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This present publication comprises the second part of Volume 3 of Semănătorul (The Sower): The Emanuel Journal of Ministry and Biblical Research. In spite of all the challenges caused by the pandemic in Romania, the Journal has continued to present submissions by the Faculty of Theology of Emanuel University, Oradea, plus contributions from International scholars. The articles are not only published here but have been shared on line with Faculty members and are available on the Emanuel website.

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The Journal provides an opportunity for the Faculty members in Emanuel to present a range of articles on various aspects broadly related to challenges in communicating Christian truth in a modern culture. Along with their International colleagues, papers are presented which address important biblical issues, provide opportunity for research, and in addition, often cover practical pastoral themes. Since articles come from different communities across the world there are occasional differences in matters of style etc. But it has been deemed that these are not such as to detract from the profit to be derived from reading them.

Dr. Hamilton Moore

Editor

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Word Studies: A Combination of Immediate Context, Current Usage, and Authorial Intention

Corin Mihăilă[1]

Abstract:

Getting to the meaning of a word is no easy task. It may seem like a quick process since the object of the study is the smallest unit of discourse. And it is so in most cases. However, it is at this basic level of meaning that most interpretative fallacies are committed: etymological fallacy, root fallacy, and illegitimate totality transfer, just to name a few. One must guard against such fallacies by considering at least three factors that determine the meaning of a word: immediate context, current usage, and authorial intention.

The word is loaded with potential meaning, but potential meaning becomes real meaning only when the word finds a place in a particular literary structure, within a particular life setting, and in the particular intention of the author who utters the word. In other words, we should be interested in the meaning a word acquires in a certain context, corresponds with its usage in that period and by the same author, and fulfils the function the author intended for the particular passage in which the word occurs.

In order to guard ourselves against fallacies of all kinds and guarantee a certain degree of precision in interpretation, we should look for what an author *does* with the word(s) he uses in a certain context.

Keywords: word studies, meaning, etymological fallacy, root fallacy, illegitimate totality transfer, immediate context, current usage, authorial intention.

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Introduction

Cotterrell and Turner rightly assess that, "Future generations may well call the last hundred years or so the Era of Theological Word Studies."[2] Word studies have always been a major part of biblical exegesis and theological studies, and rightly so.[3] A random reading through any commentary will quickly show that the interpretation of any biblical text depends substantively upon the interpretation of individual words. When we study a passage, we also tend to spend an inordinate amount of time on word studies. This is so because exegesis, at its most basic level, deals with lexeme. Osborne rightly observes that, "Words provide the building blocks of meaning."[4] Words, though the smallest unit in a discourse, are nevertheless carriers of meaning. Indeed, when considered independently of other words, individual words only have potential meaning (i.e., semantic range), but when in connection with other words, they convey meaning. They are not just *signs* but also conveyers of *sense*.[5] Words are the threads from which the tapestry of Scripture is sown together to communicate a meaningful message.

Yet, it is at this most basic level of meaning that the gravest errors are made. One does not have to listen to too many sermons to come across an "exegetical pearl" such as the correlation of the word δύναμις with "dynamite." Though such an argument may stimulate a positive and enthusiastic response from the audience, it overlooks the fact that it is based on a wrong lexical study. We would not be far off to say that Paul might have had in mind something similar when he enjoined Timothy to "rightly divide the Word of truth." Such exegetical errors, however, can be found not only in sermons (that are regarded less scholarly), but also in highly respected reference works. For instance, John Lee points to the

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[2] Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989),106.

[3] The importance of words should not be exaggerated, since meaning (especially theological meaning) is found at the level not of words but of utterances or discourse. See the corrective provided by James Barr in *The Semantics of Biblical Languages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), a book which initiated a paradigm shift in biblical studies from a focus on individual words as carrying theological meaning to a focus on discourse analysis.

[4] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 64. See also Darrell L. Bock, section entitled "Lexical Analysis. Studies in Words," in *Interpreting the New Testament Text. Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis*, eds. Darrell L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), cap.5.

[5] See Bock, "Lexical Analysis" chap. 5 for the three elements of words: sign, sense, and referent.

wrong assessment that συνάγω can mean "to turn everything into cash," according to the much used BDAG lexicon.[6]

When a biblical interpreter works with the text in a context characterized by so many abuses and fallacies in lexical studies, he is bound to ask himself whether the exegetical process can guarantee any level of accuracy and whether it can result in any authoritative statements about the meaning of a text. While such concerns may be justified, it should not lead to pessimism in interpretation when it comes to word studies. Though one must recognize that any conclusions concerning the interpretation of the biblical text are provisional and open to subsequent revisions, one should not despair. Recognizing some of the most common errors in word studies can prevent the interpreter from making them in his effort to get to the meaning of a word. Likewise, the knowledge of some guidelines for doing word studies can assure a higher level of confidence related to the results of a word study. All these elements and other information must be part of the "baggage" that the interpreter brings to his task of biblical exegesis if a reliable and authoritative interpretation is expected.

This article, then, will concern itself mainly with the proper way of doing word studies. We will present three of the most common fallacies to avoid in doing word studies: the etymological fallacy, the root fallacy, and the fallacy of illegitimate totality transfer. Then, we will discuss three factors that determine the meaning of a word: current usage, immediate context, and authorial intention. Lastly, we will present some guidelines for doing word studies in order to warrant some level of accuracy of understanding of this most basic building block of meaning.

Common Exegetical Fallacies[7]

Etymological Fallacy

Etymology is the study of the history of a term and the various meanings that it has acquired in time, from its original meaning to the current meaning.

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[6] John A. L. Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography* (Studies in Biblical Greek 8. New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 317-19. One of Lee's well-taken points is that lexicons build upon previous lexicons and therefore tend to perpetuate lexical errors, since it is impossible for one or several authors of a lexicon to do an exhaustive study of each word.

[7] For lack of space, we will not be able to list and discuss all such fallacies, neither will we be able to go into may details with those that will be presented here. For a thorough presentation of the most common exegetical fallacies upon which our study depends, see D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984). See also Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral,* esp. 66–76.

Etymology, therefore, is by definition a diachronic study of a word.[8] The etymological fallacy, then, is the belief that the current meaning of a word is somehow connected to its original meaning. In other words, there is the belief that in each word there is a "basic" and "stable" meaning that is always present, no matter the context in which it appears.[9]

An appeal to the "original" meaning of a word or to the evolution of a term as authoritative or normative for the current meaning, however, involves fundamental misunderstandings concerning language.

First, the etymological fallacy assumes that language is static rather than dynamic. Peter Cotterell and Max Turner correctly observe that, "Word-formation is *often* a fair guide to the original meaning of a Greek word but certainly *not always*. All languages change gradually with time and words come to have new meanings, older meaning often becoming obsolete."[10] The most frequent example in English used to show the dynamic nature of language is the word "nice" which is derived from the Latin *nescius* meaning "ignorant." To claim that the meaning of "nice" today is the same as its original meaning is clearly absurd.[11]

Secondly, the etymological fallacy fails to take into consideration the fact that language is the means of communication between the members of a linguistic group. It is within this socio-historical and literary context that words come to mean something. Language performs the function that a particular community intends it to perform.[12] It would then be an elemental mistake to assume that a word has maintained a core meaning over time, or even across distinct but

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[8]Cf. James Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language*, 107. Barr wrote his entire book as a critique to the methodology of constructing theology derived from word studies, dependent in turn on etymology.

[9]J. P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, The Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 23, points out that the problem can be traced back to the Greeks who believed that the meaning of a word stemmed from its nature rather than from convention.

[10]Cotterrell & Turner, *Linguistics*, 131 (emphasis by author). Likewise, Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral,* 71, states that, "In studying the history of a word we must consider the strong possibility of semantic change, when a word alters its meaning over the course of years."

[11] In Romanian, e.g., the word "a alunga" comes from the Latin "allongare" sau "elongare" meaning "a se lungi, a se alungi." Clearly the two meanings have nothing in common. See Mihai Vinereanu, *Dicționar Etimologic al Limbii Române pe baza cercetărilor de into-europenistică* (București: Alcor Edimpex, 2008), 75.

[12]For different functions that language can perform see E. A. Nida and J. P. Louw, *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament: A Supplement to the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Society of Biblical Literature 25 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 13–16.

contemporary linguistic communities. What determines the meaning of a word is the community that uses it, for meaning is conventions-bound.

These arguments and others point to Barr's conclusion that, "The etymology of a word is not a statement about its meaning but about its history."[13] Therefore, the current meaning of a word is not necessarily dependent upon previous meanings. Words have meaning only because of the context in which they are used, the linguistic community that uses them, and the time at which they are used. A proper understanding of language, then, makes a clear distinction between the synchronic and diachronic study of words.[14]

The synchronic study (how a word is used now) and not the diachronic study (how a word has evolved in meaning over time) is important in determining the current meaning of a word.[15] Etymology, therefore, is in the largest part useless in determining the lexical meaning.[16] Cotterrell and Turner explain: "The history of a word may explain *how* a word came to be used with some particular sense at a specified time but in order to find out *what* a lexeme means at that particular time we have only to look at the contemporary *usage*."[17] De Saussure used the analogy of a chess game in order to prove the uselessness of etymology in discovering the current meaning of a word:

In a game of chess any particular position has the unique characteristic of being freed from all antecedent positions; the route used in arriving there makes absolutely no difference; one who has followed the entire match has no advantage over the curious party who comes up at a critical moment to inspect the state of the game; to describe this arrangement, it is perfectly useless to recall

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[13]Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language*, 109.

[14]There is, however, a proper place for etymological study. Cotterrell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 132, explain: "The history of a word may explain *how* a word came to be used with some particular sense at a specified time but in order to find out *what* a lexeme means at that particular time we have only to look at the contemporary *usage*."

[15] Diachronic word studies are characteristic of dictionaries such as *TDNT* and *NIDNTT*. "Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-76), abbrev. TDNT; and The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1975-85), abbrev. NIDNTT." For a critique of *TDNT*, see Barr, *Semantics*, 21-45, 206-62, mentioned by Darrell Bock, in his chap. "Lexical Analysis."

[16] This does not deny the fact that there is a proper place for etymological study. Barr points for instance to the use of etymology in getting to the meaning of a difficult to understand and rare Hebrew word by looking at cognates of a known Arabic or Acadian word. But etymology cannot authoritatively impose a sense upon the word; it only gives a good semantic indication. It is the context that determines meaning; the actual usage. *Semantics*, 158.

[17] Cotterrell and Turneer, *Linguistics*, 132.

what had just happened ten seconds previously. All this is equally applicable to language and sharpens the radical distinction between diachrony and synchrony. Speaking operates only on a language-state and the changes that intervene between states have no place in either state.[18]

Emphasizing the current usage of the word in order to determine its meaning affects the way one goes about doing word studies. Negatively, it warns us against referring to the use of a term in Homer or Aristotle, for instance, in order to show what the meaning of the same term is in the New Testament times. While the meaning may be the same, the diachronic study is no sure way of determining what Paul, for instance, meant when he used the term. Positively, it motivates us to pay a closer attention to the immediate context as determinative of meaning.

Root Fallacy

The etymological fallacy lies at the basis of other fallacies such as the root fallacy. The root fallacy is based on the assumption that the meaning of a word lies somewhere in the "root" or the "basic" form of the word. In other words, those guilty of the root fallacy assume that the root of a word carries the basic meaning that is reflected in every subordinate use of the word.[19]

The root fallacy clearly confuses semantics with morphology—meaning with form. Louw is right to argue that "One of the basic principles of semantics is that the relation between the form of a word and its meaning is an arbitrary one."[20] The meaning of a word cannot be determined by or derived from its root form. A common example of the root fallacy is the explanation that the Greek word ἀπόστολος means "one sent out" based on its morphology ἀπό+ στέλλω. But such an explanation, according to Louw, ignores the fact that "It is a basic principle of modern semantic theory that we cannot progress from the form of a word to its meaning. Form and meaning are not directly correlated."[21]

The root fallacy is particularly seen in the explanation of compound words. It is a common practice among commentators and preachers to explain the meaning of a word from a combination of the meanings of its constituent parts. But such practice can lead to serious misunderstandings for it completely neglects the immediate context.

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[18] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 89.
[19] Cf. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 66.
[20] Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 25.
[21] Ibid., 29.

Several principles must guide us in determining the meaning of compound words. First, it is generally erroneous to infer the meaning of a compound word from the summation of the meanings of its constituent parts. This cannot usually be done while at the same time claiming to do proper lexical exegesis. Cotterell and Turner state that, "The meaning of the whole compound usually has a semantic content different from a mere summation of the meaning of the constituent words."[22] We say "generally" and "usually" because some terms are more "transparent" while others more "opaque." That is to say that the meanings of some compound words are more closely related to their root meaning than others.[23] Some even maintain their root meaning.[24] Cotterell and Turner explain: "The meanings of many words can be understood from knowledge of some basic form and appropriate rules of word-formation and inflection."[25] However, the general principle that the meaning of a compound word usually has a semantic content different from a mere summation of the meaning of the constituent words still stands, even if in some cases the difference is minimal.[26]

Secondly, prefixes added to verbs affect the meaning of the verb in different ways.[27] It is reductionistic to assume that the root meaning of the verb with a prefix dictates its meaning. It is true that in many cases the root meaning is closer to the semantic range of the term, but there are also cases where the meaning is completely new. Therefore, it is more accurate to state with J. W. Wenham that the prepositional prefix can affect a stem in three ways: the force of both preposition and verb continues (e.g., εἰσέρχομαι); the preposition intensifies the thrust of the verb (e.g., μεταμορφόω); and the preposition changes the meaning

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[22]Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 130.
[23]See Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 28, for different examples.
[24] E.g., "covetousness," gr. πλεονεξία, is a compound word: πλείων (eng. "more") + ἔχω (eng. "to have") = "to have more." Thus, the coveting person is the one who wants more and lust for more. E.g., "gospel," gr. εὐαγγέλιον is a compound word meaning "good news." E.g., "to confess," gr. ὁμολογέω, is a compound word: ὁμοῦ (eng. "together") + λέγω (eng. "to speak") = "to speak the same, to agree." Thus, to confess in 1Jn.1:9 means to say the same thing about sin as God says. That is why John says that whoever says that he does not have sin makes God a liar.
[25]Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 130.
[26]One example is the meaning of idioms. An idiom has traditionally been defined as a combination of words who give meaning to the whole phrase not by contributing their individual meanings but by the socio-cultural context in which they are used. Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, 24, argue that, "Idioms constitute the most semantically complex lexemes since they are so intimately and integrally related to the cultural contexts out of which they have developed." As such, "Idioms function very much like single words. […] Accordingly, idioms must also be regarded as 'lexemes' and their semantic analysis involves essentially the same procedures as in the case of individual words" (p. 7).
[27]Cf. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 67.

of the verb (e.g., ἐπιγινώσκω).[28] Thus, according to Osborne, "The student can never assume that a prepositional prefix affects a compound in any one of the three ways. Only the context and word usage can decide."[29]

Thirdly, one must not equate the "general" or "universal" meaning with the root meaning. It is true that usually one meaning is used a lot more than other possible meanings, and therefore it can be called the "general" meaning (occasionally also called "central" or "normal" or even "natural" meaning). This "general" meaning can thus be understood as the most common in frequency of occurrence and therefore the meaning that usually first comes to mind when hearing or reading a word with a limited context. In this sense, Louw argues that the "general" meaning is close to what linguistics would call the "unmarked" meaning. "Unmarked" is understood as "that meaning which would be readily applied in a minimum context where there is little or nothing to help the receptor in determining the meaning."[30]

Nevertheless, the general meaning is just that: general. One cannot assume that just because a word is used with one meaning more than with other meanings, the general meaning is always part of the meaning of the word in every context as a root meaning. The general meaning is helpful in limiting the semantic range of a word, but only the immediate context is determinative of meaning.

It is helpful here to point to Nida's categories of "central" and "peripheral" meanings. One may be right that when a word has a central meaning as well as peripheral meanings it is best to assume that the central meaning is intended unless the context points to a peripheral meaning. "This is not to say," however, states Nida:

that the central meaning is somehow always incorporated into the extended meanings, as a kind of generic semantic base to be found in all occurrences of a lexeme—what in German is called a *Grundbedeutung* and in English is sometimes referred to as "basic meaning." Being a central or a peripheral meaning is simply a matter of so-called "markedness" the extent to which various degrees of peripheral meanings need to be specially marked by more and more specific features of the context.[31]

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[28]J. W. Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965; 2d ed. 2001), 55.
[29]Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 67.
[30]Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 34.
[31]Nida and Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, 12.

Understanding the proper place of general meaning in semantics, then, helps us avoid the root fallacy. The term "general" is useful, Louw argues, "only as long as it is never raised to the status of implying that it is the root or basis of meaning." But he further argues, "to maintain a common kernel as the general meaning among all the possible meanings that may serve as a factor behind all the other meanings and which serves as a type of 'inner' meaning, is absurd."[32]

Illegitimate totality transfer

Related somewhat to the root fallacy is what Barr termed the fallacy of "illegitimate totality transfer." By this he means "the error that arises, when the 'meaning' of a word (understood as the total series of relations in which it is used in the literature) is read into a particular case as its sense and implication there."[33] This procedure illegitimately overloads the semantic value of words. Anthony Thiselton concludes: "Words do not carry with them all the meanings which they have in other sets of co-occurrences."[34]

It is important here, therefore, to make a distinction between meaning and usage in order to avoid imposing more meaning upon a word than the context allows. Nida, for instance, correctly points to the inadequacy of most dictionaries in the way they present the "meanings" of Greek words. A source of confusion comes from the assumption that each possible translation of a Greek word is in fact one of the meanings of the Greek word. It is thus important to remember that when a dictionary such as BDAG places a passage behind a certain meaning, this indicates an opinion and not an established fact, and represents a judgment based on usage rather than meaning.[35] Nida argues that, "One of the principal reasons for the inadequacy of most dictionaries is the failure to distinguish between the meaning of a word and the various specific contexts in which a word may be used."[36] Usage, therefore, is not to be confused with meaning.

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[32]Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 34 and 35 respectively.

[33]Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language*, 218. Anthony C. Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 84, explains the fallacy in this way: "This occurs when the semantic value of a word as it occurs in *one context* is *added* to its semantic value in *another context*; and the process is continued until the *sum* of these semantic values is then *read into a particular case*" (emphasis by author).

[34]Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," 84. He follows here E. A. Nida, "The Implications of Contemporary Linguistics for Biblical Scholarship," *Journal for the Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 86.

[35]Cf. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 82. See Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography*.

[36]Nida & Louw, *Lexical Semantics*, 3.

It is true that a particular usage can become so widespread or "general" that it eventually becomes part of the lexical meaning of the word.[37] But as we have already argued earlier, a "general" meaning is not the same as the "root" meaning. To equate the two is to commit the error of assuming that the way a word is used in all contexts affects the meaning of the word in a particular context. Thus, one must be careful to distinguish between the way a word is being used and the meaning of the word. The practical implication of this principle is that one should not immediately assume that the way a word is used in extra-biblical literature is necessarily parallel to the meaning in a biblical text, be it even contemporary to it. It is important to select that meaning which is used in a context similar to the passage which we are studying.[38]

Factors in Determining Word Meaning

We hope that it is clear from the presentation so far that at least two factors play a significant role in the meaning of a word: current usage and immediate context. More often than not, exegetical fallacies are committed as a result of neglecting both these factors. For instance, the etymological fallacy is the result of stressing the "original" or "basic" meaning of a word at the neglect of the current usage which is dictated by context (both socio-historical and literary). The root fallacy focuses too much on morphology and word formation, particularly when it comes to compound words, and too little on how the word functions in the context. The fallacy of illegitimate totality transfer invests too much meaning in a word due to the confusion of meaning and usage that are closely related to the context in which the word appears. The context and current usage, in all cases, determine what meaning a word acquires in a specific text and how it is used there. Therefore, we will say a few more things about these two factors, adding to them a related third one: authorial intention.

Immediate Context

According to Osborne, most modern linguists recognize the centrality of the linguistic and extra-linguistic dimensions to the issue of meaning, namely the centrality of the context.[39] However, in practice, many spend an inordinate time on analyzing the extra-biblical occurrences of a word and little time on doing a thorough exegesis of the immediate context in order to find clues that would help them in determining the meaning of the word. The danger in such an unbalanced

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[37]Cf. Cotterrell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 140.
[38]Cf. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 91.
[39]Ibid., 64.

emphasis on non-context issues is of course obvious from the exegetical fallacies discussed above.

One must, therefore, keep in mind one of the fundamental principles in semantics, according to Barr, that "there is no question about the meaning of *words*, as distinct from texts. Words can only be intelligibly interpreted by what they meant at the time of their usage, within the language system used by the speaker or writer."[40] The meaning of a word depends not on what it is in itself, but on its relation to other words. Osborne essentially follows Barr when he states that:

Terms really do not carry meaning by themselves… There is no inherent meaning in a word. Words are arbitrary symbols that have meaning only in a context. They function on the basis of convention and practical use in any language system, and they must be studied descriptively (how they are actually employed) rather than prescriptively (according to preconceived rules). A word has no single meaning, only meaning potential, a symbol waiting for a context.[41]

The last phrase in the above quotation is fundamental for a proper semantic analysis of any word. The semantic range of a word can be determined by an analysis of other occurrences of the term, but it is only the immediate context that can specify with a certain authority what the term means and how it is used in the context in which it appears. In other words, one must be aware of polysemy that states that a "particular form of a word can belong to different fields of meaning."[42] But whereas a word can have more than one meaning, this should not be taken to mean that the word is normally capable of a full range of meanings in a given utterance. A word can usually mean more than one thing, that is a word has potential meanings, but which one of the meanings is found in a particular context is determined only by that context.[43] Thus, the correct meaning of a word within any context is the meaning which fits the context best. Cotterell concurs

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[40]Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language*, 139–40.

[41]Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 75–76. Though he does not mention this, this is again one of Ferdinand de Saussure's major points in his *Course in General Linguistics*. It was he who first argued the "structurally *arbitrary* and so purely *conventional* nature of the word-to-meaning relationship." See a good presentation of the fundamental principles of linguistics as stated by de Saussure in Max Turner, "Modern Linguistics and the New Testament," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 148–53.

[42]Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 37.

[43]We are not denying that one word can have two meanings in one context, as is the case with the *double entendre* in the Gospel of John. But even in such cases where the author intends the reader to see two meanings, the context is still determinative in deciding which meaning(s) is used. Cf. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, 35.

that, "The context of the utterance usually singles out the *one* sense which is intended from amongst the various senses of which the word is potentially capable."[44]

This emphasis on the meaning of words being context-conditioned should not be misconstrued as a denial of the fact that individual words "refer" to certain things and not others. That is, as Thiselton argues, "Words do indeed possess a stable core of meaning without which lexicography would be impossible…"[45] E. D. Hirsch states the case along similar lines: "… all meaning communicated by texts is to some extent language-bound, that no textual meaning can transcend the meaning possibilities and the control of the language in which it is expressed."[46]

The context is therefore determinative of meaning, not in the sense that it creates an entirely new meaning unrelated at all to other meanings as used in other contexts, but that the context tells us which of the possible meanings that the word can have is used in that particular context. Moisés Silva states boldly that "The context does not merely help us understand meaning; it virtually *makes* meaning."[47] While such a statement may seem too bold, his point is well taken, in that language can be understood only when interpreted within the limits of its specific use. Meaning, in other words, is both determined by the context in which language is used and shaped by the community that uses it. Thus, in any lexical study one must interpret the part—the word—in light of the whole—the context.

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[44]Cotterrell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 175.

[45]Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," 79. In this essay, Thiselton rightly argues against an "atomizing exegesis" which pays too much attention to words and insufficient attention to context. However, he strikes a correct balance when it comes to word-studies and words as units of meaning. He quotes two linguists on p. 83 to offer a warning against those who take words as carrying no meaning. "There is no getting away from the fact that single words have more or less permanent meanings that they actually do refer to certain referents and not to others, and that this characteristic is the indispensable basis of all communication." And "There is usually in each word a hard core of meaning which is relatively stable and can only be modified by the context within certain limits."

[46]E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 23. He later adds: "A part is frequently autonomous in the sense that some aspect of it is the same no matter what whole it belongs to," 77.

[47]Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 139. When Silva uses the word "context" he is referring not only to the literary context but also to the context of situation (pp. 144–47). A similar argument is brought forth by the ordinary language philosophers who are united in their belief that "language can only be understood in the situation and circumstances of its *use*." Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 208. In the same location, Vanhoozer states that their motto might well have been: "There is nothing outside a context."

Current Usage

As we have already seen, the meaning of a word must also be determined synchronically (i.e., "with time") and not diachronically (i.e., "through time"), from how a word *is used* and not from how it *was used*. As fruitful as a diachronic study of a word can be, such as the study of how Septuagintal and classical Greek literature use a word,[48] ultimately the meaning of a word must be sought in the synchronic study of the word. That is, we must look at the NT use of the word as well as the contemporary nonbiblical Greek usage of that word.

Most exegesis books speak of concentrical circles of meaning that can be represented as follows:[49]
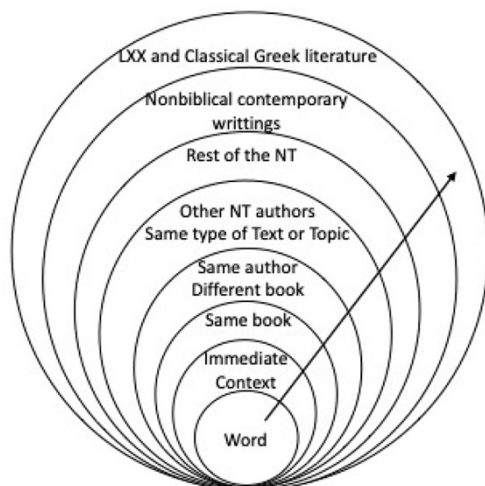
In this representation, one must always start in doing word studies from the inner circle working his way towards the outward circle, the most important ones for determining meaning being the ones closest to the word. This means that emphasis is always given to the current usage in the Bible, as the author uses it both in the immediate literary context as well as in the same book or other books

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[48] See Darrell Bock, *Interpreting,* chap. 5, and Craig L. Blomberg with Jennifer Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), chap.5.
[49] See, e.g., J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word. A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), chap.9.

written by him. All the other outer circles are mined in order to enrich, deepen, and strengthen the findings of the previous steps.

But even when respecting the direction in which one must proceed when doing word studies—from the inner circle to the outer circles—there are cases when the meaning of a word can be decided exclusively from the immediate context, the outer circles being of no help. Take for example the words καθεύδω and γρηγορέω in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-10.[50]   These words have three different meanings in the same immediate context:

1 Thessalonians 5:6-7,10 the verb καθεύδω has 3 different meanings:

Literal = to sleep (v.7);

Figurative = to be dead (v.10) and thus synonym with κοιμάομαι in 4:13,14,15;

Spiritual = indifferent (v.6).

1 Thessalonians 5:6,10 the verb γρηγορέω has 2 (or 3) different meanings:

Literal = to stay awake as opposed to sleeping;

Figurative = to be alive (v.10) as opposed to being dead;

Figurative = to watch (v.6) as opposed to being indifferent.

These examples show us that immediate context and current usage are not enough to determine the meaning of the words. One other factor must be brought into discussion: authorial intention—how the author uses the words or what the author is doing with the words.

Authorial Intention[51]

Ultimately meaning is not an inherent characteristic of words, but is grounded in the author's intention, in other words, in what he *does* with the words he *uses*. Context can be similar, words can be similar, but intention in usage can be different, as illustrated above.

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[50] For other examples see Turner, "Historical Criticism and Theological Hermeneutics for the New Testament," in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematics Theology*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 46, and Vanhoozer, *Meaning,* 210.

[51] For a more elaborate argument for authorial intention, see my article "The Importance of Background Studies in Uncovering the Meaning of a Text. An Argument from Linguistics" *Jurnal Teologic* vol.21, nr. 1 (2022): 41-64, esp. 46-49.

