing are also promised along with salvation. Many of those in ancient Israel understood the ramifications of the coming of a Jubilee Year and Jesus' association with it. The understanding of Israel's obligation to the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed widows, orphans and strangers was meant to be so much a part of their thinking that God even commands them to leave any mishap or forgotten act of harvesting in order to benefit the poor.

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4. God gave special instructions to Israel concerning the seventh day, the seventh year and after the seventh set of seven years (the Jubilee celebration every 50 years) which all help us understand the purposes of shalom concerning justice for marginalized people and care for the rest of creation.

The Old Testament is laced with the import of Jubilee for establishing God's shalom (e.g. Deut. 24:19-21).

God commands both individuals and the society in which they live to be generous and always take care of the poor. In such a community, shalom has a chance to thrive. In such a community, God will actually be glad to assign his name and dwell.

> Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the LORD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you. And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites in your towns, and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows living among you. (Deut.16:10-11 [NIV])

It was no accident that Jesus was born as a disenfranchised citizen in a land that understood shalom. Jesus was *the* shalom wake-up call to the world of his day and to ours. By being our shalom Jesus calls us to live out shalom in practical community. He descends from his shalom community of the Trinity in order to invite us back to the divine community of shalom and we, in turn, invite others. Too often as believers we have emphasized the invitation of individuals over the importance of the shalom community—both are necessary.

Reconciling Communities

You probably will not be surprised if I tell you that community begins with humility. But perhaps you have never given great consideration to the link between humility and humanity. As human beings we are limited in our understanding. We cannot know everything or we would be God. That is why we need both wisdom from God and the accountability, encouragement and acceptance found only in God's shalom community. The kind of shalom in which the Bible speaks is not an

individualistic faith venture. Shalom can only occur in community. The shalom community of the Trinity is the original design, making shalom community God's very DNA.

In community, we can know our world, learning how we react to it and how we should act in it. With other's help, especially those different than us, we can be more discerning at spotting division, particularly divisions such as racial strife. With the help of others we can educate ourselves to understand racism better and deal with it by practicing shalom. The same discernment applies to other forms of brokenness such as poverty, politics, war, inequality in education, women's health and equality issues, hunger, water pollution, eco-justice and other areas that we as shalom-bringers are called to disrupt in order to bring in God's shalom. Jesus' prayer for Earth to be "as it is in Heaven" operates on the basis of shalom community.

When understood in context, one of Jesus' most beloved parables, *The Parable of the Prodigal Son,* or as I call it, *The Story of Two Lost Sons,* is an injunction to the Pharisees and religious teachers to recognize and begin to participate in the correct understanding of the shalom community, or what Jesus called the kingdom of God. In fact, Jesus' story begins (Luke 15:1-2) with the context of those religious leaders complaining about his association with the ritually and morally unclean (the holiness codes). In each of the three parables (the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost sons) not only is the individual invitation from becoming lost to found stressed, but so is the reconciled shalom community. When the lost sheep is found, the shepherd calls his friends and neighbors, his community, to celebrate. When the widow finds her lost coin she also gathers her community for a party. In the example of the lost sons we actually learn more of the dynamics of the community. Jesus portrays the Kingdom as a shalom community of restoration and celebration. To enter the place where community would be possible it took humility for the son to return home and humility for the father to forgive him. Reconciliation in any circumstance is

possible by beginning with the realization that we are all just human beings on this earth together.

In the ending of the Prodigal Son story, we see inside the party just a bit. We come to understand that offenses must be heard and forgiven. In the celebration we can observe a form of restoration, not just in words, but through physical markers including the robe, the ring and the fatted calf, all signifying acceptance into the community. Luke concludes the parable with the oldest son–representing the Pharisees, the religious Teachers, and their emphasis on a narrow priestly understanding of the holiness codes–standing outside the party while the father, who was feeding the whole community, including servants and the poor, entreats him to come in. Unfortunately, the story ends with the religious folks outside and unconnected to the community. This is indeed a sad place to be. Jesus was showing the Pharisees (religious people like us) that they, the very people who had been given the gift of shalom, were actually missing it.

The Challenge

I have been working in the areas of evangelism, justice, and community organizing/development for most of my adult life. Over many of those years my wife and I have ministered among the poorest of the poor. We have watched shalom communities form and grow, even when we were too inept to understand how to explore the depths of shalom community. I can also say that in the best of those times we have been tremendously blessed to watch Jesus' shalom kingdom at work in these communities.

Today, our country faces some major challenges. We are a nation that likes violence and to be at war, both abroad and at home. Our attempts at racial reconciliation are not producing the common good we need for a healthy civil society. We are fast

approaching a time when environmental pollutions may reduce not only our lives, but also the lives of the many other creatures and living systems that God created for us to co-habit with on the earth.

I remember in my youth that I wanted peace in all these areas, but I was naïve and uninformed. Further, I had no community in which to walk-out shalom on earth. But I still want peace! Today, I hope I am wiser and more informed. I understand now that these problems are complex and involve not just personal choices, but also sustained and direct systemic intervention into oppressive structures. I hope the peace I am working towards now is more mature than simply an absence of conflict. I hope the peace–the shalom from God–that I look for daily is the kind of peace God wants me to pursue. I know now that it does not come without intentionality or cost, and I know it does not come without community. Jesus is our shalom, but he is not just shalom for us. Jesus is shalom for the whole world. Let us get to work building reconciled communities of shalom living, while at the same time, affecting public policy with a vision of shalom. Like the shepherd, widow and Father in Luke 15, let us get the party started!

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A GENUINE RACIAL RECONCILIATION: A MYTH OR A THEOLOGICAL CERTAINTY?

Racism is not the characteristic of a particular ethnic group, one culture or one nation.[1] Racism is not confined to age or gender; it is a systemic *human* predicament with no easy solutions. Inclusive practice such as affirmative action programs only treats the symptom leaving the root of the disease in place. Secular resolutions and cultural trends ultimately have no power to address the human heart incurably bent towards selfishness, hatred, anger and alienation. These features are all components of racism and enmity; they are also identified as manifestations of sin in Scripture.[2] And the problem of sin from a biblical perspective demands a divine solution, the only solution—the cross of Jesus Christ. If atonement as defined in the New Testament (NT) is the sole remedy for racism, then racial reconciliation is intrinsically a Christian crusade.

The issue of racial reconciliation is not merely central to the doctrine of atonement, but necessarily a fundamental feature in understanding God's identity as creator, ecclesiology, missiology and eschatology.[3] From beginning to end, Scripture is a narrative of reconciliation not only between God and humanity, but also that of reconciliation among people. And the NT conveys how God brings his purposes to fulfillment through Jesus Christ, the ultimate mediator between God and humanity as well as reconciler for one people group to another. In this article, the issue of racial reconciliation will be examined in four discrete sections of the NT: the Gospels, Acts, Pauline epistles and Revelation. Under each section, in culling out the NT's teaching

1. Racism is systemic and worldwide, e.g. Rwandan genocide (1994), Bosnian genocide (1995), the Holocaust in WWII, to name a few.

