

REDISCOVERING EXPOSITORY PREACHING

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Biblical preaching's authenticity is significantly tarnished by contemporary communicators' being more concerned with personal relevance than God's revelation. Scripture unmistakably requires a proclamation focused on God's will and mankind's obligation to obey. With men wholly committed to God's Word, the expository method commends itself as preaching that is true to the Bible. The method presupposes an exegetical process to extract the God-intended meaning of Scripture and an explanation of that meaning in a contemporary understandable way. The biblical essence and apostolic spirit of expository preaching needs to be recaptured in the training of men newly committed to "preaching the Word."

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The Master's Seminary joins with others¹ in accepting the urgent responsibility for transmitting the Pauline legacy to "preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2). The current series of articles in *The Master's Seminary Journal* signal an effort to instill in twenty-first century preachers a pattern of biblical preaching inherited from their predecessors.²

Every generation shares the kind of dire circumstances that Amos prophesied for Israel: "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the

¹E.g. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980); Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Samuel T. Logan (ed.), *The Preacher and Preaching* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986); Al Fasol, *Essentials for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

²See the initial articles by John F. MacArthur, Jr., "The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1/1 (Spring 1990) 3-15 and Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations: The Link Between Inerrancy and Expository Preaching," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1/1 (Spring 1990) 53-73. Subsequent issues of the *Journal* will carry additional essays.

Lord GOD, `When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the LORD'" (Amos 8:11). The last several centuries have proven this need again.

REVIEWING RECENT TRENDS

In an explanation of Heb 8:10, the Puritan commentator William Gouge (1575-1653) remarked,

Ministers are herein to imitate God, and, to their best endeavour, to instruct people in the mysteries of godliness, and to teach them what to believe and practice, and then to stir them up in act and deed, to do what they are instructed to do. Their labor otherwise is likely to be in vain. Neglect of this course is a main cause that men fall into as many errors as they do in these days.³

To this editorial by Gouge, Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) adds a word about nineteenth-century England:

I may add that this last remark has gained more force in our times; it is among uninstructed flocks that the wolves of popery make havoc; sound teaching is the best protection from the heresies which ravage right and left among us.⁴

John Broadus (1827-1895) decried the death of good preaching in America, too.⁵ G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945) noted,

The supreme work of the Christian minister is the work of preaching. This is a day in which one of our great perils is that of doing a thousand little things to the neglect of the one thing, which is preaching.⁶

The following typical laments evidence that little improvement had been made by the mid-twentieth century:

Except for the growing worldliness of its members, the pulpit is the church's

³William Gouge, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1980 rpt.) 577-78.

⁴C. H. Spurgeon, "Sermons `Their Matter," *Lectures to My Students* (Lecture 5, Book 1; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977 rpt.) 72.

⁵John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Grand Rapids: AP&A, n.d.) x.

⁶G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974 rpt.) 11.

weak spot.⁷

But the glory of the Christian pulpit is a borrowed glow. . . . To an alarming extent the glory is departing from the pulpit of the twentieth century. . . . The Word of God has been denied the throne and given a subordinate place.⁸

Yet it remains true that "whatever be the marks of the contemporary pulpit, the centrality of Biblical preaching is not one of them."⁹

In a tradition that focuses on the centrality of the written Word few subjects are more important than the interpretation and proclamation of that Word. Everyone stresses the necessity of a solid exegesis of the text, but few are adept at providing such an exegesis and preaching effectively from it.¹⁰

By the mid-1980's a national Congress on Biblical Exposition (COBE) convened to urge a return to true biblical exposition.¹¹ COBE's recurring theme demanded that the American church must return to true biblical preaching or else the western world would continue its descent toward a valueless culture. Commenting on the uniqueness of America in contemporary culture, Os Guinness noted with concern that ". . . in all my studies I have yet to see a Western society where the church pews are so full and the sermons so empty."¹²

John MacArthur's review of preaching patterns in the late 80's led him to observe,

Specifically, evangelical preaching ought to reflect our conviction that God's Word is infallible and inerrant. Too often it does not. In fact, there is a

⁷Jeff D. Ray, *Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1940) 14.

⁸Merrill F. Unger, *Principles of Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955) 11-15.

⁹Nolan Howington, "Expository Preaching," *Review and Expositor* 56 (Jan 1959) 56.

¹⁰Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Exegesis and Preaching: The Principles and Practice of Exegesis," *Covenant Quarterly* 34 (Aug 1976) 3. For other comments on the decline of expository preaching in America, see Lloyd M. Perry *Biblical Preaching for Today's World* (Chicago: Moody, 1973) 9-12.

¹¹Brian Bird, "Biblical Exposition: Becoming a Lost Art?" *Christianity Today* 30/7 (Apr 18, 1986) 34.

¹²Ibid.

discernible trend in contemporary evangelicalism *away* from biblical preaching and a drift *toward* an experience-centered, pragmatic, topical approach in the pulpit.¹³

As the 90's dawn, an irresistible urge for a focus in the pulpit on the *relevant* seemingly exists, with a resultant inattention to God's *revelation*. Siegfried Meuer alerted the 1960's to the same "contemporary danger."¹⁴ He likened the direction of his day to the earlier trends of Harry Emerson Fosdick who wrote in the 20's, "The sermon is uninteresting because it has no connection with the real interests of the people. . . . The sermon must tackle a real problem."¹⁵ Meuer noted that Fosdick opened the floodgate for philosophy and psychology to inundate the modern pulpit with unbelief.

Fosdick's philosophy sounds alarmingly similar to the advice given in a recent publication on relevant contemporary preaching:

Unchurched people today are the ultimate consumers. We may not like it, but for every sermon we preach, they're asking, "Am I interested in that subject or not?" If they aren't, it doesn't matter how effective our delivery is; their minds will check out.¹⁶

The implied conclusion is that pastors must preach what people want to hear rather than what God wants proclaimed. Such counsel sounds the alarm of 2 Tim 4:3: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires."

¹³MacArthur, "The Mandate" 4.

¹⁴Siegfried Meuer, "What Is Biblical Preaching?" *Encounter* 24 (Spring 1963) 182.

¹⁵Harry Emerson Fosdick, "What Is the Matter with Preaching?" *Harper's Magazine* 47 (July 1928) 133-41.

¹⁶Bill Hybels, *et al.*, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching* (Portland: Multnomah, 1989) 27. A similar comment is, "The wise interpreter begins with a human need today, and chooses a passage that will enable him to meet this need" (Andrew W. Blackwood, *Expository Preaching for Today* [New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953] 13).

What is the necessary response? We assert that it is to rediscover and reaffirm expository preaching for the coming generation of preachers facing all the spiritual opportunities and Satanic obstacles of a new millennium. We agree with Walter Kaiser's appraisal:

Regardless of what new directives and emphases are periodically offered, that which is needed above everything else to make the Church more viable, authentic, and effective, is a new declaration of the Scriptures with a new purpose, passion, and power.¹⁷

REVISITING SCRIPTURE

When warnings about a drift away from biblical preaching sound, the only reasonable response is a return to the scriptural roots of preaching to reaffirm its essential nature. In a reexamination of the heritage of biblical proclamation, two elements emerge: the mandates to preach and the manner of preaching.

Mandates to Preach

The gospels, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation provide many examples and exhortations to preach the truth in fulfillment of God's will. As a reminder of the apostolic legacy and a reaffirmation of the scriptural authority for Bible-based preaching, five significant mandates are representative of the larger number of passages.

Matt 28:19-20 ` "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

1 Tim 4:13 ` "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching."

2 Tim 2:2 ` "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of

¹⁷Kaiser, *Exegetical Theology* 242.

many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

2 Tim 4:2 ` "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

Tit 2:1 ` "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."

Manner of Preaching

In his discussion of *khrrsv* (*kryss*, "I preach," "I proclaim") Friedrich notes at least thirty-three different verbs employed by NT writers to portray the richness of biblical preaching.¹⁸ In the following discussion, the four most prominent of these are examined briefly.

Kryss sees general use throughout the gospels, Acts, and the epistles. John the Baptist (Matt 3:1), Jesus (Matt 4:17), and Paul (Acts 28:31) all engaged in the action of preaching as indicated by this verb. To Timothy, Paul commended this same activity, telling him to preach the Word (2 Tim 4:2).

Eaggelzv (*Euaggeliz*, "I preach the gospel") is practically interchangeable with *kryss* (Luke 8:1; Acts 8:4-5). Paul and Barnabas preached the good news of the Word of the Lord (Acts 15:35).

Martyrv (*Martyre*, "I testify," "I bear witness") is a legal term picturing the communication of truth from one who has a first-hand knowledge. John the Baptist bore witness to the light (John 1:7-8) and John the Apostle testified to the Word of God (Rev 1:2).¹⁹

Didskv (*didask*, "I teach") focuses on the purpose and content of the message transmitted, without excluding elements of the three previous verbs. As part of the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His disciples to teach (Matt 28:20). Paul recommended teaching to Timothy (1 Tim 6:2; 2 Tim 2:2). Teaching is sometimes associated with

¹⁸Gerhard Friedrich, "khrrsein, et al.," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966) 3:703.

¹⁹See Klaas Runia, "What Is Preaching According to the New Testament," *TynBul* 29 (1978) 3-48, for further information on *khrrsv*, *eaggelzv*, and *martyrv*.

kryss (Matt 11:1) and *euaggeliz* (Acts 5:42). The content of what is taught focuses on the way of God (Matt 22:16) and the Word of God (Acts 18:11).²⁰

In addition to these four prominent words, there are many others that significantly enhance the biblical manner of communicating God's Word. For example, the Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to "guide" (or "lead" (*dhgv* [*hodge*]) him through Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:31). Paul "explained" (or "laid out") (*ktuhmi* [*ektithmi*]) the kingdom of God (Acts 28:23; cf. 18:26). Paul told Timothy that he was to "entrust" (or "commit") (*paratuhmi* [*paratithmi*]) what he had heard from Paul to faithful men that they might teach others also (2 Tim 2:2).

Jesus's interaction with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus adds further dimensions to biblical preaching. He "explained" (or "interpreted") (*diermhnev* [*diermneu*]) the things about Himself in the OT, from Moses to the prophets (Luke 24:27). They in turn marveled at the way He had "opened" (or "explained") (*dianogv* [*dianoig*]) the Scriptures (Luke 24:32; cf. 24:45).

A study of additional words such as *naggllv* (*anaggell*, "I announce, declare") (Acts 20:27), *naginskv* (*anaginsk*, "I read") (1 Tim 4:13), *parakalv* (*parakale*, "I exhort, comfort") (1 Tim 4:13), *jhgomai* (*exgeomai*, "I declare") (Acts 15:12), *lalv* (*lale*, "I speak") (John 3:34), *dialgomai* (*dialegomai*, "I discuss, argue") (Acts 17:17), and *fuggomai* (*phtheggomai*, "I utter") would be profitable. Yet this brief survey is enough to conclude that the one common link in all the biblical terms in their contexts is a focus on the things of God and Scripture as exclusively central in the preacher's message. Without question, this feature alone marks the uniqueness of scriptural preaching. A biblical and theological content is the *sine qua non* of NT proclamation.

With this biblical foundation, an identification of the contemporary mode of NT preaching is possible.

²⁰For an expanded discussion of *didskv*, see Homer A. Kent, Jr., "A Time to Teach," *GTJ* 1/1 (Spring 1980) 7-17.

DEFINING EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Discussions about preaching divide it into three types: topical, textual, and expository. Topical messages usually combine a series of Bible verses that loosely connect with a theme. Textual preaching uses a short text or passage that generally serves as a gateway into whatever subject the preacher chooses to address. Neither the topical nor the textual method represents a serious effort to interpret, understand, explain, or apply God's truth in the context of the Scripture(s) used.

By contrast, expository preaching focuses predominantly on the text(s) under consideration along with its(their) context(s).²¹ Exposition normally concentrates on a single text of Scripture, but it is sometimes possible for a thematic/theological message or a historical/biographical discourse to be expository in nature. An exposition may treat any length of passage.

One way to clarify expository preaching is to identify what it is not:²²

1. It is not a commentary running from word to word and verse to verse without unity, outline, and pervasive drive.
2. It is not rambling comments and offhand remarks about a passage without a background of thorough exegesis and logical order.
3. It is not a mass of disconnected suggestions and inferences based on the surface meaning of a passage, but not sustained by a depth-and-breadth study of the text.
4. It is not pure exegesis, no matter how scholarly, if it lacks a theme, thesis, outline and development.
5. It is not a mere structural outline of a passage with a few supporting comments, but without other rhetorical and sermonic

²¹Horton Davies, "Expository Preaching: Charles Hadden Spurgeon," *Foundations* 66 (Jan 1963) 14, calls exposition "contextual preaching" to distinguish it from the textual and topical types.

²²These ten suggestions are derived from Faris D. Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1963) vii-viii.

elements.

6. It is not a topical homily using scattered parts of the passage, but omitting discussion of other equally important parts.
7. It is not a chopped-up collection of grammatical findings and quotations from commentaries without a fusing of the same into a smooth, flowing, interesting, and compelling message.
8. It is not a Sunday School-lesson type of discussion that has an outline of the contents, informality, and fervency, but lacks sermonic structure and rhetorical ingredients.
9. It is not a Bible reading that links a number of scattered passages treating a common theme, but fails to handle any of them in a thorough, grammatical, and contextual manner.
10. It is not the ordinary devotional or prayer meeting talk that combines running commentary, rambling remarks, disconnected suggestions, and personal reactions into a semi-inspirational discussion, but lacks the benefit of the basic exegetical-contextual study and persuasive elements.

Before proceeding further, consider the English word group "expose, exposition, expositor, expository." According to Webster, an exposition is a discourse to convey information or explain what is difficult to understand.²³ Application of this to preaching requires that an expositor be one who explains Scripture by laying open the text to public view in order to set forth its meaning, explain what is difficult to understand, and make appropriate application.

John Calvin's centuries-old understanding of exposition is very similar:

First of all, Calvin understood preaching to be the explication of Scripture. The words of Scripture are the source and content of preaching. As an expositor, Calvin brought to the task of preaching all the skills of a humanist scholar. As an interpreter, Calvin explicated the text, seeking its natural, its true, its scriptural meaning. . . . Preaching is not only the explication of

²³ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1988) 438.

Scripture, it is also the application of Scripture. Just as Calvin explicated Scripture word by word, so he applied the Scripture sentence by sentence to the life and experience of his congregation.²⁴

Exposition is not so much defined by the form of the message as it is by the source and process through which the message was formed. Unger poignantly captures this sense:

No matter what the length of the portion explained may be, if it is handled in such a way that its real and essential meaning as it existed in the mind of the particular Biblical writer and as it exists in the light of the over-all context of Scripture is made plain and applied to the present-day needs of the hearers, it may properly be said to be *expository preaching*. . . . It is emphatically not preaching about the Bible, but preaching the Bible. "What saith the Lord" is the alpha and the omega of expository preaching. It begins in the Bible and ends in the Bible and all that intervenes springs from the Bible. In other words, expository preaching is Bible-centered preaching.²⁵

Two other definitions of exposition help clarify what it is:

In preaching, exposition is the detailed interpretation, logical amplification, and practical application of a passage of Scripture.²⁶

At its best, expository preaching is "the presentation of biblical truth, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, Spirit-guided study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit applies first to the life of the preacher and then through him to his congregation."²⁷

²⁴John H. Leith, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and Its Significance for Today in the Light of Recent Research," *RevExp* 86 (1989) 32, 34.

²⁵Merrill F. Unger, *Principles* 33. See also William G. Houser, "Puritan Homiletics: A Caveat," *CTQ* 53/4 (Oct 1989) 255-70. Houser proposes that the power of the Puritan pulpit diminished as the mechanical form of the message took precedence over the process of forming the message. Coupled with boring deliveries and exceedingly long messages, Puritan preaching influence quickly declined when these factors became dominant.

²⁶Ray, *Expository* 71.

²⁷Hadden W. Robinson, "What is Expository Preaching?" *BibSac* 131 (Jan-Mar 1974) 57. For other definitions, see Broadus, *On the Preparation* 119-20 and J. Ellwood

In summary, the following minimal elements identify expository preaching:

1. The message finds its sole source in Scripture.²⁸
2. The message is extracted from Scripture through careful exegesis.
3. The message preparation correctly interprets Scripture in its normal sense and its context.
4. The message clearly explains the original God-intended meaning of Scripture.
5. The message applies the Scriptural meaning for today.

The spirit of expository preaching is exemplified in two biblical texts:

And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading (Neh 8:8).

Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:26-27).

A particular example is Jesus' expounding of Isa 61:1-2 in the synagogue (Luke 4:16-22). He later gave a thematic exposition of Himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27, 32, 44-47). Philip in Acts 8:27-35 expounded Isa 53:7-8 for the Ethiopian eunuch. Stephen preached a historical/biographical expository sermon to the Jews before they stoned him (Acts 7:2-53).

Greer Boyce has aptly summarized this definition of expository

Evans, "Expository Preaching," *BibSac* 111 (Jan-Mar 1954) 59.

²⁸R. B. Kuiper, "Scriptural Preaching," *The Infallible Word* (3rd rev. ed., ed. by Paul Wooley; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967) 253, asserts strongly,

Exposition of Scripture, exposition worthy of its name, is of the very essence of preaching. It follows that it is a serious error to recommend expository preaching as one of several legitimate methods. Nor is it at all satisfactory, after the manner of many conservatives, to extol the expository method as the best. All preaching must be expository. Only expository preaching can be Scriptural.

preaching:

In short, expository preaching demands that, by careful analysis of each text within its immediate context and the setting of the book to which it belongs, the full power of modern exegetical and theological scholarship be brought to bear upon our treatment of the Bible. The objective is not that the preacher may parade all this scholarship in the pulpit. Rather, it is that the preacher may speak faithfully out of solid knowledge of his text, and mount the pulpit steps as, at least, "a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

The preacher's final step is the most crucial and most perilous of all. It is to relate the biblical message both faithfully and relevantly to modern life. At this point all his skill as a craftsman must come into play. We must be warned that faithful exposition of a text does not of itself produce an effective sermon. We need also to be warned, however, that faithfulness to the text is not to be sacrificed for the sake of what we presume to be relevancy. This sacrifice too many modern preachers seem willing to make, producing, as a result, sermons that are a compound of moralistic advice, their own unauthoritative and sometimes unwise opinions, and the latest psychology. Expository preaching, by insisting that the message of the sermon coincide with the theme of the text, calls the preacher back to his true task: the proclamation of the Word of God in and through the Bible.²⁹

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPOSITORY PROCESS

Discussing the biblical foundations and the definition of expository preaching, while essential, is relatively easy. The real challenge comes when one has to move from the classroom to the weekly pulpit. Unless the preacher understands clearly the expository process, he will never achieve his potential in the craft of expository preaching.

As a frame of reference for discussion, we propose that the expository process include four standard elements: preparing the expositor, processing and principlizing the biblical text(s), pulling the expository message together, and preaching the exposition. The four

²⁹Greer W. Boyce, "A Plea for Expository Preaching," *CJT* 8 (Jan 1962) 18-19.

phases need equal emphasis if the exposition is to be fully effective in the sight of both God and the congregation.

*Preparing the Expositor*³⁰

Since God should be the source of expository messages, one who delivers such a message should enjoy intimate communion with God. This is the only way the message can be given with greatest accuracy, clarity, and passion.

Seven areas of preparation qualify a man to stand in the pulpit and declare, "Thus saith the Lord!":

1. The preacher must be a truly regenerated believer in Jesus Christ. He must be a part of God's redeemed family (John 1:12-13). If a man is to deliver a personal message from the Heavenly Father effectively, he must be a legitimate spiritual son, or the message will inevitably be distorted.
2. The preacher must be appointed and gifted by God to the teaching/preaching ministry (Eph 4:11-16; 1 Tim 3:2). Unless a man is divinely enabled to proclaim, he will be inadequate, possessing only human ability.³¹
3. The preacher must be inclined and trained to be a student of God's Word. Otherwise, he cannot carry out the mandate of 2 Tim 2:15 to "cut straight" the Word of God's truth.
4. The preacher must be a mature believer who demonstrates a consistent godly character (1 Tim 3:2-3).³²
5. The preacher must be dependent upon God the Holy Spirit for divine insight and understanding of God's Word (1 Cor 2:12-13).

³⁰D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones devotes a whole chapter to this subject (*Preaching and Preachers* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972] 100-20).

³¹James Stalker, *The Preacher and His Models* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891) 95-99; cf. also John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) 37-46.

³²Louis Goldberg, "Preaching with Power the Word 'Correctly Handled' to Transform Man and His World," *JETS* 27/1 (Mar 1984) 4-5.