The difference is between information and intention in a text.[52] In linguistics, the distinction is between semantics and pragmatics.[53] Abraham Kuruvilla, applying this linguistic distinction to biblical hermeneutics, speaks of what the author *is doing* (i.e., pragmatics) with what the author *is saying* (i.e., semantics).[54]

Hirsch is the strongest advocate of the author as determiner of meaning. He states: "Almost any word sequence can under the conventions of language legitimately represent more than one complex of meaning. A word sequence means nothing in particular until somebody either means something by it or understands something from it. There is no magic land of meanings outside human consciousness."[55] Therefore, Hirsch argues that meaning is connected not to words but to people who intent to perform something by them. Words are properties of people, who use them to mean something. In other words, people

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[52] Kevin Vanhoozer, *First Theology. God, Scripture, and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2002), 179 speaks of intention in a text as "the performative quality of Scripture: *words on a mission*." Jeannine K. Brown, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics. Scripture as Communication* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2007), 16, distinguishes between cognitive content (i.e., propositional truth) and noncognitive purposes. More specifically, the author, in his communication through his text, seeks to engage the reader and not just inform her. This distinction is characteristic of the speech-act theory of J. L. Austin, who contends that utterances not only say things, but also do things. The distinction is between *locution* (i.e., what we say), *illocution* (i.e., what we intend to accomplish with what we say), and *perlocution* (i.e., how the reader responds). A communication is accomplished when the first two aspects are fulfilled. See Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975). For a summary see Brown, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 32-35.

[53] For a general discussion from linguistics, see "Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robyn Carston, "Linguistic Communication and the Semantics / Pragmatics Distinction," *Synthese* 165 (2008): 322, mentioned by Abraham Kuruvilla in "What Is the Author *Doing* with What He is *Saying*? Pragmatics and Preaching—An Appeal!" *JETS* 60/3 (2017): 557-80. For an application to biblical hermeneutics, see Gene L. Green, "Relevance Theory and Biblical Interpretation," in *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (NT Monographs 11; ed. Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O'Donnell; Sheffield: Phoenix, 2009), 219–20; Abraham Kuruvilla, "Pericopal Theology: An Intermediary between Text and Application," *TrinJ* 31 NS (2010) 265–83; idem, *Text to Praxis: Hermeneutics and Homiletics in Dialogue* (LNTS 393; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 142–90; "The Aqedah (Genesis 22). What is the author doing with what he is saying" JETS 55.3 (2012): 495-6; and idem, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013). "Christiconic View" în *Homiletics and Hermeneutics. Four Views on Preaching Today*, eds. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).

[54] See, e.g., Abraham Kuruvilla, "'What Is the Author *Doing* with what He Is *Saying*?' Pragmatics and Preaching—An Appeal!" *JETS* 60/3 (2017): 557-80. For an application to homiletics beginning from this distinction, see my forthcoming essay, "Raportul dintre text, predicator și ascultător. Implicații hermeneutice și homiletice" (The Relation between text, preacher, and listener. Hermeneutical and Homiletical Implications).

[55] Hirsch, *Validity*, 5.

mean something by words while words do not mean anything disconnected from those who use them;[56] they only have potential meanings. Thus, one must discover the meaning of the text from the intention of the author as expressed through the text. Vanhoozer argues that, "Texts without authors count neither as historical nor as communicative action. Texts without historical authors are texts without meaning."[57] Turner agrees that, when we ask concerning authorial intention, "we are inquiring about what intentional acts he has indeed performed in and through what he has actually said, understood within the linguistic/cultural world in which he uttered/inscribed the words of the letter."[58]

Thus, we may say that the text provides only *the information* or *the saying* but both *the intention* or *the doing* is a function of the author. This is not to say that we must get into the psychology of the author to determine his intention, but that the author is an important factor in determining the meaning, besides considering current usage and immediate context.[59] As Jeffrey Reed states: "Words as physical objects do not 'possess' meaning, they are 'attributed' meaning by speakers and listeners in a context."[60]

Meaning, then, is the result of the combination of three factors: current usage, immediate context, and authorial intention. A neglect of either of the three leads to any one or more of the exegetical fallacies discussed above.

Guidelines for Word Studies

In light of these conclusions, we are now ready to put forth several guidelines for doing lexical analysis, that can ensure legitimate results. It is, of course, impossible to give an exhaustive list of guidelines for doing word studies and to go into great details, but we will seek to highlight the ones that build upon what

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[56] Vanhoozer puts it this way: "We can then say of meaning what has been said of guns: words don't kill; *people* do." *Meaning,* 202.

[57] Ibid., 233.

[58] Turner, "Historical Criticism and Theological Hermeneutics," 47.

[59] See Vanhoozer's emphasis on speech-act theory to get to the authorial intention, *Meaning*, chap.5. See also Stephen E. Fowl, "The Role of Authorial Intention in the Theological Interpretation of Scripture," in *Between Two Horizons. Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology,* eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 71-87; Nicholas Wolterstorff "Resuscitating the Author," in *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*, eds. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, James K. A. Smith, and Bruce Ellis Benson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 35-50.

[60] Jeffrey T. Reed, "Modern Linguistics and the New Testament: A Basic Guide to Theory, Terminology, and Literature," in *Approaches to New Testament Study*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 120, eds. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 232.

has been presented so far.[61] The reader must be aware that these guidelines appear in no particular order of importance, though the immediate context must always be in the mind of the reader as he follows each guideline.

One must pay close attention to the theme and details of the immediate context (i.e., the paragraphs and chapters) in which the word occurs, because meaning is closely tight and undoubtedly determined by the literary context that uses the word.

One must look at other usages of the word in texts from the same author, in other texts in the Bible,[62] and in extra-biblical material. One must focus however primarily on the *current* usage of the word. Therefore, one must analyze the occurrences of the word in the same period unless it can be shown that the word has not changed in its semantic value over time.[63] In this sense, the parallels distant in time must be used with caution, though at times they may prove to be valuable to the study. For instance, an appeal to the Church Fathers may be legitimate, even if they are quite remote in time, especially if they interpret the text studied.

One must be careful not to impose the meanings of the same word from a different context on the word in the context in case, even if the parallel context is contemporary with the time of the writing. The reason is that a language does not use words in an absolutely consistent way; neither does the same person. For this reason, one should select only that meaning to be relevant which is used in a context similar to the passage studied.

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[61] For different guidelines for word studies, see, e.g., Andrew David Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017), chap.8; Craig Blomberg, *Handbook*, section entitled "What Does It All Mean? Steps in Word Study" in chap. 5; Darrell Bock, *Interpreting*, section 5.2 entitled "Diachronic and Synchronic Word Analysis."

[62] Here, the use of lexicons such as Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988) and dictionaries such as Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-93), and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), 3d ed., ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), are useful. For more tools in word studies, see Gordon D. Fee *New Testament Exegesis. A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002, 79-95.

[63] For an examination of words used in nonbiblical sources, see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. and aug. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940; revised supplement, 1996)" and the computer based program *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (*TLG*) and online resource *Perseus* at www.perseus.tufts.edu.

One must seek to be thorough in gathering the semantic range, since even a rare meaning of a term is a possibility for the use of that term in the biblical context. One must demonstrate discernment in this matter also, for although the gathering of all relevant parallels is a good indication of what a word can mean, the literature available should not be believed to exhaust all the possible meanings. The ancient literature available to us today is simply limited.

When dealing with a compound word, one should seek to avoid the root fallacy. In the case of a verb with a prepositional prefix one should seek to discern in which way (of the three) the prefix affects the meaning of the word.

In using dictionaries and lexicons, one must keep in mind that they are interpretative to a large degree. In other words, they offer the opinion of the author(s) concerning the category of meaning and usage under which a word should fit. Their categories are not established facts. Moreover, all the lexicons and dictionaries build upon previous ones and therefore are bound to contain errors.

Conclusion

Words are the building blocks of meaning in any discourse. Unless one knows the meaning of the words employed one cannot discern the meaning of what is being communicated. Thus, one of the most elemental steps in biblical exegesis is word studies. At this most basic level of meaning, there are fallacies that must be avoided, factors that must be taken into consideration, and guidelines that must be followed in doing word studies. This article has sought to explain these issues in order to ensure a certain level of accuracy of understanding when one reads the Bible.

We have seen that words communicate meaning only in so far as they are employed by human authors to function (i.e., authorial intention) within a certain literary context (i.e., immediate context). It is human authors who use words in ways specific to their time and setting (i.e., current usage) in order to convey a meaningful message.

The Bible is God's communication to us through human words inscribed in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, if we want to understand and appropriate his message, we have no choice but to seek to understand the words. It is only through his Word come to us in human words (i.e., Bible) and human flesh (i.e., Jesus) that we can be saved and grow in understanding and holiness. That is why, when we come to the Bible, we need not only read it, but read it carefully. So, let

us be mindful of how we apply ourselves to God's Word(s) if we want to apply correctly God's Word(s) to ourselves.

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The Unchanging Word of God and Today's Fast-Changing Generations

Dr. Ovidiu Hanc[1]

Abstract

This article advocates that the Bible, as the unchanging word of God, represents a revelation that is relevant simultaneously not only for the modern world but also for the fast-changing generation X, Y, Z of the postmodern era. It will analyse the way in which the message of the Bible is relevant over time. It will be discussed how some argue that the presentation of the Gospel must consider the cultural setting in which the message is proclaimed, others will suggest that relevance is almost akin to compromise.

Key Words: modernism; postmodern era; revelation; relevance; the word of God.

Introduction

There are significant discrepancies between modern and post-modern times. In modernism the mind was understood as a reflection of nature, given the fact that the reality was perceived as it was. In this naturalistic milieu, there was a strong emphasis on technological accomplishment and progress, while the individual was regarded as the measure of all things through his rational ability to manage the natural order. Although there is no definite moment of transition from one trend to another, the shift from modern to post-modern paradigm started in the middle of the 20th century and was developed toward the latter part of this century. Post modernism regarded the rationality and technological achievement of modernism as unsatisfactory and even dangerous. Modernism was dismissed as oppressive, arrogant, violent and dangerous to the natural realm because of its technological and scientific expansion.

The progress of modernism became a dangerous trip towards disaster; hence in postmodernism the autonomous individual was replaced with social entities, the

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objective reality was replaced with subjective relativism and pluralism. Although both modernism and post modernism are based on a naturalistic framework, the difference between the two systems is that while modernism approaches reality as a mirror, postmodernism approaches reality as a window that shows us the reality that can be perceived through the means of social epistemology.

Answering to both modernism and postmodernism, Christianity comes with a theistic approach to reality in which the natural reality is totally dependent on and governed by God as a sovereign ultimate authority. The Bible, which encapsulates God's revelation, comes with a supernatural worldview and advocates the existence of an objective and moral truth about God that can be known through faith. This epistemological endeavour contrasts the modern naturalistic epistemology and postmodern epistemological relativism.

When it comes to the postmodern society, we discover that postmodernity is fragmented and encompasses different generations which although having the same fundamental values, are distinct in many ways. The sociologist Karl Mannheim defined the concept of *generation* as a fundamental tool for the study of social sciences.[2] In time, the study of generation, tended to be more and more fragmented. This is why today's population can be categorized in five distinct generations: the Silent Generation; the Baby Boomers; and the Generations X, Y, and Z.

The purpose of this article is to advocate that the Bible, as the unchanging word of God, represents a revelation that is relevant simultaneously not only for the modern world but also for the fast-changing generation X, Y, Z of the postmodern era. Because of the difference between various cultures and ages, it is important to analyse the way in which the message of the Bible is relevant over time. As the message of the Gospel was carried from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, the message was proclaimed undistorted, however the presentation of the message varied from one setting to another. This aspect triggers a detailed discussion about the issue of relevance. While some can argue that the presentation of the Gospel must consider the cultural setting in which the message is proclaimed, others can argue that relevance is almost akin to compromise and should not be taken into consideration in the process of proclamation. Should the proclamation of the Word of God differ from one context to another? How should we differentiate between relevance as a means of contextualizing the Gospel message in spite of the cultural values and

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[2] Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge: Collected Works*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti, vol. 5 (New York: Routledge, 1952), 276–322.

relevance as compromising the Gospel message to the detriment of cultural values?

Five Generations, Five Worlds

Today's society is generally seen as a pluralistic society that is formed by five distinct generations: the Silent Generation; the Baby Boomers; and the Generations X, Y, and Z.

The Silent Generation is the generation of people born before the end of the Second World War. Due to the socio-political milieu of the years of depression between the two world wars, the generation that was born in this context has a traditional approach to life with a high regard for authority and the older generation. An article in Time Magazine described this generation as Unimaginative, Withdrawn, Unadventurous, and Cautious.[3]

This generation was followed by the Baby Boomers, the generation that was born in the following two decades after the war. The name of this generation is given by the significant birth rate increase following the social realities after the Second World War. This generation had a more liberal approach to life in general in the new economic environment that the world faced.

The next Generation is Generation X, those that were born in the 60s and 70s. The term Generation X was first used by Robert Capa, a renown photographer and a photojournalist as a title of one of his photo-essays that he used in order to describe a group of young people, seemingly without identity, who face an uncertain, ill-defined and hostile future.[4] One example of research on Generation X is the volume *GenXegesis: Essays on Alternative Youth (Sub)Culture.*[5] This collection of essays analyses this phenomenon with all its corresponding features. This generation had a different approach to life since they were the generation that had to become more independent since they experienced less adult supervision compared to that of their parents. The development of the musical culture reflects greater openness toward the social dimension of life.

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[3] 'The Younger Generation', *Time*, 5 November 1951, 46–47, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php? title=Silent_Generation&oldid=933687873; 'Silent Generation', in *Wikipedia*, 2 January 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Silent_Generation&oldid=933687873.

[4] John M. Ulrich, 'Introduction. Generation X. A (Sub)Cultural Genealogy', in *GenXegesis: Essays on Alternative Youth (Sub)Culture*, ed. John M. Ulrich and Andrea L. Harris (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press, 2003), 3.

[5] John M. Ulrich and Andrea L. Harris, eds., *GenXegesis: Essays on Alternative Youth (Sub)Culture* (Madison: Popular Press, 2003).

This generation was followed by the Millennials, those that were born in the 80s and 90s. The Millennials were born into an era with unprecedented digital technological advance. This generation is generally seen as egocentric and group oriented.

The last two decades are generally described as the Generation Z or the Centennial's, those that were born in the 21st century. This generation is totally immersed in the use of digital devices and online communication. Because technology makes all things available at once, this generation tends to lack patience and be unwilling to wait. They were raised with the idea that they are special and they can have whatever they want. However, faced with the real world, they discovered that they are not as special as they thought, and because of this their self-image is actually destroyed. From a psychological point of view, the self-image of this generation is incomparably lower than that of the previous generation. In order to solve this issue, this generation tends to use the image that is offered within technology. However, their relationships are more superficial and this is another factor that enhances their depression. So, it appears that this generation is facing the new challenges of a digital world like no other generation before.

People of the Book in a world of images

It is important to note that the generations X, Y, and Z share the notion of community as a fundamental value in which autonomy is subjected to social entities and context and reality is defined by the community. All these characteristics have a spiritual dimension. George Barna's research, particularly on the generation that is present in the local church, highlights that as the generations change their values tend to change as well. Writing on the "reengineering" of the local church for the next millennium George Barna highlighted that there will be some significant transitions that will take place in the emerging Church today. He noted that as we introduce new approaches to ministry, many of the fundamental elements of the Church will undoubtedly be redefined.[6] While some changes that are promoted by the emerging Church today will help the Church, the quality of the ministry will not necessarily improve.

While Western civilization flourished with the help of printed media, it made the printed media more and more elaborate. If at the beginning the type-set was the basic tool in which each letter had its place, with the rise of modern media, the shift from words to drawings, diagrams, pictures and images inevitably grew.

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[6] George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 177.

The rise of technology has produced a major shift from the Gutenberg epoch to the Zuckerberg world. This generation started to focus more on image than on the written word. This change had fully impacted the way in which society today operates with cognitive realities. The shift from a reading process with all its subsequent cognitive development to a world of image that affects not so much the reasoning, but the feeling of a person had taken its full toll with the emerging new generations.

This shift from words to images has impacted the way people relate to the Word of God. The lack of emphasis on the written word is inevitably affecting the way people relate to Scripture. Kenton Sparks analysed the way in which the premodern, modern, and postmodern period function. He noted that the differences between these three periods hinge, in many respects, on the concept of *tradition* - the Latin term "traditio" means that which is transmitted or "handed on." "Individuals tend to receive their view of the world passively, as they grow up in and are acculturated to their native family and society."[7] This is especially true in the postmodern period where biblical interpretation is shaped by the community.

However, the message of the Bible has a divine nature since it is the God-breathed word of God. The Bible is not only inspiring but is also inspired (2 Timothy 3:16). Postmodern times proved themselves to be driven by epistemological scepticism and relativism. Ben Witherington correctly argued that "postmodernity offers up a relativism that denies absolute truth, a pluralism that valorizes difference whether or not it is or produces good or ill, and a universalism which suggests all is lost and all of us are permanently lost."[8]

Looking back throughout history, in both Biblical times and Church history, the divine revelation of the Word of God is always a defining and reforming reality. There are several moments in Biblical times in which spiritual reformation meant a total returning from a world of images and idolatry to the Word of God. Also, Church History has many instances in which spiritual reformation took place as people discovered the value of the Word of God and its intrinsic power to change.

As the generations change from one historical context to another, it is important to analyze the nature of the Word of God in relation to various generations that seems at times in opposition. This article advocates that the Bible, as the inspired

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[7] Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 26.
[8] Ben Witherington III, *The Living Word of God: Rethinking the Theology of the Bible* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 173.

Word of God has a unique spiritual dimension in the fact that the same revelation can be approached by various people from various generations and have the same outcome of salvation for the glory of God. The universal nature of the Word of God represents a distinct feature that makes the Scripture relevant for each generation that seems in many regards as belonging to different worlds. Even if the generations are nowadays changing in nature at an alarming pace, the unchanging word of God represents a reality that is simultaneously absolute and relevant.

The need for Revelation

The Bible represents the written manifestation of divine revelation. While in modernism the truth is defined only by empiric scientific methodologies, post-modernism claims there is no such thing as absolute truth, but only stories and narrative experiences. The truth is a subjective entity that is interpreted and defined by the community. From a Christian perspective, the world is not only in need of revelation but also is meaningless without it.

Looking at the New Testament we discover that the Gospel narrative is presented as a historical narrative that is simultaneously true and personal. The community of faith discovers the narrative of Jesus' story as being not only true but also transcendent. Thus, the narrative is in fact a metanarrative of faith in which the truth defines the community not vice-versa. The main truth of the Gospel is the resurrection story, a story that is presented at both individual level and community level.

One Word, Many Worlds

An Unchanging Word addressed to Distinct Individuals

One example of the way in which the message of the Gospel is unchanged, while it is addressed to significant distinct individuals is the resurrection encounters as presented in the Gospel of John. In the Gospel of John 20-21, the Evangelist presents three distinct interactions between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, Jesus and Thomas and Jesus and Peter. The interaction is totally distinct and shows that the same message is relevant for every individual regardless of their identity or background.

In the first personal encounter, Jesus discovers Himself to Mary Magdalene, a woman who is spiritually and emotionally bankrupt. The dialogue between the two protagonists is in a familiar, soft tone. The use of the Aramaic words attests this warm and familiar tone. While the Evangelist uses the name Μαρία, Jesus

calls her using the Aramaic form Μαριάμ. The use of this form of address that can be translated as Miriam is followed by her address also using the Aramaic Ραββουνι.

The following personal encounter that is presented with extensive details is between Jesus and Thomas. While Thomas, called the Twin, was not with the disciples when Jesus came, his response to the testimony of disciples about the resurrection of Jesus is filled with scepticism and unbelief. As Jesus appears to Thomas eight days later, the discussion between Jesus and Thomas is marked with rational insights. Jesus does not ask Thomas simply to believe without arguments, but on the contrary, He invites him to believe based on empiric evidence by touching His body as a rational proof for believing.

On the appearance by the Sea of Tiberias, the Evangelist focuses on Jesus and Peter. After the miraculous catch of fish, the discussion with Peter gravitates on the special mandate that Jesus is giving to Peter, but also on the discussion about the fate of the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter's question about what is going to happen with this disciple finds a striking response with a rather harsh tone: 'If it is my will that he remains until I come, what is that to you?' (v.22). If this passage is interpreted apart from Peter's strong personality that is presented in the Gospel, the reader can be puzzled about the direct tone that Jesus is using. However, given the fact that Peter is a person with a strong will and a dynamic personality, the response that he receives to his question should not be perceived in a disturbing manner.

Therefore, if all these personal encounters are placed together, we can see that the resurrected Jesus interacts with various individuals in very different ways. Jesus addressed Mary in a warm, familiar tone, Thomas in a rational way, and Peter in a direct manner. The message of the resurrection is the same, while the methodology is different.

An Unchanging Word to distinct communities

The universal nature of the Word of God is also seen in the fact that the same Word brings salvation when it is presented not only to different individuals but also to different cultures. In the Acts of the Apostle the message of the Gospel is presented to many cultures. From the beginning of the book the mandate that Jesus gives to the disciples has a universal dimension in which the Gospel must be proclaimed from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The end of the book finds Paul in Rome, a place that can be seen not only as the

centre of the first century world, but also the strategic place from where the Gospel will eventually spread to the ends of the earth.

To highlight the universal nature of the message of the Gospel it is important to note the fact that this message remains unchanged even if this message is proclaimed by the Apostle Peter to the Jews in Jerusalem or by the Apostle Paul to the philosophers on Mars Hill in Athens.

The religious, social and political context is so distinct that one can describe the two contexts as being two different worlds. The Acts of the Apostle becomes a strong testimony about the universal nature of the Word of God that remains unchanged even if the context changes completely.

The double call in preaching: faithful to the Word, faithful to the audience

The call to preach the Word of God to a Fast-Changing society comes with a huge challenge since the preacher is situated between the absolutes of the divine revelation and the ever-changing expectations of the audience. There is a distinction between distorting the message to fit the audience or making it meaningless to the audience. If a Nobel laureate in Physics is asked to present various physical principles, he will present his topic in one way at undergraduate level and to the academic elites in Physics in a totally different manner. It is wrong to say that the Nobel laureate is distorting the principles of Physics given the fact that he made his presentation to the undergraduate students relevant. Similarly, in order to communicate the Word of God to various generations, the preacher has to stay faithful to the word but also he has to be sensitive and responsible to his audience in a manner that will not be misunderstood by them.

Alec Motyer, in his book "Preaching?" noted the fact that the preacher has not one, but two responsibilities. The first responsibility of the preacher is to the truth, while the second responsibility is to the audience. Motyer correctly noted that the preacher should be concerned by the manner in which the audience will hear best the truth. This implies the fact that the presentation of the Gospel must be shaped in such a way that the message becomes palatable and the audience is receptive to it.

This aspect triggers a discussion about relevance and compromise. Is the attempt to be relevant a deviation from the teaching of the Bible? Is there a tension in preaching between adopting God's revelation and adapting it to fit the audience? The answer to this question is multifaceted and claims a clear definition of the term relevance.

Relevance and Compromise

Erick Metaxas, in his book about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, noted that for Bonhoeffer the preaching was considered to be nothing less than the very word of God. For him, the act of preaching was not merely an intellectual exercise but a holy privilege to be the vessel through whom God would speak. Because of this he once said: "Do not try to make the Bible relevant. Its relevance is axiomatic. Do not defend God's word, but testify to it. Trust to the Word. It is a ship loaded to the very limits of its capacity."[9] The intrinsic power of the Word of God to change the human heart is an argument against any attempt to try to fit the word of God to the audience and not vice versa (*e.g.* Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.) Any attempt to make the Gospel relevant means an attempt to dilute its essence.

On the other hand, one can argue that the Apostle Paul becomes relevant to the community to whom he was preaching the Word of God. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul mentions that to the Jews he became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; while to those under the law he became as one under the law that be might win those under the law (1 Corinthians 9:20). However, it is important to note what Paul is saying and what he is not saying in his address to the Corinthian Church. First, Paul does not cross the moral line in order to present the message of the Gospel. Paul's address to the Church in Corinth is very strict when it comes to personal liberty and especially to the moral dimension of Christian living. Second, Paul does not succumb to the present social realities in order to get eventually to the Gospel message. Paul was always presenting the Gospel upfront and, starting from the Gospel, he became all things to all people, that he might save some (1 Corinthians 9:22). For Paul, the message of the Gospel is not the target of his ministry, but the starting point. Third, Paul is advocating in his letter to the Corinthians a lifestyle that rejects compromise, but also embraces personal denial.

For Paul, to be relevant is a synonym to contextualize not to compromise. This aspect is seen in the fact that while preaching the Gospel it is important to identify some vital features of the audience and use these characteristics as a tool to present better the message of the Word of God. Tim Keller argued that the claim of religious relativism is not a solution, because it is an exclusive claim to

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[9] Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 272.

superiority masking itself as something else. For him, Jesus' dying on the cross best fulfils the yearning of our pluralistic culture for peace and respect among people of different faiths. "This is contextualizing—showing the plausibility of the gospel in terms my culture can understand."[10] As the generations change, the sociologists can identify a shift on the emphasis on mind in opposition to the emotions. A faithful approach to the preaching of the Word of God will not put knowledge and feelings in antithetic positions but will navigate through the variables of a specific cultural group or period with the absolute message of the Gospel.

Conclusion

One fundamental doctrine about God is the immutability of his nature. God is the same yesterday, today and forever (*e.g.,* Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3.6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17). The Word of God presents at length a God that does not change even if the society and culture is changing often. The universal nature of the Word of God means that this Word presents a message of salvation, sanctification and glorification that is perpetually relevant to any group or generation.

The concept of truth in Christian theism is an absolute reality. Voddie Baucham correctly noted that if something is "true," that is, if it corresponds to God's perspective, then it is true for all people in all places at all times.[11]

The Word of God is rooted in the nature of God; therefore, the message of the Bible is an unchanging reality that supersedes today's fast-changing generations. At the same time, the Word of God is simultaneously absolute and relevant.

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[10] Tim Keller, 'The Gospel and the Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World', in *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, ed. Piper, John and Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), 118.
[11] Voddie Baucham Jr., 'Truth and the Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World', in *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, ed. Piper, John and Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), 53.

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"Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down": An essay on some aspects of the history of revival [1]

Michael A.G. Azad Haykin[2]

Abstract

This article focuses upon the theme of revival in the history of the church. It highlights first the deep interest of Calvin and Edwards in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and how their influence was deeply felt among the Puritans. Three examples of revival are given, namely, in France; in the seventeenth century; the English and Scottish Puritans, Calvin's spiritual children, also experienced revival first-hand; the Elim Evangelistic Band, which developed into the Elim Pentecostal Churches, begun in Ulster in 1915 and soon spread to other parts of the British Isles. In the 1920s it experienced a massive period of revival growth under the leadership of George Jeffreys (1889–1962). Here we learn of the variety as to how God sends revival, using different instruments. The article discusses the following facts about revival and gives examples. Genuine revival is not something that can be created. Revival comes from God. In times of revival, the Spirit primarily uses the Word of God to powerfully impact people. In revival the Holy Spirit's activity is an exalting of the Saviour—a Christ-centred event.

Key Words Revival, the Puritans, the Elim Pentecostal Churches, God-sent revival, the power of the word, Exalting Christ.

"There is no subject which is of greater importance to the Christian church

at the present time than that of revival. It should be the theme of

our constant meditation, preaching and prayers."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Revival in the Reformed tradition

One of the key means by which God has brought about a renewal of interest in Reformed teaching and doctrine over the past forty years has been the British Westminster Conference (formerly known as the Puritan Conference). Organized in the 1950s by, among others, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and J.I. Packer, this conference, which still meets annually in December, has played a vital role in awakening evangelicals to the riches of Puritan and Reformed theology. For many years it was customary for Lloyd-Jones to give the final address of the conference. The first of such addresses was the one that he gave in 1959 entitled "Revival: An Historical and Theological Survey."[3] Lloyd-Jones began his address by defining revival as "an experience in the life of the church when the Holy Spirit does an unusual work." These extraordinary movements of the Spirit consist first of all, he stated, in the "enlivening and quickening and awakening of lethargic, sleeping, almost moribund church members" and then in "the conversion of masses of people who hitherto have been outside in indifference and in sin."[4] Lloyd-Jones went on to illustrate his definition of revival from the history of the church and from Scripture, and to show that "the history of the progress and development of the church is largely a history of revivals, … these mighty exceptional effusions of the Spirit of God." Now, what is so striking about Lloyd-Jones' survey of revival from the history of the church is how large a place revivals have occupied in the Reformed tradition. In fact, Lloyd-Jones asserts that one of the main reasons why revivals have not been prominent in this century is due to the fact that the final half of the nineteenth century witnessed a

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[3] For the full address, see D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors: Addresses Delivered at the Puritan and Westminster Conferences 1959–1978* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 1–23.