2. See Matt. 5:21-26; Eph. 4:17-32; Col. 3:5-11.

3. This article is the abbreviated version of K.A. Mathews & M.S. Park, *The Post-Racial Church: A Biblical Framework for Multiethnic Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), esp. 145-271.

on racial reconciliation, it will become abundantly clear that racial reconciliation is not the cause of the socially liberal or the interest of particular minorities, but shibboleth of the Christian faith.[4]

Jesus' Teachings on Racial Reconciliation

While the most explicit theological statements on racial reconciliation are found in the Pauline epistles (e.g. Rom. 3:29-30; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28), it is less clear whether or not Jesus himself advocated racial reconciliation. The indisputable reference comes at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, after his death and resurrection in Matthew 28:19 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations" (cf. par. Mk. 16:14-16; Lk. 24:47; and Acts 1:8). The all-inclusive character of this missional mandate infers that a critical shift has taken place in the paradigm of God's people *because* of Christ's death and resurrection, progressing from ethnocentricity to multi-ethnicity, but retaining the chief hallmark of faith as the necessary touchstone for God's people.[5] Nearly all texts on Jesus' ministry with non-Israelites portray the welcoming inclusion of non-Jews based on the Gentiles' demonstration of genuine faith in the person of Jesus Christ (e.g. Matt. 8:5-13, par. Lk. 7:1-10; Matt. 15:21-28, par. Mk. 7:24-30;6 Lk. 17:11-19; Matt. 8:28-34, par. Mk. 5:1-20, Lk. 8:26-39), which implicitly foreshadow the future destruction of ethnic barriers. Jesus' debate with the Jewish lawyer in Luke 10:1-20 is an excellent example of how Jesus exegetes God's laws in terms of multi-ethnicity and instructs the inclusion of non-Israelites as members of God's family.

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4. OT is central in that the NT is the fulfillment of God's promises in the OT and sets the foundation for racial reconciliation in the NT. As such, the relevant OT passages merit a full examination. However, due to space restrictions, the germane OT texts will be briefly mentioned. For a more comprehensive treatment, see Mathews & Park, *The Post-Racial Church,* 37-144.

5. This is fleshed out comprehensively by Paul in Rom. 1:16-4:25 in terms of harmartiology, justification (atonement) and faith. Under all three theological themes, both Jew and Gentile are equalized without distinction.

6. See Mathews & Park, *The Post-Racial Church,* 146-150 for an analysis of this difficult passage.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan basically teaches an essential component of discipleship—to love the neighbor as we love ourselves. It does not, however, stand alone; it is followed by two other passages on discipleship: 10:38–42 focuses on the importance of listening to Jesus' teaching and 11:1–13 concentrates on the importance of persistent prayer. Discipleship requires not only diligence in prayer and careful attention to Jesus' teaching, but also love for one's neighbor. So, the entirety of Jesus' teaching in 10:25–11:13 falls under the privilege of discipleship to "see and hear." We cannot be disciples if we do not love and care for our neighbors! It is also worth noting that what Jesus teaches through the parable is not something new, but consistent with the requirements of discipleship or "following God" in the Old Testament (OT).[7]

The story begins with a lawyer who stood up and asked Jesus a question *in order to test him* (10:25). His question is simple: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (10:25). Jesus points to the law and asks the lawyer: "How do you read it?" (10:26). But, the lawyer poses the question in 10:29: "And who is my neighbor?" At this point, Luke provides us the motivation behind this question: self-justification.[8] The lawyer's question, at minimum, seeks to delimit the command to love one's neighbor. That Jesus lifts up a Samaritan as the hero in the parable suggests that the lawyer's concern is to draw the line between Jews and non-Jews. Jesus' use of a Samaritan as the model suggests that simply noting that extreme generosity defines what it means to love the neighbor is not enough. The lesson Jesus teaches here is radical: extreme

7. The explicit mention of the law (10:26) within the framework of salvation (10:25 "eternal life") along with the lawyer's citation of OT (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18) indicates that Jesus' teaching on loving one's neighbor is a necessary component of salvation coherent with the OT's understanding of Israel's covenant relationship with God

8. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1027. This text lists three possible reasons why the lawyer poses this question: 1) justification of past neglect; 2) correction of past remiss; and 3) justification in his status quo.

generosity *transcends* the social and ethnic boundaries. The passage is fraught with not merely socially radical, but theologically radical challenges: Israel's covenant boundaries are redefined.[9]

Of the three travelers from Jerusalem, the one who fulfills the law by "loving the neighbor" is neither the priest nor the Levite, but a Samaritan. Given the historical and mutual hatred between Jews and Samaritans, Jesus' parable would surely have challenged the Jewish certainty of salvation based on ethnic pedigree.[10] And if indeed the lawyer sought to justify himself by clarifying the boundaries for his own definition of "neighbor," then Jesus' protagonist, the good Samaritan, subtly, yet unmistakably discourages such efforts. The Samaritan – rather than the priest or the Levite – is the one who stands to "inherit eternal life" (10:25–28). This inclusion of those considered to be excluded from salvation is radical, but consistent with Jesus' ministry. A passive attitude toward care for hurting humanity describes the religious bigot not the follower of Jesus.

In the parable, the command to "love one's neighbor as oneself" is one that is defined in the fullest sense. Whereas the lawyer seeks to delimit this command (a minimalistic mindset), Jesus defines the same command in the fullest sense. The Samaritan is set apart from the previous two travelers in that he "has compassion," the same as divine compassion in Luke.[11] This compassion is expressed not merely through staying on the same side of the road (cf. 10:31–32), but also through personal attendance and great sacrifice to himself (10:34–35). Perhaps the minimalistic mindset, clearly rejected by Jesus, is motivated by social discrimination operative in the first century. The fulfillment of God's mandates for a covenant relationship or salvation requires a comprehensive disposition that penetrates through social

9. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 307.

10. See also John the Baptist's critique of the similar attitude in Matt. 3:7-10 and Lk. 3:7-14.

11. See 1:76-78; 7:13; 15:20.

barriers and stigma of the day. Particularly, the ethnic identity of the wounded man is perhaps purposely undisclosed: the Samaritan's compassion is not dependent on the ethnicity of the wounded man.[12]

Turning to practical application, the word that is repeated throughout is *poieō* which means "to do." The lawyer begins with the question: "Teacher, what must I *do* to inherit eternal life?" in 10:25. Jesus replies to the lawyer: "You have answered right; *do* this, and you will live" (10:28). The lawyer answers: "The one who *did* mercy on him" (10:37). Jesus' final words complete the exhortations towards exercise of mercy: "Go and *do* likewise" (10:37). The parable emphasizes not merely knowledge, but the *practice* of God's commandments. As the priest, the Levite and the lawyer demonstrate, knowledge of God's mandates does not insure its *practice*. Obedience to God's decrees is necessary for eternal life. Further, it is the expansive love demonstrated by the Samaritan, who simultaneously breaks through historical social hostility and risks personal loss of time, resources, and money.

Jesus' teaching raises some provocative questions on the issue of racial reconciliation and the Christian faith. Is it possible to be Christ's disciple and not fulfill the twin commands to love God wholly and to love the neighbor as one self? While it might be relatively easy to love God, it is another matter to love our neighbor as ourselves. This parable suggests that those who are "saved" will live out both commands. Perhaps we can invert this: if our love for our neighbor is the litmus test for salvation, would the test prove positive for salvation?[13]

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12. It is, of course, obvious that both the priest and the Levite are also not motivated by the ethnic identity of the wounded man. Their lack of compassion is derived more from selfish concerns, a moral flaw that becomes stark in view of their status as those who are more pious and zealous for the things of God and his people. This moral flaw or lack of compassion is heightened further, if they come upon the wounded man after they have worshipped in Jerusalem—the road is from Jerusalem to Jericho according to 10:30. See J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke, NICNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 430-431.