Without the Spirit's illumination and power, the message will be relatively impotent.³³

6. The preacher must be in constant prayerful communion with God to receive the full impact of the Word (Ps 119:18). The obvious one to consult for clarification is the original author.³⁴
7. The preacher must first let the developing message sift through his own thinking and life before he can preach it. Ezra provides the perfect model: "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Processing and Principilizing the Biblical Text

A man in tune with God's Spirit and Word is ready to begin a process to discover not only what God originally meant by what He said, but also appropriate principles and applications for today.³⁵

1. Processing the biblical text³⁶ ` A man cannot hope to preach effectively without first having worked diligently and thoroughly through the biblical text. This is the only way the expositor can acquire God's message. Two preachers from different eras comment on this essential feature:

A man cannot hope to preach the Word of God accurately until he has first engaged in a careful, exhaustive exegesis of his text. Herein lies the problem,

³³Kaiser, *Exegetical Theology* 236.

³⁴Charles H. Spurgeon wrote, "If you do not understand a book by a departed writer you are unable to ask him his meaning, but the Spirit, who inspired Holy Scripture, lives forever, and He delights to open the Word to those who seek His instruction" (*Commenting and Commentaries* [New York: Sheldon and Company, 1876] 58-59).

³⁵Nicholas Kurtaneck, "Are Seminaries Preparing Prospective Pastors to Preach the Word of God?" *GTJ*6/2 (Fall 1985) 361-71.

³⁶Specifics of the exegetical process will be outlined in a forthcoming essay in *The Master's Seminary Journal*. See Snodgrass, "Exegesis" 5-19 for a basic nine-step approach.

for competent exegesis requires time, brain power, "blood, sweat, and tears," all saturated with enormous doses of prayer.³⁷

You will soon reveal your ignorance as an expositor if you do not study; therefore diligent reading will be forced upon you. Anything which compels the preacher to search the grand old Book is of immense service to him. If any are jealous lest the labor should injure their constitutions, let them remember that mental work up to a certain point is most refreshing, and where the Bible is the theme toil is delight. It is only when mental labor passes beyond the bounds of common sense that the mind becomes enfeebled by it, and this is not usually reached except by injudicious persons, or men engaged on topics which are unrefreshing and disagreeable; but our subject is a recreative one, and to young men like ourselves the vigorous use of our faculties is a most healthy exercise.³⁸

2. Principlizing the biblical text ` Preaching does not stop with understanding ancient languages, history, culture, and customs. Unless the centuries can be bridged with contemporary relevance in the message, then the preaching experience differs little from a classroom encounter. One must first process the text for original meaning and then principlize the text for current applicability.³⁹ One's study falls short of the goal if this step is omitted or slighted.

Pulling the Expository Message Together

At the third stage the expositor has finished his deep study and asks himself, "How can I blend my findings in such a way that my flock will understand the Bible and its requirements for their lives today?" In a sense, the art of exposition commences here.⁴⁰

³⁷John A. Sproule, "Biblical Exegesis and Expository Preaching" (unpublished lecture at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind., 1978) 1.

³⁸Spurgeon, *Commenting* 47.

³⁹H. Cunliffe-Jones wrote, "We must be able to say not only 'This is what this passage originally meant,' but also 'This passage is true in this particular way for us in the twentieth century.'" ("The Problems of Biblical Exposition," *ExpTim* 65 [Oct 1953] 5).

⁴⁰It is helpful to distinguish between a sermon, a homily, and an exposition.

Nolan Howington uses a graphic description to relate exegesis and exposition: "Thus an exegete is like a diver bringing up pearls from the ocean bed; an expositor is like the jeweler who arrays them in orderly fashion and in proper relation to each other."⁴¹

Titles, outlines, introductions, illustrations, and conclusions enter the process at this stage. The message moves from the raw materials mined by exegesis to the finished product of exposition, which the hearers hopefully will find interesting, convicting, and compelling. The key to this step is remembering what distinguishes exposition: explain-ing the text, especially parts that are hard to understand or apply. It is equally important to remember not only the text, but the audience as well.

F. B. Meyer offers this advice when thinking of the listeners and what sermonic form the message will take:

There are five considerations that must be met in every successful sermon. There should be an appeal to the Reason, to the Conscience, to the Imagination, to the Emotions, and to the Will; and for each of these there is no method so serviceable as systematic exposition.⁴²

Preaching the Exposition

The final decision to be made by the expositor relates to his preaching mode, whether from memory or from notes. This step is perhaps the most neglected in preparation by those committed to true exposition. Too often expositors assume that proper work done in the study will ensure that the pulpit will care for itself. It is true that there

"Homily" comes from the Greek *mōla* which, like the Latin *sermo*, means "conversation" or "talk." The Latin word is the basis of the English "sermon," so in a general sense, all three are the same. For the purpose of this article, however, we choose to use the phrase "expository message" or "exposition" so that its source, process, and purpose are unmistakably distinguishable from the other two terms.

⁴¹Howington, "Expository" 62.

⁴²F. B. Meyer, *Expository Preaching Plans and Methods* (New York: George H. Duran Company, 1912) 100.

is no substitute for hard work in the study, but equally hard work in the pulpit will reward both the preacher and the flock to a much greater degree. James Stalker effectively draws attention to this challenge:

Ministers do not get enough of result in the attention, satisfaction and delight of their hearers for the work they do; and the failure is in the vehicle of communication between the study and the congregation—that is to say, in the delivery of the sermon. What I am pleading for is, that there should be more work to show for the coal consumed.⁴³

At the point of delivery, it is essential for the expositor to be clear in his purpose. Otherwise, the message preached may be far afield from the message studied and the message of Scripture. J. I. Packer makes this point by contrasting what preaching is not with what it is:

The purpose of preaching is not to stir people to action while bypassing their minds, so that they never see what reason God gives them for doing what the preacher requires of them (that is manipulation); nor is the purpose to stock people's minds with truth, no matter how vital and clear, which then lies fallow and does not become the seed-bed and source of changed lives (that is academicism). . . . The purpose of preaching is to inform, persuade, and call forth an appropriate response to the God whose message and instruction are being delivered.⁴⁴

Also of importance is the language used in communicating the message. It should be clear, understandable, picturesque, and most of all, biblical. The following strong warning issued over twenty years ago is still applicable:

I urge adherence to Biblical terminology. Much modern preaching has taken a psychological and sociological turn. It is mysterious and mystical. It sets forth

⁴³Stalker, *The Preacher* 121.

⁴⁴J. I. Packer, "Why Preach?" *The Preacher and Preaching* (Samuel T. Logan, ed.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986) 9.

psychiatric ideas, often using the terms of the psychiatrist rather than those of the Christian evangelist. It speaks of repression, fixations, traumas, neuroses, and syndromes, world without end. I claim that in the main these are not terms that the Holy Spirit can use effectively.⁴⁵

Another crucial matter is the dynamics of speech, i.e. audience relationship and communicative effectiveness. Vines and Allen outline three basic principles for every expositor:

In short, effective communication from the pulpit must be informed by Aristotle's rhetorical triad of logos, ethos, and pathos. This involves a thorough knowledge of the subject matter and here is where there is no substitute for thorough exegesis. It involves a thorough knowledge of the speaker-audience dynamic such that the preacher must speak from integrity and his audience must know of his sincerity and genuineness. Finally,⁴⁶ it involves a knowledge of people and how they respond to the spoken word.

Above all, the expositor must expound the Word like Paul did in Corinth (1 Cor 2:1-5). He did not come as a clever orator or scholarly genius; he did not arrive with his own message; he did not preach with personal confidence in his own strength. Rather, Paul preached the testimony of God and Christ's death, and this, with well-placed confidence in God's power to make the message life-changing. Unless this kind of wholesale dependence on God marks the modern expositor's preaching, his exposition will lack the divine dimension that only God can provide.

In summary, of the four steps of the complete expository experience—preparing the expositor, processing and principlizing the biblical text, pulling the expository message together, and preaching the exposition—no phase can be omitted without seriously jeopardizing the truthfulness or usefulness of God's Word mediated through the expositor.

⁴⁵William W. Ayer, "The Art of Effective Preaching," *BibSac* 124 (Jan-Mar 1967) 41.

⁴⁶Jerry Vines and David Allen, "Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and Proclamation," *Criswell Theological Review* 1/2 (Spring 1987) 333-34.

CONSIDERING EXPOSITIONAL ADVANTAGES⁴⁷

Expository preaching best emulates biblical preaching both in content and style. This is the chief benefit. Besides this, other advantages listed in random order include the following:

1. Expository preaching best achieves the biblical intent of preaching: delivering God's message.
2. Expository preaching promotes scripturally authoritative preaching.
3. Expository preaching magnifies God's Word.
4. Expository preaching provides a storehouse of preaching material.
5. Expository preaching develops the pastor as a man of God's Word.
6. Expository preaching ensures the highest level of Bible knowledge for the flock.
7. Expository preaching promotes thinking and living biblically.
8. Expository preaching encourages both depth and comprehensive-ness.
9. Expository preaching forces the treatment of hard-to-interpret texts.
10. Expository preaching allows for handling broad theological themes.
11. Expository preaching keeps preachers away from ruts and hobby horses.
12. Expository preaching prevents the insertion of human ideas.
13. Expository preaching guards against misinterpretation of the biblical text.
14. Expository preaching imitates the preaching of Christ and the apostles.
15. Expository preaching brings out the best in the expositor.

⁴⁷James W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988 rpt.) 228-53, develops some of these advantages in more detail.

RECLAIMING EXPOSITORY PREACHING

As the twentieth century sets and a new millennium dawns, we must reclaim the method and art of expository preaching for the coming generation. No one said it would be easy. It is quite the opposite. No other method of preaching requires so much work. At the same time, no other method rewards so richly.

If the suggestions which have been offered are well founded, it will be obvious that expository preaching is a difficult task. It requires much close study of Scripture in general, and much special study of the particular passage to be treated. To make a discourse which shall be explanatory and yet truly oratorical, bearing a rich mass of details but not burdened with them, full of Scripture and abounding in practical applications, to bring even dull, uninformed, and unspiritual minds into interested and profitable contact with an extended portion of the Bible`of course, this must be difficult.⁴⁸

While the growing trend among today's preachers is toward consumer satisfaction and contemporary relevancy, we reaffirm that biblical preaching must be first directed toward divine satisfaction and kingdom relevance. Reflect carefully on Mark Steege's clarion call to expositional preaching and its note of biblical authority:

Through our preaching the Lord seeks to change men's lives. We are to be evangelists, to awaken men to their high calling in Christ. We are to be heralds, proclaiming the messages of God to men. We are to be ambassadors, calling men to be reconciled to God. We are to be shepherds, nourishing and caring for men day by day. We are to be stewards of the mysteries of God, giving men the proper Word for their every need. We are to be witnesses, telling men of all that God has done for them. We are to be overseers, urging men to live their lives to God. We are to be ministers, preparing men to minister with us to others. As we reflect on each of these phases of our work, what emphasis each gives to the importance of preaching! What a task the Lord has given us!⁴⁹

⁴⁸Broadus, *On the Preparation* 124.

⁴⁹Mark J. Steege, "Can Expository Preaching Still Be Relevant in These Days?" *The*

Although R. L. Dabney wrote over a century ago, we join him today in urging,

. . . that the expository method (understood as that which explains extended passages of Scripture in course) be restored to that equal place which it held in the primitive and Reformed Churches; for, first, this is obviously the only natural and efficient way to do that which is the sole legitimate end of preaching, convey the whole message of God to the people.⁵⁰

Springfielder 34 (Mar 1971) 261.

⁵⁰Robert L. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979 rpt.) 78-79.

GRANDEUR AND GRACE:
GOD'S TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE
IN PSALM 113¹

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Psalm 113 is a rich treasury for all. Literarily, it is a masterpiece of semantical, syntactical, and structural development. The Spirit of God inspired this psalmist to combine beauty with bounty, resulting in a highly functional piece of art that amplifies the psalm's theological substance and applicational summons. Liturgically, this hymn of praise has played a significant role in both Passover week and Passion week. Applicationally, it has served as a well of refreshment for needy people throughout its history. Theologically, the psalm's message of God's transcendence and immanence provides substance to the promise of refreshment. Today Psalm 113 continues to invite the people of God to come and drink deeply.

* * * * *

A TRANSLATION

- 1 Praise the LORD!
O servants of the LORD, praise *Him*!
Praise the name of the LORD!
- 2 Let the name of the LORD be blessed
both now and forever!
- 3 From east to west,
let the name of the LORD be praised!
- 4 The LORD *is* high above all nations;
His glory *rises* above the heavens.

¹This essay was originally presented at the Forty-first Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in San Diego, CA, in November 1989 and has been adapted for incorporation in this issue of *The Master's Seminary Journal*.

- 5 Who is like the LORD our God,
who is enthroned on high,
6 who condescends to care for *things*
in the heavens and upon the earth?

- 7 *He lifts up the* downtrodden from *the* dust;
He raises the destitute from the dump
 8 to make *them* dwell with nobles,
 with the nobles of His people.
 9 *He makes the* woman barren in household to dwell
as a joyful mother of sons.
 Praise the LORD!

INTRODUCTION

One reason for the spiritual poverty of some Christians is their ignorance or failure to reflect on who God is. In so doing, they have robbed themselves of a vital source of help and encouragement. No better solution to their problem is available than a careful study of Psalm 113.

"Presence-theology" discussions and debates about whether or not in the person of the LORD is ever genuinely conceived of as dwelling on earth have generally been counter-productive in the edification of the church.² Finite and fallible human deliberations, energized by overly simplistic assumptions, have both impeded the study of key texts and skewed their balanced theology. Conclusions that see contradictions rather than complementary truths have resulted, especially in reference to God's transcendence and immanence. Consequently, this investigation will undertake a long-overdue examination of the psalm's data without recourse to critical agency.

Psalm 113 provides a natural theological entrance into two corollary thoughts about God, His transcendence and His immanence. As in other texts, God's attributes of greatness and goodness, His characteristics of grandeur and glory, harmoniously blend in a theological duet. The psalm is an excellent avenue for a deeper appreciation of God's attributes.

LITERARY ENHANCEMENTS

Before proceeding with an exposition of the psalm, a look at how its great themes are enhanced by a variety of stylistic features is beneficial.

Semantical

Word-plays on the roots **<wr** (*rwm*, "to be high, exalted") and **bvy** (*y*)

²See John Gray, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 215; Martin Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 37, 194-95, 300; Walter Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978) 70-81; Eugene Maly, "'The Highest Heavens Cannot Contain You': Immanence and Transcendence in the Deuteronomist," *Standing Before God* (ed. by A. Finkel and L. Frizzell; New York: KTAV, 1981) 100-101; von Rad, "Oranw," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament [TDNT]* 5:504-7; cf. the other hypotheses which undergird most of the related discussions pertaining to "place-theology" and "name-theology." For brief critiques and interaction, note W. C. Kaiser, "b," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament [TWOT]* 1:411-12; *idem*, "<," *TWOT* 2:934-35.

dwell") magnify this psalm's astounding development.³ God's *rank*, appropriately summarized by the qal forms < (*rm*, "he is exalted") and / (*lebet*, "to dwell") in vv. 4a and 5b, does not inhibit God's ability to *rescue* those in distress, as well depicted in the corresponding hiphil forms <y (*ym*, "to raise, lift up"), **yyoh** (*lhb*, "to [make] dwell"), and **yyom** (*mb*, "to make [her] dwell, abide") (i.e. vv. 7b, 8a, 9). This exalted One mercifully and characteristically exalts lowly and exasperates people. He who is transcendent enables them to transcend their stressful circumstances.

Syntactical

Syntactical subtleties also accentuate the psalm's theological motifs. For example, the introductory crescendo of *hallel*s (i.e., "praises") (v. 1) establishes the *priority* of praise to Yahweh. Then in the next two verses an inverse parallelism in four lines conveys the *propriety* of praise.⁵ The pual participle *Ob ("blessed") from *rb (*brk*, "to bless")⁶ in v. 2a is paralleled by its counterpart (mhulll, "to be praised") in v. 3b. Correspondingly, the d (#ad, "unto, until") . . . (min, "from") prepositional combination of v. 2b is immediately followed by its counterpart in v. 3a.

Verse 4, containing explicit assertions of God's transcendence, is highlighted by progressions and parallels. The abbreviated hy (*yh*, "the LORD") of v. 1a, hwhy (*yhwh*, "the LORD") of v. 1b, and the circumlocution hwhy < (*m yhwh*, "name of the LORD") of vv. 1c, 2a, and 3b anticipate the exalted one, *yhwh*, who is the subject of v. 4a. The Tetragrammaton is followed by another significant circumlocution in v. 4b, odob (*kbd*, "His glory").⁷

Especially important in v. 4 are the corresponding phrases with l ("above"), a preposition eminently suited to convey the concept of transcendence. An upward and outward movement from "over/above all people/nations" (v. 4a) to "over/above the heavens" (v. 4b) emphasizes the concept, possibly creating the impression that God is far removed from the cares of His creatures and creation. Nevertheless, the widening concentric circles of transcendence subsequently

³Cf. Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word, 1983) 100.

⁴Most interpreters construe **yyom** as a hiphil participle from **bvy**; contra. David Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraun, 1980) 249, who suggests it derives from **bwv** (i.e. "who transforms . . .").

⁵A bridge to this chiasm is provided by the hwhy <>/ at the end of v. 1, since occurrences of hwhy < serve as book ends for vv. 2-3.

⁶*rb is part of a repertoire of Old Testament praise synonyms; cf. llh, hdy, ,nr, ldg, <wr, rmz, etc.

⁷The odob of v. 4b may be construed as standing at the head of a parallel noun clause or as governed by the < of v. 4a. Concerning the latter option, Buitendijk translates, "His glory transcends . . .," arguing that "ram is a case of zeugma and is to be construed as a predicate also of 'kebedo'" (Moses Buitendijk, *The Psalms Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* [New York: KTAV, 1969] 348).

⁸Cf. BDB, 752, 755; Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) 51; and G. L. Carr, "h," *TWOT* 2:669-70.

reverse, and the reality of the LORD's immanence emerges (vv. 6-9). This "revelation" is dramatically portrayed through a downward and inward movement (v. 6) which makes low⁹ to care for matters not only "in the heavens" but also "upon the earth."¹⁰ This reality is vividly documented by selected examples of intertextuality (vv. 7-9).

The rhetorical question¹¹ of v. 5 is pivotal. Patterns of the basic "who-is-like" formula recur throughout the Old Testament (e.g. Exod 15:11; Deut 3:24; Ps 3:1; Isa 40:12 ff.; 46:5; etc.) as a part of theological affirmations and in personal names. Both usages serve as reminders of the LORD's uniqueness.¹³ There is no one like Yahweh!

In the middle of v. 5 comes a shift of emphasis from being to doing. Yet the particular causative participles of vv. 5b and 6a still function substantive apposition with the *nywO1 eq \O(,') hwhy* (*yhwh @ eq \O(+,e)l eq \O(-,e) \O(=,e)n eq \O(=,u)*, "the LORD our God") (v. 5a).¹⁴ Furthermore, the apposition of . . . *y eq \O(I,h)y eq \O(I,B) eq \O(I,g) eq \O(I,e) eq \O(a,h)* (*hammag eq \O(+,e)b eq \O(=,i)h eq \O(+,i)*, "to make high, exalt") (v. 5b) with . . . *y eq \O(I,l)y eq \O(I,p) eq \O(I,v) eq \O(a,M) eq \O(a,h)* (*hamma eq \O(+,s)p eq \O(=,i)l eq \O(=,i)*, "to make low, condescend") (v. 6a) is extraordinary. The LORD who literally "makes high to dwell" (a poignant summary of His transcendence) is the very one who "makes low to dwell" (that is, *to care for* the needs of His subjects (i.e. an arresting introduction to immanence). By this stark apposition transcendence and immanence join hands in a complementary manifesta-tion of the incomparable one (i.e. v. 5a).

Structural

Depending upon emphases on form and/or content, the psalm may be

⁹Cf. E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, eds., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* [GKC] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 350 (par. 114n).

¹⁰Besides the impacting reversal of order (i.e. v. 4: earthly, heavenly; v. 6: heavenly, earthly) the shift from the preposition **ל** in v. 4 to occurrences of **ע** in v. 6 contributes to the change in mood (from separation to involvement).

¹¹Obviously, when proper attention is paid to the immediate context, "there is . . . much more than rhetoric in the question of verse 5, 'Who is like the Lord our God?'" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 150* [Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1975] 402).