[4] Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans*, 1–2.

widespread turning away from Reformed theology which continued unabated until the late 1940s.[5]

To those acquainted with the history of Calvinism these assertions by Lloyd-Jones should not be a surprise. For example, a fascination with the work of the Spirit lies at the very core of that English strand of Calvinism, namely, Puritanism. This late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century movement sought to reform the Church of England and, failing to do so, splintered into a variety of denominations, such as English Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Particular (i.e., Calvinistic) and General (i.e., Arminian) Baptist.[6] Whatever else the Puritans may have been—social, political, and ecclesiastical Reformers—they were primarily men and women intensely passionate about piety and Christian experience. By and large united in their Calvinism, the Puritans believed that every aspect of their spiritual lives came from the work of the Holy Spirit. They had inherited from the continental Reformers of the sixteenth century, and from John Calvin (1506–64) in particular, "a constant and even distinctive concern" with the person and work of the Holy Spirit.[7] Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921), the distinguished American Presbyterian theologian, can actually speak of Calvin as pre-eminently "the theologian of the Holy Spirit."[8] Of his Puritan heirs and their interest in the Spirit Warfield has this to say:

The formulation of the doctrine of the work of the Spirit waited for the Reformation and for Calvin, and … the further working out of the details of this doctrine and its enrichment by the profound study of Christian minds and meditation of Christian hearts has come down from Calvin only to the Puritans … it is only the truth to say that Puritan thought was almost entirely occupied

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[5] Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans*, 4–5.

[6] Irvonwy Morgan, *Puritan Spirituality* (London: Epworth Press, 1973), 53–65, esp. 60; Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans. An Anthology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), xi–xiv; J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 37–38.

[7] Richard B. Gaffin, "The Holy Spirit," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 43 (1980): 61. See also the detailed discussion by Garth B. Wilson, "Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Reformed Tradition: A Critical Overview," in George Vandervelde, ed., *The Holy Spirit: Renewing and Empowering Presence* (Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1989), 57–62.

[8] B.B. Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God" in Samuel G. Craig, ed., *Calvin and Augustine* (Repr. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980) 107. See also his "John Calvin: The Man and His Work" and "John Calvin the Theologian," in Craig, ed., *Calvin and Augustine*, 21, 487.

with loving study of the work of the Holy Spirit, and found its highest expression in dogmatico-practical expositions of the several aspects of it.[9]

The new covenant gift of the Holy Spirit

One of the heirs of this pneumatological tradition was Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), whom Martyn Lloyd-Jones has described as "pre-eminently the theologian of Revival."[10] It was Edwards, who once stated:

The sum of the blessings Christ sought by what He did and suffered in the work of redemption, was the Holy Spirit ... the Holy Spirit, in His indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy, or in one word, of all the Spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: and is also the sum of all perfection, glory and joy, that He purchased for them in another world.[11]

Edwards rightly discerned that none of God the Father's plan of salvation nor the Lord Jesus' actual work of redemption would have been realized if it was not for the gift and outpouring of the Spirit. It is to the Holy Spirit that God the Father and God the Son have entrusted the utterly indispensable work of applying the cross-work of Christ to sinners, both individually and corporately. The era initiated at Pentecost, when Christ gave the Holy Spirit in all of his fullness and power, is one to which the Old Testament longingly looked forward.[12] And it is one in which the Spirit of God is powerfully at work. To use the words of Titus 3:6, the Holy Spirit has been "poured out on us [that is, believers] *richly* through

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[9] B.B. Warfield, "Introductory Note" to Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (1900, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1956), xxxv, xxviii.

[10] Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival" in his *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 361. In the words of J.I. Packer, Edwards' theology of revival "is, perhaps, the most important single contribution that Edwards has to make to evangelical thinking today" (*A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990], 316). See also the remarks in this regard by R. E. Davies, *I Will Pour Out My Spirit: A History and Theology of Revivals and Evangelical Awakenings* (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Monarch Publications, 1992), 26: "No one who studies the topic of revival will dispute the statement that Jonathan Edwards, the eighteenth-century American preacher and writer, is the classic theologian on the subject."

[11] Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time,* ed. Stephen J. Stein in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1977), 5:320.

[12] See, e.g., Isaiah 44:1–2; Joel 2:28–32; Ezekiel 36:25–27; and Zechariah 12:10.

Jesus Christ, our Saviour" (italics added). This is a truth to which all Christians should be able to heartily assent.

There have been and are differences among Christian thinkers with regard to some aspects of the Spirit's work, in particular, whether or not what theologians have historically called the "extraordinary" gifts of the Holy Spirit continue beyond the Apostolic era. Jonathan Edwards, for instance, was confident that these gifts were given only in certain biblical periods and especially in the apostolic era "to reveal the mind and will of God before the canon of the Scripture was complete" and to help establish the fledgling church.[13] Martyn Lloyd-Jones, on the other hand, who was a very keen admirer of Edwards, was equally confident that the gifts have continued to be given throughout the history of the Church.[14] Despite such differences, albeit not unimportant, both would have agreed that the new covenant era is one in which the rich work of the Holy Spirit is all-pervasive.

Among these rich new-covenant works of the Spirit are the following:[15]

The Holy Spirit is the one who floods the heart of the sinner with God's love for him or her.[16]

It is only the Spirit who can make alive sinners dead in sin and fill their hearts with the conviction that "Jesus is Lord."[17]

It is the Spirit who comes to indwell the heart of such sinners and makes them holy temples of the living God.[18]

It is the Spirit who is the seal of the salvation of believers and so the guarantee of their future in the glory to come.[19]

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[13] Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1989), 8:149–154.

[14] See his argument in Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Baptism and Gifts of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996). For a discussion of the gifts of the Spirit and revival, see also Stuart Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord: The History of Prospects for Revival in the Church and the World* (Carlisle, Cumbria; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2000), 83–96.

[15] For the list that follows, I am partly indebted to Max Turner, "'Revival' in the New Testament" in Andrew Walker and Kristin Aune, *On Revival: A Critical Examination* (Carlisle, Cumbria; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003), 16–17.

[16] Romans 5:5.

[17] 1 Corinthians 12:3.

[18] 1 Corinthians 3:16–17.

[19] 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:30.

It is the Spirit gives believers the boldness to come into presence of the awesome and almighty maker of heaven and earth and call him "Dear Father."[20]

Indeed, it is the Spirit who undergirds and empowers the entirety of the Christian's spiritual life. For this very reason the Apostle urges believers in Galatians 5:25, "since we live by the Spirit"—that is, since they have been given spiritual life by the Spirit—"let us keep in step with the Spirit"—that is, let them live lives characterized by genuine spirituality and holiness.

Three examples of revival

Prominent among these new-covenant works has been what has been variously termed "revival," "awakening" or "renewal." Three examples will help us to understand something of the variety of what we are thinking about here.

If one looks at the massive advance of the gospel in Europe during the time of the Reformation this advance can be adequately explained only in terms of spiritual revival. Take France as an example. From small beginnings in the 1520s when a handful of men and women in France embraced the Evangelical faith, the numbers grew and grew year by year. It has been estimated that by the time of John Calvin's death in 1564 there were roughly 1,200 Calvinistic congregations in the country with around two million members, which was about a tenth of France's population.[21] And the emergence of these congregations occurred in the space of less than fifty years! The French Reformation was like a mighty river that completely altered the landscape of the history of France.

In the seventeenth century, the English and Scottish Puritans, Calvin's spiritual children, also knew revival first-hand. These revivals, though, were far smaller than that at the time of the French Reformation, and certainly not the nation-wide revival for which the Puritans longed and laboured.[22] At a celebration of the Lord's Supper at Shotts near Glasgow on Sunday, June 20, 1630, for example, the service was attended by such a rich sense of the presence of God that at the conclusion of worship, instead of retiring to bed, folk continued together in prayer and devotion throughout the night. God had so presenced himself with them that they were unable to part without further thanksgiving and praise. A

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[20] Galatians 4:6.
[21] Mark Greengrass, *The French Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1987), 43.
[22] For good discussions of revival during the Puritan era, see Iain Murray, "The Puritans and Revival Christianity," *The Banner of Truth* 72 (September 1969): 9–19; Packer, "Puritanism as a Movement of Revival" in his *Quest for Godliness*, 35–48; Davies, *I Will Pour Out My Spirit*, 63–68.

Monday preaching service was therefore arranged, and a young man called John Livingstone (1603–1672), chaplain to the Countess of Wigton, was persuaded to be the preacher.

Livingstone had spent the previous night in prayer. Alone in the fields, at eight or nine in the morning, he was so overcome with a sense of his unworthiness (particularly as so many choice ministers and experienced Christians were present) that he thought he would slip away quietly. He had actually gone some way and was almost out of sight of the church when the words "Was I ever a barren wilderness or a land of darkness?" were so impressed upon his heart that he felt bound to return and preach. What was to ensue was a most remarkable demonstration of the power and the grace of God under the preaching of his Word. Livingstone preached for about an hour and a half upon Ezekiel 36:25–26:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (KJV).

His sermon was drawing to a close when a heavy shower of rain caused people in the churchyard to cover themselves hastily with their cloaks. This prompted the preacher to continue:

If a few drops of rain so discompose you, how discomposed would you be, how full of horror and despair, if God should deal with you as you deserve? And God will deal thus with all the finally impenitent. God might justly rain fire and brimstone upon you, as he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain. But, for ever blessed be his name! the door of mercy still stands open for such as you are. The Son of God, by tabernacling in our nature, and obeying and suffering in it, is the only refuge and covert from the storm of divine wrath due to us for sin. His merits and mediation alone are the screen from that storm, and none but those who come to Christ just as they are, empty of everything, and take the offered mercy at his hand, will have the benefit of this shelter.[23]

Livingstone continued preaching in such a vein for another hour or so, experiencing, in his words, "such liberty and melting of heart, as I never had the

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[23] Cited "Revival Snapshots: Kirk of Shotts," *Evangelical Times* 31, no.6 (June 1997): 16.

like in public all my lifetime." It was later estimated that close to five hundred individuals were converted as a result of that single sermon.[24]

History does not record another day like this one in Livingstone's ministry. Unlike the mighty river of the French Reformation, here the revival was more like a small rivulet that impacted but a small area geographically. Yet, like the French Reformation, it brought the life-giving water of the Spirit to thirsty and needy souls.

A third example comes from the denominational body in the United Kingdom known as the Elim Evangelistic Band, later called Elim Pentecostal Churches. It had begun in Ulster in 1915 and soon spread to other parts of the British Isles. In the 1920s it experienced a massive period of revival growth under the leadership of George Jeffreys (1889–1962), a Welshman who was converted at the beginning of the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905.[25] In 1930, what began as a series of evangelistic meetings in Birmingham soon mushroomed into genuine revival. The meetings had begun in Ebenezer Chapel, which could seat 1,200. That was soon filled and a move was made to the town hall that could seat 3,000. This venue also was soon filled and a skating rink, which could seat 8,000, was requisitioned. Finally, the size of the crowds coming to the meetings required a move to Bingley Hall that could seat 15,000. In all, 90 meetings were held and over 10,000 converts recorded. In the space of seventeen years, the number of Elim churches grew from 15 in 1920 to 233 in 1937. The powerful impact of Jeffreys' ministry can be partly accounted for by various social reasons, but there is no doubt that the Spirit of God was also powerfully at work among this Christian community in the 1920s and 1930s.[26]

It is surely evident from these three examples that genuine revivals can vary considerably one from one another. Reasons for this fact are not hard to find. Movements of spiritual renewal never occur in an historical vacuum. There are distinct cultural, social and economic factors that influence these revivals, and thus help to make them unique works of God. Moreover, Christians in these various movements of revival differ in temperament and experience, which creates further differences between the revivals. John Calvin, David Livingstone, Jonathan

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[24] Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24-25.
[25] N.A.D. Scotland, "Jeffreys, Stephen…and George" in Timothy Larsen, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 331–332.
[26] Andrew Walker and Neil Hudson, "George Jeffreys, Revivalist and Reformer" in Walker and Aune, *On Revival*, 137–156.

Edwards, George Jefferys were all leaders in periods of spiritual renewal and advance and yet in many ways they were very different individuals. One should also note that the living God delights in variety and never quite repeats himself. This is quite evident in the realm of the natural world and is equally true in the realm of church history, and especially in this matter of revival.[27]

Four characteristics of revival

Yet, for all this, there are *some* recurring characteristics in all revivals, whatever their historical setting and whoever the leadership involved. Let us look at a number of these characteristics as they occur in the following definition of revival by the Australian historian Stuart Piggin.

Revival is a sovereign work of God the Father, consisting of a powerful intensification by Jesus of the Holy Spirit's normal activity of testifying to the Saviour, accentuating the doctrines of grace, and convicting, converting, regenerating, sanctifying and empowering large numbers of people at the same time, and is therefore a community experience.[28]

In what follows we focus on three marks of genuine revival that Piggin notes in this definition and add a fourth that comes from observations made by Jonathan Edwards, whom Piggin—following Martyn Lloyd-Jones—describes in his book as "the church's theologian of revival *par excellence*."[29]

Revival is a work of God in which God takes the initiative and presences himself in power and glory.

In times of revival, according to Jonathan Edwards, the Spirit primarily uses the Word of God to powerfully impact people.[30]

Revival is a powerful intensification by Jesus of the Holy Spirit's normal activity of convicting, converting, regenerating, sanctifying and empowering.

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[27] James I. Packer, "Steps to the Renewal of the Christian People" in his *Serving the People of God*, *The Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer*, vol. 2 (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1998), 77. See Jonathan Edwards' statement regarding variety within the 1734–1735 Northampton revival in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, ed. C.C. Goen in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1972), 4:185–186.
[28] Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord*, 11.
[29] Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord*, 25.
[30] See Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, ed. Goen, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:253–254.

Revival involves also a powerful intensification of the Holy Spirit's normal activity of testifying to the Saviour—in other words, revival is a Christ-centred event.

"Rend the heavens and come down"

First of all, genuine revival is not something that can be created by the people of God. They may recognize their need of it, but they can no more make it than they can create wind and fire. In Piggin's words, "Revival is an *outburst* of God's power; it is not a conglomerate of mere human energies."[31] Revival must thus be distinguished from evangelism or evangelistic campaigns or various strategies to bring about church growth. Such are vital and useful in extending the kingdom of God, but they are not revival. We who are Western Evangelicals especially need to be reminded of this truth, for if there is one thing that has characterized Western Evangelicalism, especially that in North America, it has been a pragmatic attitude of "we can do it"— "if it is broken, we can fix it." This is so evident when it comes to the matter of revival, where, as Ian Stackhouse, the Leading Pastor in the King's Church, Amersham. England, has astutely put it, we have hankered after "the latest and the novel [strategies] with which to effect revival," but all to no avail.[32]

Genuine revival, on the other hand, being God's work, comes down from above. And when God brings it, there is no mistaking it. He speaks and there is life. He speaks and the earth and the heavens are shaken. Then is answered that great prayer of Isaiah in Isaiah 64:1-3:

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,

> that the mountains might quake at your presence—

>> as when fire kindles brushwood

> and the fire causes water to boil—

>> to make your name known to your adversaries,

> and that the nations might tremble at your presence!

>> When you did awesome things that we did not look for,

> you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

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[31] Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord*, 14.
[32] Ian Stackhouse, "Revivalism, Faddism and the Gospel" in Walker and Aune, *On Revival*, 239–251.

In the New Testament era—a period of revival as well as a paradigm for revival—one sees the impact of this awesome presencing of God in a passage like 1 Corinthians 14:24-25, where Paul writes:

But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Or consider the revival that took place in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734 and 1735, when Jonathan Edwards was pastoring the Congregationalist work in the town. At that time the fact that God is always present and human beings completely known to him was brought home to the mind and heart with inescapable force. Thus, Edwards could write in his *Faithful Narrative*: "in the spring and summer following, *anno* 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God."[33] Edwards proceeded to detail some of the consequences of this awareness.

Several persons have had so great a sense of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, that nature and life has seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had showed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame.[34]

Closer in time, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, experienced a season of revival on the campus during March of 1970. Dr. Jack Gray, professor of missions, later recalled how "God was so mightily present we could all but touch him. It was awesome … We were meeting God in all his majesty."[35] Another who was there during this awakening on the Southwestern campus was a student by the name of Henry Liginfelter, who remembered that on one occasion the "Holy Spirit's presence was overpowering. Everybody was just bent over the pews, praying and confessing."[36]

This awareness of God's presence in revival deepens humility, kills innate pride, and renders the church more God-centred. In a word: in genuine revival the Lord focuses attention on himself.

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[33] Edwards, *Faithful Narrative*, ed. Goen, Works, 4:151.
[34] Edwards, *Faithful Narrative*, ed. Goen, Works, 4:182.
[35] Cited Timothy K. Beougher, "Times of Refreshing: The Revival of 1970 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary" in his and Alvin Reid, ed., *Evangelism for a Changing World: Essays in honor of Roy Fish* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1995), 221.
[36] Cited Beougher, "Times of Refreshing," 221.

"Sharper than any two-edged sword"

The New Testament era—when the longing of the Old Testament for the outpouring of the Spirit was realized—can be rightly seen as a time of revival.[37] During it, the Word of God was central to the Spirit's work. On the day of Pentecost, for instance, after Peter had proclaimed God's Word, we read that his hearers were "cut to the heart"[38]—God's Word humbled them and brought them under deep conviction. In a similar vein, the writer of Hebrews, thinking of the way that God lays bare the human heart, can say:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.[39]

The link between the sentences here needs to be noted. It is by his Word that God lays bare the hearts of men and women and children. Yet again, the Apostle Paul asks the Thessalonian Church to pray that "the word of the Lord may run swiftly" and overcome all opposition.[40]

In the latter days of the Puritan era in the seventeenth century, when spiritual lethargy was beginning to grip far too many Puritan congregations, a noted English Presbyterian, John Howe (1630–1705), preached a series of fifteen sermons in 1678 on Ezekiel 39:29.[41] Unless the Spirit is poured forth, Howe asserted, then preaching, or the right form of church government, or even the power to do miracles, would be unable to heal the inner decay that was becoming evident in orthodox Puritan congregations.[42] "We are dead, the Spirit of God is retiring, retired in a very great degree … even from Christian assemblies," Howe bluntly declared.[43] But Howe predicted that a better day was coming. On that day, he went on:

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[37] Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord*, 37.

[38] Acts 2:37.

[39] Hebrews 4:12–13.

[40] 2 Thessalonians 3:1–2.

[41] "Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God" (KJV). See John Howe, *The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest Before the End of Time, by a Plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit* in *The Works of the Rev. John Howe, M.A.* (London: Frederick Westley; A.H. Davis, 1832), 562–607. Though preached in 1678, these sermons were not actually published until 1725.

[42] Howe, *Plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit* in his *Works*, 603–604.

[43] Howe, *Plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit* in his *Works*, 604.

when the Spirit shall be poured forth plentifully, … I believe you will hear much other kind of sermons, or they will, who shall live to such a time, than you are wont to do now-a-days; souls will surely be dealt withal at another kind of rate. It is plain, too sadly plain, there is a great retraction of the Spirit of God even from us; we do not know how to speak living sense [i.e. felt reality] unto souls, how to get within you; our words die in our mouths, or drop and die between you and us. We even faint, when we speak; long experienced unsuccessfulness makes us despond; we speak not as persons that hope to prevail … When such an effusion of the Spirit shall be as is here signified … [ministers] shall know how to speak to better purpose, with more compassion and sense, with more seriousness, with more authority and allurement, than we now find we can.[44]

This text bears witness to the fact that in times of spiritual revival, the word of God and its truths are ardently treasured, heeded, and central to the revival.

And so it proved when revival came in the following century in the 1730s. Jonathan Edwards said of the Northampton revival of 1734–1735 that while "God was so remarkably present amongst us by his Spirit, there was no book so delighted in as the Bible."[45] He gave the example of a seventy-year-old woman converted during this awakening:

Reading in the New Testament concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners, seemed to be astonished at what she read, as at a thing that was real and very wonderful, but quite new to her, insomuch that at first, before she had time to turn her thoughts, she wondered within herself, that she had never heard of it before; but then immediately recollected herself, and thought she had often heard of it, and read it, but never till now saw it as a thing real.[46]

As J.I. Packer notes, in times of revival, the "sense of God's presence imparts new authority to his truth. The message of Scripture which previously was making only a superficial impact, if that, now searches its hearers and readers to the depth of their being."[47]

Another excellent illustration of the vital necessity of the Word in revival can be found in a revival that took place in Wales at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Welsh Revival of 1904-1905. There is no doubt that this revival had a profound

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[44] Howe, *Plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit* in his *Works*, 575. For the explanation of "living sense" as "felt reality," I am indebted to J.I. Packer, *God In Our Midst. Seeking and Receiving Ongoing Revival* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1987), 33.
[45] Edwards, *Faithful Narrative*, ed. Goen, *Works*, 4:184.
[46] Edwards, *Faithful Narrative*, ed. *Goen*, Works, 4:181.
[47] Packer, "Steps to the Renewal of the Christian People," 78.

impact upon Wales. It is estimated that around 100,000 were converted during the revival that saw entire communities transformed almost overnight. Philip Eveson, the Principal of London Theological Seminary, notes, for example, that the managers of the numerous coal pits in Wales "reported increased coal output and swearing diminished so much that the old pit ponies were disorientated."[48] Moreover, it attracted world-wide interest from places as far away as here in Canada, South Africa, and India. Among the key leaders used by God in this revival was Evan Roberts (1878–1951),[49] who undoubtedly was a key catalyst in this work of the Spirit. As the revival progressed, though, Roberts preached less and less, and allowed the various meetings to be made up of singing and testimonies. While the latter are undoubtedly good, even greater good would have been achieved if Roberts had preached more and grounded the converts solidly in the Word.[50] As Josh Moody, senior pastor of the historic College Church in Wheaton, has rightly noted: "The effectiveness of a revival, and its long-lasting fruit or otherwise, depends massively on the already existing biblical fuel, and what kind of biblical fuel is added to the fire."[51]

"He will convict the world concerning sin"

The Farewell Discourse of John 14–16 contains some of the richest pneumatological teaching in the New Testament. Among the things that our Lord teaches about the Spirit is that when he comes in Pentecostal power he would "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement."[52] Not surprisingly, in light of the awareness of God's holy presence and the teaching of his Word, genuine revivals normally include a profound sensitivity to sin, a "deep awareness of what things are sinful and how sinful we ourselves are."[53] Packer has rightly noted: "No upsurge of religious interest or excitement merits the name of renewal if there is no deep sense of sin at its heart. God's coming [near], and the consequent impact of his Word, makes Christians much more sensitive to sin than

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[48] Philip Eveson, "The 1904–1905 Welsh Revival," *Grace Magazine* (February 2004): 4.
[49] For two brief studies of his life, see D.D. Morgan, "Roberts, Evan" in Larsen, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, 554–556, and Catrin Alsop, "Evan Roberts," *Grace Magazine* (February 2004): 5–6.
[50] Eveson, "1904–1905 Welsh Revival," 5; Alsop, "Evan Roberts," 6.
[51] Josh Moody, "Revival" (Facebook post, February 15, 2023).
[52] John 16:8.
[53] Packer, "Steps to the Renewal of the Christian People," 78.

they previously were: consciences become tender and a profound humbling takes place."[54] As American historian Richard Lovelace rightly observes:

Christians whose spiritual lives are grounded and nurtured only on self-esteem and positive thinking, without a vision of the depth of sin, are going to be lacking in depth, reality and humility. Spirituality is imported by the Holy Spirit, and since he is "the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17), he cannot dwell in fullness where there is only partial openness to truth. If we cannot face the bad news about the depth of sin and the height of holiness, we cannot fully grasp the good news of salvation and the transformed life in Christ.[55]

Indeed, Jonathan Edwards, thinking about what constitutes genuine revival, was not slow to place sensitivity to sin as one of the marks about an authentic work of the Spirit.

If we see persons made sensible of the dreadful nature of sin, and of the displeasure of God against it, and of their own miserable condition as they are in themselves by reason of sin, and earnestly concerned for their eternal salvation, and sensible of their need of God's pity and help, and engaged to seek it in the use of the means that God has appointed, we may certainly conclude that it is from the Spirit of God.[56]

And George Whitefield (1714–1770), whose remarkable preaching of the Word was used by God to bring multitudes on both sides of the Atlantic to a genuine conversion, could state: "If you have never felt the weight of … sin, do not call yourselves Christians."[57]

Consider, for example, the case of Robert Robinson (1735–1790), best known today as the author of the hymn "Come, Thou Fount of every blessing."[58]

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[54] Packer, "Steps to the Renewal of the Christian People," 79. In the New Testament era we see this sensitivity to sin in such passages as the following: Acts 2:37–38; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Titus 3:3–7.

[55] Richard F. Lovelace, *Renewal as a Way of Life: A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 70.

[56] Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, ed. Goen, Works, 4:252–253.

[57] Cited Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord*, 152.

[58] On the life of Robinson, see especially Graham W. Hughes, *With Freedom Fired. The Story of Robert Robinson Cambridge Nonconformist* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1955); L.G. Champion, "Robert Robinson: A Pastor In Cambridge," *The Baptist Quarterly* 31 (1985–1986): 241–246; Len Addicott, "Introduction" to his, L. G. Champion, and K.A.C. Parsons, *Church Book: St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, Cambridge 1720–1832* ([London]: Baptist Historical Society, 1991), viii–xviii.
I am well aware that Robinson's theological convictions in his final days have been the subject of considerable discussion and disagreement. There are reports that he questioned the doctrine of

Robinson was brought under deep conviction of sin when he went to hear Whitefield preach in 1752. When Robinson first went to hear Whitefield, his motivation in going was an odd one to say the least. On Sunday morning, May 24, 1752, he and some friends were out looking for some amusement when they came across an aged woman who claimed to be a fortune-teller. After they had gotten her thoroughly drunk on what was probably cheap gin, they proceeded to have her tell their fortunes. When it came to Robinson, the woman predicted that he would live to see his children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren growing up around him.

Now, what had started as something of a lark was taken quite seriously by Robinson as he made his way home later that day. When he was alone, he thought that if he were indeed to live to such a ripe age, he would probably end up being a burden to his family. There were in those days no such things as social security or welfare. What then could he do? Well, he thought, one way for those who are older to make themselves liked by their grandchildren is to have a good stock of stories to draw upon to entertain them. He thus determined there and then to fill his mind with knowledge and "everything that is rare and wonderful," which, when he was old, would stand him in good stead and cause him, so he reasoned, to "be respected rather than neglected."[59]

As his first acquisition, he decided to experience one of Whitefield's sermons. He went to hear him, though, as he later told the famous preacher, with feelings of pity for "the folly of the preacher" and "the infatuation of the hearers"—those "poor deluded Methodists,"—and of abhorrence for Whitefield's doctrine.[60] Whitefield was preaching that evening at the Tabernacle, his meeting-house in Moorfields, London. His text was Matthew 3:7, John the Baptist's stern rebuke of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" When, according to Robinson:

the Trinity, for instance. On the other hand, however, one of his oldest friends, Coxe Feary (1759–1822) pastor of the Calvinistic Baptist work in Bluntisham, Huntingdonshire, recorded a conversation that he had with Robinson but a month before the latter's death in 1790. Robinson affirmed that when it came to the doctrine of the Trinity he was neither a Unitarian nor an Arian. "My soul rests its whole hope of salvation," he solemnly told Feary, "on the atonement of Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God." (Joseph Belcher, "Note *" in his ed., *The Complete Works of the Re. Andrew Fuller* [1845, Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988], II, 223–224).

[59] Andrew Fuller, "Anecdote," *The Evangelical Magazine* 2 (1794): 72_73. Fuller had received this account of Robinson's conversion from Robinson himself. The story was written under the name of "Gaius," the pen-name that Fuller regularly used.

[60] Robert Robinson, Letter to George Whitefield, May 10, 1758, in William Robinson, ed., *Select Works of the Rev. Robert Robinson, of Cambridge* (London: J. Heaton & Son, 1861), 166–167.