13. Cf. also 1 Jn. 3:9–10

More critically, in loving our neighbors do we mirror Jesus' maximalist mindset or the lawyer's? As demonstrated by the Samaritan, loving a neighbor requires personal investment of time, energy, and money.[14] Further, love for a neighbor exceeds ethnic boundaries. It is one thing to exercise extreme love for a neighbor within the same ethnic group, but an entirely different matter to extend this extreme love to those considered "foreign."[15] How often do we see another person fallen on hard times and cross the road to avoid contact and responsibility? While certainly whites are also in ghettos, undeniably, the poor neighborhoods that I know of have been dominantly populated by non-whites. The church has been commendable in its consistent support of homeless ministries; yet, does it exemplify loving the neighbor as Jesus has defined it here? Is the need of the "other fallen on the road" only that of clothes, food, and temporary housing? What about medical or legal care, education, and personal friendship? Given the treasure of various gifts available in the well-established church, is it not possible to provide voluntary services (medical, legal, education) to those in economically depressed communities?

Racial Reconciliation and Table Fellowship for the Early Church

Conversion of Cornelius: Acts 10

As the church is persecuted and scattered, conversion of those excluded from Judaism progresses from the Samaritans, to the Ethiopian, and finally to Cornelius (8:1-10: 48).[16] Acts begins with the less radical barrier (Samaritans) and progresses to the Ethiopian (Gentile), but this story does not introduce the concept of fellowship (8:39–40). The Cornelius narrative introduces two new elements: 1) Gentile inclusion is now divinely appointed to an apostle (Peter); and 2) table fellowship is introduced

14. Cf. Jam. 2:14–17

15. Cf. Lk. 6:33.

16. See B.R. Gaventa, *Acts, ANTC (*Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 142, and 140: "The Ethiopian is proleptic of all those who will be reached for God through the witness to the gospel." Also Marshall, Acts, 160.

through Peter's vision (10:9–16) and by his prolonged visitation with Cornelius (10:48). Gentile inclusion becomes sanctioned by an apostle.[17] Indeed, this apostolic endorsement is critical not only for receiving Gentiles as equally saved, but also for table fellowship. "Including Gentiles means receiving them, entering their homes, and accepting hospitality—even meals—in those homes."[18] Table fellowship with Gentiles was the critical issue that the early church needed to address if witness to the Gentiles was to continue. "Table fellowship" means sharing a meal within the context of a household—it conveys intimate relations of a family.[19] As such, it was a powerful means by which the early church redefined family: it was now defined by allegiance to Christ; table fellowship indicates a profound theology—it redefines kindred relations and practices inclusion of those formerly excluded.

The importance of table fellowship is underscored in several ways in Acts 10. First, the lengthy and detailed description of Cornelius' conversion, in comparison to the two previous conversion accounts, indicates that the issues raised within the passage are significant. Second, Peter's vision of common or unclean animals and the divine command to "kill and eat" as well as the statement in Acts 10:15 "What God has cleansed, do not call common" are repeated three times (10:16); the three-fold repetition suggests that the need for Peter to change his perspective on what is clean and unclean is central (cf. also 11:1-18). If God also calls Gentiles to salvation on equal terms with the Jews, then table fellowship with the converted Gentiles is part and parcel of salvation. If eating together signifies common identity, then Peter's table fellowship with Cornelius indicates a common identity no longer based on ethnicity, history, or culture, but exclusively on Christ. [20]

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17. The term "Hellenist" (*hellēnistēs)* is a rare term and in Luke refers to Greeks (14:1; 18:4; 19:10; 20:21). But here, the context suggests that Philip is a Greek speaking Jewish Christian. See Marshall, Acts, 125–126.

18. Gaventa, *Acts,* 172.

19. D.W. Pao, "Family and Table-Fellowship in the Writings of Luke," in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith,* ed. R.J. Priest and A.L. Nieves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 186.

20. See Pao, "Family and Table-Fellowship in the Writings of Luke," 181–193.

Yet, table fellowship was not simply a sociological issue for Jews in ancient times, but ultimately a matter of retaining their religious purity and national identity as God's people. Peter's strong resistance to the command to "kill and eat" (10:13–14) stems from the dietary regulations in the OT.[21] Israel, called to be holy as the people of God, were confined to strict guidelines on what could be consumed as food. To eat what was marked as "unclean" or even to touch an unclean animal rendered Israelites ritually unclean. The dietary regulations reinforce their distinct identity and strongly discourage any syncretistic tendency, together reinforcing their covenant relationship with God.

In Acts 10, it becomes clear that the three-fold vision is not simply about food, but ultimately Gentile inclusion and table fellowship. In 10:28 Peter states: "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me to call no man common or unclean." And since a Gentile is no longer considered "unclean" by God, Peter has no hesitation to prolong his visit which would have necessarily required table fellowship. Peter's vision contains profound implications for the identity of God's people; salvation is no longer exclusive to the Jews, but extended to all nations, table fellowship being a critical component.

Jerusalem Council: Acts 15

As the gospel spreads beyond the borders of Judea through the evangelistic activities of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1–14:28), the more conservative Jewish believers are uncomfortable with salvation apart from the law (15:1-2). During the debate in Jerusalem, Peter relates his experience with Cornelius and evaluates the demand for Gentile converts to submit to the law as incongruous to salvation

21. Lev. 11; Deut. 14.

by grace (15:10–11). After further testimony from Paul and Barnabas (15:12–13), James delivers the final verdict. James interprets Peter's experience with the Gentiles as coherent to the prophecy of Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–17). The critical point of the prophecy is that the restoration of David's tent will necessarily encompass "all the Gentiles who are called by my name" (15:17 citing Amos). Thus, inclusion of the Gentiles is divinely ordained and the fulfillment of OT prophecies. James concludes that law observance should not be required for the Gentiles (15:19).

Yet, James lists several concerns: abstinence from pollution by idols, sexual immorality, food strangled, and food not completely drained of blood (Acts 15:20). Although it may not be immediately apparent, these four concerns all have a common thread related to the issue of idolatry. The first prohibition most likely addresses pollution associated with idols and idolatrous rituals in keeping with the OT.[22] Eating with pagan neighbors is directly linked with eating food sacrificed to their gods. The OT passages explain why Jewish people avoided pagan food; it is associated with pagan idolatry. The notion that deities required sacrifice of food and drink was also prevalent in first century AD.[23] Food sacrificed to idols would not only be found at religious ceremonies, but found in nearly all social functions (e.g., weddings, funerals) including social events for labor guilds (work-related associations) and in the market place where idol food was sold regularly.[24] So, James' advice against eating food associated with idolatry reveals not only OT concerns, but common knowledge of pagan idolatrous rituals in Gentile culture.

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22. Dan. 1:8; Ex. 34; see also Num. 25:1-3.

23. E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 3rd* ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 170; A.T. Cheung, "Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy," in *Journal for the Study of the NT Supplement Series* 176 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 27–38.