¹²Survey BDB, pp. 567-68, for the proper names built upon this theological formula.

¹³Cf., e.g., C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1966) 22, 99, 102.

¹⁴Through a less formal syntactical relationship, even the anarthrous participles of vv. 5b and 6a continue as vital links in a strong theological chain.

¹⁵For various views on the so-called *hîreq compaginîs*, see discussions in GKC 253-54 (par. 90); Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970) 101; Delitzsch, *Psalms (Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, eds., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, n.d.) 3:203-4; Avi Hurvitz, "Originals and Imitations in Biblical Poetry: A Comparative Examination of I Samuel 2:1-10 and Psalm 113:5-9," *Biblical and Post-Biblical Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (ed. by A. Kort and S. Morschauer; Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 1985) 119-22; A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972) 2:782; and Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 99, n. 6a. Cf. also the forms in vv. 5b and 6a (probably), and 9a.

divided differently into major sections.¹⁶ A basic analysis of the psalm's form to the following twofold division: "a hymnic introduction" (i.e. vv. 1-3) and "reasons why God is worthy of praise and homage" (i.e. vv. 4-9).¹⁷ Most structural analysts, however, prefer a threefold division.¹⁸ A few of these end divisions are vv. 1 and 3 (i.e. vv. 1, 2-3, 4-9),¹⁹ while the majority prefer the following strophic division: vv. 1-3, 4-6, 7-9.²⁰

Kidner's "high above . . ." (i.e. vv. 1-4)/"far down . . ." (i.e. vv. 5-9) separation represents a twofold division based largely on thematic considerations.²¹ This breakdown naturally emphasizes the psalm's overarching pedagogy: the "nothing too great for Him, no-one too small."²² A shift to the interrogative mood at v. 5 lends some weight to this twofold division (i.e. coming between vv. 4 and 5).²³ The following propositional outline attempts to integrate the psalm's various literary phenomena with its two thematic divisions:

- Two choruses of thanksgiving flow from primary theological incentives:
- 1A. (vv. 1-4) The first chorus of thanksgiving flows from the incentive of God's transcendence.
 - 1B. (vv. 1-3) The worshipful response to God's transcendence
 - 1C. (v. 1) The exhortation:
 - 1D. Its reverberation: the threefold *hallel*
 - 2D. Its responsibility: the servants/worshippers of the LORD
 - 3D. Its Recipient: the LORD
 - 2C. (vv. 2-3) The extent:
 - 1D. (v. 2) considered temporally
 - 2D. (v. 3) considered geographically
 - 2B. (v. 4) The worshipful recognition of God's transcendence
 - 1C. (v. 4a) He transcends all that is earthly
 - 2C. (v. 4b) He transcends all that is heavenly
 - 2A. (vv. 5-9) The second chorus of thanksgiving flows from the incentive of God's immanence.
 - 1B. (vv. 5-6) The interrogatives develop His immanence
 - 1C. (v. 5) The interrogatives of v. 5 reveal that God's immanence

¹⁶For an excellent survey of the options, see Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 99-100.

¹⁷Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* 2:780.

¹⁸Based upon an older method of grouping various combinations of parallelism Briggs adopted a fourfold strophic division (Charles Augustus Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907] 2:387).

¹⁹See Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 99.

²⁰Cf. the strophic and poetic analyses of K. K. Sacon, "A Methodological Remark on Exegesis in the Preaching of Psalm 113," *Nihon no Shingaku* 25 (1986) 26-42 (see *Old Testament Abstracts* 10/1 [1987] 65); Peter C. Craigie, "Psalm 113," *Interpretation* 39/1 (Jan. 1985) 70-74. Craigie as a rule develops the strophes in reverse order because "we will only be able to respond honestly to the opening summons to praise when we have perceived God's merciful dealings with human beings (vv. 7-9) and his majesty in heaven and earth (vv. 4-6)" (ibid., 71).

²¹Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* 401.

²²I.e. Kidner's title for Psalm 113 (ibid.).

²³Cf. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 100.

- is uncompromising (i.e. it does not come at the expense of transcendence)²⁴
- 2C. (v. 6) The interrogative of v. 6 reveals that God's immanence is unassuming²⁵
- 3B. (vv. 7-9) The illustrations dramatize His immanence
- 1C. (vv. 7-8) The general illustration of God's concern for the downtrodden
- 2C. (v. 9) The special illustration of God's consolation for the childless

BACKGROUND

Another helpful preliminary to the psalm's exposition is an awareness of its liturgical background. Leslie conjectured that Psalm 113 "is a liturgical choir hymn which was sung antiphonally by two Levitical choirs."²⁶ The specific details of its usage are unknown, although "the setting was clearly cultic."²⁷

That it came to be recognized as "a classical Hebrew hymn"²⁸ is confirmed by its inclusion in the "Hallel" (i.e. Psalms 113-118) which "is recited on all major biblical festivals, with the exception of Rosh Ha-Shanah and the Day of Atonement."²⁹ This grouping "is also recited during the Passover *seder* service (Tosef., Suk. 3:2), when it is known as *Hallel Mizri* ('Egyptian *Hallel*') because of the exodus from Egypt which the *seder* commemorates."³⁰ The latter use probably relates to "The Last Supper":³¹

It is interesting to recall that probably just as Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn after they had eaten the Passover meal (Matt. 26:30) almost certainly Pss. 115-118 so most likely before

²⁴This particular reminder of an uncompromised transcendence at the outset of a consideration of our LORD's immanence* is supported by scriptural parallels. The most obvious example is Job 34:57:15:

- 1A. He has a transcendent manifestation of glory above (Isaiah in introducing the psalm focuses upon His transcendence)
- 1B. He is separate in position: "Thus says the high and lifted up One"
- 2B. He is separate in existence: "*who* perpetually exists"
- 3B. He is separate in character: "*whose* name is holy"
- 2A. He has an immanent manifestation of grace below (the LORD in speaking focuses upon His own immanence)
- *1B. *He is near but without compromise*: "I dwell in a high and holy *place*"
- 2B. He is near with grace: "and with the crushed and lowly in spirit"
- 3B. He is near with purpose: "in order to revive . . ."

²⁵The ultimate proof of this came in the Incarnation.

²⁶Elmer A. Leslie, *The Psalms* (New York: Abingdon, 1949) 192.

²⁷Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 99.

²⁸Craigie, "Psalm 113" 70.

²⁹"Hallel," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7:1198-99.

³⁰*Ibid.* On the so-called Egyptian Hallel, cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (trans. by D. R. Ap-Thomas; Nashville: Abingdon, 1962) 1:3.

³¹On the Passover setting of "The Last Supper," see J. Behm, "klv," *TDNT* 3:732-34, and J. Jeremias, "psxa," *TDNT* 5:896-904.

meal they had sung Pss. 113-114.³²

Craigie's summary helps to complete the historical survey of Psalm 113 in wor

With the passage of centuries, the psalm became more closely associated with the celebratory of Passover. Indeed, in the modern *Passover Haggadah*, Psalm 113 is still recited in the context of the blessing of the cup of wine, prior to the participation in the Passover meal. And in Christianity, Psalm 113 was traditionally designated as one of the Proper Psalms for evening worship on Easter Day, thus linking the Christian use of the psalm to its ancient Jewish antecedents. In both Judaism and Christianity, Psalm 113 was a special psalm employed in the worship of God at those times in the liturgical calendar when praise of excellence should be addressed to the Almighty.³³

Verses 7-9 of the psalm have been seen as "a connecting link between the Song of Hannah and the Magnificat of the Virgin."³⁴ In fact, Craigie calls 1 Sam 2:1-10 the prehistory of Psalm 113:7-9 and Luke 1:46-55 its posthistory.³⁵

EXPOSITION

The psalm opens and closes with **H** **u**l **e**q \O(A,y) **u**l **e**q \O(,l) \O(a,h) (*hal e*q \O(+,e)l *e*q \O(=,u) y *e*q \O(~,a)h, "praise the LORD"),³⁶ a formula that serves as a boundary, since

Psalm 113 bids all men to let the praise of God resound all the world over and motivate all to appeal with the declaration that this incomparable God, transcending the heavens in glory, is the Sovereign of the world who controls the affairs of men below from his throne on high.

Outside this psalm, the reverberating invitations to praise in v. 1 most closely parallel Ps 135:1.³⁸

Selected from an arsenal of worship synonyms,³⁹ **11h** (*hll*, "praise"), is especially suited to elicit jubilant praise⁴⁰ from the community.⁴¹ The voc

³²Leslie, *The Psalms* 192-93.

³³Craigie, "Psalm 113" 70.

³⁴J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966) 1:322. The 1 Sam 2 parallels are not an automatic indication of a postexilic date for Ps 113; cf. John T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35/2 (Apr 1973) 154.

³⁵Craigie, "Psalm 113" 71.

³⁶See Sacon in *OTA* 10/1 (Feb 1987) 65. There is no solid evidence for suggesting that the occurrences are later liturgical additions (e.g. Buitenweiser, *The Psalms* 348). Additionally, the placement of the final **H** **u**l before Ps. 114 (LXX 113) in the LXX is incorrect. Consequently, the twenty-four occurrences of the formula **H** **u**l bracket this great hymn.

³⁷Buitenweiser, *The Psalms* 348.

³⁸If the *hallel* pattern of Ps 113:1 is designated as a, b, c, then the corresponding *hallel* exhortations of Ps. 135:1 reflect an a, c, b order.

³⁹For some of the most important ones, note H. Ringgren, "11h *hll*I and II," *TDOT* 3:406; and C. C. Coppel, "1 II," *TWOT* 1:217.

⁴⁰*TDOT* 3:404; Coppel adds, from an overall assessment of **11h**, that "belief and joy are inextricably intertwined" (*TWOT* 1:217).

⁴¹Ringgren notes that the summons to praise with **11h** is almost always in the plural

construction **hw̄y ȳ eq̄ \O(E,d) eq̄ \O(⌈,b) eq̄ \O(a,;) (# \O(+,e)d eq̄ \O(=,e) yhw̄h**, "servants of the LORD")⁴² is a designation for "worshipping community,"⁴³ "the loyal among Israel."⁴⁴ It is also noteworthy the root **db̄;** (**#bd**, "to serve, worship") denotes both service and worship, emphasizing "the privileges of the worshippers as well as their duties and responsibilities."⁴⁶

"The name of the LORD" (**hw̄y < eq̄ \O(E,v)>/ eq̄ \O(e,') [@ \O(+,s) eq̄ \O(~,e)m yhw̄h**]) is the object of the third echoing imperative from Deuteronomy 10:17-18 (Remembering that eq̄ \O(+,s) eq̄ \O(~,e) m "in the OT often included existence, character, and reputation,"⁴⁷ "the *name of the LORD*" "signifies the whole of God's self-disclosure of God."⁴⁸ Passages such as Exodus 33:19-23 and 34:5-7 indicate that eq̄ \O(+,s) eq̄ \O(~,e) m, when applied to God, encompasses the totality of God's attributes and actions.

The origin of the Tetragrammaton *yhw̄h* is in question. "While no consensus exists, the name is generally thought to be a verbal form derived from the root *hyh*, later *hyh*, 'to be at hand, exist (phenomenally), come to pass.'"⁴⁹ Significantly, the consensus of modern scholarship supports the biblical text [cf. Exod. 3:15] associating the name of Yahweh with the root **hyh**. . . .⁵⁰

The jussive exhortation **ȳ eq̄ \O(I,h) eq̄ \O(⌈,y) (y eq̄ \O(+,s) eq̄ \O(=,i)** standing at the head of vv. 2-3 (i.e. "*May/Let the name of the LORD be praised*") centers on the *priority* of praise, and the subordinate *pual* participles in these verses with their compound prepositional phrases combine to introduce

associated with the community, while **hdwh** is generally singular being associated with an individual (*TDOT* 3:408). Cf. Coppes' discussion of the propriety of such a corporate reference (*TWOT* 1:217).

⁴²LXX tradition takes **hw̄y** as the object of **ul**, thereby construing the **ȳ** as an independent vocative (i.e. as if it were **<ȳ**). As Allen notes in the reference to this tradition, "Probably at an early stage abbreviation . . . has been *assumed*" [emphasis mine] (*Psalms 101-150* 99).

⁴³W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, "paw Ueo," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [1971] 5:475, n. 122.

⁴⁴A. Cohen, *The Psalms*, Soncino books of the Bible (London: Soncino, 1945) 378; in the light of Deut 3, Cohen widens the scope of inclusion, commenting "the call is made to all, Israelites and Gentiles who acknowledge God" (ibid.). On the other hand, some would restrict **hw̄y ȳ** to the Levitical circle. Both Allen and Anderson entertain this option; however, they commendably opt for the more comprehensive interpretation (see *Psalms 101-150* 99, and *Psalms 2:780*, respectively).

⁴⁵E.g. its occurrences in 2 Kgs 10:18-24 and Jesus' association of the twin concepts in Matthew 23:17 (referring to Deut 6:13).

⁴⁶Anderson, *Psalms 2:780*; for a basic survey, see W. C. Kaiser, "**d**," *TWOT* 2:639-41.

⁴⁷W. C. Kaiser, "<," *TWOT* 2:934. Kaiser documents his conclusion with 1 Sam 25:25, among other passages.

⁴⁸Ibid.; cf. Delitzsch, *Psalms* 3:204-05. Anderson corroborates, noting that **hw̄y ȳ** "comprises primarily the whole self-revelation of Yahweh to his people; the phrase may be a circumlocution for 'Yahweh'" (*Psalms 2:780*). Kidner's reference to "the Revealed" is also correct (*Psalms 73-150* 401).

⁴⁹D. N. Freedman, M. P. O'Connor, and H. Riggren, "**hw̄y**," *TDOT* 5:500.

⁵⁰Ibid., 5:513. Cf. Payne's conclusions in "**h** II," J. B. Payne, *TWOT* 1:210-12; contra some other scholars' Harris' editorial comments within Payne's article.

propriety of universal praise. Indeed, "no less response in space or time is warranted of him."⁵¹

Blessing formulas are common throughout ancient Near Eastern literature. The Old Testament is saturated with them (for an identical parallel to Ps 113:2; Job 1:21).⁵² Based on the previous *hallel*s and a subsequent parallelism with $\backslash O(A, L) \text{ eq } \backslash O(U, h) \text{ eq } \backslash O([, m) (m \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, e)hull \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)l, "$ praised") in v. 3b, $* \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, r)Ob \text{ eq } \backslash O([, m) hwhy < \text{ eq } \backslash O(E, v) \text{ eq } \backslash O(I, h) \text{ eq } \backslash O([, y) (y \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, e)h \text{ eq } \backslash O(=, i) \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, s) \text{ eq } \backslash O(=, e) m) m \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, e)b \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, o)r \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)k$, "let the name of the LORD be blessed") stands as "an expression synonymous with 'Praise the LORD.'"⁵³ Such praise is unrestricted in its duration (i.e. $< \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, l)o; > d \text{ eq } \backslash O(a, ;)$ $\backslash O([, w) h \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, ?) \text{ eq } \backslash O(a, ;)$ $\text{ eq } \backslash O(E, m) [m \text{ eq } \backslash O(=, e)\# \backslash O(\sim, a)h w \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, e)\#ad \# \text{ eq } \backslash O(=, o)l \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)m]$).⁵⁴ Literally, it should conclude "from now and forever,"⁵⁵ i.e. "forever, without ceasing."⁵⁶

In the middle of the inverted parallelism of vv. 3-4, a spatial focus repeats the emphasis on time: $o'ob \text{ eq } \backslash O([, m) > d \text{ eq } \backslash O(a, ;)$ $v \text{ eq } \backslash O(e, v) > i \text{ eq } \backslash O(a, r) \text{ eq } \backslash O([, z) \text{ eq } \backslash O(I, M) \text{ eq } \backslash O(mimmizra \text{ eq } \backslash O(>, h) \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, s)eme \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, s) \#ad \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, e)b \text{ eq } \backslash O(=, o) \backslash O(=, o)$, "from the sun's place of rising to its entrance,"⁵⁷ "throughout the world from east to west."⁵⁸ (v. 4a). Concerning $l \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, L) \text{ eq } \backslash O(U, h) \backslash O([, m) (m \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, e)hull \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)l$, "being praised") (v. 3b),⁵⁹ the participle describes God as "worthy of praise."⁶⁰ The following assertions of transcendence and immanence support the praiseworthiness of His name all over and everywhere.

One of the major spheres of usage of $<ur (r \text{ eq } \backslash O(=, u)m$, "to be exalted") (cf. $r \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)m$ at the head of v. 4) is "height as symbolic of positions such as glory and exaltation."⁶¹ Besides v. 4a, several passages corroborate God's exaltation, e.g., Ps 46:11; 99:2; 138:6;⁶² Isa 6:1; 57:15⁶³; etc.⁶⁴ Furthermore

⁵¹Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 101.

⁵²For a survey, see J. Scharbert, "***rb**," *TDOT* 2:284-88; for a condensed presentation, see Oswald, "*****," *TWOT* 1:132-33.

⁵³Anderson, *Psalms* 2:780.

⁵⁴For occurrences of this identical compound, cf. Pss 115:18; 121:8; 125:2; 131:3; Isa 9:6; Micah 4:7; and for similar compounds, cf. Pss 41:14; 90:2; 103:17; 106:48; Jer 7:7; 1 Chr 16:36; 29:55 BDB, 763.

⁵⁶Anderson, *Psalms* 2:780.

⁵⁷Cf. BDB, 99-100, 280-81. See also this compound prepositional phrase in Ps 50:1; Mal 1:11.

⁵⁸A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge University Press, 1906) 678.

⁵⁹Cf. the occurrences of the pual participle from **llh** in Pss. 18:4; 48:2; 96:4; 145:3.

⁶⁰J. Herrmann and H. Greeven, "exomai," *TDNT* 2:786; for some discussion see *TDOT* 3:409.

⁶¹A. Bowling, "**<ur**," *TWOT* 2:837.

⁶²Note the interesting juxtaposition of the roots **<wr** and **lfv** in Ps 138:6; cf. Ps 113:4; 113:6a ff.

⁶³Note the parallelism between **<** and the root **'cn** in both of these verses from Isaiah.

⁶⁴For some pertinent observations, see Robert Baker Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Test*

prepositional phrase $\langle \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{I}, \text{Y}) \text{O} \text{G} \rangle \text{I} \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{A}, \text{K}) \rangle \text{I} \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{A}, \text{K}) \rangle \text{I}$ (*#al`kol`g eq \O(=, o)yim*, "above all nations") provides greater resolution to the portrait of God's transcendence.⁶⁵ When attention is fixed upon the exalted LORD, all the *g eq \O(=, o)yim* pale into insignificance (cf., e.g., Ps 46:11; Isa 40:17).

The LORD's *k eq \O(~, a)b eq \O(=, o)d* (v. 4b), like His *eq \O(+, s) eq \O(+, s)m*, refers to "God's self-disclosure,"⁶⁶ often standing for "Yahweh himself."⁶⁷ That very "glory," representing all He is and does, that surpasses the high heavens.

These affirmations of transcendence (v. 4) are a powerful incentive for the invited praise (vv. 1-3). Although the order is switched, similar choruses in Ps 57:6, 12 and 108:6 also observe the priority and propriety of praise: "Be exalted above the heavens, O God; and Your glory above all the earth!"

The implied response to the rhetorical questions in v. 5 is "No one!" No one compares with "the LORD, our God."⁶⁸ It seems that *uny eq \O(E, h)O \O(, ')* (*@ eq \O(+, e)l eq \O(~, o)h eq \O(=, e)n eq \O(=, u)*, "our God") carries covenantal overtones⁶⁹ and anticipates the gracious interventions of vv. 7-9.⁷⁰ In v. 4 it must be remembered that this personal God "makes high to dwell" (v. 4). Expressed in the participle *y eq \O(I, h)y eq \O(I, B) eq \O([, g) \O(a, M) eq \O(a, h)* (*hammagb eq \O(=, i)h eq \O(=, i)*, v. 5b), the verb *H eq \O(a, b) eq \O(A, G)* (*g eq \O(~, a)bah*, "to be high, make high"⁷²), a synonym for *r eq \O(=, u)m* and an antonym of *l eq \O(a, f) eq \O(A, v)* (*eq \O(+, a) \O(~, a)pal*, "be low"),⁷³ "is often used to describe the greatness, height, or position of a person. . . ."⁷⁴ *G eq \O(~, a)bah* combines idiomatically with the complementary infinitive *l eq \O(~, a) eq \O(+, s)ebet* (from *b eq \O(a, v) \O(A, y)* [*y eq \O(~, a) eq \O(+, s)ab*, "to dwell"]) in a vivid statement of the LORD's exalted enthronement: "who is enthroned on high."⁷⁵

Even though v. 6a is conceptually antithetical to v. 5b, it is also syntactically appositional.⁷⁶ Delitzsch captures the apparent irony of a transcendent/immanent God:

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 35.