Mr. Whitefield described the Sadducean character; this did not touch me, I thought myself as good a Christian as any man in England. From this he went to that of the Pharisees. He described their exterior decency, but observed that the poison of the viper rankled in their hearts. This rather shook me. At length, in the course of his sermon, he abruptly broke off; paused for a few moments; then burst into a flood of tears; lifted up his hands and eyes, and exclaimed, "O my hearers! the wrath's to come, the wrath's to come!" These words sunk into my heart, like lead in the waters. I wept, and when the sermon was ended, retired alone. For days and weeks I could think of little else. Those awful words would follow me, wherever I went, "The wrath's to come, the wrath's to come"![61]

For over three years Robinson was haunted by these words and Whitefield's sermon. He regularly attended the preaching at the Tabernacle, and found himself "cut down for sin" and "groaning for deliverance." Eventually on Tuesday, December 10, 1755, "after having tasted the pains of rebirth," Robinson "found full and free forgiveness through the precious blood of Jesus Christ."[62] Robinson eventually went on to pastor St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church in Cambridge, where he became one of the best colloquial preachers of the day. About two and a half years after his profession of faith Robinson wrote a hymn long treasured by God's people: "Come, Thou Fount of every blessing." It appears to have been written to commemorate what God did for him when he saved him.

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;

Streams of mercy, never ceasing,

Call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,

Sung by flaming tongues above;

Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it,

Mount of God's unchanging love.

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[61] Fuller, "Anecdote," 73.
[62] Robinson, Letter to George Whitefield in Robinson, ed., *Select* Works, 167; William Robinson, "Memoir [of Robert Robinson]" in his ed., *Select Works*, xv–xvi, footnote.

…Oh! to grace how great a debtor

Daily I'm constrained to be!

Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,

Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love;

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,

Seal it for Thy courts above.[63]

"He will glorify me"

 Although the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work in times of revival, it is Christ who is central and spoken about and glorified. As Jesus told his disciples about the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, "he will glorify me."[64] In these words there is set forth what J.I. Packer has rightly called the "Holy Spirit's distinctive new covenant role," namely, "directing all attention away from himself to Christ" and making sure that Christ is "known, loved, honoured, praised and [has the] preeminence in everything."[65] This is so utterly central to the New Testament.

If this is the central thrust of the Spirit's work in the new covenant era initiated by Pentecost and if, as has been argued, the New Testament is an era of awakening and revival, then one can rightly say that revivals, which witness the intensification of the Spirit's work, are by nature Christ-centred events. Consider:

Acts 2:14–40 and Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost. It is a Christ-centred sermon. The Holy Spirit is mentioned right at the beginning of the sermon (2:17-18) in the citation from Joel. Then Peter, taking his cue from the conclusion of this citation, which states that "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be

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[63] On this hymn, see the remarks of Erik Routley, *I'll Praise My Maker. A study of the hymns of certain authors who stand in or near the tradition of English Calvinism 1700–1850* (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1951), 260–262.

[64] John 16:14.

[65] J.I. Packer, *Keep In Step With the Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1984), 65, 64, 54.

saved,"[66] preaches Jesus crucified and risen from the dead and seated at the Father's right hand as Lord and Messiah.

Acts 4:8–12, where Peter and John have been arraigned before the Sanhedrin, and Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit," preaches Jesus as the only way of salvation.

Ephesians 5:18–19, which tells us that when believers are filled with the Spirit, they become worshippers of the Lord Jesus, lifting him up in psalm and hymn and Spirit-given song.

The vision in Revelation 4–5 that is given to John of the throne room of heaven, informs us that Christ is declared to be worthy to receive "honour and glory" and thus rightly the object of universal co-adoration with the Father.

The opening verses of the anonymous letter to the Hebrews, where the reader is told that Christ is the object of angelic worship for he is the creator and sustainer of the universe, and indeed he is the very "radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature."[67]

The overall tenor of the written products of the revival in the New Testament era. Take, for example, Paul's letter to the Colossians. Without a doubt this book is Spirit-inspired, and yet there is virtually no mention of the Holy Spirit.[68] But it is filled with lavish praise of Christ. Christ is set forth as the One who sustains the entire universe and who is preeminent in all of it.[69] Christ is the "hope of glory."[70] And in Christ dwells all the fullness of the deity and all the "treasure of wisdom and knowledge."[71]

To illustrate the ministry of the Spirit in relation to Christ in this present age, Packer rightly talks of the Spirit's work as "a floodlight ministry."[72] The truth of this came home to me a goodly number of years ago in Montreal. I had the privilege for some two and a half decades of teaching at Séminaire Baptiste Évangélique du Québec (SEMBEQ), the French Fellowship Baptist seminary that used to be located on Gouin Boulevard, the longest street in Montreal. The area in which the seminary was located was a very prestigious area of the West Island of Montreal. One summer night when I was teaching there I decided to go for a

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[66] Acts 2:21.
[67] Hebrews 1:6, 2–3.
[68] For the one clear reference, see Colossians 1:8.
[69] Colossians 1:18. Colossians 1:17.
[70] Colossians 1:27.
[71] Colossians 1:19; 2:9, 3.
[72] Packer, *Keep In Step With the Spirit*, 55, 65.

walk in the neighbourhood. I noticed that a good number of the owners of the wealthy homes in the area had strategically placed floodlights around their homes so that passers-by like myself might ooh and aah about their achievements in stone and brick. Now, if instead of focusing on the homes which were lit by the floodlights I had instead concentrated my attention on the floodlight themselves—"Oh, that's an interesting-looking floodlight; I wonder where they bought it" or "what a lovely light that floodlight is giving; I wonder how powerful it is"—I would have missed the whole meaning and purpose of the floodlights. The owners of the homes had put the floodlights out in front so that I should look at their homes, not at the floodlights, the source of illumination.

So it is with the Spirit's ministry. He has been sent by God the Father to focus our attention to Christ, to kindle in our hearts an unquenchable love for Christ and for his purposes, and to enable us to reflect faithfully his person and character. The Spirit has not come to primarily speak about himself. He has not been given to us so that we should focus primarily on him and his work. He has come to inhabit these mortal frames so that we should love Christ and adore him, and that we should seek to live each day in obedience to Jesus. How much more true is this in times of spiritual awakening.

The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in revival has this one indispensable genuine mark then: it is Christ-centred. It is designed to exalt Christ and glorify him in the minds and hearts of men and women, and boys and girls. As the Victorian Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), who knew revival early on in his ministry, once put it:

If we do not make the Lord Jesus glorious; if we do not lift him high in the esteem of men, if we do not labour to make him King of kings, and Lord of lords; we shall not have the Holy Spirit with us. Vain will be rhetoric, music, architecture, energy, and social status: if our one design be not to magnify the Lord Jesus, we shall work alone and work in vain.[73]

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[73] C.H. Spurgeon, *The Greatest Fight in the World* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1891), 64.

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Exploring biblical and logical foundations for establishing a rigorous compatibility between divine sovereignty and human freedom

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Abstract

Throughout the history of Christian theology, the antinomy between, on the one hand, the divine will expressed through foreknowledge and predestination and, on the other hand, the human will expressed through limited knowledge and free choice, has been perpetuated. Since both of these wills claim their presence in the immanent order of everyday reality and the divine will is essentially sovereign, then to what extent does man have free will or freedom of choice? The answer to this question has divided theologians into different groups and theological rationalities. Some have brought to the fore the theory of predestination and the sovereignty of God, and others have invoked the compatibility of foreknowledge and human free will, developing theories that highlight human freedom.

In this article, I will highlight two compatibilist theories, that of John Calvin and that of Luis de Molina. At the same time, I will show that, according to the fundamental principles of logic, contradiction and the excluded middle, Calvinism denotes a high view of God's sovereignty and a low view of human liberty, whereas Molinism, a high view of creaturely freedom, but a low view of God's sovereignty. Finally, I will propose, based on the biblical texts and the logic of *included middle*, evoked by the Romanian-French physicist, Basarab Nicolescu, the exploration of a rationality that gives rise to a high view of God's sovereignty, as well as a high view of human freedom, creating the premise for the elaboration of a rigorous compatibilism.

Key words: Calvinism, Molinism, predestination, free will, included middle, sovereignty.

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Calvinistic Compatibilism: Secret Predestination

In this section I will present the compatibilist perspective of John Calvin (1509-1564) on the relationship between divine predestination and human choice, showing that this perspective formulated in the light of the fundamental principles of logic denotes a high view of God's sovereignty, but a low view of human freedom. First of all, we will explore Calvin's notion of predestination, and then that of free will, in order to finally outline the relationship between creaturely freedom and the dominant character of the divine will.

Paul Helm notes that "Calvin never forogot that the *Institutes* was not a textbook or a *summa* but a manual of instruction in the Christian faith for believers . . . ."[2] Therefore, we cannot expect a systematic presentation of his conception of predestination. But in the pages of the *Institutes*, Calvin usefully dwells, from time to time, on this topic. In fact, Helm argues that predestination is not the main premise of Calvin's thought.[3]

However, Calvin supports the cause of God's predestination of men, on the ground that "of the common mass of mankind, some should be predestinated to salvation, and others to destruction."[4] He repeatedly calls this predestination the secret predestination, closely following Augustine in this approach.[5] As Richard A. Muller notes, "John Calvin was part of a long line of thinkers who based their doctrine of predestination on the Augustinian interpretation of St. Paul."[6]

Calvin is keen to point out that "our salvation flows from the fountain of God's mercy . . . ."[7] Thus, obtaining salvation is not due to any specifically human merits, but exclusively to God's mercy. Man is essentially fallen, and only God's mercy makes possible man's access to the path of salvation. The following rhetorical questions expressed by Calvin denote this fact: "And what is this but a plain declaration of the Lord, that he finds no cause in men to induce him to show favour to them, but derives it solely from his own mercy;"[8] Nothing good dwells in man.[9]

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[2] Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 8.

[3] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 96.

[4] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trad. John Allen, e-artnow, 2021, p. 2030.

[5] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2241.

[6] Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree, Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*, Original published in 1986. Republished in 2008, Ebook edition created 2012, Ebook corrections 2020, Michigan: Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

[7] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2030.

[8] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2067.

[9] Romans 7:18 (ESV).

Although God, in a sovereign way, makes it easy for man in general to have access to the thought of eternity,[10] yet, in particular He elects only some to salvation, ensuring that they shall thereby obtain the gift of salvation: "Election . . . is the mother of faith."[11]

If God chooses only some for salvation, what about the others? Calvin elaborates on the notion of predestination of all men by showing that this is the way "by which God adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death [. . .] Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which He has determined in himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not treated with similar destiny; but eternal life is fore-ordained for some, and eternal damnation for others"[12]. Calvin's theological notion of predestination, part of the theology of providence, brings to the fore the truth that God is sovereign, therefore "[d]ecision of salvation or death belong to Him."[13]

However, the divine decree of electing some to heaven and others to eternal damnation is not without justification in Calvin's theology. He refers to the sinful nature of man and the consequences of his actions which cannot go unpunished.[14] But still, isn't it incorrect that God does not give freedom of choice to His creatures? In a historical period in which the individual considers himself part of a collectivist and pyramidal social mechanism, which strictly imposed obedience to the king who had the right of life and death over his subjects, Calvin responds to this objection, referring to Romans 5:20-21, where the Apostle Paul disapproves as irrational of the clay criticizing the potter's decisions, pointing out that "we must always return at last to the sovereign determination of God's will, the cause of which is hidden in himself."[15]

Calvin does not exclude the fact that man has the capacity of choice. Man was originally endowed with "a mind capable of discerning good from evil, and just from unjust; and of discovering, by the light of reason, what ought to be pursued or avoided;"[16] This mind was also given the will: "To this he has annexed the will, on which depends the choice."[17] In addition to the will to do, God also

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[10] Ecclesiastes 3:11 (ESV).
[11] apud Muller, *Christ and the Decree,* p. 79.
[12] Calvin, *Institutes*, pp. 2039-2040.
[13] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2098.
[14] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2012.
[15] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2092.
[16] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 408.
[17] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 408.

endowed man with the ability to choose: "To these was added choice, to direct the appetites, and regulate all the organic motions".[18] Adam's ability to rightly choose good over evil was compromised, however, only when he fell into sin. Here are the words of the theologian: "Yet his choice of good and evil was free; and not only so, but his mind and will were possessed of consummate rectitude, and all his organic parts were rightly disposed to obedience, till, destroying himself, he corrupted all his excellencies."[19] From that moment, man no longer had a pure will and an unaltered capacity for choice.[20] The degradation of the capacity to choose has spread over all humanity: "At present be it only remembered, that man, at his first creation, was very different from all his posterity, who, deriving their original from him in his corrupted state, have contracted an hereditary defilement."[21]

The fact that man is "corrupted in all the parts of his nature, and deprived of supernatural gifts"[22] it makes it easy for Calvin to understand that the human will is not genuinely free and that, by way of consequence, right choice would necessarily claim the divine illumination of the human will. Calvin evokes Augustine's view of the human will by showing that this capacity is defeated by sin, captive to it, and incapable "towards righteousness", devoid of freedom, except where, as has been said, it is set free by divine grace.[23]

Calvin develops a theory in which divine sovereignty expressed through predestination and human freedom manifested through self-choice are compatible.

This compatibilist perspective emerges from Calvin's response to the serious objections raised to his theory of predestination according to which God predestined all the deeds of men, including "corruption which is now stated as the cause of condemnation".[24] On this subject, Muller explains the fact that the reformed theologian, when he interpreted Ephesians 1:5-8, exposed the notion of predestination in close connection with the four Aristotelian causes: the first cause, called the efficient cause, the second cause, the formal cause, the third, the material cause and the last, the final cause: "Calvin comes to terms with the scholastic Augustinianism of primary and secondary causes and of the necessary

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[18] Calvin, *Institutes*, pp. 408-409.
[19] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 409.
[20] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 409.
[21] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 410.
[22] Calvin, *Institutes*, p.538.
[23] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 546.
[24] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2092.

ordering of events and things at the level of primary causality without a disruption at the level of secondary or inferior causality of the contingent character of things or of the responsibility of human beings for all acts of will."[25] The first cause is God, secondary causes are all contingent causes such as forces of nature or human will. Muller states the following: "Here also is Calvin's defense against the charge of Bolsec that he had followed Lorenzo Valla in the development of an utterly deterministic system: this is not a thoroughgoing necessitarianism insofar as it respects contingency and real possibility at the level of secondary causes. Calvin could state categorically that God had not "necessitated the sin of men".[26] So, at the level of choosing between the possibilities of action, man is not determined, he alone is responsible for the decisions of his heart, regardless of the circumstances in which he finds himself. Of course, there is a correspondence between the primary cause and the secondary causes, between the divine will and creaturely freedom, but only through the subordination of the latter to the former.

A compatibilist presentation of Calvinism can be formalized in Paul Helm's terms, thus:

"[A] person is free (thought he may be necessitated) when, roughly speaking, he is exercising his choice in a way that is in accordance with his preferences even though such exercise may involve elements of psychological constraint".[27]

"Psychological freedom may be consistent with . . . metaphysical necessity"[28]

Therefore, a person is free when he is exercising his choice in a way that is in accordance with his preferences even though such exercise may involve elements of metaphysical necessity.

Metaphysical necessity also presupposes the necessity of sin[29] which cannot be dispossessed of its bonds except by conversion, Helm points out: "Because man sins of necessity, he can only be redeemed by conversion"[30], and conversion is the exclusive work of God.[31] That is why the metaphysical necessity of sin can only be substituted by the metaphysics of redemption. A person, therefore, is free

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[25] Muller, *Christ and the Decree,* p. 79.
[26] Muller, *Christ and the Decree,* p. 79.
[27] Paul Helm, "Calvin and Bernard on Freedom and Necessity: A Reply to Brümmer", *Religious Studies*, *30*(4), 457–465, (1994), http://www.jstor.org/stable/20000113, p. 460.
[28] Helm, "Calvin and Bernard on Freedom and Necessity", p. 461.
[29] Helm, "Calvin and Bernard on Freedom and Necessity", p. 462.
[30] Helm, "Calvin and Bernard on Freedom and Necessity", p. 463.
[31] Helm, "Calvin and Bernard on Freedom and Necessity", p. 464.

when he is exercising his own choice either under the constraints of the metaphysical necessity of sin or in those of redemption. In other words, freedom of choice, in the view of Calvinism, is a genuine freedom by virtue of the fact that it is an action of its own, that is, it is exercised by a conscious agent, although it is a tributary one, since it obviously involves the constraints of metaphysical necessity. It is a freedom in need. Man is necessarily oriented by sin to perdition, but the grace of God reorients some, with sufficient necessity, to salvation.

After Calvin ensures that divine sovereignty is left intact at the cost of highlighting a constrained human freedom, realizing that a perfect fit between divine sovereignty and human freedom is not possible, and content with a flimsy compatibilism, he invokes the transcendent character of divine justice.[32]

The two principles of the logic of non-contradiction and the excluded middle require the admission and validation of both contrary positions, predestination and free will, to be removed. Calvin, animated by a high view of God supports divine sovereignty and implicitly predestination, preserving freedom within the narrow perimeter of metaphysical necessity, which creates the profile of a low view of creaturely freedom.

To conclude this section, the theological perspective of secret predestination has the indisputable merit of emphasizing God's sovereignty, but a few things can be objected to it. First of all, by pre-destining some to eternal damnation, it irreversibly victimizes the human being by transposing it into the posture of its restraint in the capricious captivity of necessity. If man is irredeemably destined for perdition anyway, then moral striving may be a lost cause. Secondly, through the predestination of all things, both the epistemic error of man, as well as the commission of evil by the human creature, as well as the unfortunate circumstances of man can all be put, uncritically, to the account of God, which can cause alienation from faith. Thirdly, the fact of the unilateral and secret divine decree of man's destiny which, obviously, can be a fatal and undesirable one, can lead to defeatism, in any of its desperate forms: social isolation or nihilism.

However, despite the fact that Calvin's conception of predestination, part of the theology of providence, circumscribes at best a tenuous compatibilism, the image of God as the first, dominant cause, fully generates both the feeling of divine omnipresence and the desirable sensation that everything is under divine control and that everything makes sense, even if the behind-the-scenes springs of divine reason remain, for now, not fully understood.

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[32] Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 2093.

Molinistic Compatibilism: Middle Knowledge

Luis de Molina (1535-1600) was a 16th-century Catholic theologian who actively participated in the European scholastic phenomenon, accommodated among other regions and by the Iberian peninsula, his birthplace.[33] This theologian developed a theological approach that would make room for moral responsibility in the equation. Molina put forward the idea that man has a room for maneuver in the divine plane in which he can decide and act unhindered by any inextricable divine programming.

Molina distinguished "*Three* types of knowledge in God"[34]: "One type is purely *natural*, and accordingly could not have been any different in God. Through this type of knowledge He knew all the things to which the divine power extended either immediately or by the mediation of secondary causes, including not only the natures of individuals and the necessary states of affairs composed of them but also the contingent states of affairs . . ."[35]. "The second type is purely *free* knowledge, by which, *after* the free act of His will, God knew *absolutely* and *determinately*, *without any condition or hypothesis*, which ones from among all the contingent states of affairs were *in fact* going to obtain and, likewise, which ones were not going to obtain."[36] "Finally the third type is *middle* knowledge, by which, in virtue of the most profound and inscrutable comprehension of each faculty of free choice, He saw in His own essence what each such faculty would do with its innate freedom . . ."[37]. This kind of knowledge is independent of God's will, as Molina states.[38]

William Lane Craig points out that divine knowledge possesses three logical moments.[39] Although, "It is important to emphasize again that temporally there are no such successive moments in God's knowledge. His decision to create the world is an eternal decision; there never was a time when God had middle knowledge but lacked free knowledge."[40] Firstly, in regard to what is in God's nature or essential to Him, Craig explains, there is a natural knowledge, that is, a knowledge which coincides with the faculty of His omniscience, this faculty being aware of all possibilities or possible worlds, not only of individual

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[33] Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, Part IV of the *Concordia*, trans. and introduction by Alfred J. Freddoso, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. vii.
[34] Molina, *On Divine*, p. 168.
[35] Molina, *On Divine*, p. 168.
[36] Molina, *On divine*, p. 168.
[37] Molina, *On divine*, p. 168.
[38] Molina, *On divine*, p. 168.
[39] Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 237.
[40] Craig, *The Only Wise God, The Compatibily of Divine Freedom*, pp. 288-289.

essences.[41] According to His nature, God knows in advance all the possibilities of decision and action of created beings, all that they *can do*, given certain states of affairs. This knowledge does not depend on what God would like to happen, i.e., "on the free decision of His will".[42] Secondly, there is a divine knowledge, called "middle knowledge", which anticipates everything that created beings *will do* in the given perimeter of their states of affairs, perimeter or context that precedes their choice. And this not because of the pressure of these circumstances in which they will find themselves, but because of their own unhindered deliberation.[43] In the Molinist view, through middle knowledge God foreknows, but does not follow His divine will, repressing it intentionally. This chronological stage in divine thought is called "middle knowledge" because it is found in the middle between the first moment in the logic of the unfolding of divine knowledge and the third.[44] In this temporal moment of divine thought, the divine will is not determinative, but determined by the truth of the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, as we shall see below.

Alfred J. Freddoso explains middle knowledge as follows: "Like natural knowledge but unlike free knowledge, middle knowledge is prevolitional, with the result that God has no more control over the states of affairs He knows through His middle knowledge than He does over the state of affairs He knows through His natural knowledge."[45] Further, "By His natural knowledge God knows that it is metaphysically possible but not metaphysically necessary that Adam will sin if placed in the garden; by His free knowledge He knows that Adam will in fact be placed in the garden and will in fact sin. What He knows by His middle knowledge, on the other hand, is something stronger than the former but weaker than the latter, namely, that Adam will sin *on the condition* that he be placed in the garden. So God has middle knowledge only if He knows all the conditional future contingents."[46]

Middle knowledge looks at counterfactual, virtual things, things imagined, not actualized, but anticipated by the divine intellect, things that would occur under certain circumstances. This knowledge is not essential to God in the sense that the actions of creatures do not depend on the divine will, but entirely precede it. God, at this logical moment, is in a passive situation regarding his will. In both

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[41] Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 237.
[42] Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 237.
[43] Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[44] Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[45] Molina, *On Divine*, p. 47.
[46] Molina, *On Divine*, p. 47.

"natural knowledge" and "middle knowledge" no decision of the divine will is involved.[47]

Craig notes that "true contrafactuals are contingently true".[48] They belong to the free decision of the human agent. Craig is keen to point out that "although it is essential to God that He have middle knowledge, it is not essential to Him to have middle knowledge of those particular propositions which in fact he does know."[49]

Moreover, God does not possess middle knowledge about "decisions of His own will"[50] in the context of counterfactual things, imagined in the process of anticipation. If the free will of human beings depended on the divine will, they would be deprived of freedom because they would be determined by it. In order to recognize this creaturely freedom, Molina resorts to the exception "decisions of God's will from divine middle knowledge"[51].

The third logical moment, after that of knowing all possibilities and after that of facilitating creaturely freedom, is the moment when God decrees the actualization of that anticipated world through middle knowledge.[52] So, through natural knowledge, God knows everything that *can be done* by created beings, through middle knowledge He knows everything that they *would do*, given certain circumstances, and through God's "free knowledge" what created beings *must do* given the divine decree of creation. This third moment of divine knowledge unfolds only after God has decreed the actualization of the world known and chosen by Him through middle knowledge. This last moment in the chronology and logic of divine thought, Craig says, "is denominated 'free knowledge' by Molina because it is logically posterior to the decision of the divine will to actualize a world".[53]

Regarding the compatibility between predestination and the freedom of choice of created beings, Craig is convinced that "middle knowledge also serves to reconcile predestination and human freedom. In Molina's view, predestination. . . is the order and means by which God ensures that some free creatures attain eternal life [. . .] God knows that many will freely reject His sufficient grace

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[47]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[48]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[49]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[50]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[51]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 238.
[52]Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 239.
[53]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 239.

and be lost [. . .] Thus, predestination and human freedom are entirely compatible."[54]

More precisely, "middle knowledge" presupposes the fact that God, before proceeding with His creation, knew everything that any being would do, therefore He created every course of actions of every human being, building the history of the world based on this knowledge. So, the average knowledge of God depends on what free beings will do under certain circumstances. Here are Molina's words: "this knowledge depends on the fact that the being would in its freedom do this or that, and not the other way around."[55] Calvin is unhappy with the consideration that God would have foreknowledge of human deeds without predestining their actualization, stating the following: "If God simply foresaw the fates of men, and did not also dispose and fix them by his determination, there would be room to agitate the question, whether his providence or foresight rendered them at all necessary. But since he foresees future events only in consequence of his decree, that they shall happen, it is useless to contend about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by ordination and decree."[56] For Calvin the predestination of men to perdition, "all things being at God's disposal . . ."[57] it is legitimized by the earthly model, as I said before, of the king who disposes of the life and death of his subjects; but not for Molina. Molina is sensitive to the fact that a man cannot be convicted of actions that he had no way of doing otherwise since they were imposed upon him by necessity and without right of appeal. Therefore, middle knowledge is a significant theological contribution that Molina brings up into the theological dialogue.

However, some objections can be raised to this perspective as well.

Final remarks. In the last part of this section, I will highlight two objections that can be raised against Molinism: that of the predestination of a world among the possible ones and the one that I call the "middle trap of middle knowledge".

Objection to the predestination of free creatures to one of the possible worlds.

Middle Knowledge presupposes that God knew the counterfactual truth of the best possible version of the world in which each of the created human beings has the opportunity to be themselves, in their most honest version, having the

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[54]Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge*, pp. 241-242.
[55]Molina, *On Divine*, p. 170.
[56] Calvin, *Institutes*, p.2099.
[57] Calvin, *Institutes*, p.2098.

freedom to decide and act in such a way that he can freely choose or knowingly reject the grace of salvation, after which God, on the basis of the same middle knowledge, will compose a course of the things of the world so that it does not violate creaturely freedom and, at the same time, corresponds to the general purpose He has for the world. Some observations are necessary here: according to "middle knowledge" God suspends his own will in order to facilitate the freedom of decision and action of human beings, giving them the possibility of producing evil. Since the suspension of the divine will causally precedes counterfactual evil (physical, moral, or spiritual), the divine decision to self-suspend its will at the counterfactual level is the cause by conscious omission of counterfactual evil. If counterfactual evil had not been preceded by God's deliberate will to self-repress His will, then it would not have existed. Counterfactual evil is present in the world, not by God's commission, but by the deliberate omission of God's will. James expresses himself about the mistake of omission.[58]

The core of this objection can be expressed formally as follows:

1. It is known that different environments of existence affect differently the agents of the path they occupy.

2. There is the counterfactual truth about world X that influences the freely created agent A to choose action B, under circumstances C, which is different from the counterfactual truth about world Y that influences freely created agent A about choosing action B1, under circumstances C1 unlike of world Z, with action B2 and circumstances C2, and so on up to Bn, respectively Cn.

3. According to Molinism, God predetermines by divine decree the actualization of the counterfactual truth of world X in which the freely created agent A is influenced to choose an action B, under circumstances C.

4. Therefore, God, by the decree of creation, predetermines agent A to be influenced about an action B, different from B1 or B2. Thus, God predetermines agent A to be influenced to act in the sense of action B and not in the sense of action B1, B2, or Bn.

By actualizing the counterfactual truth about world X, Agent A is predetermined to bear the different influences of world X as opposed to those of worlds Y or Z in which he might have acted quantitatively or qualitatively differently. Therefore, the divine decree, even if it does not restrict the freedom of agent A,

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[58] James 4:17 (ESV).

in relation to the counterfactual truth of world X, it restricts the freedom of agent A, in relation to the counterfactual truth of world Y or Z.

The objection of the "middle trap"

According to Molinism, God mentally operates on counterfactual truth by foreknowing the factual truth whose actualization He freely decrees through free knowledge. Through middle knowledge, God represses His will so that created beings can be free to respond affirmatively or negatively to the offer of saving grace. This repressed divine will is released only when middle knowledge is consumed as a logical moment and when God gives way to his will to act in consequence of the decisions and actions of free beings known to him through his foreknowledge. God had a choice between giving freedom to human beings and depriving them of freedom. As we will see below, any of these alternatives puts God in eternally regrettable poses, in a trap with no way out, hence the idea of the *middle trap of middle knowledge*.