24. Pliny, a governor of Bithynia-Pontus writes to Trajan in 112 AD concerning the trials against Christians. In this letter he mentions the sale of idol food as a general and a long-standing procedure. See A. N. Sherwin-White, ed., *Fifty Letters of Pliny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 68–70, 171–178.

While sexual immorality can cover all forms of indiscriminate sexual behavior,[25] in both testaments, sexual immorality is often linked with idolatry. Frequently in passages such as Hosea 5:3–4, Ezekiel 16:15–46, Jeremiah 3:1–10 and Revelation 2:14, 20, sexual immorality is a metaphor for idolatry. This means that from God's perspective, idolatry or the act of worshipping anything else other than the one true God is as despicable as sexual immorality.

So, while three of the four items James lists deal with food, all four are linked with idolatry. James' concern is to encourage Gentile Christians to distance themselves from their former context of idolatry.[26] Although all consent that both Jew and Gentile are saved by grace, the historical tradition of law observance as part of covenant requirement is not easily laid aside—the Gentiles are called to exercise sensitivity to their Jewish brothers and sisters so that common meals with Jews may be possible.[27] Then, James' concern is not with respect to how the Gentiles are saved, but how both Jews and Gentiles can hold common table fellowship.[28] It is assumed that there should be table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles since all are saved in the same manner—by grace. Indeed, Acts 2:42–47 explicitly mentions breaking bread daily as a core component of the fellowship of believers. Given this common assumption, the logistics of how both can hold table fellowship is a negotiable matter under discussion in Acts 15.

The reality of Gentile inclusion led the early church to make informed decisions based on careful examination of Scripture. First, all affirmed the inclusion of Gentiles as the work of God and the fulfillment of Scripture. Second, if there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile with respect to salvation, common table fellowship for

25. E.g., Rom. 1:18–32; 1 Cor. 5:1; 7:2.

26. cf. 1 Cor. 10:14; Gal. 5:19–20; Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 4:3.

27. I. H. Marshall, *Acts*, 31.

28. Bruce, *Acts*, 295–296.

both is assumed. Third, within this newly created body of believers, concession to the "other" is the operative norm. The verdict rendered at the Jerusalem Council was not ordinary, but ground-breaking development. Given the centrality of the Law for Israel (Exod. 19:1–9; 34:10–28; Deut. 4:40), the apostles' affirmation that all are now saved by grace required reassessment of their tradition and renewed insight on God's redeeming acts throughout their history through the Christ event. The reconsideration of these traditions through the lens of Christ is a radical reworking of their understanding of salvation, the people of God, and fellowship among the people of God.

Racial Unity and Peace Forged by the Cross

For Paul in Ephesians 2:11-22 there is a "once for all" solution to historic and incessant racial enmity—the cross of Jesus Christ. The phrase "but now" combined with the metaphors "far" and "near"[29] place the cross of Christ as the decisive event that transforms alienation to reconciliation, a shift that is identified as "peace." The term "peace" occurs four times in these verses: v. 14, v. 15 and twice in v. 17; in 2:14, Christ is "our peace."[30] Jesus as "our peace" points to something more than simply "a personal emotional stability." The context of the entire passage (2:11–22) is corporate and not individual. Further, the term "peace" occurs with specific reference to racial relations (i.e. Jews and Gentiles). Peace as the consequence of Christ's work on the cross is not the result of merely human effort, but of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This peace is neither superficial nor temporary. In 2:14–15 Christ is "our peace" because he: 1) "made both one"; 2) "destroyed the dividing wall that separates, the hostility";

29. See E. Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 244-45. The terms "far" and "near" are most likely borrowed from Is 57:19.

30. The personal pronoun "he" (*autos*) stands at the beginning of 2:14 and is emphatic.

and 3) "abolished, the law of commandments."[31] All three actions effectively refer back to the cross event mentioned in 2:13 - peace between Jews and Gentiles (i.e. all races) is one accomplished 2000 years ago.[32]

The phrase "made both one" as well as the other two phrases refer not to God-human relationship, but to the relationship of Jews and Gentiles. The previous distinctions that separated the two are no longer in effect.[33] With respect to v. 14, "The real barrier was, in fact, the Mosaic law itself with its detailed holiness code… It separated Jews from Gentiles both religiously and sociologically, and caused deep-seated hostility."[34] The separation between Jew and Gentile is primarily theological. The law, as a "fence" provided protection for Israel from pagan influences of her neighbors. Although the intention of the law was to preserve Israel's unique identity as God's people and not to create ethnic strife, the same law also engendered hostility between Jew and Gentile. Through the cross ("in his flesh"), this fundamental division described as "hostility" has been destroyed. The law is made "ineffective or powerless" and the separation, or the hostility, between Jew and Gentile is destroyed.

Three points can be highlighted. First, it is clear that the enmity between Jew and Gentile is first and foremost theologically based. The Gentiles were *not* the people of God. But, through the cross, the Gentiles are God's people.[35] If this critical (theological) reason is now abolished in the cross, is there any justification for racial discrimination based purely on skin color or ethnicity? Second, racial reconciliation accomplished at the cross is the fulfillment of God's desire for all peoples to worship

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31. All three actions are conveyed by aorist participles.

32. See H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 368.

33. The last two phrases explicate the first.

34. P.T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 196.

35. Cf. Rom. 9:25, 1 Pet. 2:10

him.[36] Third, if racial enmity was effectively destroyed at the cross, why do we still live in racial tension and practice discrimination and separation? Is the cross no longer effective or somehow incomplete? For Christians who confess the atoning effects of the cross, the issue of racial reconciliation is not merely sociological, but ultimately theological and the testimony of the church.

What is the end goal of the cross? The obvious answer to this question is atonement. Atonement, however, is not simply individualistic ("atonement for my sins"), but has a corporate dimension too. The purpose of the cross is explicitly linked with reconciliation between Jew and Gentile. In 2:16, both Jew and Gentile, now one in Christ, are reconciled to God through the cross. And by the cross, Christ "put to death the hostility in him." Here, "hostility" does not refer to racial relations, but to God-human relations.[37] Reconciliation on the horizontal dimension (between humanity) is not independent of the vertical dimension (between God and humanity); they are mutually inclusive. Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God in the same manner—by the work of Christ on the cross. Further, it is not one race reconciled to God, nor many races separately, but both in "one body" are reconciled together to God. The phrase "both have access" does not refer to the two individually, but to the two together as one: "we both together have access."[38] Just as reconciliation takes place "in one body" (2:16), access to the Father occurs "in one Spirit." And Gentiles are no longer "foreigners" and "aliens" but "fellow citizens"[39] and "members of the household" of God (2:18-19). The last two phrases communicate the kind of ties which exist within a family unit.

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36. Cf. Lk. 2:29-32; Rom. 9:25

37. Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 383-84. The change of context in 2:16 justifies this interpretation.

38. Ibid., 388.

39. This word "fellow citizen" *(sympolitai)* is used only here in the NT; it is a compound of the word *politēs* meaning "citizen" with the preposition syn meaning "with." The preposition emphasizes unity and togetherness.