⁶⁵Cf. \langle with $\langle \text{y } \text{I} \rangle \text{I}$ in Ps. 99:2.

⁶⁶J. N. Oswalt, "d," *TWOT* 1:427.

⁶⁷Anderson, *Psalms* 2:781.

⁶⁸For a concise summary of the conjectural emendations and transpositions which have been suggested in vv. 5-6 of the MT, see Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 99, n. 6a. His first observation (concerning the transpositions) is preferable, his last is permissible, and the others are unacceptable.

⁶⁹Cf. Anderson, *Psalms* 2:781, who draws attention to Jer 24:7; 30:22; and 31:1.

⁷⁰Consequently, amidst a recapitulation of God's transcendence (v. 5), the stage is set for the concentration upon His immanence (vv. 6-9).

⁷¹On the hiphil expressing action in a definite direction see, once again, GKC 350 (para. 114r).

⁷²R. Hentschke, "H," *TDOT* 2:356-60.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 2:357-58; note the textual documentation cited for both assertions.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 2:358; concerning the theological significance of H, Hamilton appropriately notes: "God's position is said to be 'on high' (Ps. 113:5; Job 22:12) and his ways are 'higher' than those of mankind (Isa. 55:9)" (V. P. Hamilton, "H," *TWOT* 1:146).

⁷⁵Cf. Anderson, *Psalms* 2:781.

⁷⁶See the discussion above under syntactical enhancements.

He is the incomparable One who has set up His throne in the height, but at the same time directs His gaze deep downwards . . . in the heavens and upon the earth, i.e. nothing in the realm of the creatures that are beneath Him escapes His sight, and nothing is so low that remains unnoticed by Him; on the contrary, it is just that which is lowly, as the following strophe presents to us in a series of portraits so to speak, that is the special object of His regard.⁷⁷

Consequently, while the *hammagb eq \O(=,i)h eq \O(=,i)* of v. 5b trumpet of exaltation, the *hamma eq \O(+,s)p eq \O(=,i)l eq \O(=,i)* of v. 6a which is a note of condescension.⁷⁸

The complementary infinitive */o' eq \O(,r) eq \O(I,l)* (*\O(+,e)@ot*, "to see"), from the common *h eq \O(A,') eq \O(A,r)* (*\O(~,a)@ eq \O(~,a)h*), carries an uncommon theological significance. In contexts such as this and Gen 22:8, 14; 29:32; 1 Sam 1:11;⁷⁹ 2 Sam 16:12; Ps 106:44, *\O(~,a)@ eq \O(~,a)h* means to *look at* with interest, kindness, and helpfulness. Used here to confirm the LORD's intervention, it is acceptably rendered, "the LORD condescends to care for"⁸¹ (things) "in the heavens and upon the earth." The LORD's gracious condescension more than compensates for life's hard conditions (e.g. vv. 7-9).

The anarthrous causative participles of vv. 7-9 (i.e. *y eq \O(I,m)y* [*\O(I,q) eq \O(,m) [m eq \O(+,e)q eq \O(=,i)m eq \O(=,i)*, "raising up"] [*y eq \O(I,r) eq \O(A,y)* [*y eq \O(~,a)r eq \O(=,i)m*, "lifting up"], *y eq \O(I,b)y eq \O(I,v)om [m eq \O(=,o) eq \O(+,s) eq \O(=,i)b eq \O(=,i)*, "causing to dwell"])) illuminate His merciful immanence via forceful illustration. In vv. 7-8 a general but extremely significant illustration of God's active concern for the downtrodden arouses the reader's amazement first. Then another unexpected example follows: God's consolation for the childless (v. 9). In reference to these illustrations, Allen recalls that "the third strophe [i.e. vv. 7-9] uses 1 Samuel 1 to illustrate this grace in terms of the providential reversal Yahweh brings about in raising the socially underprivileged to positions of respect."⁸² Keizer appropriately digresses regarding the theological ramifications of this psalm's great climax:

Consciously . . . those verses look back to the song of Hannah, which they quote almost exactly (cf. 7, 8a with 1 Sa. 2:8). Hence the sudden reference to the childless woman who becomes a mother (9), for this was Hannah's theme. With such a background the psalmist only makes its immediate point, that the Most High cares for the most humiliated, but brings them up.

⁷⁷Delitzsch, *Psalms* 3:205.

⁷⁸In reference to **l**, Austel notes that "though the idea 'be low' in the physical sense underlies the verb and its derivatives, its most important use is in the figurative sense of 'abasement,' 'humiliation,' 'humility'" (H. J. Austel, "**l**," *TWOT* 2:950). An examination of the roots **<wr** and **lfv** in Ps 138:6a would be appropriate here.

⁷⁹In light of these particular texts, note the appropriateness of the illustration in Ps 113:9.

⁸⁰BDB, 907-8.

⁸¹Cf. Anderson, *Psalms* 2:781.

⁸²Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 101.

mind the train of events that can follow from such an intervention. Hannah's joy became Israel's; Sarah's became the world's. And the song of Hannah was to be outshone one of the *Magnificat*. The spectacular events of our verses 7 and 8 are not greater than this done one; the most important of them have sprung from just such an origin.⁸³

The $\mathbf{1} \text{ } \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{D})$ ($d \text{ } \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\sim, a)l$, "poor") and the $\mathbf{,o} \mathbf{y} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{I}, \mathbf{b})$ ($\mathbf{,o} \mathbf{y} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{e}, ')$ ($@ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{b} \mathbf{y} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(=, o)n$, "needy"),⁸⁴ normally social outcasts, are the focal point of God's bold intervention in vv. 7-8.⁸⁵ Although "the *dal* was not numbered among dependents who have no property,"⁸⁶ he still represented "those who lack."⁸⁷ The plight of the $@ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{b} \mathbf{y} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(=, o)n$ in the Old Testament generally seems to be more aggravated: "The destitution of the *@ebhyon* is to be inferred from the whole tenor of the appropriate psalms: it manifests itself in affliction, illness, loneliness, and nearness to death."⁸⁸ Therefore, he represents those who are materially, socially, and spiritually in need.⁸⁹ God really cares for such people.

In the parallelisms of v. 7, the $d \text{ } \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\sim, a)l$ was associated with the $\mathbf{1} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{f})$ ($\mathbf{1} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{A}, ;)$ ($\# \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\sim, a)p \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\sim, a)r$), "dust," "an emblem of low estate,"⁹¹ and the *@ebhyon* with the $\mathbf{1} \ \mathbf{o} \mathbf{p} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{I}, \mathbf{v})$ ($\mathbf{1} \ \mathbf{o} \mathbf{p} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\mathbf{a}, ')$ ($@ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{b} \mathbf{y} \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(+, s)p \ \mathbf{e} \mathbf{q} \ \backslash \mathbf{O}(\sim, o)t$), an "ash-heap, refuse-heap, dung-hill,"⁹² certainly "an emblem of deepest poverty and desertion."⁹³ Anderson briefly describes the image of such an ancient garbage dump as this when he comments,

It was the rubbish heap outside the village or town, which had become the pitiful shelter for the poor, the outcasts, and the diseased (cf. Lam. 4:5; also Job 2:8). There they begged, ransacked the refuse dump to find some scraps of food, and slept.⁹⁴

But the LORD mercifully extricates the needy from (cf. the two occurrences)

⁸³Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* 402. There are no compelling reasons to construe these illustrations corporately as a reference to Zion according to targumic tradition (e.g. Cohen, *Psalms 37-150* 10; Buitenwieser, *The Psalms* 248).

⁸⁴For other combinations of $\mathbf{1}$ and $\mathbf{,o} \mathbf{y}$ in various contextual settings, see 1 Sam 2:8; Isa 25:4; Amos 4:1; 8:6; Pss 72:13; 82:4; Prov 14:31; Job 5:15-16; etc. Commenting upon this particular combination in our psalm, Botterweck concludes that "according to the context, the *dal* and *@ebhyon* belong to the same group as the feeble, hungry, poor, and godly" (P. J. Botterweck, "TDOT 1:40).

⁸⁵For a good review of the humiliation of such people along with God's interest in them, see Grundmann, "tapeinw," *TDNT* 8:9-10.

⁸⁶H. J. Fabry, "1," *TDOT* 3:219.

⁸⁷L. J. Coppes, "1," *TWOT* 1:190. Coppes concludes that "we might consider *dal* as referring to one of the lower classes in Israel" (ibid.).

⁸⁸*TDOT* 1:36; Botterweck's whole survey is illuminating (ibid., 36-37).

⁸⁹Cf. L. J. Coppes, "1," *TWOT* 1:4-5.

⁹⁰Cf. "The *dallim* Under the Protection of Yahweh, the King, and His Fellow Men (Psalms 101-150)" *TDOT* 3:226-30; also notice Allen's New Testament applications (*Psalms 101-150* 101-102).

⁹¹Delitzsch, *Psalms* 3:205.

⁹²BDB, 1046.

⁹³Delitzsch, *Psalms* 3:205.

⁹⁴Anderson, *Psalms* 2:781-82.

of , $\text{eq} \setminus O(I, m)$ [*min*, "from"]) such dire circumstances. He "lifts up, raises them from their predicament. The lifted up and exalted One (vv. 4-5) "can raise men high in rank (i.e. 'exalt' them . . .)." ⁹⁶ Verse 8 confirms that by its progression from extrication to exaltation.

The LORD's intention is "to cause [them] to dwell," ⁹⁷ "to make (them) sit *l eq \ O(+, e) h eq \ O(=, o) eq \ O(s) eq \ O(=, i) b eq \ O(=, i)*" ⁹⁸ in fellowship with ⁹⁹ < *\ O(I, b) y eq \ O(I, d) eq \ O(I, n) (n eq \ O(+, e) d eq \ O(=, i) b eq \ O(=, i)* "nobles, princes"), those of "exalted material and social position." ¹⁰⁰ Verse 9 is therefore "a figure for elevation to the highest rank and dignity," ¹⁰¹ and compared with the plight of v. 7, it "is meant to bring out by way of contrast the magnitude of divine power and grace." ¹⁰²

Barrenness (v. 9) in the cultural context of the Old Testament was a poor status. ¹⁰³ "The lot of a childless wife must have been hard (cf. 1 Sam. 1:6). Barrenness was often regarded as a disgrace and a curse from God (cf. Gen. 20:18; 1 Sam. 1:5; Lk. 1:25 . . .)." ¹⁰⁴ It is no wonder that, from a woman's perspective, a barren womb was among the insatiable things in Proverbs 30:15 (cf. Rachel's agonizing cry in Gen 30:1). From a man's perspective, it occasioned ultimate frustration as indicated by Abraham's response in Gen 15:2 and Jacob's in Gen 30:2.

Although the syntactical options of v. 9 are diverse, ¹⁰⁵ the overall impact of its illustration is incontestable. The gracious LORD "makes the wife barren in the household to dwell" ¹⁰⁶ as a joyful mother of sons," i.e. "he grants

⁹⁵Cf. BDB, 878-79, 927; the hiphils from <uq and <ur are near synonyms as shown by the parallelism here. Interestingly, since yy is synonymously related to <y, it not only is semantically to God's description as < in v. 4 (cf. the previous discussion under semantic enhancements), but also conceptually to the root hbg in v. 5 (cf. R. Hentschke, "H," TDOT 2:333 for a general discussion of these synonyms). In reference to <uq with God as subject, Coppes observes that "the word may denote his creative, saving, and judging action" (L. J. Coppes, "The LORD's Creative, Saving, and Judging Action," TWOT 2:792); cf. A. Oepke, "gerv," TDNT 2:334.

⁹⁶A. Bowling, "<ur," TWOT 2:838.

⁹⁷BDB, 443.

⁹⁸Most emend the final y of the MT to w based largely on LXX and Syriac tradition (e.g. GKC, 2:333-334; 90n), but there are other options: Dahood takes it as a "third-person suffix -y" (Psalms III: 101-150); Delitzsch says, "ver. 8 shows how our Ps. cxiii in particular delights in this ancient i, where it is affixed to the infinitive as an ornament" (Psalms 3:204); and Buttenwieser argues, "Though Gr. lhshb, the reading of the Hebrew is equally correct: according to this reading the objects of vs. 8 may be construed also with lhshb, being a case of brachylogy" (The Psalms 249).

⁹⁹The two occurrences of < in v. 8 balance the two occurrences of , in v. 7. < in such contexts emphasizes "fellowship and companionship" (BDB, 767).

¹⁰⁰L. J. Coppes, "b," TWOT 2:555. His brief summary of the major synonyms of by is informative (ibid.).

¹⁰¹Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms 679.

¹⁰²TDOT 3:228.

¹⁰³Cf. other occurrences of the adj. r in Gen 11:30; 25:21; 29:31; Judg 13:2-3; 1 Sam 2:5; and Job 24:10.

¹⁰⁴Anderson, Psalms 2:782.

¹⁰⁵E.g. BDB, 443; Buttenwieser, The Psalms 349; Delitzsch, Psalms 3:206; etc.

¹⁰⁶Again, note the causative verbal from b (i.e. yom, v. 9; cf. yyoh, v. 8).

security."¹⁰⁷ Consequently, He not only prospers the poor (v. 8), but He blesses the barren (v. 9). The appropriate $H \text{ eq } \setminus O(A, y) \cup l \text{ eq } \setminus O(l, l) \setminus O(a, h)$ (*hal eq \setminus O(+, e) l eq \setminus O(=, u) y eq \setminus O(\sim, a) h*, "praise the LORD") close psalm.

What a majestic God Psalm 113 reveals! Yet his grandeur does not nullify His grace, and conversely, His grace does not undermine His grandeur:

The bridge which man himself cannot throw across to reach the remote, transcendent nevertheless exists; it is built by God himself so that in spite of all the disparity between God and man a communion exists between them which enables man to believe that the God who is far off is also the God of the here and now. What remains a mystery to the mind of man is revealed to the eyes of faith: that the exalted God not only looks down upon men but in fact looks graciously to them.¹⁰⁸

CONCLUSION

Since God is supreme in the universe for all time and yet has still shown His concern for His creatures, how should His children respond? Certainly a reverent gratitude is in order, as is a God-consciousness that pervades every activity and attitude. In times of need, reminders of a transcendent God's involvement in human life can be important sources of strength. These and other lessons derived from Psalm 113, a gem among gems. Disclosures about God that arise from the exquisite beauty of the language should be adorning the Bride of Christ. Furthermore, preachers and teachers of God's word should shine their expository floodlights on this Scripture more regularly. God's infinite greatness and inexplicable grace need more attention. The richly blessed should give spontaneous thanksgiving and praise to Him who reigns in heaven and graciously responds to human needs.

¹⁰⁷Anderson, *Psalms* 2:782.

¹⁰⁸Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) 707.

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE:
A METHOD OF TRANSLATION
OR A SYSTEM OF HERMENEUTICS?¹

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The recent popularity of Dynamic Equivalence in translating the Bible justifies a closer scrutiny of it, particularly in light of the growing interest in biblical hermeneutics which it parallels. A comparison of the disciplines of D-E translation and hermeneutics reveals a large amount of similarity between the two. The similarity exists whether one compares D-E to traditional hermeneutics or to theories being advanced in contemporary hermeneutics. In view of the close parallel between D-E and hermeneutics, three questions need to be faced: a linguistic one, an ethical one, and a practical one.

* * * * *

Dynamic Equivalence entered the scene as a formalized method of translation and as a scientific discipline with a theoretical basis about two decades ago, but its presence as a practical pursuit in translating the Bible into English dates back to around the turn of the century.² Since the 1960's, it has grown rapidly in popularity and has

¹This essay was originally presented to a Plenary Session at the Fortieth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Wheaton, IL, in November 1988 and has been updated for incorporation into this issue of *The Master's Seminary Journal*. A related essay, "Bible Translations: The Link Between Exegesis and Expository Preaching," appeared in the Spring 1990 issue of *The Master's Seminary Journal*.

²E. A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating, with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964) 5. Nida noted that the art of translation had outstripped the theory of translation. His work was put forth as an effort to provide a theoretical basis for what was already being produced. In his survey of the history of translation in the western world he writes, "The 20th century has witnessed a radical change in translation principles" (21). Later in the same work he adds, "The present direction is toward increasing emphasis on dynamic

been greatly acclaimed.³ This investigation purposes to examine the extent to which dynamic equivalence draws upon hermeneutical

equivalence. This represents a shift of emphasis which began during the early decades of this century" (160). Perhaps he was looking back to the *Twentieth Century New Testament* (1902) as the first effort which utilized what he chooses to label "dynamic equivalence" principles. F. F. Bruce, *History of the English Bible* (3rd ed.; New York: Oxford, 1978) 153, calls this 1902 publication the first of a series of "modern English translations."

³E. H. Glassman, *The Translation Debate`What Makes a Bible Translation Good?* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981), devotes his work to showing the virtues of what he calls "content-oriented" translations, another name for dynamic-equivalent translations. J. R. Kohlenberger III, *Words about the Word`A Guide to Choosing and Using Your Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 61-72, also presents an apologetic for the dynamic equivalence approach. D. A. Carson, "The Limits of Dynamic Equivalence in Bible Translation," *Notes on Translation* 121 (Oct 1987) 1, hails the triumph of dynamic equivalence in these words: "As far as those who struggle with biblical translation are concerned, dynamic equivalence has won the day`and rightly so."

principles as a part of its translation method and to weigh whether it should be termed a method of translation or a system of hermeneutics. Eugene A. Nida, who probably has earned the title of "the father of dynamic equivalence," though he more recently has chosen to call the process "functional equivalence,"⁴ sees hermeneutics as entirely separate from dynamic-equivalence translation procedures,⁵ but does so on the basis of a novel understanding of hermeneutics. He defines the field of hermeneutics as that which points out parallels between the biblical message and present-day events and determines the extent of relevance and the appropriate response for the believer.⁶

⁴J. de Waard and E. A. Nida, *From One Language to Another, Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Nelson, 1986) vii-viii. The authors mean nothing different from what Nida intended by "dynamic equivalence" in his *Toward a Science of Translating*, but have opted for the new terminology because of a misunderstanding of the older expression and because of abuses of the principle of dynamic equivalence by some translators.

⁵E. A. Nida and W. D. Reyerburn, *Meaning Across Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981) 30.

⁶*Ibid.*

This concept of hermeneutics is quite different from that traditionally assigned to the word. Normally it is defined as "the science of interpretation."⁷ *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines hermeneutics as "the study of the methodological principles of interpretation."⁸ *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged* makes hermeneutics synonymous with exegesis.⁹ Terry more precisely notes that hermeneutics constitutes the principles of interpretation that are applied to exegesis.¹⁰ Yet Nida emphatically distinguishes between exegesis and hermeneutics, and says they are two distinct components of the larger category of interpretation.¹¹

Admittedly the connotation of "hermeneutics" has shifted in recent times, creating widespread confusion. Yet Nida appears to be in disharmony with everyone in his definition. He has equated hermeneutics with what has traditionally been called "application," which is based on the one correct interpretation of the original writing,¹³ and in so doing, has represented an extreme position that is unacceptable because it represents an abnormal sense of the word. So his strict dissociation of hermeneutics and translation cannot be taken seriously.

In light of current confusion over the scope of hermeneutics we must stipulate our meaning of the term in the context of this investigation. In the earlier part of the discussion we will focus on "the more technical kind of hermeneutics known as sacred or biblical hermeneutics,"¹⁴ in other words, the traditional definition. In the future we will expand to include more recent elements which have in some circles found their way under the broadened umbrella of "hermeneutics."

⁷M. S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.) 17. H. A. Van der Kamp, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 16 defines hermeneutics "the science and art of biblical interpretation." D. F. Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986) 4, views the traditional definition of hermeneutics as "study of the locus and principles of interpretation."

⁸*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam, 1983) 536.

⁹*Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (New York: Random House, and Schuster, 1979) 851. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam, 1971) 1059, defines hermeneutics as follows: "the study of the methodological principles of interpretation and explanation; *specif.*: the study of the general principles of biblical interpretation."

¹⁰Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* 19.

¹¹Nida and Reyerburn, *Meaning* 30. See also de Waard and Nida, *From One Language to Another* 40, where the authors write, "This issue of the communicative role of the Bible highlights an important distinction which may be made between exegesis and hermeneutics, although some writers use these terms almost indistinguishably."