Namely, God could order the non-granting of the freedom of decision and action to human beings. In this case, God could create either human robots, lacking free decisions, but programmed to do good, or arrested humanoids, free creatures, capable of doing evil, but always forced to avoid it. In this case, God's freedom of decision is maximal, but human freedom is either not granted or not actualized, there being only two logical possibilities, the robot man, or the man harnessed to the saddle of absolute and arbitrary coercion. Since man was made an eternal being, both these situations would have compelled God to the eternal suffering of seeing His creature in unworthy and unhappy postures.

In terms of granting freedom, we have a regrettable alternative. If some of the free beings, assuming their freedom, receive the divine offer, then their decision and actions accord with the divine will, but if some free beings reject the offer of saving grace, then their decisions and actions are discordant with the divine will, and are antagonistic to it. Leszek Kolakowski notes this aspect in the following words: "If He is not indifferent, but subject to emotion like us, He must live in a constant state of sorrow when He witnesses human suffering. He did not cause it or want it, but He is helpless in the face of all the misery, the horrors and atrocities that nature brings down on people or people inflict on each other."[59] Since the suffering of some human beings is eternal, then the suffering of God is eternal too. The perspective of Molinists, such as Craig, is that the state of the present

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[59] Leszek Kolakowski, *Is God Happy, Selected Essays*, Agnieszka Kolakowska - translations and introduction, New York: Basic Books, Electronic Edition, 2013, p. 278.

universe is ultimately tragic.[60] So tragic is the condition of the alienated in the eyes of the saved that, in Thomas Talbott's terms, Craig considers that "[i]n effect God performs a kind of lobotomy on the redeemed; he simply 'obliterates of their minds' any knowledge of those persons who come to be lost."[61]

Therefore, the Molinist theology and logic of "middle knowledge", portrays God trapped in suffering regardless of His alternatives. This would be the *middle trap of middle knowledge*. He also suffers if man is deprived of freedom, an alternative excluded from the Molinist theodicy, but He also suffers because of the restriction of His own will, according to the middle knowledge theory, and the granting of freedom to human beings. Of course, this dilemma is not peculiar to Molinism solely, but it is an inescapable reality of its cosmology.

Through its implications, Molinism profiles a low view of God and a tragic theodicy. But this is exactly where the tragedy of this narrative resides. Since God knows in advance that some free beings will choose alienation from Him and others dependence on Him by faith, why does He not extract the former from actualization, thereby absolving them of the suffering and tragic consequences of alienation? Is God somehow caught in the middle trap? The fact that the Molinist viewpoint betrays a cosmology with tragic aspects, enrolls it into an *insufficiently* elaborated *compatibilism*.

Rigorous compatibilism: included middle

In this last section I propose to explore the possibility of developing a rigorous compatibilist perspective that facilitates the understanding that divine will expressed through predestination and human will manifested through free choice can harmonize in perfect metaphysical and theological symmetry. In this sense, I will succinctly transpose the logic of the *included middle* and its scientific horizon of provenance as invoked by the academician Nicolescu, I will show the fact that the Bible evokes both the existence of divine will and human freedom, in its revelational perimeter, going on to extract, finally, some theological conclusions as a consequence of the discussed issue.

The exploration of quantum physics made the researcher, in general, face the strange phenomenon of noticing that light, as a physical phenomenon, is at the same time a wave and a corpuscle. This referral is scandalous, Nicolescu notes, philosopher and professor of quantum physics at the Sorbonne University, Paris,

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[60] Thomas Talbott, "Craig on the Possibility of Eternal Damnation," *Religious Studies* 28, no. 4 (1992): 495–510. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20019574, p. 508.
[61] Talbott, "Craig on the Possibility of Eternal Damnation," p. 508.

because it defies classical logic.[62] Classical logic does not admit a third "T" that is both A and non-A at the same time and under the same ratio.

Classical logic is based on three fundamental principles: the principle of identity, when A = A, the principle of contradiction, when A is different from non-A, and the principle of the excluded middle, when a valid term or proposition is either A or non-A, the third "T" variant, the one in which something is at the same time and under the same A and non-A ratio, is excluded.

The intellectual scandal that Nicolescu talks about consists in the fact that quantum mechanics admits, despite classical logic, mutually contradictory couples united in ambivalent pairs, such as the notion of "wave and corpuscle, continuity and discontinuity, separability and non-separability, local causality and global causality, symmetry and symmetry breaking, time reversibility, etc."[63] What had to be done now? There were only two options, either we remain faithful to classical logic and thus pay tribute to frozen perplexity and ignorance, or we admit mutually contradictory binary notions for the sake of their enormous predictive power and evidence, but in this case, we are forced to accede to the transgression of classical logic by accepting a logic that makes room for the third "T".

The founders of quantum mechanics, faced with this dilemma, turned to this last option, Nicolescu notices: "In 1936, Birkhoff and van Neumann presented a first proposal of such a quantum logic. Since then, a significant number of works (Mackey, Jauch, Piron, etc.) have been dedicated to the study of a coherent formulation of a quantum logic. The ambition of such a logic was to resolve the paradoxes generated by quantum mechanics and to try, as far as possible, to reach a greater predictive power than through classical logic."[64]

The credit for developing quantum logic goes to Stephane Lupasco, who aptly formulated *included middle* logic as a "true, formalizable, and non-contradictory logic".[65] The included third implies a "unifying third of A and non-A"[66]. Under the aspect of the social value of the *included middle*, the "progressive updating of the state T"[67], Nicolescu believes that this logic, through its specific reflex to avoid the "transformation of contradictions into opposites" would generate a

[62] Basarab Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea? Reflecții în Jurul Operei lui Stephane Lupasco*, trad., Simona Modreanu, Romania, Iași: Editura Junimea, 2009, p. 23.
[63] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?,* p. 23.
[64] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 25.
[65] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 26.
[66] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 27.
[67] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 56.

society based on a "philosophy of freedom and tolerance"[68] very different from a philosophy of social conflict and recurrent wars. Together with Jean-Francois Mahlherbe, Nicolescu believes that "the interaction between the included middle and Wittgenstein's language games could have important repercussions in the formulation of a contemporary ethics"[69].

However, the fundamental role played by *the included middle* principle is to facilitate access to new levels of reality. The notion of *level of reality* belongs to Nicolescu. In the terms of the Romanian - French physicist and philosopher, it can be said that the logic of *the included middle* (included third) "induces an open, Godelian structure of the ensemble of levels of reality"[70]. Here's how: "1. A couple of contradictions (A, non-A) located at a certain level of reality is unified by a state T located at an immediately neighboring level of reality; 2. In turn, this state T is linked to a couple of contradictions (A', non-A'), located at its own level; 3. The pair of contradictions (A', non-A') is, in turn, unified by a state T' located at a different level of Reality, immediately adjacent to the one in which the ternary (A', non-A', T). The iterative process continues ad infinitum, until the exhaustion of all levels of reality, known or imaginable"[71].

Returning to the quantum phenomenon, in which light is defined as both a wave and a corpuscle, it must be respecified that through the prism of classical logic, this phenomenon is contradictory and therefore unintelligible, it "appears as a struggle between two contradictory elements (example: wave A and the non-A corpuscle)"[72]. We cannot admit an A/non-A union, that is, an included third, unless we accept the idea of the existence of a new level of reality, with a new logical system, with a new rationality, in which the logic of the *included middle* appears as a functional logic. Quantum physics admits such a level of reality, called the *quantum level*, different from the macrophysical one. At this second level of reality, Nicolescu emphasizes, "what appears as disunited (wave or corpuscle) is actually united (quantum), and what appears as contradictory is perceived as non-contradictory."[73] The principle of the *included middle* does not, therefore, negate the value of the excluded middle, since it acts, as said, at another *level of reality*, but it strictly outlines its sphere of action. A significant logical proof that the excluded middle is valid is precisely the ground it constitutes for

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[68] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 56.
[69] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 56.
[70] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 83.
[71] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 83.
[72] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 80.
[73] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 81.

differentiating the *included middle* from itself, because, as we can see, the *included middle*, being different from the excluded middle, cannot be both itself and its opposite at the same time. But it is not the logic of the excluded middle that prevails in the structural ensemble of the unified reality, but the logic of the included middle. Only the *included middle* paves the way to new levels of reality.

The principle of the *included middle* proposes a new rationality. But when we, as subjects of knowledge, relate to this new level (or new levels) of reality as an object, we are dealing with two realities of epistemological value. Both are validated as such by how they respond to perception. The level of reality that responds to our perception, i.e., *resists*, is the concrete level, and the one characterized by *the zone of non-resistance to perception* "allows and requires the interaction between subject and object"[74]. It is a new, deeper level of reality, it is a *hidden* level of reality, and it plays the role of the *hidden third*. Nicolescu mentions that "the hidden third is alogical, because it is entirely located in the non-resistance zone, while the *included middle is logical*, because it refers to the contradictory A and non-A, located in the resistance zone"[75]. But, continues Nicolescu, "both unite contradictory things: A and non-A, in the case of the included middle and subject and object in the case of the hidden third party"[76]. Since in the zone of resistance the subject and the object are separated, in the zone of non-resistance the subject is unified with its object, it can be both subject and object or neither subject nor object at the same time.

Nicolescu's thesis, on which the principle of transdisciplinarity is based, is that "Reality is One, at the same time unique and multiple"[77] but it is layered on different levels. However, Nicolescu proposes that we consider reality simultaneously, as an open, Godelian unity, that is, appreciating it both through the prism of the *hidden third*, when the unity of things is undifferentiated, and through the prism of the levels of reality where unity is a composite of differences.

What is relevant to the theme of the binomial predestination (man is not free)/freedom (man is not predestined), is the fact that Nicolescu identifies the Sacred as an experience of an "irreducible real"[78]. The Sacred is part of the new rationality, a reality that is a *hidden third*, accessed through the *included middle*.

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[74] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 90.
[75] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 90.
[76] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 90.
[77] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 91.
[78] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 93.

The sacred is "that which binds beings and things"[79], an "extraordinary, unexpected and surprising Eros" that "crosses levels of Reality and levels of Reality of the subject"[80], it can be approached neither subjectively nor objectively, but in a *complex* way. The sacred escapes the human capacity for knowledge and full representation, it is the *hidden third* that expresses itself through a break in symmetry and proposes a new rationality in which opposites are reconciled in *complexity*

Both the Bible and apophatic theology reveal that God's thinking transcends our capacity for knowledge and that transcendence represents a higher level of reality than the linear or sequential one in which we live. Although God has access to the level of immanent reality in which we live, we do not have access to that of transcendence. The apostle Paul rhetorically highlights this truth as follows: "So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."[81] And in the Epistle addressed to the Romans, the Apostle Paul exclaims: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"[82] God's thinking constituting in the apostle's vision a reality that exceeds our power of comprehension. Job is realistic when he asks: "Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?"[83] The author of Psalm 92 is impressed by the depth of God's thoughts saying: "How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep!"[84] Isaiah also notes the fact that God's skill cannot be penetrated: "The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable."[85] Moses, the author of the Pentateuch, appreciates that God reveals to us some of the things of transcendental reality with the explicit purpose of letting us own and relate to the standard of His ethical and spiritual system: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."[86]

If we admit the theory of different levels of reality, an immanent reality and a transcendent reality, then we must admit both a linear, consistent logic, focused on the principles of non-contradiction and the excluded middle, and a divine,

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[79] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 93.
[80] Nicolescu, *Ce Este Realitatea?*, p. 94.
[81] 1 Corinthians 2:11b (ESV).
[82] Romans 11:33 (ESV).
[83] Job 11:7 (ESV).
[84] Psalms 92:5 (ESV).
[85] Isaiah 40:28 (ESV).
[86] Deuteronomy, 29:29 (ESV).

timeless, and non-consistent, a logic of the *included middle*, in which antinomies harmonize, opposites are reconciled, antinomies are resolved into ambinomies on the basis of springs still unknown to the mind tributary to temporality and three-dimensional space. Moreover, the Apostle Paul believes that human beings will also have access to such knowledge, that is why he clearly affirms the hope of our transition from a limited knowledge, specific to the immanent level of knowledge, to a knowledge specific to the higher level, when he says: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."[87] It is clear, according to the words of the apostle Paul, that there are truths known partially in this horizon of immanence, but which can be fully known in eternity. Should the antinomy of predestination/creaturely freedom also be part of this category? The answer to this question has three reasons to be yes. Firstly, the Bible speaks openly both of predestination, foreknowledge, and pre-decree of things, and of man's free will, free choice, and moral responsibility without indicating any dialectical tension between them. Secondly, as previously shown, the fundamental principles of logic rule out the possibility that man is both predestined and morally responsible for the things he has done in a contingent universe. The excluded middle claims either that man is not predestined but free, as libertarian theories try to demonstrate, or that man is predestined but not free, as fatalists and exponents of fragile compatibilism reveal. Calvinism and Molinism brought into the light of logic and theological criticism betray either a high view of God's sovereignty, but a low view of creaturely freedom, as is the case of the first theology, or a high view creaturely freedom, but a low view of God's sovereignty, as is the case of the second one. Thirdly, the antinomies predestination/free will, predestination/human responsibility, are more easily explained within a theory that admits the existence of *levels of reality* where there can be both a high view of God's sovereignty and a high view of human freedom.

According to the theory of the *levels of reality* of Nicolescu and Lupasco, we can integrate the antinomies predestination/creaturely freedom, predestination/human responsibility in the following argumentation:

1. The theory of levels of reality validates antinomian propositions of the type A/non-A based on the logic of the *included middle*.

2. The pairs predestination/creaturely freedom, predestination/human responsibility represent antinomic propositions of the type A/non A.

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[87] 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV).

3. Therefore, the theory of levels of reality validates the pairs predestination/creaturely freedom, predestination/human responsibility in the logic of the *included middle*.

The relevance of this argument has the role of eliminating the dialectical anxiety by including the antinomies under discussion in the category of quantum (ambinomia) and theological binomials that have become axiomatic, which have not only a discursive role, but also an explanatory one, contributing significantly to the advancement of knowledge. In the category of these fundamental binomials are those of light, corpuscle/wave, of Christ, man/God, the Bible, human literature/divine literature, and the Holy Trinity, one Being/Three Persons.

But if we integrate the antinomy of predestination/creaturely freedom, predestination/human responsibility in a logical formula that correlates the theory of *levels of reality* with the Pauline epistemic hope, then we can formulate the following logical argument:

1. The truth of antinomian propositions is either partially known or unvalidated in the light of the logic of the immanent order (excluded middle), whereas in the light of the logic of the transcendent order (included middle) it is fully known and, at the same time, logically validated.

2. The pairs predestination/creaturely freedom, predestination/human responsibility represent antinomian propositions.

3. Therefore, the truth of the pairs predestination/creaturely freedom, predestination/human responsibility is either partially known or unvalidated in the light of the logic of the immanent order (excluded middle), whereas in the light of the logic of the transcendent order (included middle) it is fully known and, at the same time, logically validated.

The value of this formulation is to point out the existence of a new level of reality, a new logic, according to which antinomian pairs are validated in ambinomies. This syllogistic argumentation equally admits the convergence of God predestining all things according to a vast series of biblical texts (Deuteronomy 7:7; Proverbs 16:4, 9; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 24:31; John 15:16 ; Acts 2:23; Romans 8:29-33; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:3,4,11-12; Galatians 1:15-16; Colossians 3:12-13; Philippians 2:13; Titus 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; James 4:15; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 18-20;), and the fact that man is free to decide and act unconstrained by necessity physical or metaphysical, as appears from other biblical texts (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:2; Deuteronomy 23:23; 30:15-20;

Joshua 24:25; Psalm 54:6; 119:108; Mark 8 :34; Galatians 5:13, John 8:38; 1 Peter 2:16;).

The rationality of the levels of reality also explains the argument of the Apostle Paul in Romans 9. The excluded middle logic promotes one of the parties in an antinomian relationship. In this text, predestination seems to be promoted at the expense of free will and, implicitly, human responsibility. Classical logic, therefore, creates the premise of criticism and indignation under this aspect: "What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? [. . .] You will say to me then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?'"[88] The apostle Paul responds by emphasizing, through the analogy of the clay vessel and the potter, that we are in relation to God only a simple object made of clay, while God is a wise craftsman. Therefore, our mind compared to God's mind is a clay mind with inferior logic, while God's mind is a non-consecutive, non-limited mind capable of solving the most complex problems and deepest mysteries, such as the predestination/free will antinomy. Not only can we live with this binomial, but because of it we justify our entirely free and responsible choices and due respect to God as absolute Sovereign.

The theory of *levels of reality* in convergence with the Pauline epistemic hope makes solving the problem of the convergence of the antinomian binomial to be transferred from the level of human thinking, to the level of God's thinking or from the present to the future. Through this transfer, human thought is freed both from the duty of resolving it, in the epistemic hope of finally attaining the complete truth of its synthesis, and from the burden of the dialectical tension and cognitive dissonance that derives from it. But in addition to the fact that the antinomy in question has a logical validation, this, like the binomial corpuscle/light in the quantum binomial, leads to the advance of theological knowledge and the foundation of Christian ethics, joining the category of other ambinomic pairs such as that of the dual nature of Christ, or of the double essence of the Bible. According to rigorous compatibilism animated by the logic of the *included middle*, the image we have of God is that of an absolute Sovereign, the God of Anselm of Canterbury, a maximal being in all aspects, and the image we have of us as human beings is that of creatures endowed with complete freedom.

So, the logics of *included middle* correlated with the *Pauline epistemic hope* gives rise to a high view of God's sovereignty and a high view of human freedom. The reader may consider equally that God predestines everything, that God is in full control of the created world, but also that, according to a divine logic, man

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[88] Romans 9:14 (ESV).

is entirely free to choose and therefore fully responsible for his decisions and actions. But this synthesis is realized in all its complexity only in the mind of God or, according to the epistemic hope of the apostle Paul, it can also be known by the human mind at the moment of our entry into the glory of heaven.

Conclusion:

With the aim of exploring a possibility of theological harmonization of the antinomian notions predestation/free will, predestation/human responsibility, I probed both the theological springs of Calvinistic compatibilism, where I considered *fragile compatibilism*, as well as the intimate structures of Molinistic compatibilism, conceived as *insufficient compatibilism*. The first perspective I considered fragile because it subsumes creaturely freedom to metaphysical necessity, and the second one I called insufficient due, on the one hand, to the predestation of creatures to a world that they did not choose, but which influences them profoundly, and on the other hand, due to the "middle trap", of the middle knowledge. So, the first compatibilism describes a high view of divine sovereignty, but a low view of human freedom, while the latter depicts a high view of human freedom, but a low view of divine sovereignty. For a more succinct presentation of both positions I will present them below in syllogistic form:

According to Calvinism there is the following formulation:

1. If God foreknows that person A will do action "a" in circumstance X, then person A will do action "a" in circumstance X.

2. God foreknows that person A will do action "a" in circumstance X.

3. Therefore, person A will do action "a" in circumstance X.

Molinism's objection to the above formulation is that the thesis does not necessarily derive from the premises, according to modal logic. That is why this theological perspective advances the following formulation:

1. Since person A is free to do action "a" or action "b", or any other action, in circumstance X, and person A freely chose to do action "b" in circumstance X, then God foreknew that A would do action "b" in circumstance X.

2. Person A chose to do action "b" in circumstance X.

3. Therefore, God foreknew that person A would do action "b" in circumstance X.

Here it must be reiterated that we can only think linearly, syllogistically, discursively, and God is totally different from us, a fact that explains why we cannot represent God's thinking in the same way as we think, in successive logical stages. When, however, we project onto God and His thinking, the image we have of how our thinking works, we proceed anthropomorphically, committing the theological error of reducing God's attributes to human attributes.

Under this aspect, of the total difference between God's thinking and human thinking, I explored the possibility of bringing into discussion the rationality guided by the logic of the *included middle*, as it was presented by Nicolescu. This elaborates the theory of *levels of reality* that corresponds to both a number of biblical texts and the Pauline epistemic hope. According to the rationality of the immanent and transcendent levels of reality, the predestination/free choice antinomy is validated by the logic of the *included middle*. The implications of this perspective is that according to it a high view of God's sovereignty and a high view of creaturely freedom are highlighted, God is absolutely sovereign, and man is fully free to choose and alone responsible for his actions.

It is important to show, here in conclusion, that before Nicolescu, and around the same time as Lupasco, there were Mircea Eliade and Petru Culianu, concerned with the logic of the *included middle*.[89] The latter made the following clarifications: "it is often called 'negative logic', in reality it is a non-Aristotelian logic, logic that, without recognizing the principle of the excluded middle, transcends both affirmation and negation"[90]. This logic has known, historians of religions say, multiple expressions in Mahayana religiosity. At this point it should be noted that a theological approach in the spirit of the *included middle* could invoke the third "T" to justify any theology. Or this fact would be regrettable! It must be said that the Pauline epistemic hope does not legitimize the whole momentum of the theory of *levels of reality*, but tempers its scope. The logic of the included middle does not apply to the truths of the revealed immanent level of reality, but only to those antinomian pairs evoked by the Bible, whose internal connection has been left unclarified in the act of revelation.

Of course, this note does not diminish the value of the theory of *levels of reality* (which I have simplified by talking only about the immanent and the transcendent level of reality), but it has the merit of warning about possible speculative flare-ups which, in the case of biblical Christianity, will be avoided if the latter is even

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[89] Mircea Eliade, Petru Culianu, *Dicționar al Religiilor,* cu colaborarea lui H. S. Wiesner, București: Humanitas, 1993, p. 74.
[90] Eliade & Culianu, *Dicționar al Religiilor*, p. 74.

more concerned with establishing its theses on the stable and lasting ground of special revelation.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that the convergence between the theory of *levels of reality* (which integrates the logic of *included middle*) and the *Pauline epistemic hope* advances the sovereign image of God and an optimistic perspective on man's freedom of choice, a fact that makes the idea invoked in this work worth exploring further and passed through the filter of theological criticism.

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Social Ministry and Its Effects on Evangelistic Preaching

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Abstract

Social issues present an opportunity for Christians to perform social ministry to persons beset by the consequences of sin—whether caused by their own doing or their social surroundings. Social ministry can beneficially undergird evangelism and evangelistic preaching when the social ministry is conducted in the proper manner. This article will discuss the effects of social ministry on evangelistic preaching. The first part will define social ministry and how it contrasts with social action. The scope of this article will focus on social ministry while mentioning social action as a separate function whose aims are distinct from social ministry. The second part of this article will present the application of social ministry in the evangelistic enterprise. This section will discuss some of the biblical principles behind social ministries and how it affects evangelism in positive and negative ways. The last part of this article will discuss some theological and practical issues that affect evangelistic preaching.

Key Words: Social ministry, social activism, the social gospel movement, gospel proclamation, Biblical exposition.

Introduction

Social issues are increasingly becoming a concern among many in the contemporary culture. Social issues such as poverty, crime, and unemployment invoke concern and compassion for those interested in the welfare of society. People enthusiastic about certain social issues typically express their passion through various means of social action. Those most passionate about a social cause usually advocate for that cause in some form of activism.

The reasons for growing concerns about social problems vary. One of the main reasons is the prominence of social problems and their negative consequences upon the welfare of society. The prevalence of the media culture and the ease of

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communications make social problems more visible. In a contemporary society where mobility, awareness, and human interaction is unprecedented, social problems are not easy to overlook. Evangelical Christians who do evangelistic outreach or any ministry that interacts with people will recognize the most obvious social problems that people are experiencing.

Social issues matter in designing strategies for effective evangelism. The mission strategist or evangelist should consider these issues since the ethos in which they minister is likely affected by one or more social problems. A strong likelihood exists that the people being evangelized are impacted by social problems. The possibility also exists that persons being evangelized might be advocates or activists for a particular social cause. The evangelist who overlooks these possibilities misses an opportunity to relate to the people in an understanding way and, thus, fails to maximize the evangelistic moment.

Clarifications from an evangelical perspective

Definitions

The terminology used to describe the various means of social engagement can vary according to perspective and experience. The most fundamental term that needs clarification is *social issues* or *social problems.* William Pinson, former professor of Christian Ethics at Southwestern Seminary, defined social issues as, "significant subjects and problems in society."[2] Examples of social issues include crime, unemployment, divorce, alcohol and drug abuse, and racism. Social issues are problems that afflict individuals and adversely impact the society of which individuals are a vital part. Every person can relate to social issues since they are quite prominent in a fallen world.

The two common terms used to describe social engagement are *social ministry* and *social action*. Social ministry involves charitable acts of kindness to meet individual and immediate needs. Delos Miles, former Professor of Evangelism at Southeastern Seminary, described social ministry as "deeds of love and mercy."[3] Miles referred to such deeds as those in Matthew 25:31-16 which includes "feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and the prisoners."[4] Pinson offered a similar definition of social ministry as "an effort to help persons in special need and those

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[2]William M. Pinson, Jr., *Applying the Gospel: Suggestions for Christian Social Action in a Local Church* (Nasville: Broadman, 1975), 14.
[3]Delos Miles, *Evangelism and Social Involvement* (Nashville: Broadman, 1986), 16.
[4]Ibid.

hurt by adverse social conditions, such as the poor, the neglected child, the sick, or the aging."[5] Social ministry seeks to address social problems by providing immediate relief to the affected persons. Social ministry does not necessarily deal with the systems or structures that attribute to social problems.

Another important term used to describe social engagement is *social action*. Social action involves the attempt to change social conditions or structures that cause social problems. Miles described Christian social action as "self-conscious attempts to change sinful social structures."[6] Social action can also be referred to as *social activism*. Social activism involves advocacy for a particular social issue. This advocacy often requires involvement in the political process to bring about desired change.

Social ministry differs from social action (or activism) in the scope of involvement and the desired changes. The level of involvement in social ministry is hands-on and personal interaction with the person or persons in need. Social ministry seeks to help the hurting rather than deal with social causes of their hurt.[7] The level of involvement in social action is broader which often requires political means to influence public policy. Social action is "distinguished from social ministry in that it is directed primarily to social causes of the human hurt rather than to persons who are hurt."[8] Social ministry seeks individual change whereas social action seeks institutional change.

Debate

Many Christians and churches believe that social ministry is necessary in showing the love of Christ toward the needy. A general consensus exists among Christians of various persuasions who agree on the necessity of Christian social ministry. Most churches are involved in social ministry to some extent.[9]

The point of disagreement among Christians typically occurs over the appropriateness and pragmatism of social action. Is there a biblical mandate to change social structures? Will changing social structures accomplish the proper end for an orderly and godly society? Strong convictions exist on each side of this debate. Recent church history includes the intense debate during the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy of the early twentieth century.

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[5]Pinson, *Applying the Gospel*, 14.
[6]Miles, *Evangelism*, 16.
[7]Pinson, *Applying the Gospel*, 13.
[8]Ibid.
[9]Miles, *Evangelism*, 17.

At the center of the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy is the essence of the social gospel. The social issues of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries caused by immigration, urbanization, and industrialization provoked some Christians to seek more active social engagement to improve these declining conditions. The call for social activism among Christian evangelicals became more than a matter of compassionate concern and practical engagement. Social gospel proponents framed a theological system to promote and give credence for making social action the priority of the church. Some theologians sought to make social concerns and activism a gospel issue. The resulting theological system became known as the social gospel.

The social gospel movement originated from strongly-held beliefs that the church's primary mission was to bring God's kingdom to earth through social action. One of the major figures who spearheaded the social gospel movement was Walter Rauschenbusch—a Baptist in New York. Rauschenbusch, straightforward in his theology of social reconstruction as the primary mission of the church, stated that, "the essential purpose of Christianity was to transform human society into the kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God."[10] The social gospel was the subject of intense debate between liberals who expanded the meaning of the gospel and conservatives who deemed the social gospel as another gospel.