In verses 20-22, the metaphor of building ("having been built," "the whole building" "you are being built," and "dwelling place") is emphasized and connects well with the notion of "household of God" in 2:19. This new community of both Jews and Gentiles is one shaped by the teachings of the apostles and prophets and the cornerstone of Jesus Christ (2:20). Further, this new community is a structure that is "being joined or fitted together" (2:21). Not one structure or merely a few, but the *entire* structure is in view. The word *harmologeō* with the prefix *syn* means "to join or pile together." In the context of first-century construction activity the absence of mortar required each stone to be cut and tailored to fit with another off-site and brought to the site to be compiled and shaped into a building (cf. 1 Kings 6:7). *Synharmologeō* in conjunction with the word "to grow" appears in the present tense suggesting that the process of being "fitted together" is consistent with the continual process of growth.

The end goal of this on-going growth is to become "a holy temple in the Lord." The final verse reiterates growth and corporateness with the goal of becoming a "dwelling place of God;" the development of a "holy temple or dwelling place of God" does not isolate a single nation, but requires unity of both Jews and Gentiles. And finally, 2:21 communicates the necessary ingredient in the construction of this building: being fitted together. Each stone in the entire structure, being cut and tailored to fit the other indicates that, while reconciliation is effectively accomplished with the cross event, the process of growing into a "dwelling place of God" requires the continual adjustment to and accommodation of each other. "Being cut and tailored to fit the other" naturally implies a certain level of discomfort and pain. The most frequent reason for not pursuing racial integration is that the differences in culture and collective worship practices are "too uncomfortable" to overcome. Inconvenience, discomfort, vexations and hardship are all natural and on-going features of growing and being built together as one temple.

Revelation: Multiethnic Worship

While ethnic diversity may be virtuous on several grounds, multiplicity of races alone does not fully express the treasures that await the church in the Second Coming. The end times as revealed in Revelation is not about simply adding color on a white canvass, but unity of races held together by the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the worship of the Triune God. Without a doubt, racial diversity is a critical theological factor, but not a virtue in and of itself.

There are three texts (5:9–10; 7:9–17; 21:24, 26)[40] in Revelation chosen for examination and all deal with worship of God in various contexts. Yet, all three describe the worship of God with the same factor: multiethnic worship. All three passages provide an end-time perspective on the Christian faith vis-à-vis worldly powers and the all-important sovereignty of God. These passages show undeniably that the church is multiethnic. The theology that surfaces from these texts emphasizes elements already explored above and provide further nuance to the theology behind racial reconciliation.

The first two passages (5:9–10 and 7:9–17) employ the same language to describe the multiethnic worship of God: "from every tribe and language and people and nation" in 5:9 and "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" in 7:9. While the order is not the same, in each case the entirety of the human race is conveyed through the reiteration of the same words for "tribe," "language," "people" and "nation." This phrase for all of humanity is repeated in Revelation in three other passages in a different order: 11:9; 13:7; and 14:6. Two other passages that convey the comprehensive sense of "all nations" are in 10:11 and 17:15. In 10:11, "many

40. There are actually four passages that merge multiethnicity and worship (5:9-10; 7:9-17; 21:24, 26 and 15:3-4). This section has been greatly abbreviated; for comprehensive treatment see Mathews & Park, *The Post-Racial Church*, 187-198.

kings" replaces "tribe," and in 17:15 "multitudes" replaces "tribe." Thus, in all seven instances the entirety of the human race is expressed through four nouns with small variations. Given the apostle John's use of numbers as symbols in Revelation, the numbers four and seven are highly significant.[41] Number four, as in the four directions of the compass, represents the world, and seven conveys completeness. Hence, these references are comprehensive, and all the nations are in view. As the examination of these seven texts will reveal, not all references are in a worship setting; but for our purposes it is necessary to highlight the two passages (5:9–10 and 7:9–17) that are found in the context of worship.

Our first passage is the third song in this sequence and comes immediately after the Lamb is identified as worthy to break the seal (5:6). In response, both the living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship the Lamb (5:8) and sing another song (5:9–10). Here, Christ is praised as worthy for his ability to take the scroll and break its seals grounded in his unique qualifications: "for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God." Christ is worthy to inaugurate God's holy judgment because of his identity as the Redeemer. This redemption is further clarified in the following phrase "from every tribe and language and people and nation." Christ's redemption is comprehensive and available to all nations, all ethnic groups, and all races.

Further, Christ's redemption makes all nations a kingdom and priests to God and they will reign on earth (5:10). To narrow the ethnic dimension of God's people to one or few is to diminish the all-extensive range of Christ's redeeming work and, thereby, his worthiness. Hence, the multiethnic aspect of those redeemed plays a critical role in the worship of Christ by the living creatures and the twenty-four elders. And finally, the fourth song in 5:12 is sung by "the voice of many angels,

41. See R. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 29-37.

numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands."[42] The entire celestial body worships Christ as the Redeemer of all people. In conclusion, the worship offered by multiethnic people is theologically significant; it contributes to the portrait of God's and Christ's all-encompassing worthiness and all-extensive work of redemption. These divine attributes command worship from not only a partial group, whether earthly or heavenly, but indeed from the entire universe. Multiethnic worship serves as a factor in God's and Christ's worthiness to receive worship from the entire creation. If, indeed, multiethnic worship signifies God's all-encompassing sovereignty over all nations and his all-extensive work of redemption, what does a worship limited to one or a few races indicate? How much more would our worship of God be if it was multiethnic? How powerful would the gospel message be in such a setting?

The second passage (7:9–17), as noted above, employs a similar formula as 5:9 where the same key words "tribe," "language," people," and "nation" appear in different order. As in 5:9, the multiethnic group participates in worship along with the angels, elders, and living creatures (7:11–12). However, here in this passage, the focus is on the "great multitude;" their identity stands at the forefront of this passage. This "great multitude" is multiethnic and stands before "the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands" (7:9). "White robes" has already been mentioned, promised to those who overcome in 3:4–5 and given to martyrs in 6:11. The white robes, as in 3:4–5 and 6:11indicate purity is faithfulness even to death, and faithfulness is equated with victory. The phrase "in the blood of the Lamb" indicates that they are made pure by the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ (i.e. they are those saved). Here and throughout Revelation, the notion of salvation is faith that remains steadfast and overcomes.[43] Thus, this multiethnic group is one that

42. Osborne, *Revelation*, 262.

43. Cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 25–29, 3:5, 12, 21.

is bonded in the blood of Christ; they are not merely saved, but have "overcome."[44] The common bond for all is salvation in Christ and faithful endurance to the point of death.

What is the reward for this group? First, it is the privilege of dwelling in the presence of God and serving him continually in his temple (7:15).[45] God's presence covers them and conveys protection and comfort, two elements that are elaborated further in 7:15–17. Second, all forms of suffering are removed: they neither hunger nor thirst and neither the sun nor scorching heat will harm them (7:16). Third, Christ himself will be their shepherd and guide them to provision of life and removal of all sorrow (7:16). This is similar to the description of life in the New Jerusalem; all three features are found in 21:1-4. The similarities in both passages indicate that what is foreshadowed here in 7:9–17 is the presence of the multiethnic people of God not only in the heavenly throne room, but ultimately in the New Jerusalem.