¹²B. L. Ramm and others, *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 6. Ramm writes, "Although traditionally hermeneutics has been treated as a special theological discipline, recent studies have endeavored to enlarge the scope of hermeneutics. These studies wish to see hermeneutics in a new perspective as a function of the human understanding . . ." (6). Ferguson notes that the traditional definition "needs amplification and qualification since there has been a steady shifting of emphasis in carrying out the hermeneutical task . . ." (*Biblical Hermeneutics* 4).

¹³Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* 600.

¹⁴Ramm, *Hermeneutics* 6.

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE AND TRADITIONAL HERMENEUTICS

The Overlapping of Dynamic Equivalence and Exegesis

One of the striking features of dynamic equivalence is its embracing of its methodology of what has been known traditionally as biblical exegesis. Inclusion of exegetical procedures is necessitated by the first of three steps dynamic-equivalence theory recommends. The three steps are reduction of source text to its structurally simplest and most semantically evident kernel, transference of the meaning from the source language to the receptor language at a structurally simple level, and generation of the stylistically and semantically equivalent expression in the receptor language.¹⁵

The first of the three steps consists of two parts, analysis of the source text in terms of grammatical relationships and analysis of it in terms of the meaning of the words and combinations of words.¹⁶ A common way to illustrate grammatical analysis is with uses of the Greek genitive case and the corresponding English construction of two nouns or pronouns connected by "of."¹⁷ Those familiar with the earliest stages of NT Greek study recognize quickly that an analysis of various uses of the Greek genitive case is a standard part of preparation for biblical exegesis. Yet there is a strange reticence by those who espouse D-E methodology to recognize that this type of study has been underway for a long time.¹⁸

The 1986 work by de Waard and Nida does refer to standard tools of lexicography, but it casts them in a negative light. Traditional bilingual dictionaries are labeled as deficient because they depend almost entirely

¹⁵Nida, *Toward a Science* 68. According to Nida, this three-step process is the way "the competent translator" works.

¹⁶E. A. Nida and C. R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969) 3.

¹⁷Nida, *Toward a Science* 207-208, 229; Nida and Taber, *The Theory* 35-37. "Field of blood" (1:19) and "God of peace" (Phil 4:9) are two among the suggested examples of ambiguity (Nida, *Toward a Science* 207). For the former Nida suggests two possible interpretations, "field where blood was spilled" or "field that reminded people of blood." For the latter he rejects "a peaceful God" as an option, and chooses "God who gives peace" or "God who causes peace."

¹⁸The sole use of "exegesis" in the index of Nida's *Toward a Science of Translating* is in a page reference to the field in his historical survey of translations in the western world (Nida, *Toward a Science* 28). The only place where Nida and Taber use "exegesis" in their *Theory and Practice of Translation*, according to their index, is as a part of a sample set of principles prepared for making a "Southern Bantu" translation, and this mention is only in passing (Nida and Taber, *Theory* 182). The standard grammars for NT Greek are never alluded to in the above works, nor are they listed in their bibliographies.

This coolness toward what has been a long established field of biblical studies is perhaps reflected in the judgment of Nida and others that good exegetes and grammarians make poor translators. A. Nida, "Bible Translation for the Eighties," *International Review of Mission* 70 [1981] 136-137). Hess, "Some Assumptions," a paper read at the President's Luncheon, Biola University, November 1984, 9, states as his ninth assumption "that the linguistic and cultural demands of non-European languages necessitate biblical interpretation that goes beyond traditional conventional exegesis." This assumption of a Wycliffe Bible translator displays the dissatisfaction with traditional exegesis as Nida and his associates seem to entertain.

"glosses," i.e. surface structure transfer of meanings.¹⁹ The same authors criticize Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker for being very unsystematic and in failing to cover the ranges of meaning of individual words.²⁰ It is evident from these criticisms that the analysis step in the D-E process covers the same ground that has traditionally been covered by exegesis, an exegesis based on principled interpretation that compose the field of hermeneutics.²¹

From the perspective of a traditional definition of hermeneutics little can be entertained that D-E is, among other things, a system of hermeneutics. Perhaps some will respond, however, that all translations are commentaries and hence incorporate the application of hermeneutical principles in arriving at their renderings. This is absolutely true.²² A certain degree of interpretation is unavoidable, no matter how hard the translator tries to exclude it. Yet a characteristic of formal equivalence is its effort to avoid interpretation as much as possible by transferring directly from the surface structure of the source language to the surface structure of the receptor language.²³ By omitting the step of analysis that is built into the D-E approach, interpretation can be excluded to a much higher degree. Since D-E intentionally incorporates interpretation, it obviously has a significantly higher degree of interpretation than formal equivalence and is in a much stronger sense a system of hermeneutics than is formal equivalence.

Dynamic Equivalence and Ambiguous Passages

One type of passage illustrates particularly well the commitment to dynamic equivalence to the practice of hermeneutics. This is a passage where interpretation is uncertain, i.e. one whose meaning is ambiguous. As a general rule, dynamic equivalence is dedicated to the elimination of ambiguities.

In building his rationale for D-E, Nida quotes Alexander Fraser Tyndale

¹⁹de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 160.

²⁰Ibid., 161-62.

²¹Further evidence of the inclusion of hermeneutics in the D-E methodology is seen in what the authors have written about such things as how to handle the synonyms $\gamma\alpha\pi\nu$ (*agapa*, "I love") and $\phi\iota\lambda\epsilon$ (*phile*, "I love") in John 21:15-19 (de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 93), the treatment of $\alpha\nu\alpha\lambda\omicron\upsilon\theta\alpha$ (*anacolutha*) (ibid., 105), the meaning of $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\nu$ (*katalamban*, "I apprehend") in John 1:5 (ibid., 107), and the meaning of $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\alpha$ $\lambda\eta\sigma\omicron$ (*martyria Isou*, "the testimony of Jesus") in Revelation 1:2 (ibid., 127). All these belong properly in the realm of exegesis. As a matter of fact, de Waard and Nida in essence acknowledge the essential presence of the science of interpretation in D-E when they write, "The primary exegetical perspective of a translator is 'what did the text mean to the people who were the original receptors?'" (ibid., 177).

Glassman gives a similar but simpler explanation of the step of analysis, using $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa$ ("flesh") with its varying NT meanings as one of his examples of the interpretive decisions that must be made by a D-E translator (Glassman, *Translation Debate* 59-60).

²²D. G. Rossetti expressed this over a century ago: "A translation remains perhaps the most common form of commentary" (cited by Nida, *Toward a Science* 156).

²³W. L. Wonderly, *Bible Translations for Popular Use* (London: United Bible Societies, 1968) 5. He refers to formal correspondence, a later name for formal equivalence, "the direct transfer technique" and to dynamic equivalence as a process of "indirect transfer, involving 'decomposition and recomposition' or analysis-plus-restructuring" (ibid.).

principle approvingly: "To imitate the obscurity or ambiguity of the original is a fault and it is still a greater one to give more than one meaning."²⁴ To follow through with this perspective, he later uses the Greek genitive-case form with the corresponding use of the English preposition "of" to illustrate how to eliminate ambiguities.²⁵ "Cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21) is rendered "the cup by which we remember the Lord," "wisdom of words" (1 Cor 1:17) is taken to be "well arranged words," and "sons of wrath" (Eph 2:3) becomes "those with whom God is angry." In each case the obscurity in meaning disappears through a grammatical restructuring.²⁷

More recently, de Waard and Nida have expressed the same perspective regarding ambiguous passages: "It is unfair to the original writer and to the receptors to reproduce as ambiguities all those passages which may be interpreted in more than one way."²⁸ They add that the translator should place in the text the best attested interpretation and provide in marginal notes the appropriate alternatives.²⁹

Usually the case for non-ambiguity is buttressed by references to the inadequacies of formal-equivalence translations. Examples of ambiguous and allegedly misleading formal-equivalence translations have been multiplied. A volume of examples adduced have won the case for D-E in the minds of some. As persuasive as these lists are, however, superficiality and carelessness are marked in the choices of at least some of the illustrations. The scope of our discussion permits citation of only one widely used passage to illustrate this. In Psalm 101 Glassman cites the description of the "blessed man" who in formal-equivalence translations does "not stand in the way of sinners." He then criticizes the rendering in these words: "Nowadays to stand in the way of something or someone mea-

²⁴A. F. Tytler, *The Principles of Translation* (1790), cited by Nida, *Toward a Science* 19.

²⁵Nida, *Toward a Science* 207-208; cf. also Nida and Taber, *The Theory* 35-37; Wonderly, *Bible Translations* 163.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Wonderly in 1968 noted the rarity of an expression that is ambiguous when its total context is taken into account (Wonderly, *Bible Translations* 162). He conversely observed that a completely "unambiguous" expression is also rare (ibid.). In light of this he saw the elimination of all possible ambiguities as undesirable. Yet, for the sake of the uneducated, he advised the translator to "eliminate them or reduce to a minimum the probability of their being misunderstood" (ibid., 162).

Determination to eliminate ambiguities has seemingly grown stronger with the passage of time. In 1981 Nida and Reyburn saw attempts to reproduce ambiguities in a translation as unfair to the original author and unfair to the untrained reader (Nida and Reyburn, *Meaning* 7-8; ambiguities referred to are, of course, those resulting from the scholars' lack of understanding, not intentional ambiguities intended by an author; see also Jean-Claude Margot, "Should a Translation of the Bible Be Ambiguous," *BT* 32/4 [Oct 1981] 406-413). They suggested that the translator's goal should be to "translate so as to prevent misunderstanding of what the original receptors understood" (ibid., 20).

Also in 1981 Glassman gave "avoid ambiguity" as one of five guidelines to be followed in a correct translation. He displays much less caution in his application of this principle than Wonderly did earlier (Glassman, *The Translation Debate* 101-4).

²⁸de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 39.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰E.g. Carson, "The Limits" 1.

prevent or hinder, to serve as an obstacle."³¹ He should have indicated that was only a personal opinion because his statement is blatantly inaccurate according to authorities on the English language. Webster's unabridged dictionary gives the following as the first definition of the expression "in the way of": "so meet or fall in with; in a favorable position for doing or getting."³² This is clearly the correct idea conveyed by the Hebrew, that of "associate with." The blameless man does not place himself in a compromising position with sinners.

Unfortunately the reaction of Glassman and others against a formal equivalence rendering of Psalm 1:1 is characteristic of other ill-advised conclusions by D-E advocates. This is surprising, for some of these are leading linguists who as a part of their methodology advocate a careful respect for the referential meaning of words and expressions as they appear in dictionary resources.³³ Yet they disregard their own advice. For example, de Waard and Nida object to formal equivalence renderings of Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" by stating flatly, "*want* no longer means 'to lack' but rather 'to desire.'"³⁴ In contrast, contemporary dictionaries give the intransitive verb "want" a meaning of "lack" or "have a need,"³⁵ exactly what the psalmist intended to say. Rather than correcting the formal-equivalence translators, the linguistic specialists should have acknowledged the legitimacy of their word choice. They would have been more credible if they had prefaced their critical remark with "in my sphere of knowledge" or "according to our judgment," but to say without qualification "*want* no longer means 'to lack'" raises questions about their judgment in general.

Formal-equivalence translations handle ambiguities in exactly the opposite way. In the receptor rendering they maintain as far as possible the ambiguity that exists in the source language. This places a heavier responsibility upon the reader and student of the English text by forcing him either to interpret the passage himself or to resort to a commentary or Bible teacher or expositor.

³¹Glassman, *Translation Debate* 108. Carson, "The Limits" 5, and de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 33, use the same illustration. Glassman is cited because his work has the earliest publication date, though he had access to the unpublished manuscript of de Waard and Nida (Glassman, *Translation Debate* 127 [ch 6, n 7]) and may have obtained it from them.

³²*Webster's New Twentieth Century* 2071. This same source gives as the first definition of "in the way" the idea of obstructing, impeding, or hindering, but "in the way of" is a separate entry (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, on the other hand, defines "in the way" as meaning, first of all, "a position to be encountered by one: in or along one's course" (1325). The idea of hindrance or obstruction is not introduced until the second definition in this latter source. Similarly, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* defines "in the way" as follows: "on or along one's path, road, or course: in a position to be encountered by one" (2588).

³³Nida, *Toward a Science* 70.

³⁴de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 9.

³⁵*Webster's New Twentieth Century* 2059. *Webster's New Collegiate* gives "to be needy or desirous" as the first meaning and "to have or feel need" as the second (1327). The definition incorporating the idea of "desire" is not given until the fourth definition. After giving an obsolete definition, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* defines "want" by "to be in need" in the first non-obsolete meaning.

³⁶Another formal equivalence rendering such as "lack" may be clearer in the minds of some, but "want," but "want" is still a very legitimate option.

help, but it also leaves open interpretive options that would otherwise be beyond his reach.³⁷ It also runs less risk of excluding a correct interpretation.

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE AND CONTEMPORARY HERMENEUTICS

To compare dynamic equivalence with contemporary hermeneutics, it is necessary to sketch some of the recent trends in the latter field.

Recent Trends in Hermeneutics

One of the recent foci in hermeneutical discussions is the establishment of a starting point for interpretation. Special attention to this aspect of interpretation furnishes a convenient approach to comparing D-E with contemporary hermeneutics.

This starting point, sometimes called the interpretive center, functions as a control for the interpreter as he attempts to bring together diverse texts of Scripture.³⁸ It serves as the organizing principle, furnishing the interpretive structure for exegesis, and is therefore a very important consideration.

Eitel portrays two broad types of hermeneutical controls, a Scripture-dominant one and a context-dominant one.³⁹ These two are a convenient way to divide the wide assortment of starting points that have been proposed. One belongs to the past and focuses on elements in the original settings of various portions of Scripture, and the other belongs to the present with elements of the contemporary world setting the tone for interpretation.

Thiselton insists that the starting point must be something in the present situation of the interpreter.⁴⁰ The interpreter addresses his initial questions to the text and is personally interpreted by the response of the text, thus beginning

³⁷J. W. Scott, "Dynamic Equivalence and Some Theological Problems in the NIV," *WTJ* 48 (1986) 355, points out the superiority of the KJV and NASB renderings of Acts 16:31 to that of the NIV, in this regard. Translators with limited understanding of the text, he notes, will more probably convey the original meaning more accurately and more completely than those of a free translation (see also p. 351). E. L. Miller, "The *New International Version* on the Prologue of the Gospel of John," *HTR* 72/3-4 (July-Oct 1979) 309, criticizes the NIV for not retaining the ambiguity of the Greek in John 1:9, saying that the translators had usurped the reader's right to an accurate rendering of the text. J. C. Jeske, "Faculty Review of the Revised NIV," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 85/2 (Spring 1988) 106, cites the same version for its failure to retain the ambiguity of the Greek in Heb 9:14. Yet he also commends the NIV for retaining ambiguity in its handling of Luke 12:10 (105). A. H. Nichols (in "Explicitness in Translation and the Westernization of Scripture," *Reformed Theological Review* 3 [Sept-Dec 1988] 78-88) calls this focus of D-E "explicitness" and pinpoints some of the difficulties it creates in translation.

³⁸D. M. Scholer, "Issues in Biblical Interpretation," *EQ* LX:1 (Jan 1988) 16.

³⁹K. E. Eitel, "Contextualization: Contrasting African Voices," *Criswell Theological Review* 1 (Spring 1988) 324.

⁴⁰A. C. Thiselton, "The New Hermeneutic," *New Testament Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 315.

hermeneutical circle.⁴¹ Thiselton criticizes the traditional method according to which the interpreter works with the text as a passive object, making it his starting point. This, he says, is impossible.⁴²

Among others who have joined Thiselton in making something like this a present a controlling factor in hermeneutics are a number of cross-cultural communication leaders. Padilla is even more specific about the necessity of the interpreter's starting from his own situation.⁴³ Kraft agrees and notes that different cultural backgrounds produce different needs, which in turn prompt the seeker to ask different questions.⁴⁴ Because of this, he continues, new theologies will eventually emerge in non-Western cultures. Revelation is thus a relative matter, differing in each culture and necessitating that interpretation begin with revelation formulated by the interpreter.⁴⁵

Marxism as an ideological system is the hermeneutical starting point of liberation theology.⁴⁶ Another proposed contemporary starting point in hermeneutics is natural revelation. Mbiti sees natural revelation deposited in African religions as equal in authority with and therefore in control of biblical revelation.⁴⁷ Bruce Narramore places natural revelation through secular psychology on the same level of authority as biblical revelation and interprets the Bible through the eyes of secular psychological theory.⁴⁸ This list of controlling principles could be expanded easily.⁴⁹

The above rapid survey reflects that in the minds of many the traditional

⁴¹Ibid., 316.

⁴²Ibid.; A. C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 87.

⁴³C. R. Padilla, "The Interpreted Word: Reflections on Contextual Hermeneutics," *Themelios* 10 (1981) 22.

⁴⁴C. H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979) 144-46.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics* 177.

⁴⁷J. S. Mbiti, "The Encounter of Christian Faith and African Religion," *Christian Century* 97 (April 27 - September 3, 1980) 817-18.

⁴⁸Bruce Narramore, "The Isolation of General and Special Revelation as the Fundamental Basis to the Integration of Faith and Learning," paper read at President's Luncheon, Biola University, 22, 1984, 2-3, 10.

⁴⁹Some representative writers with a feminist emphasis are explicit about interpretive controls pertaining to their present personal situations. Hull starts with the interpretive guideline that women are fully redeemed and formulates her biblical interpretations in this light (G. G. Hull, "Response," *Women, Authority and the Bible* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986] 24). Fiori's organizing principle in interpretation is the oppression of women by men (Elisabeth Schiappa Fiori, *In Memory of Her* [New York: Crossroad, 1984] 32-33). In light of contemporary feminist emphases Jewett and Bilezikian identify Galatians 3:28 as a norm according to which all Scriptures must be interpreted (P. K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 142; G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985] 128; see also Jerry H. Ney, "Mediated Meaning: A Contextualist Approach to Hermeneutical Method," *Asbury Theological Journal* 43/1 [Spring 1988] 37-38). The conviction that contemporary experience should be identified with apostolic Christianity is another principle that will control interpretation (R. Stronstad, "Trends in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Paraclete* 22/3 [Summer 1988] 2-3). Other controls that have been suggested include a decision about whether one can lose his salvation or not, a conviction that non-participation in war, and ideas about the capability of a believer's never sinning (Stronstad, "Issues" 16-17).

starting point in hermeneutics, that of the original text, is no longer acceptable control in interpretation, if it ever was. Criticisms of the grammatico-historical method of interpretation are often direct and uninhibited.⁵⁰ It is clear that the hermeneutical focus has shifted dramatically from the original setting of Scripture to a variety of contemporary issues that have become interpretative controls.

Trends in Translation

Contemporary trends in translation have paralleled those in hermeneutics. The traditional method of translation adopted the source message as its control and sought to bring the contemporary reader back to that point.⁵¹ Most reader preferences in translation express the opposite goal, that of bringing the source message into the twentieth century to the contemporary reader.⁵² The new approach to relate the text to the receptor and his modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture, a controlling factor called "the principle of equivalence effect."⁵³ The traditional method of taking the receptor to the text seeks to help the reader identify himself with a person in the source-language context as fully as possible, teaching him the customs, manner of thought, and means of expression of the earlier time. With D-E, comprehension of the patterns of the source-language culture is unnecessary.⁵⁴ The prime concern given to effective communication

⁵⁰E. g. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* 131, 136-137; W. S. Lasor, "The Sensus Plenior and Biblical Interpretation," *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 266; see also Scholer, "Issues" 9.

⁵¹Nida, *Toward a Science* 165.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 166; Glassman, *Translation Debate* 74; H. M. Wolf, "When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate," *NIV The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 127. Jerome's Vulgate has often been used as an early example of dynamic equivalence or idiomatic translation because Jerome expressed the purpose of translating "sense for sense" rather than "word for word" (e.g. see Nida, *Toward a Science* 13; J. Beekman and J. Callow, *Translating the Word of God* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974] 24). This widely used quotation of Jerome is wrongly used, however, because Jerome adds an important qualification to his statement that is not usually noticed: "I translate for Holy Scripture where even the word order is sacred" (Epistle LVII, in *Jerome: Letters* [ed. J. Labourt; Paris, 1953] III, 59, cited by Harvey Minkoff, "Problems of Translations: Concern for the Text Versus Concern for the Reader," *Biblical Review* 4/4 [Aug 1988] 36). *Mysterium*, the Latin word rendered "sacred" in this quotation, is rendered "a mystery" by others (Philip Schaff and J. Wace, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954] 10:152) because *mysterium* and *sacramentum* were used almost interchangeably by the Latin Fathers to refer to holy things (A. Dulles, "Mystery in Theology," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* [Washington: Catholic University of America, 1967] 10:152). Regardless of the English rendering of this word, however, the fact remains that because of its inspiration, Jerome put Scripture into a special category that required more literal translation principles than other literature. His Vulgate was therefore quite literal (Minkoff, "Problems" 36).