While the social gospel represented an aberrant interpretation of the gospel, some Christians affirmed the idea of some level of social engagement as responsible Christian living. They saw an inseparable link between the Christian faith and social action. They regarded a Christian faith without works as an impossibility. Seifert and Clinebell declared their view of religion as "a way of life or a quality of man's being and action, rather than a separate segment walled off from the rest of existence."[11]

Some Christians believed that the church had the moral responsibility to lead in addressing the social crises of modern culture. They claimed that the church should assert moral leadership in addressing societal ills. Charles Reynolds Brown, writing from a Congregationalist background during the early 1900's, wrote:

Ministers of religion are sent out to be fishers of men. But when they use exclusively these methods which lay the sole or even the main emphasis upon

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[10]Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crises* (New York: McMillan, 1907), xiii.
[11]Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell. *Personal Growth and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 27.

individual regeneration, leaving social problems to be worked out sometime, somewhere, quite apart from the inspiration and guidance of the Christian Church, I think you will bear me witness that in these days they do not land the fish to any considerable extent; and in certain classes of society they do not land them at all.[12]

Brown's stance on social responsibility attributed the church's failure at its mission to their neglect to actively engage social issues. Such attitude often poses two issues for the church. First, it places the power of salvation plainly upon their strategy and ability to meet social needs. Such presumption usurps the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit in His unique role in calling and effectively regenerating of the unbeliever (Titus 3:5). Secondly, this attitude can place undue blame and guilt upon Christians when there is no fruit borne in evangelism. The believer, as a result, often resorts to seeking more sophisticated strategy in an attempt to draw unbelievers into the faith.

Although Christians disagreed on the church's responsibility for social action, many agreed to individual efforts to social action "as members of nonchurch or parachurch organizations."[13] The parachurch movement has been very prominent in organizing and mobilizing for the purpose of addressing social needs.

Applications for evangelistic practices

Before delving into the implications of social ministry on evangelistic preaching, it is necessary to discuss the relationship between social ministry and evangelism. In what ways has social ministry either helped or hurt evangelism? The following sections will also look at some biblical principles behind social ministries and its connection with evangelism. Since social ministry can play a key role in evangelism, two sections will present some concerns and effective models.

Biblical Principles

The Bible contains principles from which Christians draw for proving the relationship between evangelism and social involvement. Delos Miles in his book *Evangelism and Social Involvement* described six "interfaces" in the Bible how evangelism and social involvement fit together.[14] A few of them are worth mentioning.

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[12]Charles Reynolds Brown, *The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 11.
[13]Miles, *Evangelism*, 17.
[14]Miles, *Evangelism*, 27-37.

Miles noted the "cultural mandate" in Genesis 1:26-31 and the "evangelistic mandate" in Matthew 28:16-20 (the "Great Commission"). Miles stated these mandates continue to apply to Christians today. Miles went further and declared that one can see the cultural mandate in the Great Commandment in Matthew 22:37-40—to love God and neighbor as self. The Great Commission as the evangelistic mandate and the Great Commandment as the ethical and social mandate work together and are inseparable. These mandates, per Miles, are "on par with each other. Neither one supersedes [*sic*] or exhausts or explains the other."[15]

Many theologians also saw a biblical connection between evangelism and social concerns in the healing ministry of Jesus as recording the Gospels. This perhaps represents the strongest biblical proof for relating social ministry to evangelism. The Gospel accounts where Jesus went about doing good and preaching give credence to social ministry as an important aspect of evangelism. Jesus, during His itinerate ministry, went about "preaching the gospel and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:6). A relationship between the Jesus' miracles and the gospel is evident when John stated that these miracles—which included many healings and meeting other physical needs—were written for evangelistic purposes (John 20:31).

An important biblical text to consider in the New Testament is the story when Jesus fed the 5,000 men plus women and children. This is only miracle that Jesus performed that is recorded in all four Gospels. Jesus had been preaching to the people for a long period of time and the people had become hungry. Jesus posed a question to the disciples on how to address the people's physical need. Seeing they had nothing to help, the disciples recommended that Jesus send the people away. Jesus responded that the disciples not send the people away, but instead told them, "They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16). This text showed a strong correlation between social ministry and evangelism.

Another biblical passage that some theologians use to make the social concern and evangelistic relationship is Luke 4:18-19 where Jesus declared:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

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[15]Miles, *Evangelism*, 28.

Theologians who have liberally interpreted this text saw Jesus' ministry as having primarily a social purpose. Miles stated that "His targets were the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. Jesus saw Himself as God's instrument for liberation."[16] This text has been used as the fundamental proof text for liberation theology that interprets the gospel as having a social purpose.

Other theologians, with whom the author agrees, see a broader interpretation in the Luke 4 passage that has spiritual implications and not merely social. Robert Stein stated that "term 'poor' does refer to an economic condition, but not merely to economic status, for the poor and humble hope in God."[17] Stein also stated concerning the term "release to the captives" as a metaphorical statement since the Greek word ἄφεσιν is always interpreted in Luke and Acts as the "forgiveness of sins."[18] Other commentators also interpreted that "this captivity symbolizes enslavement to sin and Satan."[19] The words "blind" and "oppressed" also have metaphorical meanings for those who are spiritually blind and oppressed by sin.[20] Passages like Luke 4 and others that can be interpreted in a social meaning require careful exegesis to avoid imposing meanings to justify unbalanced and unbiblical positions of social justice.

Other New Testament biblical texts have meanings that make possible connection between evangelism and social engagement. These passages include two from the Gospels—Luke 16:19-31 and Matthew 25:31-46—which some interpreters also stretch exegetically to suit their stance on social mandates. Several biblical texts in James also address the believer's social responsibility especially to those in need—James 1:27; 2:14-16. The biblical passages in James, however, are typically applied to believers' care for other believers and may not be suitable for the evangelistic application. areful exegesis of these passages is also necessary to avoid incorrect interpretations and applications.

Advantages

Social ministry offers some advantages to evangelism. These advantages can help overcome some inhibitions of believers toward social ministry. Social ministry provides the opportunity to build relationships with the unsaved and meet the holistic needs of people which can open doors for the gospel. Most

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[16]Miles, *Evangelism*, 33.
[17]Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 156.
[18]Ibid.
[19]William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 11 of *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 253.
[20]Stein, *Luke*, 156.

unbelievers will not come to a church to hear the gospel; the church must reach out them. Social ministry provides a good opportunity to serve needs and share the gospel which meets a person's greatest need. Through social ministry, the evangelist can gain a hearing for the gospel message he proclaims with the intent of persuading the lost person to faith in Jesus Christ.

Social ministry prepares the atmosphere for evangelistic witness through good deeds which show forth the grace of God toward all people—common grace. Common grace involves meeting needs because it's right to do so. Wayne Grudem defined common grace as "the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation."[21] Common grace expressed through social ministry involves helping people out of love for God and a response to His grace. Tim Keller stated that, "if a person has grasped the meaning of God's grace in his heart, he will do justice."[22] The believer should be able to conduct social ministry for the good of people without expecting them to make professions of faith. The expectation of people coming to faith should be a response to the gospel and not a response to the believers' good deeds.

Many evangelists consider the most important advantage of social ministry as the building of bridges between the lost and the saved. Many Christians do not have the proper rapport with lost people to gain a hearing for their gospel message. Delos Miles concurred by stating that, "Honesty compels us to admit that we do not now have the kind of partnership between church social work and evangelism which many of us desire."[23]

Social ministry helps the evangelists and other Christian servants see the humanness of the people in the midst of their adversity. Although all Christians can identify with sin and its consequences, some believers cannot identify with the particular problems that some people experience. For instance, a Christian of a middle-class socio-economic status likely cannot identify with a person who was raised in dire poverty. Social issues are complex and it takes time to gain sympathy for a person's plight. Seeing people up close provides better understanding and produces genuine compassion. The Christian stops seeing the person to whom he or she is ministering as a project or another notch in the evangelistic belt. Harvie Conn in his book *Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*

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[21]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 657.

[22]Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (New York: Dutton, 2010), 93.

[23]Delos Miles, "Church Social Work and Evangelism: Partners in Ministry." *Review & Expositor* 85 no. 2 (1988): 274.

reflected on his time as a missionary trying to evangelize oppressed women in another country. Conn stated that his initial results were meager. After learning how these women ended up in their condition, Conn stated that his attitude changed and he became compassionate. He "discovered that a person is not only a sinner. He or she is also sinned against."[24] Compassion becomes possible when believers "perceive people as the sinned-against, as well as the sinning."[25]

Concerns

Social ministry supports evangelism and can be an important element for effective evangelism. While social ministry helps people in need and builds bridges for evangelism, some concerns merit mentioning. One of the greatest concerns about social ministry is it usurping the ministry of gospel proclamation. Social ministry that does not include the gospel proclamation is insufficient to bring about salvation. The common grace rendered through social ministry is not the biblical manner to call people to faith in Christ. Grudem stated that, "Common grace does not change the human heart or bring people to genuine repentance and faith—it cannot and does not save people… Common grace restrains sin but does not change anyone's foundational disposition to sin, nor does it in any significant measure purify fallen human nature."[26] Gospel proclamation is essentially necessary for saving faith (Romans 10:14-17).

Social ministry that turns into social activism can consume the church's resources and cause the church to drift away from its primary mission: to win souls for Jesus Christ. Social activism can also make enemies of people who hold different points of view, thus alienating a contingent of people with whom the church needs to reach for Christ.

The pitfalls of social ministry relate to social activism and, in some instances, social legalism. Conn discussed these two dangers with which the church needs to be concerned:

On the one hand, [service] can remake evangelism into just one more Christian word for political involvement or social action. The social-gospel history reminds us that the danger is always real. Evangelism can become a loose term for freedom marches, the boycotting of South African investments, and antinuclear demonstrations. On the other hand, the call for justice as an intrinsic

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[24]Harvie Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 44-5.
[25]Ibid., 47.
[26]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 663.

part of evangelism can be reduced to protesting pornographic films, contributing to special offering for the "boat people," and being a decent and pleasant person at the office or school.[27]

Either of these above extremes represents diversions and distortions of evangelism. Whenever these extremes exist, the true nature and purpose of evangelism is lost, oftentimes to the undiscerning believer.

The necessity of social ministry as an essential aspect of evangelism is another debatable topic. Is social ministry integral to evangelism? Delos Miles believed that evangelism and social ministry are inextricably linked:

Evangelism and Christian social concern are two sides of the same coin. If one side of a coin is missing, that coin has lost its value. The lack of a social conscience impugns the reputation of the holy God and leads to societal failure. Evangelism is surely a blood brother to social involvement.[28]

Chester and Timmis, while holding that evangelism and social action are distinct activities, agreed that they are inseparable.[29] They offered as proof text the Bible verse from 1 Thessalonians 2:8: "…we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us." The question on whether social ministry is a critical element to effective evangelism is debatable. While social ministry is an important part of effective evangelism, the author does not believe that social ministry is integral to effective gospel proclamation. Effective gospel ministry occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit and His word and not through meeting physical needs. Social ministry must not always be rendered for evangelism or evangelistic preaching to reach the hearts of the unsaved.

The church must beware of becoming assimilated into culture and, as a result, the church's priorities being determined by the secular culture rather than biblical mission. William Richardson stated, "Strange as it may seem, the current advocacy of active involvement of the church in changing social and political structures trends toward the result of assimilating the church in secular culture despite its intentions to the contrary."[30] He stated further the negative consequences: "As the church discovers where the action is it throws it resources

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[27]Conn, *Evangelism*, 44.
[28]Miles, *Evangelism*, 7.
[29]Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 78-79.
[30]William J. Richardson, *Social Action versus Evangelism* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1977), 29.

into the struggle. In this concept of mission the church tends to be united more by its commitment to making social changes than by its commitment to the God of the covenant. It is thus threatened with the loss of its integrity."[31]

Donald McGavran, well-known church growth missiologist of the twentieth century, declared the priority of evangelism in the mission of the local church. He stated that "It maintains that Christianizing the social order is a fruit of new life in Christ and of church multiplication and must, therefore, receive a lower priority."[32] Attempting to reform society to the principles and practices of Christianity can usurp the evangelistic mandate and adversely affect the Christian witness.

Effective Models

Many churches and Christian organizations often conduct social ministry under the umbrella of missions. The service that the church renders in missions can be an implementation of social ministry. Social ministry through missionary endeavors is an effective way to serve people thus opening the doors for gospel witness.

Elmer Towns, in his article "How Social is the Gospel?" mentioned four attitudes toward social ministry that determine how it can be implemented.[33] These attitudes develop the methodology for conducting social ministry. The first method is social service that grows out of evangelism. Believers engage in social ministry out of the biblical call to perform good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14; James 2:14-26). Through the preaching of the gospel, more people come to faith who also pursue good works through social ministry. As the Lord calls more people to salvation, more people mobilize for social ministry for the ultimate purpose of seeing others come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Towns referred to his method as an "outgrowth of the gospel… and leaves little room for criticism."[34]

The second attitude is social service as bridge to evangelism. This method involves serving people needs through social ministry in order to build relationships and remove any barriers or prejudices that the unbelievers may hold against Christians. Towns commented "Some have criticized this approach,

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[31]Ibid.

[32]Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, ed. C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 22.

[33]Elmer L. Towns, "How Social is the Gospel?" *Fundamentalist Journal* 4 no. 4 (April 1, 1985): 25.

[34]Elmer L. Towns, "How Social is the Gospel?" 25.

calling it a bribe to get people to listen to the gospel. If good works are done out of a sincere heart of gratitude to Christ, then good works become a bridge rather than a bribe. If the church closes its heart to the needs of people, the people will turn a deaf ear to the gospel.[35]

The third attitude toward social service is social ministry and the gospel working together with each dependent on the other. This model of inseparability raises concerns on which aspect—social service or the gospel—becomes the priority. Eventually one will have to be lessened for the other to be accomplished.

The fourth attitude toward social service is social action for the cause of justice. Social action becomes collaborative attempts to resolve the structured causes of human suffering. This attitude results in the model where social action dominates the cause and abandons the gospel purpose.

The Gospels contain many accounts of Jesus performing practical helps with His preaching and teaching ministry. Jesus apparently performed these good deeds to prove His Person and power as the Son of God. Jesus performed good deeds because it was right and loving to do so. Doing good deeds solely as a "hook" to proclaim the gospel message can seem to be a form of trickery, even if subtle or unintentional. Social ministries should be conducted out of compassion and genuine care for the person being served. Elmer Towns commented that "not all social work is a doorway to win souls, but when we minister to the physical needs of people we break down their prejudice and suspicion against us and the gospel."[36]

The social ministries of the church represent an opportunity to render good to people in the name of Christ. Social ministry can become a significant part of the church's mission where all ministries can serve. For instance, Sunday School classes can participate in mission projects that meet holistic needs. Social ministry need not be restricted to certain organizations within the local church. Walter Delamarter considered the social component to all ministries of the church:

… every function of the church—preaching, teaching, healing, and helping, for the redemptive witness of God-committed social action is not the exclusive prerogative of pastoral counselors, ethics majors, church-related social workers, or iconoclastic social reformers. A ministry of social action is an integral part of total ministry to the whole man and the whole world. It is an essential to the life-

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[35]Ibid.
[36]Ibid.

style of the church. To deny this component is to render the church's ministry incomplete and rob it of one of its most vital life-giving qualities.[37]

Each ministry of the church can conduct social ministry as an act of grace toward those in need. This social component of church ministry can become an important aspect of evangelistic outreach. Social ministry, in this regard, can support the spiritual growth of believers through their serving on mission.

Implications on evangelistic preaching

Whatever impacts evangelism in general impacts evangelistic preaching in particular. Evangelistic preaching is an important aspect of evangelism where the evangelist communicates the gospel in such a way in an attempt to persuade unbelievers to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Since all preaching is based on some theology, the theological positions that influence social ministries and how they affect evangelistic preaching warrant discussion.

Theology of the Gospel

All Christian ministries with evangelistic purpose should have the furtherance of the gospel as their primary goal. Social ministries, likewise, should pursue the furtherance of the gospel through their specific work. Believers who undertake social ministry should have a biblical understanding of the gospel. The church's understanding and appreciation for the biblical gospel will allow believers to participate in social ministry without forfeiting the gospel priority.

A matter of vital importance for social ministry is an understanding of the gospel. What is the gospel? This question may seem to be a fairly trivial one for believers. Such question, however, must not be taken for granted. Christians of varying backgrounds can have differing understandings of the gospel. Graeme Goldsworthy acknowledged the differences among Christians even when the word "gospel" is used in a biblical way.[38] Social ministry often detours off its biblical course when the gospel ceases to the central and binding on the work. Therefore, the theology of the gospel is of utmost importance for the principles and practices social ministry. The manner and meaning of social ministry rests on the gospel. The evangelists' power and purpose in his message rests on the gospel. The Apostle Paul declared the gospel as "the power of God unto salvation

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[37]Walter R. Delamarter, "Social issues and social change." *Review & Expositor* 68, no. 3 (June 1, 1971): 351.

[38]Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 81.

to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). The key issue that the evangelist must settle in his heart, mind, and purpose is the matter of the gospel.

To establish a solid gospel understanding, the evangelist must study the biblical texts that specify the word—the English transliteration of the Greek word *euangelion* which means "good news." This good news, according to some theologians, refer to the redemptive acts of Jesus. C. H. Dodd indicated an important aspect of the *euangelion* as the *kerygma*, which according to Pauline writings and the apostles is "the proclamation of the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ in an eschatological setting which give significance to the facts."[39]

Another perspective of the gospel comes from the Gospel accounts that, according to some, broadens the understanding of the gospel. This perspective deals with the gospel that Jesus proclaimed, for instance, in Mark 1:15 to "repent, and believe in the gospel." Could Jesus have been referring to His crucifixion and resurrection when He made this exhortation at the beginning of His ministry? Some theologians believe that the gospel should not be limited to facts about Jesus' death and resurrection. The gospel has a broader application. Limiting the gospel to facts about Jesus' death and resurrection seem reductionistic. Loscalzo believed that Jesus was the fulfillment of the gospel which included His ministry was "the genesis of God's *euangelion* to the world."[40] Michael Green stated that the gospel was "nothing less than God's long-awaited salvation, proclaimed by the Messiah Himself."[41] Therefore, the gospel, by these accounts, involves Jesus Himself and the totality of His ministry. Goldsworthy agreed that the gospel is "the message about Jesus in his *life*, death and resurrection (italics mine)."[42] The broader view holds validity when considering all biblical accounts. DeYoung and Gilbert referred to this perspective of the gospel as the "wide-angle lens" that includes "all the other blessings that come to those who are in Christ."[43]

So how do these perspectives of the gospel relate to the idea of social ministry? Bryan Chapell referred to the gospel as the biblical message "that God has fulfilled his promise to send a Savior to rescue broken people, restore creation's

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[39]C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), 13.

[40]Craig Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching that Connects: Guidance in Shaping Fresh and Appealing Sermons* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 41.

[41]Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), 7.

[42]Goldsworthy, 83.

[43]Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 94.

glory, and rule over all with compassion and justice."[44] Looking at the broader view of the gospel can lead to the understanding of the gospel ministry as being a holistic one that ministers to the whole person—not just the spiritual. Therefore, some believe that social ministry in the name of Jesus can be considered gospel ministry even if the death and resurrection of Christ is never proclaimed. In the author's view, this broad view of the gospel can lead to a narrow view of social ministry that addresses physical needs only.

While the broader view of the gospel is biblical, proclamation is still needed. Even when Jesus preached the gospel—His message before His death and resurrection—He called His hearers to respond through repentance and faith (Mark 1:15). DeYoung and Gilbert provided a helpful explanation:

Because the broader blessings of the gospel are attained *only* by means of forgiveness through the cross, and because those broader blessings are attained *infallibly* by means of forgiveness through the cross, it's entirely appropriate and makes perfect sense for the New Testament writers to call forgiveness through the cross—the fountainhead of and gateway to all the rest— "the gospel."[45]

Social ministry done to meet physical needs only cannot implicitly or even explicitly call someone to faith. Proclamation, therefore, still must be a necessary component of social ministry.

Evangelistic preaching includes the full gospel—Jesus death and resurrection; and the blessed life that He graciously gives. The gospel ministers to the physical and the spiritual. Loscalzo stated that evangelistic preaching "holds in balance the spiritual and physical dimensions of our existence… The good news remains a holistic message."[46]

Theology of the Kingdom

Another important theological issue requiring clarification for social ministry is the theology of the kingdom. What is the kingdom of God? Is social ministry considered kingdom work? The theology of the kingdom is important as it determines the evangelistic thrust and defines the scope of social ministry.

Jesus often spoke of the "kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33; Mark 1:15) or the "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 3:2; 10:7). Jesus, in speaking about His coming,

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[44]Bryan Chapell, "What is the Gospel?" in *The Gospel as Center: Renewing Our Faith and Reforming Our Ministry Practices,* eds. D. A. Carson and Timothy Keller (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 116.

[45]DeYoung and Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church?*, 109.

[46]Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching,*

declared that the "kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Theologians and Christians have diverse views on the meaning of "kingdom." The views range from God's redemptive reign, the kingdom in the right now, and the kingdom to come.[47]

Some theological views such as postmillennialism believed that the kingdom of God is ushered in after an age of peace and righteousness brought about by "the progress of the gospel and the growth of the church."[48] This view can be a major motivator for social ministry and perhaps a greater motivator for social action or activism. Proponents of this view often see social ministry as "kingdom work." They see their work as a part of the redemptive work that prepares the culture for the imminent reign of Jesus.

The kingdom theology of the social gospel was a major theological issue that sharply divided theologians and the church. The social gospel's view of the kingdom held that believers are called to establish God's social order. Elmer Towns stated that conservatives rejected the social gospel because of the liberals' position "that there was no distinction between spiritual redemption and social restoration."[49] When believers, in a passion for social ministry, take a similar view of the kingdom, it is the author's conviction that such a liberal and broad view be likewise rejected. Would God require the establishment of a kingdom for people who do not submit to Him as King?

Many do not see the kingdom as merely personal piety, but social changes in conformance to God's will that promote the general welfare of the public. C.R. Brown stated concerning the kingdom, "The kingdom was not a distant state to which men were to go at death—the kingdom was to come; it was to come down, like a holy city out of heaven, finding its secure foundations in nobler conditions of earthly life as these came to be dominated by the spirit of the Master."[50]

The biblical view of the kingdom keeps social ministry in perspective and prevents believers from unrealistic hopes for social change. DeYoung and Gilbert declared that "God certainly uses means and employs us in his work. But we are not makers or bringers of the kingdom."[51] They further declared that "the

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[47]Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 86-93.

[48]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1251.

[49]Elmer L. Towns, "How Social is the Gospel," *Articles* Paper 6 (April 1985), under "Articles," http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/view content.cgi? article=1005&context=towns_articles (accessed April 29, 2012).

[50]Charles Reynolds Brown, *The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 153.

[51]DeYoung and Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church?*, 134.

kingdom is specifically the reign of Jesus the Messiah, and that leads us to a simple answer … Inclusion in the kingdom of God is wholly conditioned on one's response to the King."[52]

Proclamation from the Pulpit

Should preachers address social issues from the pulpit? John Stott, in his book *Between Two Worlds*, described preaching as "bridge-building" where the preacher should balance himself between the Bible and the world in which he lives.[53] This "bridge-building" should occur between the culture and the Scripture. Stott advocated a study of the culture to learn how to address it biblically. He asserted that social issues such as abortion and poverty should be addressed from the pulpit. He suggested that the preacher bring biblical principles to bear on such issues that plague contemporary society. Stott, who was well-known as an evangelical figure, maintained the preference of expository preaching even in dealing with social issues.

While having the liberty to address social issues from the pulpit, the preacher must maintain a balance to avoid an overemphasis on social issues. Craig Loscalzo commented on the balance that the evangelist must keep:

Evangelistic preaching holds in balance the spiritual and the physical dimensions of our existence.… The Gospels are replete with accounts of Jesus' tending to the physical and spiritual needs of people. The good news remains a holistic message… The good news speaks to body, soul, mind and spirit. Our evangelistic preaching can reflect no less.[54]

The preacher should beware of using the pulpit as a platform for social justice. Stott stated that, "Rather that it is the preacher's responsibility to open up the biblical principles which relate to the problems of contemporary society, in such a way as to help everybody to develop a Christian judgment about them, and to inspire and encourage the opinion-formers and policy-makers in the congregation, who occupy influential positions in public life, to apply these biblical principles to public life."[55] He stated further that, "The pulpit should help them to develop their Christian thinking and so to penetrate their segment of the human community more deeply for Christ."[56] Preaching should aim for change

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[52]Ibid., 135.
[53]John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Nashville: Eerdmans, 1992), 135-179.
[54]Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching*, 51.
[55]Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 167.
[56]Ibid.

in the lives of the hearers who can become the change agents in society. Speaking to change society while overlooking the people of society seems ineffective.

Is neutrality on socio-political issues possible? In other words, can the preacher just avoid speaking about social issues from the pulpit without any unintended consequence? Stott stated:

What is certain is that the pulpit has political influence, even if nothing remotely connected with politics is ever uttered from it. For then the preacher's silence endorses the contemporary socio-political conditions, and instead of helping to change society and make it more pleasing to God, the pulpit becomes a mirror which reflects contemporary society, and the Church conforms to the world. The neutrality of the pulpit is impossible."[57]

Neutrality on social issues often casts the wrong message from the church. William J. Richardson stated, "The separatist approach often appears under the guise of being neutral on social problems. But the neutralist, however sincere he may be in taking this position, cannot avoid the appearance of standing with the side that wins out on a particular issue."[58] Passivity on social issues can have unintended consequences.

When social ministry turns into activism, the preacher's pulpit ministry can become imbalanced—overly concerned on the social aspect. Henry Young, in his collection of sermons by well-known African-American preachers, included a sermon by Andrew Young, former pastor who was a civil rights activist and public official, which clearly stated the social Christianity that he believed was required of the church:

I became awakened to the realization that the ministry had to have social and political implication. It is not enough to minister to the spiritual well-being of a people; we must also transform the structures of society that prevent people from relating to each other as authentic persons.… Therefore, if the church can have a ministry that concerns itself with the totality of society, we can begin to change the lives of people.[59]

Andrew Young's context, the Civil Rights movement of the mid-twentieth century, likely predisposed him to such a philosophy. The idea that social action can really change the lives of people can be challenged. The best that social

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[57]Stott, 168.

[58]Richardson, *Social Action*, 28.

[59]Andrew Young, "The Political and Social Implications of the Ministry," in *Preaching the Gospel*, ed. Henry J. Young (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 17-18.

action can do is change life *for* people. But only the gospel—through the Word of God—can change the lives *of* people.

Expository preaching through books of the Bible can cover Scripture texts that deal with social issues. Charles Reynolds Brown, a Congregationalist minister from the early twentieth century, commented on the advantages of expository preaching concerning social issues:

The habit of expository preaching thus fortifies the minister in his position; it tends to remove the prejudice which many people feel toward preaching upon questions of the day, a prejudice which sometimes closes the door against a helpful message; and it lodges many disturbing but useful lessons within the hearts of those who cannot put the Bible out of the door, as they are sometimes tempted to do with the minister whose sermon has made them uncomfortable.[60]

A preacher who preaches expositionally from the whole counsel of Scripture will have a well-balance preaching ministry—one that touches on social issues not out of personal interest, but as "thus saith the Lord." The preacher who has an affinity for social issues can avoid the temptation to overemphasize social concerns in his preaching.

Conclusion

Social issues will continue to be an issue in a fallen world. The entire creation groans under the crushing and unrelenting weight of sin (Romans 8:22). Social ministry provides believers a great opportunity to show the grace of God by helping meet physical needs. Social ministry puts believers in contact with unbelievers and helps to build rapport among them.

The gospel is the only sure and true hope for people seeking a better world. Since the gospel addresses the needs of the whole person, the evangelist should apply the word of God in its sufficiency to fulfill all human needs. Craig Loscalzo stated that "The good news speaks to body, soul, mind and spirit. Our evangelistic preaching can reflect no less."[61]

Those who believe in the authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice must deal with social problems biblically. Pastors and theologians, especially conservative ones, should not be afraid to deal with the social problems for fear of being labeled a "social gospeler" or "liberation theologian." The negligence of conservatives in addressing social problems biblically has left a void that is

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[60]Brown, *The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit*, 58.
[61]Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching*, 51.

being filled by liberal theologians. Truman Dollar stated that, "The nation deserves to hear what the Bible says about these problems."[62]

While believers are called to be "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20), the ministry of reconciliation should be rendered with grace. Harvie Conn stated that, "Evangelism must become gospel show-and-tell, showing mercy and preaching grace."[63] The gospel is a message of grace that believers are called to practice and proclaim. The Bible exhorts Christians to do good to everyone as they have opportunity (Galatians 6:10). Social ministry provides such an opportunity and prepares the way for effective evangelistic preaching.