In conclusion, "the kings of the earth" and "the nations" together convey the presence of a multiethnic people in the New Jerusalem (21:24 cf. Isa. 50:1-5). Here, L. Morris' comments are insightful: "John does not envisage the salvation of a tiny handful and the destruction of the vast majority of mankind. He sees God as bringing 'the Gentiles' into his holy city. God's purpose for mankind will not be frustrated."[46] The presence of all nations and their worship of God is the final consummation of God's passion for all peoples in the OT. God as Creator and Redeemer is also the Almighty God who accomplishes his purpose for his creation. In Revelation we see the psalmist's words come to fulfillment:

> There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.
> All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall

44. See Rev. 12:11.

45. L. Morris, *Revelation, Rev. Ed., TNTC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 115.

46. Morris, *Revelation*, 247.

> glorify your name. For you are great and perform wondrous deeds; you alone are God. (Pss. 86:8-10 [ESV])

To close, several points can be highlighted. First, the comprehensive notion of "all nations" serves as a critical factor in the depiction of God's sovereignty, omnipotence and worthiness. The multiethnic context accurately highlights God's universal sovereignty in salvation and judgment. Thus, the inclination to favor one race or an adoption of racial exclusion ultimately betrays a belief in a less-than sovereign God. Second, given the fact that the multiethnic group appears repeatedly in the context of worship, it is clear that worship of God requires a multiethnic people. This presents an insightful critique to the statement "Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America." These passages in Revelation offer a theological rationale for multiethnic worship. Even if segregation occurs in the secular world, the church should be the one place where multiethnic groups can worship together as one body. Third, in the passages examined above, the multiethnic church not only shares the common element of worship, but also stands together as a corporate group suffering for the name of Christ. The bonds that hold this multiethnic group together is their faith in Christ, the command to persevere and the willingness to suffer even death in their faithfulness. Thus, solidarity for this multiethnic group is not due to the virtues of diversity, but to Christ. They are all participants of faith in Christ, and their suffering for the same faith joins them together as one comprehensive group before God.

Conclusion

The examination of various NT passages affirms that racial reconciliation is at the very heart of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. In terms of salvation, atonement, ecclesiology and eschatology, God's will is consistently for a multiethnic worship. God's sovereign character demands worship from all people groups; he

is worthy of nothing less. To proclaim and confess salvation in the name of Christ necessarily means dissolution of old ethnic boundaries and the hearty reception of all peoples. Only such an inclusive stance will be ready for the heavenly worship in New Jerusalem. To this end, may the church strive.

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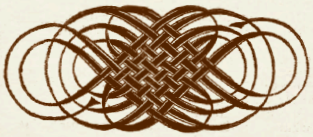
BOOK REVIEWS



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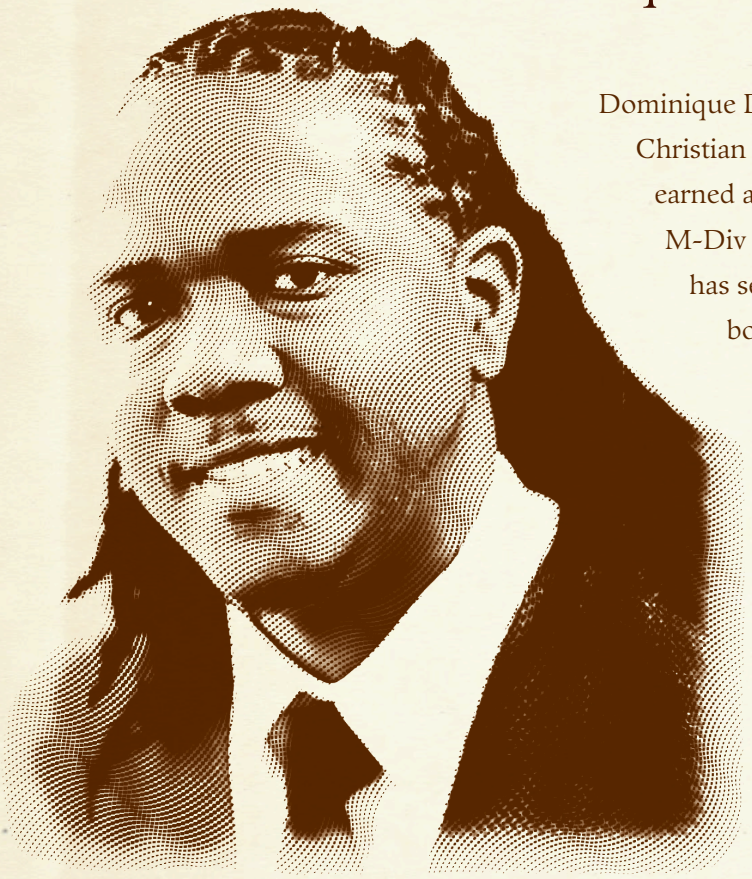

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The Cross and The Lynching Tree, by James Cone. NY: Orbis Books, 2011. 179 pages. Reviewed by Dominique Gilliard.

In the midst of a nation which claims colorblindness and strives to be post-racial, most U.S. citizens know little, to nothing, about the depths of our country's murky past regarding race relations. This is especially true outside the confines of slavery, and inasmuch as this is the case, most are bewildered upon learning that within the last 100 years approximately 7,000 African Americans were murdered in racially incited lynch mobs. Moreover, from 1890 to 1940, there were 5,500 African Americans lynched, with this sadistic practice reaching its zenith in 1892, with 155 African Americans lynched in that year alone. However, as a consequence of this nation's historical ignorance, most citizens lack this knowledge, and thus fail to realize lynching's enduring presence within America's psyche. James H. Cone explores this theologically, explicating the implications of these realities within his latest book, *The Cross and The Lynching Tree*. Within this text, Cone ultimately concludes that until the U.S. and particularly the Church, can begin to openly and frankly discuss lynching, there will cease to be real progress concerning racial reconciliation in North America.

The Cross and The Lynching Tree is an innovative work of constructive theology which indicts the U.S generally, and the white Church more specifically, for apathetically acquiescing to the heinous practice of lynching. Through passively consenting to the societal status quo of white supremacy and engaging in the historic crucifixion of black bodies, both actively, as well as passively, many white believers ascribed to a disembodied faith which contradicted biblical mandates and disregarded their responsibilities regarding Christian witness. In this vain, many white believers' of this era pledged their ultimate allegiances to whiteness, oftentimes concealed underneath the banner of patriotism and regional pride, instead of the

triune God. As a consequence of this, many white churches today, being formed and shaped by leadership from this era, have sustained these divided loyalties and spiritual distortions. They have remained devoted to whiteness and country on levels that parallel and sometimes supersede their commitment to the Gospel.

Cone articulates how the beliefs of white Christians during the Nadir period manifested into a truncated gospel which was peddled within churches and ultimately co-opted the faith making it theologically, as well as spiritually, acceptable to attend Church on Sunday morning and lynchings on Sunday afternoons. This domesticated gospel, a sort of racialized spirituality, is one that's been passed down generationally, and is still very present and prevalent within our culture and society today. Within this text, Cone excavates this consciousness of whiteness in general, and Eurocentric Christianity in particular, in an attempt to make sense of the ensuing ethic of apathy embedded within the fabric of many Caucasian Church's regarding racialized suffering.