⁵³*Ibid.*, 159. Minkoff describes formal equivalence in different terminology. It produces a "text-oriented" or "overt" translation because of its persuasion that the meaning lies in the text. D-E on the other hand produces a "reader-oriented" or "covert" translation, assuming that meaning inheres in the audience reaction to the text (Minkoff, "Problems" 35).

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

D-E at the expense of the source is a vivid confirmation of this shift in focus.⁵⁵

These two starting points are quite distinct from each other. Formal equivalence and D-E approaches represent two opposite poles in a clash that sometimes has been labeled "literal translation" vs. "free translation."⁵⁶ To be sure, there are many grades or levels between the polar distinctions,⁵⁷ but they *are* distinctions. The differing grades between the two poles are traceable to the varying degrees of consistency with which the translators have adhered to their stated goals and to self-imposed limitations upon the full implementation of their principles from passage to passage within the translation.

An example of across-the-board dynamic equivalence is *The Cotton Patch Version* produced by Clarence Jordan. It transforms the source text culturally, historically, and linguistically.⁵⁸ In this work Annas and Caiaphas are presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. Jesus is born in Gainesville, Georgia, and lynched rather than being crucified. Most, of course, would not have gone D-E to that extreme.⁵⁹ Yet the work still illustrates the direction of D-E. It shows how the methodology is limited only by the judgment of the translators and translators.⁶⁰

Such a release from restraints of the original text coincides with varying degrees of subjectivism that characterize contemporary hermeneutical systems. These recent schemes dismiss the traditional system of letting the author be the determining factor in interpretation. In so doing, of necessity they forego the judgment of the Bible's meaning through the eyes of something or someone contemporary. Hirsch notes that the text has to represent someone's meaning; if it is not the author's, then it must be the modern critic's meaning that is drawn from the text.⁶¹ Hirsch's terminology distinguishes the author's meaning from the critic's by calling what the author intended "meaning" and by using the

⁵⁵D-E does give attention to the source text in its step called "analysis," which is described as follows: "The analysis of the source text is a necessary part of the translation process. This is not the prime concern of D-E, however. In its quest for greater communicative effectiveness, it intentionally omits some information of the source text with all its details (see Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* 224). Perhaps the secondary importance of the source text and its meaning is reflected in some of Nida's expressions when he injects some of his precautionary remarks. Commenting on the Phillips' translation for its high rate of decodability, he adds, "Whether Phillips' translation of a passage is the best way of rendering these difficult verses is not the question at this point" (*Toward a Science* 175-76). This could imply that accuracy in meaning is not the major concern of the translation (see also 207-8 where a similar idea is expressed). Nichols sees the plight of D-E as hopeless because it fails to distinguish between *translation* and *communication* ("Explicitness" 82).

⁵⁶Nida, *Toward a Science* 22, 171.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁸Nida and Reyburn, *Meaning* 19; Glassman, *Translation Debate* 74. Two translations that are similar to *The Cotton Patch Version* in their across-the-board D-E are *God is for Real, Man* by C. S. Lewis and G. K. Chesterton (1966) and *The Word Made Fresh* by Andrew Edington (1975) (S. Kubo and W. F. Speck, *Many Versions?* [rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983] 330-33).

⁵⁹Nida, *Toward a Science* 184.

⁶⁰For example, de Waard and Nida, *From One Language to Another* 37-39, suggest five situations in which functional (i.e. dynamic) equivalence rather than formal equivalence should be used. Carson, *The Bible and Its Interpreters* 5-7, suggests that equivalence of response be limited to linguistic categories alone.

⁶¹E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967) 3, 5.

"significance" to refer to a relationship between that meaning and a particular concept, situation, or anything else.⁶²

Another way of viewing such hermeneutics is by contrasting it with the traditional hermeneutical distinction between interpretation and application. Gill, an advocate of a contextualist approach to hermeneutics, says it quite plainly. He supposes that his mentor of thirty years ago, Professor Traina, will disagree with his contextualist method in which there is no longer a distinction between interpretation and application.⁶⁴ Application has taken a position as a part of interpretation, and in the case of Jordan's translation, it has almost replaced interpretation completely.

While Nida and others call *The Cotton Patch Version* a translation, Kraft calls it a "cultural translation" or "transculturation,"⁶⁵ but he also concludes that translation is a limited form of transculturation.⁶⁶ He agrees with Nida in advocating use of a "dynamically equivalent" message to secure a response from the modern recipient that is equivalent to the response of the original recipient to the message. Kraft carries dynamic equivalence beyond transculturation into the realm of theologizing, concluding that the latter is a necessary outgrowth of the former.⁶⁷ He incorporates social custom as so much of a controlling factor in dynamic-equivalence theologizing that matters like the biblical teachings against polygamy and in favor of monogamous church leadership are negated.⁶⁸ This is reminiscent of the hermeneutical use of natural revelation by Mbiti as an authority in the interpretation of the Bible.⁶⁹ Here then is another tie-in between contemporary hermeneutics and dynamic equivalence.

Other Similarities Between Contemporary Hermeneutics and Dynamic Equivalence

A similarity in origin. It seems appropriate to point out the similarity in source between recent hermeneutical trends and dynamic-equivalence techniques. To a large degree, both have originated in circles that might be labeled "missiological," "cross-cultural," or "biblical linguistic." One only needs to mention some of the prominent names from our earlier discussion of hermeneutics

⁶²Ibid., 8.

⁶³M. Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 63-67, suggests that application is essentially equivalent to allegorical interpretation. This suggestion is interesting but it loses sight of the fact that allegorical interpretation as usually understood does not change from place to place and period to period as practical application does. Rather it attaches itself to the text as a deeper or hidden meaning that is more or less stable.

⁶⁴Gill, "Mediated Meaning" 40.

⁶⁵Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* 284-86. Kraft has a narrower definition of translation: ". . . a translator is not free to provide the degree, extent, and specificity of interpretation required to establish the message solidly in the minds of the hearers. Nor is it within the province of a translator to elaborate on the written message to approximate that of spoken communication" (280).

⁶⁶Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* 281.

⁶⁷Ibid., 291.

⁶⁸C. H. Kraft, "Dynamic Equivalence Churches," *Missiology* 1 (1973) 53-54.

⁶⁹See above p. 15.

illustrate this. Padilla, Kraft, Mbiti, and others in the listed fields have been in the forefront of the contextualization movement that proposes, among other things, the revamping of traditional hermeneutical principles.⁷⁰ As for dynamic equivalence in translation, Nida notes five influences that have changed translation principles in this century.⁷¹ Two of them relate directly to mission organizations, and the other three are indirectly related to mission activities. Grossman comments regarding the mission-oriented origin, giving major credit to biblical linguistics and missions for the insistence that translation be carried out in cultural context. Dynamic equivalence advocates.⁷²

A similarity of subjectivity. We have mentioned previously the contextually dominant approach of contemporary hermeneutics, and have noted the degree of subjectivism promoted thereby.⁷³ A similar subjectivity prevails in dynamic equivalence. The potential for interpretational bias is maximized in the D-E approach.⁷⁴ Fortunately it has not been used often or widely for propagandistic purposes, but D-E translations inevitably encounter criticism in various passages because the interpretations chosen in debated passages will always displease some. This problem is not nearly so characteristic of formal-equivalence translations.

The twelve-year-old *New International Version* furnishes a good means of illustrating the problem created by subjectivity because, though it is a dynamic equivalence translation, strict limitations in its application of D-E principles have greatly reduced its deviations from traditional norms of translation.⁷⁵ In

⁷⁰To the above list other names involved in cross-cultural fields could be mentioned: Caldwell (see "Third Horizon Ethnohermeneutics: Re-Evaluating New Testament Hermeneutical Models for Intercultural Bible Interpreters Today" [paper presented to Consultation of Anthropologists and Theologians, Biola University, April 14-15, 1986] 2), K. Halebian (see "Problem of Contextualization," *Missiology: An International Review* 9/1 [Jan 1983] 99), W. A. Smith (see "Culture and Superculture," *Practical Anthropology* 2 [1955] 58-69), S. G. Lingenfelte (see "Formal Logic or Practical Logic: Which Should Form the Basis for Cross-Cultural Theology" [paper presented at the Consultation of Anthropologists and Theologians, Biola University, April 15, 1986] 2, 21), J. M. Bonino (see *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] 88-89), and H. M. Conn (see "Contextualization: A New Dimension for Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 14 [1978] 44-45).

⁷¹Nida, *Toward a Science* 21-22. The five influences are the rapidly expanding field of structural linguistics, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (i.e. Wycliffe Bible Translators), the program of the United Bible Societies, the publication *Babel* by the International Federation of Translators, and machine translators. The second and third are mission organizations, and the other three impacted the methodology of these and other mission organizations.

⁷²Grossman, *Translation Debate* 73-74, 75-76.

⁷³See above pp. 159, 163.

⁷⁴Nida, *Toward a Science* 184.

⁷⁵Because of the nature of the limitations observed in producing the NIV, Scott refers to the methodology as "moderate dynamic equivalence" (Scott, *Dynamic Equivalence* 351). J. P. Longenecker, "The New International Version," *ResQ* 24/1 (1981) 6, a member of the NIV translation team, describes the NIV as a compromise between the traditional and the innovative, as sometimes formal and sometimes dynamically equivalent. Yet the purpose of the NIV as stated in its preface, "representing the meaning rather than producing a word-for-word translation, places this version squarely in the category of D-E" ("Preface," *The New International Version Study Bible* [Grand Rapids:

words, it differs radically from the extreme dynamic equivalence of *The Living Bible Patch Version*, for example. Nevertheless, there is and has been a steady stream of criticism of NIV renderings. A few illustrations will suffice to show this:

(1) In 1976 Mare raised questions about the NIV rendering of *srj* ("flesh") in 1 Cor 5:5 by "the sinful nature," saying that in this verse it referred to the body.⁷⁶

(2) In 1979 Miller criticized the NIV when it rendered *sk-nvsen* (*esknser* "dwelled") in John 1:12 by "lived for a while." This, he said, goes too far in moving the reader's interpretation.⁷⁷

(3) In the same year Scaer objected to 1 Peter 2:8b in the NIV as an illustration of how this version is potentially more insidious than the Living Bible because doctrinal problems are less easily recognized.⁷⁸ The rendering, he said, supported Calvin's doctrine of election to damnation.

(4) In 1980 Fee objected to the NIV's rendering of *gynaiKW ptesuai* (*gynaiK haptesthai*, "[good] for a woman not to touch") by "marry" in 1 Cor 7:1.⁷⁹

(5) In 1986 Scott criticized the NIV's handling of a number of passages in Acts (i.e. 2:39; 16:34; 18:8) that in the Greek allow for paedobaptism, a possibility that is excluded by NIV renderings in these places.⁸⁰

(6) Earlier this year, Jeske on behalf of the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary voiced dissatisfaction with the NIV's rendering of Matt 5:32 in both its original form (i.e., "anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a woman so divorced commits adultery") and in its most recently revised form (i.e., "anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery").

Zondervan, 1985] xi). Kohlenberger calls the NIV a D-E translation (Kohlenberger, *Words 92*). The accuracy of his categorization is confirmed by the extremely complex system of symbols and typefaces used in the exhaustive concordance that attempts to cross-reference the English of the translation with words of the original languages (cf. Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990] ix-xxii).

⁷⁶W. H. Mare, "1 Corinthians," *EBC* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 217. In a 1984 revision the rendering in the text remains the same, but the NIV committee has added two alternatives: "body" and "the flesh." Mare's suggested correction is one of many found in the *Expositor's Commentary* which uses the NIV as its basic text.

⁷⁷Miller, "The *New International Version*" 309. The committee responded by changing the rendering to "made his dwelling" in the 1984 revision.

⁷⁸David P. Scaer, "The New International Version \`Nothing New," *CTQ* 43/1 (June 1979) 242. The committee has not yet changed this rendering. Nor have they chosen to change the words "causes her to commit adultery" in Rev 20:4. Scaer objected to these words because of their millennialistic implications.

⁷⁹G. D. Fee, "1 Corinthians 7:1 in the NIV," *JETS* 23/4 (1980), 307-314. The committee has not incorporated his suggested literal rendering of "touch a woman," but has left the text as it was and has added an alternative in the margin which reads "have sexual relations with a woman." In 1990 the committee has gone further and expressed hesitation about D-E in general and the NIV in particular because it found "far too many absolutely wrong exegetical choices . . . locked into the biblical text and left the reader's only option" ("Reflections on Commentary Writing," *TToday* 46/4 [Jan 1990] 388).

⁸⁰Scott, "Dynamic Equivalence" 353-358.

⁸¹Jeske, "Faculty Review" 106-107. This list of NIV criticisms may be lengthened by consulting

Reviewers and exegetes find fault with the NIV as being too interpretive here and there, because interpretation is an inescapable aspect of D-E. Interpretations differ from person to person, no rendering that limits possibilities to a single interpretation will please everyone. Some ask, "Why not the text have been left ambiguous in this case?"⁸² Others suggest dispersion with the D-E approach so that ambiguities in the source text are left ambiguous in the translation throughout.⁸³ After examining how the NIV handles a number of debated passages, some writers suggest that the NIV may have a somewhat "wheeling" strain throughout.⁸⁴

This dissatisfaction stems ultimately from the large subjective element which is inherent in D-E. Here then is another area of kinship with contemporary hermeneutics. Continuing revision committees are at work on the NIV and similar versions to try to weed out unsatisfactory renderings. The general "tightening" trend observable in the recommendations of these committees⁸⁵ is an implicit recognition of the problems raised by subjectivity. The task is endless because of the translation philosophy of D-E translations.

A similarity in theological implications. Another relationship between contemporary hermeneutics and D-E in translation may be detected in the theological implications of each. Some of us have shied away from this subject out of fear of saying too much or of being misunderstood. Yet something of this must be discussed.

Nida observes the tendency of those who hold the traditional orthodox view of inspiration to focus attention on the autographs and therefore to favor a formal-equivalence approach to translation.⁸⁶ On the other hand, he sees those who hold to neo-orthodoxy or who have been influenced by neo-orthodoxy as freer in their translations. This, he says, is traceable to neo-orthodoxy's view of inspiration in terms of the response of the receptor with a consequent de-emphasis on the source message.⁸⁷ He and Reyburn make clear that there are exceptions to this rule, however.⁸⁸

Robert P. Martin, *Accuracy of Translation and the New International Version* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1989) 41-62.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Scaer, "The New International Version" 243.

⁸⁴Miller, "The *New International Version*" 310; Scott, "Dynamic Equivalence" 361. Kohlenberger, *Words* 66-67, recognizes the problem of the excessive-commentary element in versions such as the Amplified Bible, the Living Bible, and Wuest's Expanded Translation, but he is apparently oblivious to the presence of the same in the NIV. Thomas A. Boogaart criticizes the NIV's sacrifice of faithfulness to the original Hebrew and Greek in the interest of harmonizing different traditions within Scripture and of seeking agreement with various scientific theories ("The New International Version: What Price Harmony?" *Reformed Review* 43/3 [Spring 1990] 189-203).

⁸⁵E.g. Jeske, "Faculty Review" 104; see also Kubo and Specht, *So Many* 82-83, 253-254.

⁸⁶Nida, *Toward a Science* 27.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Nida and Reyburn, *Meaning* 61. Kohlenberger is one of those exceptions when he writes, "I believe in verbal inspiration, but I do not believe a word-for-word translation best honors the authority of Scripture" (Kohlenberger, *Words* 73).

There is little doubt that the assured conviction that the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek autographs of the Bible are inspired, lies behind the dominant formal-equivalence translations throughout the centuries of Christianity. Philoxenian, Harclean, and Palestinian Syriac Versions are early examples of efforts to conform the translation to the original text for this reason.⁸⁹ The theological motive behind this type of translation is obvious.⁹⁰

The presence of such a motive can be seen in the reactionary nature of the early-twentieth-century free translations. Moffatt in the preface of his translation of the NT associates his freedom in translation methodology with being "freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration."⁹¹ Phillips justifies his approach in a similar way in the preface to one of his paraphrases: "Most people, however great their reverence for the New Testament may be, do not hold a word-by-word theory of inspiration. . . ."⁹²

Another symptom of a relaxed attitude toward biblical inspiration is the attitude of D-E advocates toward the source languages of Scripture. Nida and Taber view these languages as being no different from any other languages. They make a strong point that Hebrew and Greek are subject to the same limitations as any other natural language.⁹³ This point is valid, but it is only part of the picture. These biblical languages are the only ones that God chose to communicate in Scripture and are therefore unique among all languages. Why, then, do D-E advocates criticize those who believe in biblical inspiration and put

⁸⁹B. M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford, 1977) 65, 69, 80.

⁹⁰de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 10. Carson's statement is surprising: "Why a translation is necessarily more in keeping with the doctrine of verbal inspiration, I am quite at a loss to know" (D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979] 90). The church has long felt that inspiration elevates the original texts to the point that a translation should reflect as much of them as possible, as reflected in Minkoff's careful analysis of the goals of the translators and Jerome in biblical translation (Minkoff, "Problems" 35-36).

⁹¹J. Moffatt, *The New Testament, A New Translation* (1913) vii.

⁹²J. B. Phillips, *The Gospels Translated into Modern English* (1952) 5. It may be coincidental, but the earliest formulation of D-E theory coincided with the espousal of new theoretical positions regarding inspiration among evangelicals. It was just one year before the appearance of *Toward a Science of Translating* that Earle wrote the following in the *ETS Bulletin*: "The words are not the ultimate reality, but the thoughts which they seek to convey . . ." (R. Earle, *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 6/1 [Winter 1963] 16). He continues by observing that Paul's struggle to find adequate words "accords well with the view of plenary dynamic inspiration` much more than it does with plenary verbal inspiration" (ibid.).

It was also roughly contemporary with similar developments in other realms. Just seven years after Nida's initial effort at establishing a theoretical basis for D-E, Richard Buffum, in one of his regular columns of the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote, "Contemporary journalism is learning to perceive a subtle spectrum of grays between the old black and white reporting techniques" (R. Buffum, *Los Angeles Times* [Oct 5, 1971]). He defines "subtle spectrum of grays" as a new "kind of pondrous, informed subjectivity" that journalists are using in place of "the old rigidly `objective approach" (ibid.).

These other developments probably had nothing directly to do with the development of D-E, but they portray the spirit of the age that indirectly spawned the D-E philosophy.

⁹³Nida and Taber, *The Theory* 7.

languages into a special category because of it,⁹⁴ unless they themselves hold a lower view of biblical inspiration? How, then, can these same authorities in the context of discussing Bible translation insist that anything said in one language can be said in another,⁹⁵ when there is inevitably some loss of meaning in translation from the inspired original into other languages? Is there an evangelical rationale for such emphases?

While opposition by D-E to an evangelical view of inspiration may not be viewed as explicit, there are implications and overtones that raise serious questions. Certainly no doubt can be entertained about the clear evangelical stance of some individuals that have participated in D-E efforts. The question here relates to the foundational philosophy behind D-E.

The same type of questions exists in regard to the hermeneutical employment of contextualization. For example, the position of Charles Kraft regarding the relative nature of all systematic theology⁹⁶ calls into question the traditional doctrine of inspiration with its associated grammatico-historical method of interpretation.⁹⁷ Herein lies another similarity of D-E to contemporary hermeneutics.

The two fields can be tied together even more specifically when, now and then, some of the hermeneutical presuppositions of D-E come to light. For example, Nida and Reyburn appear to be in agreement with Smalley regarding the non-absolute nature of biblical revelation. Smalley elaborates on alleged biblical diversity in such a way as to raise questions about his view of inspiration. He notes that Jesus in the antitheses of Matt 5 revoked the teachings of Moses in the OT and substituted a new standard that was better suited to the Palestinian culture of the first century.⁹⁸ Nida and Reyburn accept this proposition that different cultures have caused contradictory presuppositions in the Bible, citing the same passage as Smalley to prove their assertion.⁹⁹ Other contradictions that they include are the teaching of henotheism in certain parts of the OT and the teaching of monotheism in others, the OT teaching of polygamy as set aside in the NT, and the NT rejection of the OT sacrificial system.¹⁰⁰

If this is not an explicit disavowal of an evangelical view of inspiration, it is at best a foggy representation.