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[62]Truman Dollar, "Social Concern? Not me, I'm a Fundamentalist," *Fundamentalist Journal* 4, no. 3 (March 1, 1985): 66.
[63]Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching*, 33.

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'In the Sanctuary' in the Psalms

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Abstract

This study addresses the translation of the term קדש when prefixed with ב in the Psalter. While the expression is rendered rather consistently as a sanctuary reference (i.e., 'in the/my/his sanctuary') in other parts of the OT, the phrase is commonly given an alternative translation in some psalms. This article surveys the five passages in the Psalter in which בקדש is commonly translated in alternative ways from a sanctuary reference (60:8 [6]; 68:18 [17]; 77:14 [13]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]), contending that no definitive case exists in the Psalter for such alternative renderings. In the light of this, especially in cases in which בקדש appears in a verbless clause (i.e., 68:18 [17] and 77:14 [13]), 'in the sanctuary' remains the best translational option. While translating בקדש as a sanctuary reference carries significant ramifications for the ideology of these psalms, the present analysis focuses primarily on the translational issues involved.

Key Words: Psalms, Psalter, sanctuary, temple, holiness, Mount Sinai

Introduction

This study addresses the translation of קֹדֶשׁ ('sanctuary'/ 'holiness')[2] when prefixed with בְּ in the Psalter and is prompted by the variety of renderings of

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[2] The term קֹדֶשׁ is used in a variety of ways throughout the OT to designate the holy status of an object, person, or action. It can also be translated as 'sanctuary'. See Jackie A. Naudé, "qḏś," in *NIDOTTE*, 3:877-887; Helmer Ringgren and W. Kornfeld, "qḏś," in *TDOT*, 12:521-545; *HALOT* 2:1076-1078. In addition, the rendering of קֹדֶשׁ as 'sanctuary' is consistent with its Ugaritic cognate (*qdš*), which is '...the most common term for sanctuary in the Ugaritic texts...' (Richard E. Averbeck, "*miqdoš*" in *NIDOTTE*, 2:1078).

בקדשׁ in the Psalms in comparison to its rather consistent usage elsewhere in the OT.[3] From the outset, it must be acknowledged that translational variety among various occurrences of Hebrew words, or phrases, is not something that should be avoided. In fact, in many cases, it is to be expected, especially since Hebrew terms tend to have rather large semantic ranges. While translational conformity should not be regarded as an inherent value, establishing whether precedent exists for a particular translation of a word, or phrase, should factor heavily into our translational approach to a given text. If the passage in question can be addressed by appealing to the normal, consistent, usage of the word, or phrase, this approach would certainly be preferred. We shall contend that all occurrences of בקדשׁ in the Psalter are best explained by the normal, consistent, usage of the phrase throughout the Old Testament, namely that in each case, בקדשׁ should be translated a sanctuary reference.

Lexical Data and Methodology

The expression בקדשׁ occurs a total of 29 times in the OT and is translated with relative uniformity throughout, with few exceptions, most of which appear in the Psalter. In the Psalms, בקדשׁ can be rendered as a noun with a prefixed preposition and a definite article ('in the sanctuary'), but it is also commonly rendered in a variety of other ways (i.e., 'in/by holiness'; 'the holy [ones]'); 'holy'). While these other renderings diverge, they have in common that they translate קֹדֶשׁ in the abstract, rather a physical structure (i.e., a sanctuary). In contrast to the variety of renderings in the Psalter, בקדשׁ is almost exclusively translated as a noun with a prefixed preposition and a definite article in the remainder of the OT, referring to a sanctuary in general (i.e., 'in the sanctuary'),[4] the outer sanctum of a sanctuary (i.e., 'in the holy [place]'), or the inner sanctum of a sanctuary.[5] Of the 16 occurrences of the phrase in the Pentateuch, with only one potential exception (i.e., Exodus 15:11), all appearances of the phrase make reference to

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[3]In cases where multiple passages are referenced that include occurrences of בקדשׁ with a pronominal suffix, בקדשׁ shall be presented throughout this article without vowels. Since nouns with a pronominal suffix are definite by nature, presenting בקדשׁ without vowels is intended to reflect the ambiguity that results from removing the pronominal suffix.

[4]E.g., Leviticus 10:18; Numbers 4:12, 16; Psalm 63:3; 68:18, 25; 74:3. Psalm 150:1 occurs with a pronominal suffix and is translated 'in his sanctuary' in the ESV.

[5]When referencing the inner sanctum, בְּקֹדֶשׁ occurs in the construction בְּקֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים (Exodus 26:34; Numbers 18:10).

the sanctuary.[6] Excluding the Pentateuch and Psalter, the phrase only appears four times in the remainder of the Old Testament, three of which are clear sanctuary references,[7] leaving only Amos 4:2, in which YHWH is commonly thought to swear by his own 'holiness', a translation that is open to challenge.[8]

There are four occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in the Psalms that are indisputable references to a sanctuary,[9] which are borne out by the contexts in which these occurrences appear. The remaining five appearances of בקדש are variously translated: 60:8 [6]; 68:18 [17]; 77:14 [13]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]. Our analysis will address these five passages, while dividing them according to a basic syntactical division—verbless and verbal clauses. We shall begin by addressing the occurrences of בקדש in verbless clauses (Psalms 68:18 [17]; 77:14 [13]) before proceeding to the appearances of the phrase in verbal clauses (60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]). It shall be argued that no *definitive* occurrence exists in the Psalter for rendering בקדש in the abstract (i.e., 'in holiness'; 'the holy [ones]'; 'holy').[10] Particularly in the case of verbless clauses, rendering בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as anything other than 'in the sanctuary' is without precedent. Translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as 'in the sanctuary' in Psalm 68:18 [17] and 77:14 [13] carries significant *implications* for the cultic ideology

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[6]Exodus 26:34; 28:43; 29:30; 35:19; 39:1, 41; Leviticus 6:23; 10:18; 16:17, 27; 22:4; Numbers 4:12, 16; 18:10; 28:7.

[7]Ezekiel 44:27; 2 Chronicles. 29:7; 35:5.

[8]While 'by his holiness' remains the consensus among modern translations, it is worth noting that the LXX translates קֹדֶשׁ here using the neuter plural (τῶν ἁγίων) with a definite article. The neuter plural of ἅγιος is often used in the LXX to refer to a sanctuary complex (e.g., Exodus 39:1; Leviticus 5:15; 10:4, 17; 14:13; 19:30; 20:3; 21:12; 26:2; 27:25; Numbers 3:28, 32; 4:12, 15; 8:19; 18:1, 3, 5; 19:20; 31:6; 1 Kings 6:16; 8:6, 8; 1 Chronicles 22:19; 2 Chronicles 5:7, 9; 29:21; Nehemiah 10:40; Psalms 73:3; 150:1; Isaiah 43:28; Ezekiel 5:11; 8:6; 9:6; 23:38-39; 24:21; 25:3; 37:26, 28; 44:1, 5, 7-9, 11, 15-16; 45:3; 47:12; 48:10, 21; Daniel 8:13; Malachi 2:11). In the light of this, it is likely that the translators of the LXX regarded Amos 4:2 as a sanctuary reference.

[9]63:3 [2]; 68:25 [24]; 74:3; 150:1. The NIV; NASB; LEB; NKJV; ESV translate all four of these verses as sanctuary references. While some EVVs offer an alternative translation to 'in the sanctuary' for בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in some of these verses (e.g., the NET and JPS regarding 68:25 [24]), such approaches represent a minority view. In the light of this consensus, our analysis will not cover in any detail the reasons for translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in these verses as 'in the sanctuary'.

[10]This approach is to be distinguished from an attempt to argue that these alternative translations are outside of the term's semantic range. There is no reason to attempt to demonstrate that בקדש *cannot* theoretically be translated alternatively to a sanctuary reference. Rather, we shall contend that to do so in the Psalter, lacks the definitive evidence needed to justify veering from the clear translational precedent established by the vast majority of occurrences of בקדש in the OT.

informing these psalms, but the focus of this article will be upon the translational issues, largely leaving the ideological ramifications for another study.

Verbless Clauses with בקדשׁ: Psalm 68:18 [17]; Psalm 77:14 [13]

Despite frequently being translated in alternative ways, there are two occasions in the Psalms in which the expression בַּקֹּדֶשׁ occurs in a verbless clause: Psalm 68:18 [17] and Psalm 77:14 [13]. It should be noted from the onset that these verses have in common that בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is pointed with a definite article in the MT, indicating that the Masoretes regarded קֹדֶשׁ in these verses as a noun. When these occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ are correctly identified as appearing in a verbless clause, the translational options are narrowed significantly.

 (a) Psalm 68:18 [17]

Psalm 68 is notoriously difficult to interpret for a variety of reasons and has generated a significant range of scholarly opinion. Whereas it was once thought to be a catalogue of ancient Hebrew poems,[11] it is now largely regarded as possessing a basic coherence, involving YHWH's victorious procession through the desert, culminating in his enthronement in his Jerusalem sanctuary.[12] The expression בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in 68:18 [17] is commonly rendered in the abstract (e.g., 'in holiness').[13] This rendering, however, exhibits significant grammatical difficulties when the entire line is taken into consideration: אֲדֹנָי בָם סִינַי בַּקֹּדֶשׁ. When the MT is not emended from בָם to בָּא, the first two words of the line (אֲדֹנָי בָם) are commonly translated as a verbless clause ('the Lord is among them').[14] The difficulty with translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in the abstract (e.g., 'in holiness') is that בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is preceded by the proper noun סִינַי ('Sinai'). The phrase בַּקֹּדֶשׁ cannot rightly be translated as 'in holiness' because the text is lacking the necessary verb for בַּקֹּדֶשׁ to modify. For this reason, some scholars have proposed that בָם ('among them')

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[11]William Foxwell Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm 68)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no. 1 (1950), 1-39.

[12]E.g., see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 54-55; Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 1-72*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 314; Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, et al., *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 542.

[13]Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), 232; John Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 307. Among modern translations, see NASB; JPS; NET ('in holy splendor').

[14]E.g., ESV; NASB; KJV; HCSB; ASV; DRC; JPS; CPDV ('The Lord is with them').

should be emended to בָּא ('came') in order to supply the missing verb,[15] rendering the phrase 'the Lord *came* from Sinai in holiness' (אֲדֹנָי בָּא סִינַי בַּקֹּדֶשׁ). This approach, however, lacks the textual evidence needed to support emending the MT. While Psalm 68 clearly exhibits some close similarities to Deuteronomy 33, a comparison between Psalm 68:18 [17] and Deuteronomy 33:2 reveals some significant differences. On the basis of the alleged correspondence between these verses, it is argued that Psalm 68:18 [17] should be rendered according to the similar phrase found in Deuteronomy 33:2 (מִסִּינַי בָּא).[16] Psalm 68:18 [17], however, lacks the preposition מִן prefixed to סִינַי, which would indicate that YHWH came *from* Sinai. If בָּם were mistakenly copied in place of בָּא and the מִן preposition was also lost in transmission, it is peculiar that no evidence exists for such a reading among the various textual traditions. In the absence of textual evidence with which to confirm this reading, if an equally or more reasonable translation can be supplied for Psalm 68:18 [17] without emending the MT, would it not be the preferred choice?

The tensions involved in the translation of Psalm 68:18 [17] are alleviated when the emended reading of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is abandoned. When קֹדֶשׁ is translated as a noun, as the Masoretic pointing would suggest, either as a collective singular ('holy [ones]')[17] or as 'sanctuary', the abstract reading can be jettisoned in favour of

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[15]E.g., Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, Harvard Semitic Monographs, vol. 4 (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1972; reprint, Eugene: Wipf & Stock 2010), 117; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 102; Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1973), 109; John W. Rogerson and John W. McKay, *Psalms 51-100*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 84; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 55; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 283; Mainz Maiberger and Christoph Dohmen, "*sînay*," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol X,* ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, et al., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 221-222; Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 282; Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 42-89*, Kregel Exegetical Library, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 460; Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalms*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 293; deClaissé-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545. Among modern translations, see NIV, NRSV, NET ('The Lord comes from Sinai').

[16]E.g., deClaissé-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545. The same view is reflected in the BHS apparatus.

[17]Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 161. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*, 109, and Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 102, render the entire phrase as 'When he came from Sinai with the holy ones'. A similar translation is seen in deClaissé-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545: 'The Lord came from Sinai with the

reading the phrase as a verbless clause. This approach leaves two possibilities. Firstly, translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as a collective singular ('among the holy [ones]') is grammatically possible. According to this view, verse 18 [17] expresses the idea that 'Sinai is among the holy ones'.[18] While קֹדֶשׁ does appear as a collective singular on rare occasions in the OT,[19] it never functions this way in the Psalter. Rather, when קֹדֶשׁ is used as a collective in the Psalter (i.e., Psa. 89:5, 7; holy [ones]), the word is inflected in plural form, not in the singular. While a collective singular reading is grammatically possible, the immediate context of Psalm 68:18 [17] supports a more preferable translation, which leads us to the second option for translating Psalm 68:18 [17] as a verbless clause.

The best option is to render the entire phrase as 'the Lord is among them, *Sinai is in the sanctuary*'.[20] Chief among the reasons for this translation is that the same construction of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ occurs just seven verses later in the same psalm (v. 25 [24]) with clear reference to YHWH's procession into the Jerusalem sanctuary: 'Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary (בַּקֹּדֶשׁ)'. While בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in verse 25 [24] could also theoretically be translated as 'among the holy [ones]', or 'in holiness' if revocalised, the obvious terminus for YHWH's procession is his sanctuary.[21] This is made clear in verse 30 [29], which

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holy ones'. While these translations have in common that they render קֹדֶשׁ as 'holy ones', they do not translate סִינַי בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as a verbless clause, since they emend בָּם ('among them') to בָּא ('came'). Our critiques of this textual emendation have been noted above.

[18]Although the present analysis does not favour this translation, it is acknowledged as a possibility. If Psalm 68:17 [18] were to be translated as 'YHWH is among them, Sinai is among the holy ones'), this translation could equally lend itself toward some of the conclusions reached in the present analysis.

[19]E.g., Numbers 4:15, 20; 7:9 ('the holy [things]').

[20]Proponents of this translation, or an equivalent rendering, include Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 14a (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 241-242; Weiser Artur, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 478; T. Desmond Alexander, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 61. Similarly, James M. Hamilton, *Psalms I: Psalms 1-72*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary, vol. 1 (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2021), 597, renders the phrase as 'Sinai is the holy place'. The ESV adds the word 'now' for clarity: 'Sinai is now in the sanctuary'.

[21]Scholars in support of translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in verse 25 [24] include Artur, *The Psalms*, 478; Broyles, *Psalms*, 283; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 487; James Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 227; Israel Knohl, "Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography," in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures IX: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures,* ed. Christophe Nihan and Ehud Ben Zvi, (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 422. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, Anchor Bible

confirms that the Jerusalem temple is in view (מֵהֵיכָלֶךָ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם).[22] YHWH's procession is his sanctuary.[23] This is made clear in verse 30 [29], which confirms that the Jerusalem temple is in view (מֵהֵיכָלֶךָ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם).[24]

In what sense might it be said that 'Sinai is in the sanctuary'? There are at least two explanations. In his diachronic analysis of Psalm 68, Israel Knohl has proposed that סִינַי ('Sinai') should not be regarded as a place name (i.e., Mount Sinai), but rather exclusively as a divine appellation.[25] He contends that סִינַי is the name of a deity, in connection with the Mesopotamian moon god, 'Sin' (*Si-i-na*).[26] In support of his position, he maintains that the phrase מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים זֶה סִינַי in verse 9 [8] should be translated, 'before Elohim—that is, Sinai'.[27] As such, he maintains that סִינַי is already used as a divine name earlier in the psalm. Yet, Knohl does not make clear why his translation of זֶה סִינַי should be preferred over 'the/this one of Sinai',[28] which involves a well attested use of זֶה or an equivalent

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Commentary, vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 132, offers a slightly different translation, while still rendering קֹדֶשׁ as 'sanctuary': 'behold the marches of God...of my king from his sanctuary'.

[22] While it is certainly possible that בַּקֹּדֶשׁ could be used in two different ways in the same psalm, the context of verse 18 [17] also argues in favour of translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as 'in the sanctuary'. The previous verse (17 [16]) personifies the envy of the Bashan mountain range in comparison to the mountain of YHWH's abode (לְשִׁבְתּוֹ). The Bashan mountain range gazes with jealousy at YHWH's current mountain dwelling in Jerusalem.

[23] Scholars in support of translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in verse 25 [24] include Artur, *The Psalms*, 478; Broyles, *Psalms*, 283; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 487; James Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 227; Israel Knohl, "Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography," in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures IX: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures,* ed. Christophe Nihan and Ehud Ben Zvi, (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 422. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 132, offers a slightly different translation, while still rendering קֹדֶשׁ as 'sanctuary': 'behold the marches of God...of my king from his sanctuary'.

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[25] Knohl, "Psalm 68," 413-434.

[26] Knohl speculates that the alleged name סִינַי was formed by conflating the divine names אֲדֹנָי and שַׁדַּי.

[27] Knohl, "Psalm 68," 431.

[28] Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 337; deClaissé-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545. See also, ESV; NIV.

form.[29] Since there are no clear-cut cases of סִינַי being used by itself elsewhere in the OT as a divine name (i.e., without reference to Mount Sinai),[30] it would seem that the burden of proof should rest on alternative translations to 'the/this one of Sinai'. The benefit of translating the entire phrase (זֶה סִינַי) as a divine appellation—not just סִינַי—is that it maintains the list of divine titles in verse 9 [8] while also translating סִינַי in a manner consistent with its ubiquitous appearances as a place name throughout the OT.

Knohl also contends that verses 68:15-17 [16-18], indicate that the deity being described is thought to dwell on a mountain of Bashan, specifically Mount Hermon, rather than Mount Sinai. Knohl defends this alternative use of סִינַי by noting:

Psalm 68:16–18 says nothing about the revelation of God on Mount Sinai or his presence on this mountain. On the contrary: according to the writer of this psalm, God dwells and is present on Mount Bashan.[31]

These verses, however, never claim that 'God dwells and is present at Mount Bashan'.[32] In fact they do the opposite. Instead, they simply remark on the Bashan mountains' jealousy, likely in view YHWH's presence on another mountain (i.e., Mount Zion). Knohl's approach relies heavily on his diachronic analysis of the psalm, which identifies two different layers, consisting of an early 'nucleus' of the poem (vv. 5-34 [6-35]) and a later editorial addition (vv.1-4 [2-5], 35-36 [36-37]). While similar diachronic approaches have been put forth, no evidence has been provided which would demonstrably show that the psalm is comprised of different strata. When the psalm is analyzed as a whole, then the

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[29]Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 336-337.

[30]Judges 5:5 is a clear parallel to Psalm 68:9 [8] and contains the identical phrase זֶה סִינַי, which can also be translated as 'the/this one of Sinai'.

[31]Knohl, "Psalm 68," 431.

[32]Although verse 16 [15] refers to the Bashan mountain as הַר־אֱלֹהִים ('mountain of god[s]') this should not be viewed as evidence of that psalmist regards Bashan as the former dwelling of YHWH. When the phrase הַר־אֱלֹהִים is used to refer to YHWH's mountain it is naturally translated as 'mountain of God' (cf. Ezek 28:16), but in the present context, the psalmist references the Bashan mountain as a pagan alternative to YHWH's mountain abode. Hence, it is best to translate the phrase in the present context as 'mountain of gods'. As Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 163, remark, 'The high mountains of Bashan, probably the place of the battle, make claim to being a (pagan) mountain of the gods, and is challenged by the victory of the foreign YHWH from the south (vv. 16-17)'. By calling the pagan mountain הַר־אֱלֹהִים the psalmist creates an antithesis to Mount Zion, the mountain of God in Jerusalem.

psalm's connection to Mount Sinai becomes clear. Verse 1 [2] opens the psalm by recalling Moses' words from Numbers 10:35-36, when the Israelites left Mount Sinai to journey to the promised land.[33] The following table illustrates the similarity between these two verses:

Numbers 10:35-36		Psalm 68:1 [2]	
Arise, O LORD, and let your *enemies* be *scattered*, and let those who *hate* you *flee before* you.	קוּמָה יְהוָה וְיָפֻצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ וְיָנֻסוּ מְשַׂנְאֶיךָ מִפָּנֶיךָ׃	God shall *arise*, his *enemies* shall be *scattered*; and those who *hate* him shall *flee before* him!	יָקוּם אֱלֹהִים יָפוּצוּ אוֹיְבָיו וְיָנוּסוּ מְשַׂנְאָיו מִפָּנָיו׃

In the light of this, it is clear that the Psalm 68 poetically depicts YHWH's procession toward his Jerusalem temple by evoking events that took place during the Israelites' journey to the promised land. Moreover, Samuel S. Meier contends that the bringing out (מוֹשִׁיב)[34] of 'prisoners' (אֲסִירִים) in 68:7 [6] is 'deliberately juxtaposed with the exodus (Psalm 68:6-7)'.[35] If this is the case, then the couplet in verse 8 [7], containing the parallel temporal clauses בְּצֵאתְךָ לִפְנֵי עַמֶּךָ בְּצַעְדְּךָ בִישִׁימוֹן ('when you went out before your people // when you marched through the wilderness'), describes the leaving of Mount Sinai to journey toward the promised land (cf. 68:1 [2]).

This approach to the psalm is in keeping with James K. Hoffmeier's analysis of other texts involving YHWH's 'march in the South'[36] (e.g., Deuteronomy 33:2; Judges 5:4-5). While these texts are said to contain an early tradition, locating YHWH's place of origin in Edom,[37] Hoffmeier contends that these poems

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[33]Hamilton, *Psalms I*, 599.

[34]The Hiphil of יָצָא is used elsewhere in the Psalter when referencing the exodus (Psalm 105:37, 43; 136:11).

[35]Samuel A. Meier, "Imprisonment Imagery," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings,* ed. Tremper T. Longman III and Peter Enns, (Downers Grove: Intervaristy Press, 2008), 321.

[36]Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 108, treats Deuteronomy 33:2-3; Judges 5:4-5; Habakkuk 3:3-7; Psalm 68:9 [8]; 18 [17] as belonging to the same 'march in the South' tradition, which 'indicate that Sinai is to be found in Seir and Edom'.

[37]E.g., Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 108; Maiberger and Dohmen, "*sînay*," 221-222.

describe YHWH's military campaign *through* the region of Edom, as recounted in Numbers 10:11-21:35.[38] Commenting on the opening line of the blessing in Deuteronomy 33:2 ('The Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us' [הֹנָה מִסִּינַי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשֵּׂעִיר לָמוֹ]), Hoffmeier remarks, that 'This statement manifestly shows a movement of YHWH that begins at Sinai and moves toward Seir'.[39] He goes on to note that the verb זָרַח 'dawned' has a military connotation, as evidenced by comparison to Ugaritic texts.[40] Like Deuteronomy 33:2 and Judg 5:4-5, YHWH's march in Psalm 68 begins at Mount Sinai and moves through the region of Edom. In the case of Psalm 68, the journey culminates at Mount Zion, in the Jerusalem sanctuary (v. 30 [29]), portraying YHWH's conquest through the wilderness as a processional, ending with YHWH's enthronement on his holy mountain in Jerusalem. When viewed in this light, סִינַי in Psalm 68 is best regarded as a reference to Mount Sinai. Given the context of Psalm 68, Bashan might be mentioned in verses 15-17 [16-18] because this region was associated with one of YHWH's victories (cf. Numbers 21:33-35) on the path to his enthronement in the Jerusalem sanctuary.

Since Psalm 68 depicts YHWH's journey from Mount Sinai (Num 10:35-36) to Mount Zion (v. 30 [29]), it is reasonable to conclude the phrase סִינַי בַּקֹּדֶשׁ ('Sinai is in the sanctuary'; 68:18 [17]) indicates that the mountain associated with the Sinai theophany has symbolically journeyed to Mount Zion as well. Because זֶה סִינַי ('the/this [one] of Sinai'; v. 9 [8]) has now come to his Jerusalem sanctuary by way of his portable mountain temple, so too has his mountain abode.[41] This

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[38]James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 128-130.

[39]Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 129.

[40]Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 129. See also, Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel,*.

[41]Since ANE deities were commonly thought to dwell on mountains, sanctuaries were often constructed in order to evoke their mountain abode. John M. Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," in *Cult and Cosmos: Tilting Toward a Temple-Centered Theology,* ed. L. Michael Morales, Biblical Tools and Studies (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 54, remarks that the concept of ANE temples as the 'architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain' has become '...so commonplace that it has become a cliché within Near Eastern scholarship'. It is worth noting that, although a mountain-temple relationship is present in the OT, there are also key differences when compared to other ANE cultures. Perhaps chief among such differences is that Mount Sinai was not regarded as YHWH's permanent home. Exodus 19:18 indicates that YHWH 'descended' on Mount Sinai. He was not already dwelling on the mountain when the Israelites arrived. Yet, in light of the events described in Exodus 19-40, Mount Sinai came to be associated with YHWH's abode.

might shed some light on the relationship between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion observed in the psalter. As Gordon Wenham remarks:

I think that it is reasonable to say that the psalms certainly know of the lawgiving at Sinai, even though they do not make much of it. This may be because for the psalms, Zion is the new Sinai, the holy mountain where God reveals himself.[42]

Scholars have long observed that the tabernacle in Exodus 25-31; 35-40 was intended to be a 'portable Mount Sinai', in which YHWH's presence would journey with the Israelites to the promised land.[43] Evidence for this approach to the portable sanctuary emerges when observing the three gradations of holiness

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[42]Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 100. On the basis of Psalm 68, Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 284, contends, '...there really is no "Zion theology", separate from a "Sinai theology"....To speak of a "Zion theology" that somehow arose separately from a "Sinai theology" is meaningless and actually is impossible from an ancient Near Eastern point of view'.

[43]E.g., Ángel M. Rodríguez, "Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24, no. 2 (1986), 127-145; Donald W. Parry, "Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God," in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday,* ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990), 482-500; Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 274; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 237; Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, 193-277; Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 493, 532; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 107; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 89; Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41-86; Mark Scarlata, *The Abiding Presence: A Theological Commentary on Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 2018), 150; Gordon J. Wenham, "Hearing the Pentateuch," in *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address,* ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 244; L. Michael Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured: Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus*, Biblical Tools and Studies, vol. 15 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 227; Paul R. Williamson, "Promises with Strings Attached: Covenant and Law in Exodus 19-24," in *Exploring Exodus: Literary, Theological and Contemporary Approaches,* ed. Brian S. Rosner and Paul R. Williamson, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 115; T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham: Apollos, 2017), 563-564; Richard E. Averbeck, "Reading the Ritual Law in Leviticus Theologically," in *Interpreting the Old Testament Theologically: Essays in Honor of Willem A. VanGemeren,* ed. Andrew T. Abernethy, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 136; Wolfgang Oswald, "Lawgiving at the Mountain of God (Exodus 19-24)," in *The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation,* ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, et al., Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 186.

associated with Mount Sinai in Exodus 19-24.[44] The correlation between Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle is underscored by the similar phrases used to describe YHWH's decent onto the mountain and tabernacle respectively (cf. Exodus 19:16; 40:34).[45] Among those who regard the tabernacle as a 'portable Mount Sinai', there is a wide array of methodological diversity, appearing in the work of synchronically oriented and diachronically oriented scholars alike. Jacob Milgrom, a proponent of a modified form of the Documentary Hypothesis that regards P as a pre-exilic source preceding D, goes so far as to contend that 'The equivalence of the Tabernacle to Sinai is an essential, indeed indispensable, axiom of P'.[46] Regardless of one's historical-critical framework, the argument we have proposed is not dependent upon a particular dating of the tabernacle material (Exodus 25-31; 35-40) or Psalm 68. Even if the tabernacle material were regarded as having been composed in the post-exilic period, a postulate that is open to challenge,[47] such an approach would not preclude the notion of a

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[44]Sarna, *Exodus*, 105, provides a succinct summary of the evidence: 'As Ramban noted, Mount Sinai assumes the character of the sanctuary for the duration of the theophany. A close similarity to the wilderness Tabernacle is suggested by several shared characteristics. Both Sinai and the Tabernacle evidence a tripartite division. The summit corresponds to the inner sanctum, or Holy of Holies. The second zone, partway up the mountain, is the equivalent of the Tabernacle's outer sanctum, or Holy Place. The third zone, at the foot of the mountain, is analogous to the outer court. As with the Tabernacle, the three distinct zones of Sinai feature three gradations for holiness in descending order. Just as Moses alone may ascend to the peak of the mountain, so all but one are barred from the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Just as the Holy Place is the exclusive preserve of the priesthood, so only the priests and elders are allowed to ascend to a specific point on the mountain. The confinement of laity to the outer court of the Tabernacle, where the altar of burnt offering was located, evokes the parallel with Sinai in the restriction of the laity to the foot of the mountain, where the altar was built. The graduated restrictions on access, touch, and sight are the counterparts of the repeated regulations about the unlawful invasion of sacred domain in the same three ways. God is said to "descend" upon the mountain as upon the Tabernacle, and He communicates with Moses on the summit as He does in the Holy of Holies. Finally, the vivid descriptions of smoke, dense cloud, and fire that issued from and enveloped Sinai are paralleled by the cloud and fire that become associated with the tabernacle'. See also, Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology, I: The Encroacher and the Levite: The Term ʿAboda*, University of California Publications Near Eastern Studies, vol. 14 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 44-45.