Through examining the teachings, writings, and actions of leading white theologians of the 19th and 20st century, Cone explores the theology which undergirded and fostered the white church's divergence from orthodoxy, breeding heretical actions which endorsed and sustained racism. In diagnosing this, Cone highlights Reinhold Niebuhr, who was the leading white theologian of the era, as an archetype of the problem. Cone traces Niebuhr's innermost thoughts, activism, and social advocacy during his ascension towards being canonized as one of our nations most valorized theologians. In exegeting Niebuhr's life, Cone seeks to expose how and why white Christians, like Niebuhr, were enabled to considered themselves, as well as be considered by others, as justice oriented, God honoring, and fearing individuals who faithfully lived in accordance with scripture and in response to God's love in spite of being appallingly silent in the face of overt racism like lynching.

On the surface, this book is simply Cone's latest theological exercise of grappling with the meaning of black existence in America. Cone believes that the theological question for African Americans becomes: how can one believe that God loves black people in a society that has been predicated, defined, and financially stabilized by four hundred years of white supremacy?[1] However, it is upon answering this essential question of African American spirituality that Cone's latest work pivots and ultimately transcends the depth of his prior scholastic inquiries. As a theologian renowned for his concreteness, Cone theologically explores the Christological significance of lynching, exploring in-depth its implications for lynch victims, lynchers, and their families. Through ferociously staring down the assembly of U.S. history's debased black bodies, Cone is able to hone in on the barbarism intrinsic to the practice of lynching, all the while bearing witness to the defaced image of God inherent within these racialized martyrs.

Through juxtaposing the cross and the lynching tree, Cone constructs a provocative framework of invitation towards U.S. citizens, imploring readers to engage in critical self-reflection which ultimately unearths the fundamental parallels between the sociopolitical function of the cross and lynching tree within the Roman and U.S. empires. By connecting the cross and the lynching tree, two social symbols of terror separated by nearly 2,000 years, Cone illustrates how these two trees, while rarely thought to be symbolically connected, are theologically linked by their ability to interpret one another. The cross exists as the paragon symbol of the Christian faith; the lynching tree is the quintessential symbol of black oppression in the U.S. Both are symbols of death, functioning as mechanisms of domestic terrorism incited by the powers that be within their given social context. One represents a message of hope and salvation, while the other signifies the negation of those messages by white supremacy.[2] The lynching tree testifies to the ominous presence of the cross within Roman society, while the cross redeems those victimized by the

lynching tree, ensuring us that neither death, the lyncher, nor white supremacy has the final say.

Moreover, both symbols have been abstracted within our present context and insofar as this is the case, their social significance has been distorted and lost upon the masses. Cone helps to illustrate this point by surveying how the cross has been manipulated and transformed into a non-offensive symbol of holiness and commodified into a sacred fashion symbol. Consequently, by extension, the greatest sacrifice ever made has been trivialized and this ultimately blinds people from seeing the true meaning of the cross and the One who was crucified on it. Therefore, the cross needs to be liberated from its cultural captivity. The lynching tree has frequently been dismissed by the masses as an ancient relic of the past, an irrelevant reminder of racism of old, which holds no weight in today's society and is best left forgotten. Consequently, Cone draws parallels between these two trees and empires, with the hope that reflections on the cross and its functionality within Rome will shed light upon how the lynching tree was truly used within the U.S. Empire, in very similar ways; namely, in efforts to control and subjugate African Americans during the post-emancipation era. Theologically exploring the cross in this manner exposes the fallacy of U.S. innocence through illuminating this country's history of barbarism and institutionally sanctioned injustice. Moreover, it elucidates the reality that the U.S. is not as far removed as it likes to think of itself concerning racially incited mob rule and violence.

Cone's most significant assertion throughout the text is that the crucified and battered body of Christ stands in solidarity with the victims of society's numerous lynching trees throughout the course of time. Cone exemplifies an incredibly unique ability to theologically link the restorative hope of redemption to the suffering populations of both those alive and dead. He makes this link relevant both tangibly in the present and eschatologically in the future, by rooting the suffering's existence

within the power of Christ's death and resurrection. Through this, he is able to masterfully illustrate how Christ's cross served as the transvaluation of death. In this, African Americans are able to overcome the utter hopelessness of the legacy of the lynching tree by residing in Christ. This is because through the crucified Christ, lynched, castrated, and mangled black bodies are reconfigured and amalgamated into one cruciform flesh.

Conversations about the cross and the lynching tree demand the acknowledgement of African American humanity. They force the U.S. to acknowledge and own up to its racist history, a history which it has, and still to this day, desperately seeks to deny. This dialogue mandates that this nation's conviction concerning the historical crucifixion of African Americans. The U.S. church needs something as tangible as the lynching tree to anchor and cement the concept of the crucifixion for us today. The U.S. needs to see itself as guilty, as responsible for crucifixion, and not just the crucifixion of African Americans, but also of Christ, and the other re-crucified bodies which exist throughout the world today, victimized by our politics and greed.

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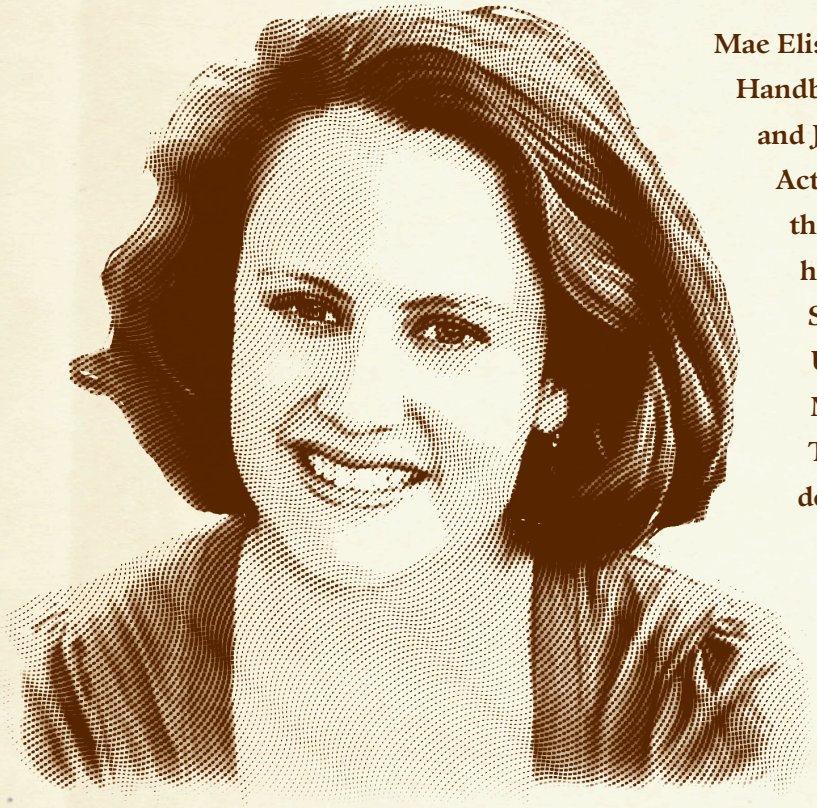
1. The 400 year reign of white supremacy for African Americans involves 248 years of legalized slavery, 25 years of sharecropping, 50 years of lynching at its climax, 47 years under the thumb of Jim/Jane Crow, and 32 years under the siege of the governmentally declared "war of drugs".