⁹⁴Ibid., 3, 6. In discussing D-E, Kraft rejects "mere literalness even out of reverence for *supposed sacred words* [italics added]" (Kraft, "Dynamic Equivalence" 44). Is this an implicit denial that the words of the original text were inspired?

⁹⁵Ibid., 4.

⁹⁶Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* 291-292.

⁹⁷Article XVIII, "Articles of Affirmation and Denials, The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Chicago, 1978); Article XV, "Articles of Affirmation and Denials, The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics," International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Chicago, 1982).

⁹⁸W. A. Smalley, "Culture and Superculture," *Practical Anthropology* 2 (1955) 60-62; *Christianity in Culture* 126. Evangelical attempts to cope with alleged biblical diversity are usually little more subtle than Smalley's; see Scholer, "Issues" 14-18, and I. H. Marshall, "An Evangelical Approach to Theological Criticism," *Themelios* 13/3 (Apr/May 1988) 79-85.

⁹⁹Nida and Reyburn, *Meaning* 26-27.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN

An answer to our initial question of whether D-E is a method of translation or a system of hermeneutics must acknowledge a considerable amount of traditional hermeneutics in the dynamic-equivalence process. The correlation between contemporary hermeneutics and dynamic equivalence is not as conspicuous as the correlation between traditional hermeneutics and dynamic equivalence. Nevertheless, here substantial similarities exist. But even if one cannot agree to the full correlation, as suggested above, he certainly must grant that D-E incorporates a large measure of traditional hermeneutics into its fabric. That being the case, several questions arise.

A Linguistic Question

Nida and other linguistic authorities are quite specific in telling translators to abide by the referential meanings of words, meanings they identify with those found in standard dictionaries.¹⁰¹ In *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* the relevant definition of the word "translation" is, "an act, process, or instance of translating: as **a**: a rendering from one language into another; *also* the product of such a rendering."¹⁰² There is little doubt that, in the minds of most people who use the English language, the term "translation" used in a cross-cultural connection suggests the simple idea of changing from one language into another. Yet that is only one-third of the process of dynamic equivalence, the step that is called "transfer."¹⁰³ The question is then, "Is it proper linguistic practice to use the word 'translation' to describe the product of a D-E exercise?"¹⁰⁴

More recently, de Waard and Nida use "associative meaning" in lieu of "referential meaning" to describe lexical definitions.¹⁰⁵ They point out, for example, the hesitancy of most translators to use "Yahweh" because in the minds of many Christians, it has become associated with a modernistic attitude toward the Bible and God.¹⁰⁶

Should not the same precision be shown in use of the word "translation"? The use of "translation" to include implementation of all the principles of hermeneutics and exegesis reflects an insensitivity to the associative meaning of that word in the minds of most English-speaking people. Perhaps "commentary" is too strong a word to describe a D-E product, but it seems that something such as "cultural translation"¹⁰⁷ or "interpretive translation" would be more in keeping with principles espoused by linguistic authorities.

An Ethical Question

A closely related ethical question may also be raised: Is it honest to tell people what purports to be the closest representation of the inspired text in their own language, something that intentionally maximizes rather than minimizes personal interpretations of the translator or translators?

Graves has observed that every translation is a lie in the sense that there

¹⁰¹Nida, *Toward a Science* 70.

¹⁰²*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1988) 125.

¹⁰³Glassman, *The Translation Debate* 61-63.

¹⁰⁴Glassman equates the verb "translate" with the verb "interpret" in his attempt to show the equality in meaning of "translate" and "paraphrase" (Glassman, *The Translation Debate* 61-63). His definition, however, is limited to the use of "translate" within the same language rather than in connection with different languages. He states his definition in a way that the noun "translation" is hardly ever qualified in general usage in connection with D-E. From the perspective of referential meaning, he fails in this regard to justify the use of "translate" in the senses of "interpretive" and "paraphrase."

¹⁰⁵de Waard and Nida, *From One Language* 123-24.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁰⁷Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* 284-286.

no identical equivalents between languages.¹⁰⁸ This problem is alleviated by the understanding in the minds of most that translation is done by means of dynamic equivalents rather than exact equivalents.¹⁰⁹ But if a translator goes one step further and intentionally incorporates his personal interpretations when he could have left many passages with the same ambiguity as the original, has he done anything by those who will use his translation?

It is not our purpose to pursue this ethical question further, but simply to raise it as a matter for possible discussion.

A Practical Question

A last question for consideration relates to the use of a D-E product in the ministry: How shall I deal with the problem that the high degree of interpretive freedom in a D-E work makes it unsuitable for close study by those who do not know the original languages?¹¹⁰ The answer to this question will depend on the type of preaching and teaching one does. If his approach is general, dealing only with broad subjects, he perhaps will not be too bothered by this characteristic.

But if he at times treats specific doctrinal issues and wants to stress the accuracy of that detail of the text, the presence of a large interpretive element in his basic message will pose problems. He will inevitably encounter renderings that differ from the view he wants to represent in his message—a problem that is largely precluded by using a formal-equivalence translation. If a preacher has to correct his translation too often, people will soon look upon it as unreliable and reflect doubts about either the translation itself or the larger issue of biblical inspiration.

These are only three questions that emerge because of an intentional incorporation of hermeneutics into the translation process. Others could be proposed. It seems that precision in discussing English versions of the Bible has been largely lost. If more exact terminology is not adopted, the church may someday incur the besetting ailment of a confusion of tongues that is self-inflicted.

¹⁰⁸R. Graves, "The Polite Lie," *The Atlantic* 215 (June 1965) 80.

¹⁰⁹Grossman, *The Translation Debate* 75.

¹¹⁰There is agreement among those who have faced the issue, that free translation and paraphrases are inadequate for those who wish to do a detailed study of the English text (J. P. Long, *The English Bible/From KJV to NIV* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981] 116, 156, 260, 291; Kubo and So, *So Many* 80, 150, 242, 338; W. LaSor, "Which Bible is Best for You?" *Eternity* 25 [Apr. 1974] 29). For a detailed discussion of the "Practical Question," see Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations: The Tension Between Exegesis and Expository Preaching," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1/1 (Spring 1990) 5.

CHRISTIAN BOOKS ON THE NEW AGE

A REVIEW ARTICLE

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The many Christian books on the New Age may be divided into the categories of general surveys, those treating special areas of thought, novels against the movement, evangelistic works, writings by former New Age advocates, treatments of the New Age appeal to women, and those directed to children. Within each category these writings differ in value and purpose. It behooves the evangelical Christian to be selective in his choice of which of these books to use.

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At least fifty Christian books have responded to the New Age Movement since 1985. Readers wonder which are of most value as they choose which ones to purchase. This essay looks at thirty-two of these works, comments briefly upon each, and compares their strengths and weaknesses with others. Volumes making the greater contributions receive a more detailed evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Evangelical books criticizing the New Age Movement (referred to henceforth as NA) number only a fraction of those works written in favor of the movement. These latter fill several shelves at Dalton, Waldenbooks, Crown, and other outlets, some of them viewing the NA in general and others claiming to contain the words of Jesus. They may deal with yoga, eastern meditation techniques, crystal power, tarot cards, out-of-body experiences, mind power to walk across burning coals or bend spoons or levitate or engage in super sex, or how to open one's life to direction from "spirit guides" (another name for demons).

The present discussion deals with *Christian* books. NA materials are too numerous to undertake an exhaustive study of them.

Even a consideration of Christian writings must be limited to *books*, excluding seminars, journal articles, materials published by The Spiritual Counterfeits Project and radio programs, tapes, and the like. Yet books cover practically all the aspects of NA.

It is helpful for the reader in gleaning information on the NA to divide the works under discussion into several categories. Some are general surveys, either of a scholarly or popular nature. Others analyze special areas of NA thought. Further, there are novels, evangelistic works, testimonies by former New Agers, books to women, and those for children. Sometimes a book may fit into more than one group.

GENERAL SURVEYS

General surveys are of two types, the scholarly and the popular.

Scholarly Surveys

Works found to be most helpful in regard to careful research, helpful critique, and informative coverage come earlier in the order of discussion: Elliot Miller, Douglas Groothuis, Karen Hoyt (ed.), Randall Baer, and Gary North.

Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 260 pp.

This former editor of *Christian Research Journal*, with an MA in apologetics from Simon Greenleaf School of Law, endorsed early forms of what eventually became "the New Age Movement." He recounts his experience and his coming to Jesus Christ (appen. D).

His easily readable survey is a masterful treatment of NA belief. The movement is a loosely structured network of organizations and people within the network who are bound together by common values` values such as mysticism, monism ("all is one"), and a vision of the new Aquarian Age of peace and enlightenment. New Agers think "they can hasten the new order . . . by cooperating to influence developments in . . . political, economic, social, and spiritual life."¹

¹Miller, *Crash Course* 15.

Miller tells what the NA is and is not, and describes factors that have made it prominent in the USA.² He attributes its rapid growth to a revolt against the emptiness of secularism and a disillusionment resulting from the sex scandals of Jimmy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. However, all New Agers are not the same.³ Their beliefs and practices may differ just as those of Christian groups and individuals do.

Miller contrasts hippies and NA people,⁴ and describes the longings of the 1970's that nourished the movement, the unchristian nature of it, and the occultism that is its heart.⁵ Substantial discussions deal with NA scientific claims (chap. 2), NA ideology (chaps. 3-4), and the Aquarian (Age) conspiracy (chaps. 5-6). The seventh chapter investigates the meaning of the NA for Christianity, giving reasons for and against labeling the NA as a precursor to the Antichrist and suggesting a Christian response to it. The next two chapters evaluate channeling (i.e. being a medium for other entities) with a mention of self-hypnosis, conscious fraud, and demon possession.⁶

Miller's appraisals are balanced and reflect a good knowledge of the relevant literature and an awareness of different sides of the issue. The late Walter Martin wrote in the Foreword, "I know of no one more qualified to write such a work and no work that approaches (its) scope and depth."

²An example is Shirley MacLaine's alleged experiences in channeling (Shirley MacLaine, *Out on a Limb* [New York: Bantam, 1983]; *idem*, *Dancing in the Light* [New York: Bantam, 1985]).

³Miller, *Crash Course* 20.

⁴*Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁵*Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁶Appendix A answers eight common questions about the NA. One gives criteria for identifying a New Ager. Appendix B thoroughly critiques Cumbey's theory of a NA conspiracy (Constance Cumbey, *Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* [Shreveport, LA: Huntington House, 1983]). He does not agree with her, but compliments her for alerting Christians. Appendix C has suggestions for witnessing to New Agers with an illustrative conversation that shows steps in leading a New Ager to the true gospel.

Douglas Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986. 192 pp.

_____, *Confronting the New Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988. 230 pp.

Elliot Miller, author of the previous work, ranks *Unmasking the New Age* preeminent in value.⁷ Groothuis with a background as a reviewer for *Christian Research Journal*, as an instructor at the McKenzie Study Center, and as a graduate student in philosophy, reflects an impressive grasp of the NA. His work is clear, well organized, careful in its citation of NA statements, and accurate in its biblical evaluations. The former of his two books is as informative as anything so far.

He notes six NA distinctives:⁸ (1) Monism and a person's consciousness expanding until his thinking dissolves into universal, undifferentiated oneness of realizing his godhood; (2) pantheism, all is God, an "it," a force, an energy, a consciousness; (3) every human is God (ignorance being the reason people do not realize this) and man is to worship his own being;⁹ (4) men need to be enlightened about their godhood and can be by consciousness-altering techniques (i.e. meditation, yoga, LSD, est [i.e. Erhard Seminar Training or Forum training], chanting, dancing, hypnotism, internal visualization, sexual acts, biofeedback, etc.); (5) all religions are one, Christianity not being unique because this would disrupt unity;¹⁰ (6) NA help can bestow cosmic evolutionary optimism by radical transforming power through methods of expanding the consciousness.¹¹

⁷Elliot Miller, "The Best Books on the New Age Movement," *Christian Research Journal* 12/1 (Summer 1989) 30.

⁸Groothuis, *Unmasking* 19-31.

⁹Or Groothuis expresses it, "The self is the cosmic treasury of wisdom, power and delight" (Groothuis, *Unmasking* 25).

¹⁰New Agers come to this conclusion in different ways, one of which is to see Jesus' mission as one of letting men know their godhood.

¹¹Humans can be "a new suprahuman species . . . as superior to present day humanity as we are to the apes" (Barbara Marx Hubbard, "The Future of Futurism," *The Futurist* [Apr 1983] 55, cited by Groothuis, *Unmasking* 30). The Messiah within

Groothuis also has chapters that are helpful on special aspects of the NA movement: moving from the counterculture to NA holistic health,¹² yoga methods for sexual intimacy and oneness, seeing a denial of death as the final stage of growth (i.e. a transition into reincarnation), and other NA expressions. He also handles human potential in psychology, science, politics, and spirituality.

He exposes veiled NA ideas by isolating the NA concepts that lie hidden beneath apparently harmless activities and philosophies (chap. 8). His pinpointing of the subjective dissolving of ethical distinctions between good and evil reflects NA's inability to claim that the movement is either good or true.¹³ He contrasts the Christian view and explains several areas where it is more sensible: a personal God, a God who is transcendent, the possibility of ethics, a rational revelation for the submissive to learn from, a truly holistic picture in God's plan and power, objectivity, and historical evidences.¹⁴

While recognizing the rapid growth of NA enterprises, Groothuis is not pessimistic. He does not see NA world conquest as a foregone conclusion. A helpful addition to a work by one with such a thorough grasp of the NA and such colorful expressions would have been a fuller development of biblical responses to NA teachings.

In *Confronting*, this same author provides a few more of these responses. Three chapters (chaps. 4-6) telling how to witness to the New Ager are an informative comparison of the NA and Christian beliefs. They show Christian tenets to be more reasonable. It is too bad that the writer does not give a practical methodology for this kind of witnessing. This is the kind of help offered by Miller's work discussed above and by the books of Baer, Martin, and McGuire yet to be described.

men will lead them into the bright future of a world community, all by means of realizing the potential of collective humanity.

¹²This includes acupuncture, biofeedback, iridology (i.e. gauging bodily irregularities by the iris of the eye) (Groothuis, *Unmasking* 61).

¹³*Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 167.

Karen Hoyt (ed.), *The New Age Rage*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1987. 263 pp.

Several resource persons, including Brooks Alexander, Robert Burrows, and Groothuis, contribute chapters to this volume edited by Hoyt, executive director of Spiritual Counterfeits Project, Berkeley, CA. Chapter subjects include holistic health, science, politics, transpersonal psychology, personal growth (i.e. finding or losing oneself), conspiracy theories, and others. One must read this book slowly and patiently. It does not flow as well as those by Miller, Groothuis, and some others.¹⁵

A beneficial appendix contains thirteen contrasts of the NA with authentic Christianity. The work's bibliography would have been more useful if it categorized the books somehow, as in the works by Miller, Groothuis, Amano/Geisler, and some others.

Randall Baer, *Inside the New Age Nightmare*. Lafayette, LA: Huntington House, 1989. 197 pp.

During his fifteen years as a New Ager Baer became a sought-after seminar leader and wrote two books on crystals, both of which attained a top-three sales rating with Random House. In an out-of-the-body experience about three or four years ago, he was pushing to reach the ultimate break-through in the realm of rapturous colors, when suddenly a hand seemed to reach down before him, peel back a layer of the scene beckoning him onward, and expose a hideous face ready to devour him. He was terrified and began having doubts.

His later analysis after becoming a Christian was that the earlier part of the experience was Satan's enticing display of the beautiful and the latter was his actual hideous face revealing his desire to destroy. As a Christian he began witnessing to New Agers even at their own

¹⁵An example of its ponderous writing-style is in a chapter on Cosmic Conspiracy and End-Time Speculation: "When the Bible speaks of conspiracy theories specifically, it ignores the issue of accuracy altogether. It simply directs our attention to God which is where it truly belongs" (Hoyt, *Rage* 201). Whatever this means could have been expressed more clearly.

seminars`but not for long. After a lectureship in New Mexico, he went to Colorado where his vehicle swerved off a mountain pass on May 5, 1989. The circumstances of his death were mysterious, giving rise to separate investigations by the FBI, an insurance company, and a sheriff's department.¹⁶

Baer's book is most informative about life inside NA experience. The Space Brothers (i.e. spirit guides) instructed him specifically how to write a book that reached number one in world sales.¹⁷ He candidly recounts frequent ruination of families during workshops and retreats through spouse swapping to find new "soul mates."

After beginning his Christian witness he was persecuted with attempts on his life by demons, as he analyzed it. Several strange incidents almost took his life before his final wreck.¹⁸ Yet he also tells of God's blessing that cheered him and the lessons he learned in witnessing.

His descriptions of the basic philosophy of the NA and the kinds of people attracted to it are revealing. People rationalize promiscuous sex to the point that "the stability of marriage in the New Age is in a terrible state" producing an unusually high divorce rate.¹⁹ Justifications for abortion take different forms, one of which is to note that through reincarnation a person will get another chance, so no harm is done.²⁰ Concern for the welfare of others was rarely observed, because in the movement, "the self loves to focus on the self."²¹

Baer exposes the NA's inroads into art, magazines, music, TV, movies, psychology/self-help books and the like.²² Recognizing that

¹⁶*The Omega Letter*, 5/11 (Dec 1989) 7.

¹⁷Baer, *Inside* 36.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 127.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*, 129-30.

²²*Ibid.*, 151-57.

New Agers view Christians as distorted old-age relics with limited thinking,²³ he includes practical suggestions for helping them out of the NA entrapment and an open letter to New Agers.²⁴ His appendices deal with buzzwords, organizations advertised or listed in NA literature, names of NA journals, titles of workshops, and the like.

His weakness in the use of questionable sources has been noted,²⁵ but the reader interest generated by his detail and personal experiences within the NA is very high.

Gary North, *Occultism and New Age Humanism: Unholy Spirits*. Fort Worth: Dominion, 1988. 426 pp.

The 1986 cloth edition of this paperback was a revision of *None Dare Call It Witchcraft* (Arlington House, 1976). The work is a wordy, philosophical/historical analysis of the subject,²⁶ but good discussions reflect the underlying presuppositions of NA ideology. The occult revival, the ignoring of a sovereign God and resulting rampant immorality,²⁷ growth in paranormal science since 1960, detailed accounts of leading sorcerers and psychics, occult powers behind them (chaps. 4-7), magic, and UFO's²⁸ are reviewed. The self-designated heart of the book is his treatment of "Escape from Creaturehood" (chap. 10).²⁹ He explains many NA phenomena as accomplished by

²³Ibid., 162-63.

²⁴Ibid., 175-78, 184-87.

²⁵An illustration is his documentation of a claim that Hitler relied heavily on the occult (Elliot Miller, "Book Reviews," *Christian Research Journal* 12/1 [Summer 1989] 30).

²⁶The author anticipates his readers' difficulty: "It requires a degree of self-discipline to read it" (North, *Occultism* 18).

²⁷Ibid., 61.

²⁸Ibid., 326.

²⁹Ibid., 329.

"supernatural and highly personal powers."³⁰

He predicts that Christians will triumph in an emerging Christian republic, not in a rapture to heaven.³¹ The rise of occultism and other NA infiltrations "can be reversed only by men who recognize their responsibilities under God to subdue the earth for the glory of God (Genesis 1:28)."³² Unfortunately North's postmillennial bias brings him to misconstrue what the proper application of Scripture is.³³

This writer's sections on the roots and trends of the NA are longer than comparable ones by Miller, Groothuis, Martin, and Amano/Geisler, whose handling of the subjects is adequate without a postmillennial solution. Three of North's chapters merit special commendation: the ones on Psychics (chap. 5), Edgar Cayce (chap. 6), and Demonic Healing (chap. 7).

Popular Surveys

Among popular surveys, the more profitable works are by Brooke, Amano/Geisler, Martin, McRoberts, and Smith.

Tal Brooke, *Riders of the Cosmic Circuit*. Batavia, IL: Lion, 1986. 220 pp.

_____, *When the World Will Be As One*. Eugene, OR: Harvest

³⁰Ibid., 330.

³¹Ibid., 394. He labels the expectation of a rapture according to dispensational eschatology as retreatism and defeatism (ibid., 395). His primary agenda is postmillennialism and reconstructionism. Christians will subdue the earth only by integrating biblical law into society, so they need to get to work and do so.

³²Ibid., 401.

³³Many non-reconstructionist Christians apply biblical truth properly in response to the NA while believing in an imminent rapture. This hope is not inconsistent with hard work for God until it occurs. Admittedly, through an unfortunate imbalance between present responsibility and future hope, some have failed, but so have those with other views of Christ's return. A healthy balance between meeting present needs and a premillennial hope is the great need of the hour.

House, 1989. 294 pp.