[45]The concept of YHWH entering the portable sanctuary along with his holy mountain is in keeping with the notion that ANE temples were largely considered to be the '...architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain' (Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," 54).

[46]Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 574.

[47]Since the time of Julius Wellhausen, the tabernacle has been viewed among source-critical scholars as the product of the Priestly source, having been composed during or after the

'portable Mount Sinai' existing among ancient Israelites prior to its codification in Exodus. Psalm 68:17 [18] may provide external evidence of the tabernacle being viewed in this way, indicating that Israel's deity is among his holy ones because 'Sinai is in the sanctuary'. We turn to explore other variously translated passages in the Psalter involving בקדש.

 (b) Psalm 77:14 [13]

The phrase בַּקֹּדֶשׁ appears in Psalm 77:14 [13], a psalm which recounts the past deeds of YHWH as a means of providing comfort in the present. After beginning the psalm by referencing his own anguish and downtrodden circumstances in verses 1-10 [1-9], in verses 11-12 [10-11] the psalmist recalls the 'years of the right hand of the most Most High' (שְׁנוֹת יְמִין עֶלְיוֹן)[48] and his 'wonders of old' (מִקֶּדֶם פִּלְאֶךָ). The psalmist's appeal to YHWH's journey through the sea and the leading of YHWH's people by the hand of Moses and Aaron make clear that the

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Babylonian exile. While this view remains the consensus among historical-critical scholars, the Priestly source has come under significant scrutiny in modern scholarship. While some have argued for a pre-exilic dating of P (e.g., Jacob Milgrom, "The Case for the Pre-Exilic and Exilic Provenance of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham,* ed. J. Gordon McConville and Karl Möller, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 48-56) others have contended that the concept of P should be abandoned entirely. Georg Fischer, "Time for a Change! Why Pentateuchal Research is in Crisis," in *Paradigm Change in Pentateuchal Research,* ed. Matthias Armgardt, et al., Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2019), 13, provides sobering remarks regarding the concept of the Priestly source in current scholarship: '...I now share the knowledge and firm conviction gleaned from decades of dealing with Pentateuch studies. As long as one holds firmly to P, assuming its existence in whatever form, whether it be a source, a layer, or a redactional reworking, there will be, in my estimation, no adequate solution to the problems of Pentateuchal research. After nearly 200 years of trying in vain to find an answer, based on the assumption of this hypothetical Priestly stratum (in whatever form), we have still not arrived at definitive results, and the impasse because of the fundamental problems underlying this theory has become obvious. Therefore, it is time to attempt to formulate an explanation without it. As a counter-proposal, I suggest daring to do away with it altogether!'

[48]The psalmist's reference to the 'right hand of the Most High' could possibly be an allusion to the Exodus 15:6, 12, which recount the defeat of the Egyptian army by YHWH's right hand. Joshua A. Berman, "The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II and the Exodus Sea Account (Exodus 13:17-15:19)," in *"Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?": Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives,* ed. James K. Hoffmeier, et al., Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 102-103, contends that Exodus 15:6, 12 reference YHWH's right hand as a polemical response to the 'distinctly Egyptian portrayal' of Pharaoh smiting his enemies with his right hand, an image that is '...ubiquitous from the third millennium down into the Christian era' (103).

exodus event is in view. In the light of this connection, it is fitting that scholars have noted parallels between Psalm 77 and the Song of the Sea.[49]

The phrase בַּקֹּדֶשׁ appears in verse 14 [13]: כָּאלֹהִים גָּדוֹל מִי־אֵל // דַּרְכֶּךָ בַּקֹּדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים. While it is generally agreed that the verse begins with a vocative ('Oh God'), the remaining words of the first half of the line (בַּקֹּדֶשׁ דַּרְכֶּךָ) are variously translated as either 'your path/way is holy/in holiness'[50] or 'your path/way is in the sanctuary'.[51] The parallel line, 'what deity is as great as God' (מִי־אֵל גָּדוֹל כָּאלֹהִים), does not aid in distinguishing between the two translational options, since God's greatness could be construed equally according to his holiness or his presence in the sanctuary. The former translation, 'your path/way is holy/in holiness', is preferred by some scholars as a consequence of dating the psalm to the post-exilic period. As a result, the present anguish of the psalmist is regarded an outworking of the temple's destruction. Yet, nothing within the psalm clearly points towards the psalm being exilic or post-exilic.[52]

The evidence, however, weighs in favour of translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ דַּרְכֶּךָ as 'your path is in the sanctuary'. In the MT, בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is pointed with a definite article, indicating that the Masoretes regarded the phrase as a preposition followed by a noun. The LXX similarly translates the phrase with a definite article (ὁ θεός, ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ἡ ὁδός σου).[53] The surrounding context of the verse also supports translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ

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[49]E.g., John S. Kselman, "Psalm 77 and the Book of Exodus," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 15, (1983), 51-58.

[50]E.g., ESV; HCSB; NASB; NIV ('your ways, God, are holy').

[51]E.g., ASV; KJV. Cf. LXX.

[52]Bound to the issue of the psalm's date is the question of its unity. While some scholars have contended that Psalm 77 contains two originally autonomous poems, there is little reason to doubt the unity of the psalm. Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 38, contends, 'Several factors suggest the poem was a unity from the beginning: The number of Hebrew words in each of the two halves (vv. 1-10 and 11-20) is almost identical (73 words in part 1 and 74 words in part 2); *ʾĕlōîm* ("God") occurs seven times; verbs of "remembering" in both parts with a different set of objects in each half of the poem'. In addition, Clifford observes, 'Another indicator of unity is the poem's coherent logic. In the first part, the psalmist cries out to God, refusing all comfort (vv. 1-2). What is the cause of such anguish? It is the cognitive dissonance that comes from remembering a past when God was favorable and experiencing the present when God is absent. The psalmist remembers divine favor (vv. 3-5), steadfast love, and fidelity to promises (vv. 6-10)... In the second part (vv. 11-20), the Psalmist remembers again but this time the object of memory is not the absence of God but the act that defeated chaos itself. Recalling those primordial deeds invites God to renew them in this unhappy time' (38-39).

[53]'O God, your way is in the holy place' (Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 585).

'in the sanctuary'. Central to the translation of verse 14 [13] is the sense in which דֶּרֶךְ ('way/path') is to be taken. Is דֶּרֶךְ to be understood figuratively, referring to God's righteous way(s)? There is considerable precedent for this use of דֶּרֶךְ in the OT. Given the 63 occurrences of דֶּרֶךְ being used figuratively in the Psalter alone,[54] this approach would certainly be preferred in the absence of evidence to the contrary in the immediate context. There is, however, evidence within the psalm that supports דֶּרֶךְ being taken literally in this instance, as a reference to the YHWH's actual footpath.

As the psalmist recounts the deeds of YHWH in verses 12-21 [11-20] by alluding to the events of the exodus, an appeal is made to YHWH's actions as a divine warrior, overcoming the waters and leading his people through the sea. In Verse 20 [19], the term דֶּרֶךְ is used to call attention to YHWH's path through the sea: בַּיָּם דַּרְכֶּךָ ('your way was through the sea'). The literal nature of דֶּרֶךְ is reinforced by the parallel line: וּשְׁבִילְיָךְ בְּמַיִם רַבִּים ('and your path was in/through [the] great waters'). The term שְׁבִיל is used elsewhere only in Jeremiah 18:15, clearly denoting a footpath, although it might carry with it a secondary figurative sense. While דֶּרֶךְ and שְׁבִיל can be used both literally or figuratively, the figurative sense of both must be ruled out in Psalm 77:20 [19], given that the memory of YHWH's bringing the people through the waters provides the context of the verse. The literal sense of דֶּרֶךְ is confirmed by the final clause of the verse: וְעִקְּבוֹתֶיךָ לֹא נֹדָעוּ ('but/yet your footprints were unseen'). While the phrase is somewhat cryptic, the reference to YHWH's 'footprints' indicates that the דֶּרֶךְ described at the beginning of verse 20[19] is not a figurative reference to YHWH's way(s), but a reference to his literal footpath. The psalmist calls attention to a great paradox—although YHWH led his people through the path of the sea, his footprints were unseen.[55]

Since YHWH's 'way' (דֶּרֶךְ) described in verse 20 [19] refers to a literal footpath, this suggests that YHWH's 'way' (דֶּרֶךְ) in verse 14 [13] is being used in the same manner. While acknowledging some benefits of this approach, Derek Kidner objects to this reading:

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[54]Psalm 1:1, 6; 2:12; 5:9; 10:5; 18:22, 31, 33; 25:4, 8-9, 12; 27:11; 32:8; 35:6; 36:5; 37:5, 7, 14, 23, 34; 39:2; 49:14; 50:23; 51:15; 67:3; 77:14, 20; 81:14; 86:11; 89:42; 91:11; 95:10; 101:2, 6; 102:24; 103:7; 107:4, 7, 17, 40; 119:1, 3, 5, 14, 26-27, 29-30, 32-33, 37, 59, 168; 128:1; 138:5; 139:3, 24; 143:8; 145:17; 146:9.

[55]The final verse of the psalm (v. 21 [20]) concludes by noting that YHWH led his people by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Although the translation, 'Thy way...is in the sanctuary' (AV, RV, cf. LXX, etc.) would find a telling counterpart in verse 19, 'thy way was in the sea', the phrase should almost certainly be taken as (lit.) 'thy way is in holiness', for this echoes the victory song at the Red Sea ('majestic in holiness', Exodus 15:11), while the companion phrases echo first its question 'Who is like thee...among the gods?', then its epithet 'doing wonders' (as in our verse 14a), and finally its allusion to the effect of these things on the 'the people' (14b; Exodus 15:14).[56]

The difficulty with Kidner's approach is that it assumes a one-to-one correspondence between verse 14 [13] and Exodus 15:11, to the exclusion of all other allusions. Yet, no reference is made to דֶּרֶךְ in Exodus 15 whatsoever. John S. Kselman has demonstrated that Psalm 77 contains parallels to the book of Exodus beyond the Song of the Sea, noting that the psalmist structures his questions about the extent of YHWH's compassion and grace in Psalm 77:9-10 [8-9] according to Exodus 34:6.[57] While the term דֶּרֶךְ is never used in Exodus 15, it is employed three times in Exodus 13:17-18, 21 to describe the literal path upon which YHWH led his people. Given the connections between Psalm 77 and the book of Exodus in general, the presence of דֶּרֶךְ is better understood as a reference to YHWH's literal path and not his figurative way(s).

When דֶּרֶךְ is properly regarded as a literal path in Psalm 77:14 [13], the translation of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as 'in holiness' loses its appeal. It is difficult to understand how YHWH's literal 'path/way' could be regarded as 'in/by holiness'. Rather, the phrase אֱלֹהִים בַּקֹּדֶשׁ דַּרְכֶּךָ in Psalm 77:14 [13] is best understood as a verbless clause, with בַּקֹּדֶשׁ being translated as a reference to the sanctuary: 'Oh God, your way/path is in the sanctuary'.

The psalmist is consoled not only by YHWH's leading of the people through the sea, but also in knowing that the same deity responsible for the exodus event has journeyed (in)to the sanctuary. This is in keeping with other forms of sanctuary ideology observed in the OT, which connect the exodus from Egypt to the building of a sanctuary. The book of Exodus itself makes a general connection between the exodus and the building of the tabernacle. Immediately after the Israelites come through the waters, the song of the sea makes reference to

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[56]Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 14b (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1975), 279.

[57]Kselman, "Psalm 77 and the Book of Exodus," 53-54. See also, Gregory M. Stevenson, "Communal Imagery and the Individual Lament: Exodus Typology in Psalm 77," *Restoration Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1997), 215-229; Allan M. Harman, "The Exodus and the Sinai Covenant in the Book of Psalms," *The Reformed Theological Review* 73, no. 1 (2014), 8.

YHWH's mountain sanctuary in Exodus 15:17.[58] Shortly thereafter the Israelites build a portable sanctuary that houses the same deity who brought them through the waters (Ex 25-31; 35-40). Exodus 29:45-46 links the concept of YHWH dwelling among the Israelites (i.e., his presence in the sanctuary) with the exodus from Egypt:

I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God (ESV).

In 1 Kings 6:1 the connection is made between the exodus from Egypt and the construction of Solomon's temple: 'In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD' (ESV).

In the light of these observations, there is no compelling reason for translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in Psalm 77:14 [13] as 'in holiness' or 'holy'. Rather, the evidence favors the translation, 'in the sanctuary'. When the above grammatical and contextual observations are taken into account, the psalm may be regarded as referencing YHWH's presence in the sanctuary, having journeyed there through the waters of the exodus, despite his footprints being unseen.[59]

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[58]While Mount Sinai is not the referent of the mountain mentioned in Exodus 15:17, the reference to YHWH's mountain sanctuary helps prepare the reader for the events that make up roughly the second half of the book of Exodus. As Alexander, *Exodus*, 297, remarks, 'By being both retrospective and prospective the song underlines that the defeat of the Egyptians is not an end in itself, but merely the first stage in a process that will climax with the Israelites living in close proximity to YHWH within the land of Canaan. In the light of this ultimate goal it is significant that Exod. 19-24 narrates the creation of a special covenant relationship between YHWH and the Israelites. This in turn prepares the way for the manufacture of a richly adorned tent that will be YHWH's portable sanctuary as he accompanies the Israelites on their journey to Canaan (cf. 25-31, 35-40)'.

[59]The concept of YHWH's footprints going 'unseen' presents an interesting contrast with the symbolism of a temple excavated in 'Ain Dara (northern Syria), which depicts a superhuman-sized deity with '...footprints of over three feet (one meter) carved into the temple flooring' (Mark S. Smith, *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016], 26). Although YHWH's 'way/path is in the sanctuary', his footprints are not seen, journeying through the waters of the exodus and leading to the temple.

Verbal Clauses with בקדש: Psalms 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]; 89:36 [35]

Among the variously translated occurrences of בקדש in the Psalter, three passages remain: 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]; 89:36 [35]. A major distinction between these references and the occurrences explored above is that בקדש follows a verb in each of these cases, allowing the possibility of בקדש being taken as a modification of the preceding verb (i.e., 'in holiness'). These three occurrences are also distinctive because none of them is pointed with a definite article because they all appear with a pronominal suffix, which *ipso facto* renders them definite. In the light of this, there is no definitive grammatical indicator of whether the Masoretes regarded these uses of בקדש as sanctuary references or as references to 'his/my holiness'. In addition, these passages have in common that they occur in the context of YHWH giving an utterance of some kind (i.e., YHWH declaring or swearing). We shall address 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7] together in the light of their commonalities before moving on to 89:36 [35].

 (a) Psalm 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]

Psalm 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7] contain identical phrases: אֱלֹהִים דִּבֶּר בְּקָדְשׁוֹ אֶעְלֹזָה אֲחַלְּקָה שְׁכֶם וְעֵמֶק סֻכּוֹת אֲמַדֵּד. The main issue in question concerns the first three words of the verse (אֱלֹהִים דִּבֶּר בְּקָדְשׁוֹ). The majority of EVVs vary between translating the phrase as 'God has spoken in his holiness' (or an equivalent phrase)[60] and 'God has spoken in/from his sanctuary'.[61] Psalm 60:8 [6] is translated as 'in his sanctuary' by some scholars.[62] Mitchell Dahood translates בְּקָדְשׁוֹ as 'from his sanctuary' on the basis of the occurrences of this construction in other psalms (e.g., 20:3; 63:3; 68:25; 134:2; 150:1), contending that the phrase is a reference to YHWH's heavenly sanctuary in similar fashion to the use of *qdš* in some Ugaritic texts referring to Baal's heavenly sanctuary.[63] Erich Zenger opts for 'in his sanctuary' on the basis of a different line of reasoning altogether. Because of the psalm's association with the Asaphite tradition, Zenger contends, 'The option "in his sanctuary" recommends itself from the context of the Asaph psalms'.[64]

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[60]E.g., ESV; NKJV; NASB; LEB.

[61]E.g., NIV; CSB.

[62]Artur, *The Psalms*, 437; Clifford, *Psalms 1-72*, 284; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 93; Brueggemann and Bellinger Jr., *Psalms*, 266. Dahood, *Psalms II*, 75, renders the phrase as 'from his sanctuary'.

[63]Dahood, *Psalms II*, 75, 80.

[64]Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 93.

Alternatively, while Goldingay acknowledges that בְּקָדְשׁוֹ should be translated as 'in his sanctuary' elsewhere (i.e., Psalm 150:1), he contends that בְּקָדְשׁוֹ should be rendered as 'by his holiness' in Psalm 60:8 [6]:

...in connection with oaths it means "by his holiness" (Amos 4:2; cf. Psalm 89:35 [36]). If the statement that follows were one made in response to this prayer, "in his sanctuary" would be plausible, but if the statement is one Yhwh made long ago, its location seems less relevant than its seriousness.[65]

By translating the בְּ as 'by', as opposed to 'in', Goldingay understands YHWH's holiness to be the object by which he swears.[66] In this scenario, however, it is equally as feasible that the psalmist envisages YHWH swearing by his own abode (i.e., his sanctuary). Yet, it is worth noting that, although the psalm possibly alludes to an oath made by YHWH, the terms for 'oath' (שְׁבוּעָה) or 'swearing' (שָׁבַע) are not used here, which are usually present when one party of an oath swears by an asset.[67] The two verses Goldingay cites as precedent for his approach (i.e., Amos 4:2; cf. Psalm 89:35 [36]) actually contain שָׁבַע and not דָּבַר. The psalmist uses the term דָּבַר+בְּ in 60:8 [6], which is never explicitly used elsewhere in the OT in association with swearing by something,[68] rendering the possibility of YHWH swearing 'by his holiness' or 'by his sanctuary' in this verse doubtful. Rather, the emphasis seems to be on the declaration itself, not the act of swearing by something. The same argument should be applied to 108:8 [7], since it also uses דָּבַר and not שָׁבַע.

Jettisoning the notion of YHWH swearing *by* his holiness in 60:8 [6] leaves the remaining possibilities of YHWH speaking/declaring either 'in his sanctuary' or 'in his holiness'. While the available data may not be sufficient to provide a decisive answer, there is evidence to support the translation, 'in his sanctuary'.[69] Sanctuaries in the ANE were associated with legal declarations and publications.[70] YHWH making a declarative promise from his sanctuary is well

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[65]Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 229.

[66]See also, Dahood, *Psalms II*, 75, 80.

[67]E.g., Dan. 12:7.

[68]The occurrence of דָּבַר in 108:8 [7] is ambiguous and should not be used to establish precedent for דָּבַר being used in cases involving swearing by an asset.

[69]As seen above, Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 229, claims that the verse's connection to oath giving (i.e., YHWH's declaration) supports the translation "by his holiness," but this view is open to challenge and will more appropriately be addressed below in association with Psalm 89:36 [35], since Psalm 89:36 [35] שבע rather than דבר.

[70]Victor A. Hurowitz, "'For Instruction shall Come Forth from Zion': Biblical and Mesopotamian Temples as Palaces of Justice," in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy*

in keeping with other familiar OT scenes envisioning *torah* going forth from YHWH's mountain sanctuary (cf. Ex. 25:16, 21-22; Is 2:2-4=Mic 4:1-3). Goldingay creates a false choice between the location and seriousness of YHWH's declaration. Recognising that sanctuaries functioned as the legal and ethical centre of society, YHWH's declaration going forth from his temple is actually in accordance with its seriousness. Alternatively, the psalmist might reference the sanctuary simply because it is the location where YHWH resides, just as other OT passages refer to YHWH hearing prayers "from his temple" (e.g., 2 Samuel 22:7; Jonah 2:8; Psalm 18:7; Psalm 27:4).[71] In the light of these observations, we must conclude that regarding בְּקָדְשׁוֹ as a sanctuary reference at least stands on equal footing with alternative translations.

 (b) Psalm 89:36 [35]

Compared to the four passages explored to this point, Psalm 89:36 [35] presents the most compelling case for translating קֹדֶשׁ as 'holiness' instead of 'sanctuary': אַחַת נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְקָדְשִׁי אִם־לְדָוִד אֲכַזֵּב. In contrast to Psalm 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7], בְקָדְשִׁי appears after the verb שָׁבַע, thus occurring in a common construction associated with oath taking or recounting a previous oath. But this verse can hardly be used as precedent for an abstract translation of בקדש. While it is possible that YHWH swears *in* his holiness in 89:36 [35], when surveying other uses of the same construction (i.e., שָׁבַע+בְּ), it is more likely that YHWH's holiness is the asset *by* which he swears (i.e., 'by his holiness').[72] The same could be said for Amos 4:2, which appears in a similar construction (נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה בְּקָדְשׁוֹ). Since YHWH has no need of swearing by or in the name of another deity,[73] he is thought by some

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of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond, ed. Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen, Resources for Biblical Study (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 400-403.

[71]Goldingay discards this possibility on the basis of the verse's alleged connection with oaths. As we have suggested above, the use of דָּבַר instead of שָׁבַע is detrimental to Goldingay's position, leaving no compelling reason for jettisoning the possibility of YHWH speaking from his sanctuary in similar fashion to him hearing from his sanctuary. A corollary of our argument below concerning the practice of oath taking is that even if 60:8 [6] were to be taken in association with an oath, this would not stand in opposition to the idea of YHWH swearing in/from/by his sanctuary.

[72]Isaiah 62:8; Jeremiah 44:26; Amos 8:7 (cf. Amos 8:14); Psalm 63:12 [11]; Daniel 12:7.

[73]Cf. Genesis 24:3; Judges 21:7; 1 Kings 1:17; 2:42; Jeremiah 12:16; Isaiah 65:16; Nehemiah 13:25; 2 Chronicles 36:13. Closely related are the occurrences involving swearing an oath 'in the name' of a deity (e.g., Leviticus 19:12; 1 Samuel 20:42; Isaiah 48:1; Jeremiah 12:16; 44:26; Zechariah 5:4).

to swear by his own holiness.[74] If this were the case, בקדש in Psalm 89:36 [35] and Amos 4:2 are not used to describe the holiness of YHWH's act of swearing, but the *object* of his swearing.[75] These occurrences are substantially different constructions than the use of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in verbless clauses, as explored above. While the idea of YHWH swearing *by* something rests on more solid ground than translating the phrase as 'in his holiness', there is still another possible rendering.

There are two occasions in which שָׁבַע+בְּ is used to describe the location where an oath is made.[76] In Judges 21:1, an oath is described as having been sworn *in* Mizpah (נִשְׁבַּע בַּמִּצְפָּה). Similarly, 2 Kings 11:4 records an oath sworn in the house of YHWH (וַיַּשְׁבַּע אֹתָם בְּבֵית יְהוָה).[77] Understood in this manner, נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְקָדְשִׁי in Psalm 89:36 [35] could be rendered, 'I have sworn in my sanctuary'.[78] Contrary to Goldingay's claim above in regard to Psalm 60:8 [6] that the context of oath taking weighs in favour of translating בְּקָדְשׁוֹ as 'by [his] holiness', it might be argued that the context of oath taking actually points toward the translation "in his sanctuary." Because sanctuaries generally functioned as "palaces of justice"[79] in the ANE, Victor A. Hurowitz notes, 'The two main types of legal proceedings performed in temples were oaths and ordeals'.[80] It is, therefore, not surprising to find scenarios in the OT that portray oaths and vows[81] being ratified at a sanctuary altar.[82] This association is seen most clearly in 1 Kings 8:31–32, which recounts Solomon's prayer of dedication for the newly constructed sanctuary:

If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, then hear in heaven and act and

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[74]E.g., see Tony W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, JSOT Supplement, vol. 147 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 15; deClaissé-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 678.

[75]Alternatively, if קֹדֶשׁ were rendered as 'sanctuary' in Psalm 89:36 [35] and Amos 4:2, it is also possible that YHWH is regarded as swearing by his sanctuary, similarly to his swearing by his own life in Amos 6:8 (נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ). In the case of Amos 4:2, as noted above (see fn. 7), the use of the neuter plural and definite article (τῶν ἁγίων) in the LXX likely indicates that the translators regarded YHWH as swearing by or in his sanctuary.

[76]Judg. 21:1; 2 Kings 11:4.

[77]It is worth noting that the LXX does not contain 'house of'. It is likely that the LXX conforms the phrase to the more regular renderings explored above (i.e., the act of swearing 'by the Lord').

[78]Similarly, Amos 4:2 could be translated, 'The Lord, YHWH, has sworn in his sanctuary'.

[79]Hurowitz, "For Instruction shall Come Forth from Zion," 389-418.

[80]Hurowitz, "For Instruction shall Come Forth from Zion," 404.

[81]On the distinction between oaths and vows in the Hebrew Bible, see Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, 11-35.

[82]E.g., Numbers 5:19-21; 1 Kings 1:50-51; 1 Kings 8:31–32.

judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness (ESV).

While sanctuary sites do not account for all occurrences of oath taking in the Old Testament, it is clear that temples were associated with the practice.

It cannot be said that the grammar itself offers a definitive answer to the question of how בקדש is used in Psalms 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]; 89:36 [35]. YHWH can be regarded as speaking or swearing, 'in his holiness', 'by his holiness', 'by his sanctuary', or 'in his sanctuary'. Although each remain possible renderings, particularly in 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7], there is strong evidence to suggest that בקדש is to be taken as a reference to YHWH's sanctuary, rather than his holiness. Since בקדש occurs in 89:36 [35] with שָׁבַע, the phrase potentially occurs in connection with an idiom for oath swearing, yet it remains unclear as to whether YHWH is regarded as swearing 'by his holiness', 'by his sanctuary' or 'in his sanctuary'. Of the three passages in our final category (Ps 60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]), there is no *definitive* case in which בקדש must be translated in the abstract (i.e., 'in holiness'; or adjectively (i.e. 'holy').

Conclusion

Having surveyed the variously translated occurrences of בקדש in verbless (Psalm 68:18 [17]; Psalm 77:14 [13]) and verbal (Psalm 60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]) clauses in the Psalter, we found that the verbless clauses show significant grammatical and contextual difficulties when translating בקדש abstractly ('in holiness'; 'among the holy [ones]'). Rendering the phrase as 'in the sanctuary', in keeping with the majority of other appearances of קֹדֶשׁ in the OT, is the best translational option for these verbless clauses in the Psalter. Among the three occurrences of בקדש in verbal clauses (Psalm 60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]), no case can be found in which בקדש should *necessarily* be translated in the abstract ('in holiness') or as a collective singular ('among the holy [ones]'). These occurrences should not be regarded as an established precedent for translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ alternatively from its well-attested translation of 'in the sanctuary', especially in the case of verbless clauses (68:18 [17] and 77:14 [13]). New vistas are opened for understanding the cultic nature of these Psalms when correctly translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as 'in the sanctuary'. When בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is properly translated, these psalms may provide a window into an ancient Israelite understanding of the relationship Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

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