2. James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2011), xiii.

Mae Elise Cannon



Mae Elise Cannon is the author of Social Justice Handbook: Small Steps for a Better World (IVP, 2009) and Just Spirituality: How Faith Practices Fuel Social Action (IVP, 2012). Cannon is an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). Cannon holds an M.Div. From North Park Theological Seminary, an M.B.A. from North Park University's School of Business and Nonprofit Management, and an M.A. in bioethics from Trinity International University. She is now a doctoral candidate in American History with the minor in Middle Eastern studies at the University of California – Davis focusing her dissertation on the history of the American Protestant church in Israel and Palestine.

Blood Brothers, by Elias Chacour with David Hazard. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2003. 240 Pages. Reviewed by Mae Elise Cannon.

In my years of working in the Middle East, I have heard many accolades of Elias Chacour's book *Blood Brothers*. The story is one of profound love, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

Elias Chacour was born in 1939 and grew up in the small village of Biram in the hills of Galilee. During that time, the British ruled Palestine. When Elias was 10 years old, the communities of Galilee came face-to-face with Zionist settlers, many of whom were refugees from World War II. One day, Elias' father came home and told his children that Jewish soldiers would be visiting their town. Some of the town's people were worried about what the coming of the soldiers might mean.

Elias' father, Michael, taught his children to extend hospitality to the Jews: "The Jews and Palestinians are brothers – blood brothers. We share the same father, Abraham, and the same God. We must never forget that." Thus, when the young soldiers came to stay in their home, the Chacour family welcomed them by celebrating with a feast of lamb. The family slept on the roof of their home, giving the bedrooms to their Jewish visitors.

Shortly thereafter, fighting broke out between the newly established Israeli forces and neighboring Arab nations. When the violence reached Galilee, the Palestinian villagers left their homes and fled to the nearby olive groves for safety. The villagers intended to return to their homes and thought their plight into the wilderness would only be temporary. However, when they returned to their village, they discovered they were no longer welcome. They were displaced by the Zionist soldiers, heavily armed, who now claimed the land as their own.

After being displaced, the Chacour family and other townspeople traveled to the neighboring village of Gish. They discovered the town had been abandoned. Later, they found the graves of some of the villagers who had been killed. The refugees from Biram decided to settle temporarily in the abandoned homes. Families were forced to live in small homes with inadequate shelter. Food was scarce. Yet in the middle of fear and suffering, Elias' father demanded that his family respond with Christian love and charity. He taught Elias to abhor violence and that aggression was not a legitimate response for Christians even when fighting against injustice.

Later the Chacour family, and other villagers from Biram, went back to the village. Two Israeli Supreme Court orders had declared that the land rightfully belonged to the Palestinians. At the time when the people were returning to their homes, the residing soldiers set off bombs and razed the village by bulldozer. Only remnants and broken buildings remained. As the villagers watched in horror, Elias was deeply influenced by the words of his father as he watched the horrific scene: "Forgive them."

This was the message of forgiveness and reconciliation with which Elias was raised. His parents despaired that he would not be able to receive a good education in Gish, so they sent him with the town bishop to live in an orphanage in Haifa where he would be able to go to school.. Having been a country boy, Haifa was a unique and challenging place for Elias. Initially, God seemed distant in the busy city life of Haifa. After a while, however, Elias received the special privilege of being able to stay up late and there in the stillness and solitude of the evening hours, God revealed himself to this young Palestinian boy. It was in Haifa where Chacour received his call to ministry.

Having decided to follow God's call, Elias went to Bible College in Nazareth where he would study to become a priest. While at school, Chacour writes about how he

hurt for the Jewish people while wrestling with his own experience of having lost so much: "Why had the civilized world allowed them [the Jews] to be persecuted?... Why did the world allow my people to be driven into diaspora only a few years after the Holocaust?" In the midst of these questions, Elias excelled at school and diligently pursued his calling.

After Nazareth, Chacour had the opportunity to go to seminary at Saint Sulpice in Paris. He learned that in Western eyes, being a Palestinian was a disgraceful thing. Responding to a particularly provocative incident, Elias declared: "We're not terrorists. Neither are our families. We don't want to hurt anyone. The Jews are welcome in our country, but we don't want their military to take over our farmland and our homes. Would you? We just want to bring peace back to our people. To reconcile Palestinians and Jews."

It was in Paris where Elias had to come to grips with his own wrestling: How could he be called to be a servant of God and harbor so much anger and resentment inside? He tells of his struggle: "As a Christian, I had just as difficult a calling as a blood son of Israel. I could not join with the violent bands who were now attacking the country, even though I could feel their frustration. But neither could I live by the passive ways of Father and the other elders…" Elias knew there must be another way.

Once graduating from seminary and being ordained, Chacour was assigned to be a priest in the poor Galilean village of Ibillin. Initially, the situation greeting Father Chacour was rough. He had little resources, the church was in disrepair, and the townspeople were full of negative feelings toward both the church and its new priest. However, after persistence and commitment – visiting every family in the town and consistently showing God's love and care – the community experienced a profound transformation. Chacour invited nuns from Nazareth to come and serve as Christian witnesses in the community. Eventually the townspeople brought their

children and the sick to see the Sisters. The nuns provided medical care and spiritual support alongside of Father Chacour and his new ministry.

Father Chacour's ministry of reconciliation was launched within the small intimate village community of Ibillin. For years the townspeople had been relating with contempt and malicious gossip. Yet over time a profound thing happened: deep reconciliation began to occur within the Christian community. Christians reached out to their Muslim neighbors. Gossip ceased and those participating repented of how their spiteful tongues had caused pain. Hospitality began to be one of the marked signs of this revitalized parish community.

Shortly after this marked change, Chacour was summoned to receive further education at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. While in Jerusalem, Chacour was deeply influenced and often surprised by the close relationships and receptivity of Jewish students and professors toward him. This time in his life deeply influenced his understanding of the Israeli narrative and his own pursuit of both justice and reconciliation.

After his formative time in Jerusalem, Chacour returned to Ibillin and continued his ministry. He became increasingly inspired, influenced by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, to provide hope and dignity to the Palestinian community. Committed to making a difference among his people, he began to start educational programs, build schools, and sponsor programs of reconciliation between Jewish and Palestinian students and teachers. In 1983, under the leadership of Abuna (Father) Chacour, the Prophet Elias High School was built in Ibillin. This high school has since expanded to now include several thousand Christian, Muslim, and Druze students.

Today, Abuna Chacour is recognized as a world leader in non-violent activism and is an ambassador for the Holy See in Rome. The effectiveness of his ministry has been recognized by the global community and he has received many awards

including the 2001 "Man of the Year" in Israel. Chacour has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times for his peace building efforts and work with the Palestinian community in Israel.

Abuna Chacour's ministry of reconciliation rests on the powerful message of hope exemplified in the person of Christ. Inspired by his faith, Chacour has dedicated his life to restoring dignity to the Palestinian community while pursuing reconciliation with their Jewish neighbors. He is committed to "changing hearts and not only institutions" while relying on the words of Jesus and His words on the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers…" Chacour believes: "Palestinians need the hope of a future. Hope that one day we can reconcile with the Jews and live in dignity again." Ultimately, Chacour and his story remind us of the hope that comes in the person of Christ who reconciles all things.