Brooke's *Riders* profiles three "godmen" of India: Sai Baba (chaps. 1-3), Muktananda (chaps. 4-10), and Rajneesh (chaps. 11-21). Brooke, before conversion to Jesus Christ, spent 1969-71 studying them. The book shows the deceit of these leaders who pushed themselves in self-denial and mind-expansion to the "explosion" crisis and received enlightenment about their own deity. The attainment also brought cosmic power and a searing of conscience and moral sensitivity. Their control over their followers was absolute.

Sai Baba could hiss at his devotees over any annoyance they caused him and plunge them into despair for days.³⁴ Muktananda dispensed with morality, frequently having several women in his bedroom in one night.³⁵ He died in 1982 of a heart attack. In 1985 Rajneesh said that "Jesus Christ was a crackpot" and "only the retarded and utterly mediocre people can believe in God."³⁶ Subsequently, he pled guilty to two charges in United States federal courts for which he received a ten-year suspended sentence and was asked to leave the country.³⁷ He had trouble in other countries³⁸ and died recently on a South Pacific island while practicing the occult.

A chief benefit of the book is to help those who are being deluded into accepting NA thought to see its deceit before it is too late. Brooke analyzes some of these leaders' paranormal acts as merely human, but attributes some to powers from another world.³⁹ His own conversion resulted from an uneasiness that he was into something the Bible condemned (see chap. 22).

When the World Will Be As One relates NA plans for a global

³⁴Brooke, *Riders* 35.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 71-72.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 159.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 160.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 161.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 65.

community to solve human problems. The greatest hindrance they face is genuine Christianity, which prevents NA seepage into every area of American life.⁴⁰ True Christians, in insisting on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and not allowing the equality of Mohammed, Krishna, Lord Maitreya, and others with Him, make the authentic Christ an impediment to the NA. They therefore reformulate the NT picture of Christ into a broadminded, non-judging, cosmic being who approves all paths except the one biblical way. This reformulated Christ also teaches the deity of man, the truth of eastern mystery religions, and a syncretistic world. Channelers and psychics communicate with this Christ. New Agers are strongly antichurch.⁴¹

In Brooke's opinion, a world network of secret financiers is quietly conspiring to take control of the world economy through which it will bring governments under its control (chap. 20). This reviewer wonders whether a hidden aristocracy could have as much control as Brooke thinks, but can see how this plan, if fully implemented, could lead to such a world order.

As a young Christian, Brooke claims to have had a private superscreen vision of the NA future world system, which was quite different from the bright future promised by New Agers. His vision featured a grotesque creature who brainwashed people so as to destroy them.⁴² It is unwise to combat the NA by pitting vision against vision as Brooke does, however. An accurate biblical picture of the future would be better. Brooke does this in his closing reminder that Christ will come and bring the collapse of the false Babylon, a global network of economic and occult forces. He then will replace man's world order with His own.

Miller has pointed out inaccuracies in Brooke's *Riders*. Brooke incorrectly attributes a NA newspaper ad for the NA "Christ" to the Lucis Trust founded by NA author Alice Bailey. Instead, the ad was

⁴⁰An example of seepage cited tells how a ouija board lured a person deeper and deeper into the occult (Brooke, *When the World* 18-22).

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 115-17.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 282.

placed by the Tara Center.⁴³ Aside from minor weaknesses, Brooke's books have outstanding content and are written in an engaging style.

Walter Martin, *The New Age Cult*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989. 140 pp.

Martin's clear and orderly study sees the 1970's as when "the New Age Movement" terminology began. He has a good summary of NA doctrines (chap. 2) with their corresponding biblical correction (chap. 3). He pinpoints dangers of NA in the classroom, politics, and the church (chaps. 4-6). Dangers to the church include an erroneous doctrine of sin (i.e. sin is man's ignorance of his godhood), eastern meditation, no moral absolutes, and the teaching of a NA cosmic Christ to be found in all religious traditions. A discussion of reincarnation (chap. 7) and practical steps for evangelizing New Agers (chap. 8) conclude the book.

Martin's book is more informative than Chandler's, which is yet to be discussed, because of its briefer and more specific descriptions. Its strength is in giving Christian answers instead of majoring in information about the NA.

J. Y. Amano and Norman L. Geisler, *The Infiltration of the New Age*. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1989. 150 pp.

Amano's and Geisler's book is equally as helpful as Martin's in brevity, readability, and organization. Amano, a free-lance writer, and Geisler, Dean of the Liberty Center for Christian Scholarship, have combined efforts to produce well-selected material on eastern ideas that are seeping into the west. In particular, they treat pantheism, the occult and spirit guides, reincarnation, self-godhood, the global-village dream, and a world conspiracy. Their theory of a conspiracy sees Satan as the mastermind, not humanism, communism, NA belief, or the like.⁴⁴ The book's emphasis on the unproductivity of developing conspiracy theories of the latter kind may be overstated. Perhaps

⁴³Elliot Miller, "Book Review," *Christian Research Journal* 11/2 (Fall 1988) 30.

⁴⁴Amano and Geisler, *The Infiltration* 99.

some can maintain a proper balance while pursuing such endeavors. However, their point about inadequate evidence to show New Agers secretly in control of the world is well taken.⁴⁵

Appendices at the end include a summary of key NA concepts (appen. 1) and a section similar to Baer's book alerting Christians to signs of the NA (appen. 5). The latter lists New Age leaders, buzz words (i.e. centering, cosmic energy, etc.), and symbols (i.e. rainbow, pyramid, and rays of light). For its length, the book is very lucid and comprehensive.

John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *The Facts on the New Age Movement*. Chattanooga, TN: John Ankerberg Evangelistic Association, 1988. 40 pp.

This booklet condenses fundamental statements into answers to thirty lead questions. Well documented and perceptive, it shows how reasonable biblical answers are and exposes fallacies and dangers in NA thinking. It defines the NA, identifies its leaders, and describes its beliefs, attractiveness, techniques for channeling, and use of crystals to gain power. Scriptural answers to the NA, reasons why New Agers are against true Christianity, and arguments why New Agers are not behind a conspiracy to seize control of the world are also included. In addition, the brief work has space enough to discuss witchcraft, demons, and Satanism. Finally, the benefits of Christ for the New Ager are clarified.⁴⁶

Alice and Stephen Lawhead, *Pilgrim's Guide to the New Age*. Batavia, IL: Lion, 1986. 112 pp.

The Lawhead work is a simulated driving tour of NA beliefs on cosmos, self, family, body, mind, and kingdom with the co-authors at the wheel.⁴⁷ An initial clarification of what the NA is would have

⁴⁵Ibid., 100.

⁴⁶The booklet is available from The John Ankerberg Show, P. O. Box 8977, Chattanooga, TN 37411.

⁴⁷Lawhead, *Pilgrim's Guide* 4.

helped this book. The "drivers" speed away so fast that the reader is puzzled by disjointed details about an enormous universe before being shown the relevance to the NA. Each part of the tour ends with a Christian perspective so general that it is unconvincing. Perhaps the book will appeal to readers who prefer picture books, but this preference will deprive them of much. Straightforward books by Miller, Groothuis, Baer, Martin, and Amano/Geisler are more helpful.

Kerry D. McRoberts, *New Age or Old Lie?* Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson, 1989. 137 pp.

Growing out of an MA thesis at Simon Greenleaf School of Law, this readable book by an Assembly of God pastor is a worthy addition to the field, but not as informative as Miller, Groothuis, Baer, Martin, and Amano/Geisler. It has short summaries of principal NA beliefs and criticizes the NA preference for myths rather than factual data. The weakness of NA holism, cosmic evolution, ethics, astrology, and the like are shown. He pictures New Agers as idolaters who worship the image God created (i.e. deified men) instead of glorifying God. Demonic entities masquerade as wise teachers, mimicking the threefold lie of Satan in Gen 3:1-5.⁴⁸ Questions about the NA are answered and tips given on how to witness to New Agers (chap. 8). Baer and Martin are also good on this, as is McGuire's work yet to be described. Roberts concludes against a conscious human NA conspiracy.⁴⁹

Dave Hunt, *America the Sorcerer's New Apprentice. The Rise of New Age Shamanism.* Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1988. 318 pp.

Hunt, author of several NA books, describes how more Americans are using consciousness-expanding methods and consulting spirit guides. Ouija boards, contact with the dead, and psychotherapy and the occult are among his topics. He understands demons to be the source of paranormal phenomena more often than

⁴⁸McRoberts, *Old Lie* 78-79.

⁴⁹Ibid., 82-84.

humans.⁵⁰ His extensive and informative quotes from NA sources do not always validate his conclusions. For example, his theory that the present NA expression of worldly concepts will directly result in the Antichrist and world government of the prophesied tribulation period cannot be pressed with certainty.

The growth of shamanism results from "deliberate planning and strong effort,"⁵¹ he says, and will transform America into a Hindu/Buddhist/Shamanic faith eventually if not halted. The only countries to survive its surge so far are Islamic ones. He shows the desirability of Christianity instead of this pantheistic and naturalistic way.⁵² Americans must choose their destiny.⁵³

Texe Marrs, *Dark Secrets of the New Age*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1987. 288 pp.

This is one of a number of books on the NA by Marrs, a retired Air Force officer who now leads Living Truth Ministries of Austin, TX.⁵⁴ It amasses over six hundred quotations and many details to clarify NA teachings. Marrs relates these to biblical information about the government of Antichrist, but the reader must evaluate carefully all the good data to see whether it confirms his conclusions. His emphasis on alertness and defending the truth is proper, but Christians cannot be as certain as he is that the present state of the NA movement is the one that will fulfill prophecy about the end-time tribulation.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Hunt, *New Apprentice* 197.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 281.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 275-76.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 294.

⁵⁴Douglas Groothuis, "'A Summary Critique' of Texe Marrs," *Dark Secrets, idem*, "Mystery Mark of the New Age," *Christian Research Journal* 11/3 (Winter-Spring 1989) 27-28.

⁵⁵Marrs, *Dark Secrets* 61, 262-63. Many in church history have claimed to be the Messiah or forerunners just before the Messiah's appearance. They were wrong. On

The viewpoint of this author is apparently post-tribulational.⁵⁶ He derives support for his theory of a soon-to-come world religion from Hal Lindsey, Paul Crouch, Pat Robertson, Constance Cumbey, Dave Hunt, Jimmy Swaggart, and Dave Wilkerson.⁵⁷ The weakness of his case is typified in the seven identifying marks of Antichrist (chap. 6) where his use of Scripture is often misleading.⁵⁸

Yet the book has much that is profitable if used with discretion.⁵⁹

Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age*. Dallas: Word, 1988. 360 pp.

Chandler, a *Los Angeles Times* writer, in this lucid popular survey treats many aspects of NA and includes many quotations. Representative of his thirty-three chapters are ones on gurus; crystal and pyramid power; commercial appeal; ideas in education, music and art; theories of conspiracy; reincarnation or resurrection; and cautions and dangers. His concluding chapter presents Jesus Christ as the man of all ages.

The well-documented book arranges key concepts in an entertaining style, but does not satisfy those looking for detailed Christian answers. The works of Miller, Groothuis, Martin, Amano/Geisler, Smith, and others are better at this.

April 5, 1982 Benjamin Creme mistakenly said his Lord Maitreya (the Messiah) would come (ibid., 36). The present trend has elements that *could* turn out to be the fulfillment of prophecy. Christians should not be dogmatic that it is, but should be well informed and try to reach New Agers in the meantime.

⁵⁶Ibid., 25.

⁵⁷Ibid., 29.

⁵⁸For example, he cites Isa 9:6 to show that Antichrist will be a man of peace (ibid., 68-69). This is a verse that refers to Christ. His use of Dan 11:32 to portray the false Christ as corrupt and deceitful is also an interpretive error. Evangelical interpreters usually limit Dan 11:21-35 to Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), with the portion about Antichrist beginning at either v. 36 or v. 40.

⁵⁹Groothuis's review of Marr's work documented above in n. 54 is helpful.

F. LaGard Smith, *Out on a Broken Limb*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1986. 207 pp.

_____, *Crystal Lies. Choices and the New Age*. Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1989. 162 pp.

The former work of Smith, a professor of Law at Pepperdine University, evaluates Shirley MacLaine's *Out on a Limb*. It is a detailed and excellent response to MacLaine. Its explanations are clear, often deriving specific help from Scripture. This extremely worthwhile book patiently develops the problems of reincarnation and karma, NA consciousness, and me-generation selfism. Unfortunately the editors have not documented many of MacLaine's quotations and other information as other works of this type have. Smith's qualifications should not be impaired by these omissions.

In very readable form, his *Crystal Lies* plainly describes many facets of NA belief and practice such as reincarnation and famous channelers. He personally detected mistakes in a session with one of MacLaine's channels (chap. 7). Other facets featured are yoga, holistic health, and "easy outs" like divorce for freedom-craving people (chap. 11). He notes a profession of Christianity by many New Agers who support their profession with a "pick and choose" method of interpreting the Bible. These same ones reject clear biblical teaching about sin, salvation, sacrificial atonement, grace, resurrection, judgment, heaven, and hell.⁶⁰ Edward Cayce was one, having served as a Baptist Sunday School teacher at one time.

Other highlights include Smith's emphasis on personal godhood⁶¹ and a correlation between the NA's denial of sin and its dismal record of immorality.⁶² He disagrees with the conspiracy theorists, though he respects their zeal.⁶³ This writer's works are

⁶⁰Smith, *Crystal Lies* 25-26.

⁶¹Ibid., 19, 36-37, 42, 50, 95, 103.

⁶²Ibid., 55.

⁶³Ibid., 58-59. The militancy of fundamental Islam is one of his reasons for denying a one-world government in the near future. Another is the variation in views among New Agers themselves (ibid., 59).

lighter reading, but very informative and worthwhile.

SPECIAL AREAS OF THOUGHT

John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *Astrology. Do the Heavens Rule Our Destiny?* Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1989. 334 pp.

The first of several books treating limited aspects of the NA is co-authored by Ankerberg (introduced previously) and Weldon, who has a doctorate in comparative religions and has written on psychic healing and sorcery. This definitive and authoritative analysis of astrology is presented for the sake of forty million Americans who believe in it, including ten percent of the evangelical population.⁶⁴ The book has wide documentation (over three hundred sources) and has a twenty-page bibliography that is divided into helpful categories.⁶⁵ Separate chapters discuss subjects such as the world view of astrology, its alleged proof, scientific evidence against it, the compatibility of astrology and Christian doctrine, and its relation to spiritism. The authors cite Robert Morey (*Horoscopes and the Christian* [Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1981] 48-59) to support the incompatibility of astrology with Christianity.⁶⁶ This book reflects their care and great investment of time in studying the subject.

Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser, and John Weldon, *New Age Medicine. A Christian Perspective on Holistic Health.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1987. 205 pp.

In this work Paul, a family physician, Teri, executive of a crisis pregnancy center, and Weldon (identified earlier) have revised an earlier work, *The Holistic Healers* (Chattanooga, TN: Global, 1983), by adding studies of biofeedback, homeopathy, and iridology. This highly regarded book evaluates "holistic" inroads into the field of

⁶⁴Ankerberg and Weldon, *Astrology* 7, citing a Gallup Poll.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 313.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 286.

human health from outside organized medicine. After centuries of the practice of medicine by mystics, faith healers, gurus, and shamans, scientific medicine has developed in the past few hundred years, but it has failed to restore health for people who are afraid to die. Those advocating healing through faith and the paranormal have capitalized on this failure.⁶⁷ The frequent impersonal and callous approach of many medical doctors is another reason for the new surge of interest by people who want to be treated as *whole* persons.

Features of medicine derived from eastern mysticism and occult metaphysics (chap. 4) include four ideas on how to gain energy: all is one, and in an unaltered state, a person feels a oneness with all in one reality; man is god; life's aim is to become aware of one's godhood through various techniques; and the enlightened person attains control of his consciousness. A survey of the mystical roots of ancient Chinese medicine in chapters 4-6 is accompanied by two objections to the system: (1) Invoking life energy through the suggested procedure ignores objectivity and bases "science" on conjecture, subjective impressions, and unreliable data. (2) The approach is usually pervaded with mystical ideas, i.e. conditioning the psychic centers of the body to receive universal love and magic.⁶⁸ Some people who sincerely believe they are trusting the Bible are actually practicing occultism when, because of their lack of discernment, they engage in "treatments" based on a world view that is contrary to the Bible.⁶⁹

Other chapters in the work cover psychic healing and Edgar Cayce (chaps. 7-8), biofeedback, homeopathy, iridology (chap 9), alternatives to the new medicine (chap. 10), and biblical foundations for wholeness (chap. 11). Its annotated bibliography is valuable. Groothuis calls this an "excellent Christian critique."⁷⁰

⁶⁷Reisser *et al*, *Medicine* 9-10.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 93-94.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 95.

⁷⁰Groothuis, *Unmasking* 191. He lists three other good sources: Martin and Diedre Bobgan, *Hypnosis and the Christian* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1984); *Spiritual Counterfeits Journal* (Aug 1978); and John Weldon and Zola Levitt, *Psychic Healing* (Chicago: Moody, 1982) (*ibid.*). William Nolen's older book effectively exposes fraud

John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *The Facts on Channeling*. Chattanooga, TN: John Ankerberg Evangelistic Association, 1988. 41 pp.

This well-organized, carefully documented book answers twenty-eight questions, including "What is channeling?," "Who are channelers?," "Why does it matter who or what the 'spirits' are if they help people?," and "What does the Bible say about channeling?" The answer to the last question, "Have any channelers later turned to God?," is illustrated by two who have.⁷¹

Brooks Alexander, *Spirit Channeling*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988. 32 pp.

This booklet by a senior researcher for The Spiritual Counterfeits Project reflects a thorough knowledge of the subject, but does not document its contents as well as the previous booklet does. Books by Smith and Miller also have substantial sections on channeling.

Mark Albrecht, *Reincarnation. A Christian Critique of a New Age Doctrine*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1987. 139 pp.

This is one of several books that specializes on reincarnation. Albrecht, former co-director of The Spiritual Counterfeits Project, delivers a well informed treatment of the teaching's history, beginning prior to 500 B.C. in the East and tracing its spread to and rapid growth in the West during the last century. He relates it to karma, i.e. good and bad deeds have a reaction and one can use personal karma to gain merit and a better situation in a later reincarnation. With clear and accurate answers from the Bible, he responds to those who twist the

by psychic healers (*A Doctor in Search of a Miracle* [Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1974]), as do books by André Kole and Al Janssen (*Miracles or Magic?* [Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1987]) and Dan Korem (*Powers, Testing the Psychic & Supernatural* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988]).

⁷¹Victor Ernest, *I Talked with Spirits* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1971); Raphael Gasson, *The Challenging Counterfeit: A Former Medium Exposes Spiritualism* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge, 1966).

Bible and early church Fathers to support reincarnation (chap. 4). Arguments for and against the doctrine are offered (chap. 7), along with its philosophical and theological problems (chaps. 8-9).

Norman Geisler and J. Yukata Amano, *The Reincarnation Sensation*. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1986. 192 pp.

The authors divide reincarnation beliefs into ten types and thoroughly expose the system's logical fallacies. Acknowledging that about twenty-five percent of Americans accept some form of the teaching, they relate it to its eastern roots, to psychology, to justice and injustice, and to salvation. They give biblical answers, some good (chap. 5) and some not so good (chap. 4), and a chart of reincarnational models. A chapter title in the table of contents promises instructions on how to witness to a reincarnationist (chap. 10), but does not deliver when a reader opens to that point in the text. Overall, however, this well-written book receives a high grade.

NOVELS AGAINST THE NEW AGE

Frank E. Peretti, *This Present Darkness*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1986. 376 pp.

_____, *Piercing the Darkness*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1989. 441 pp.

Peretti's fast-selling works stress the urgency of prayer in spiritual warfare that encounters unseen angels and demons. The plots are fascinating, and the action fast-moving. His characters engage in eastern meditation, channeling, expanded consciousness, realization of potential claims to be gods, and experience in past and future lives.⁷²

A novel can be a poor place to learn Christian doctrine and practice. Unfortunately, Peretti and others sometimes go beyond Scripture. He makes holy angels sarcastic and spiteful⁷³ and victorious

⁷²Peretti, *Present* 90-99, 236-45.

⁷³Peretti, *Piercing* 16.

only when humans pray. He gives all of them wings and swords, and attributes to them different nationalities. Demons dissolve, fall into many bits, vanish in a red puff, have their heads cut off by angels,⁷⁴ and roll like a puppy on black tar.⁷⁵ Other distinctions that Scripture never makes include designations of particular demons of lust, lawlessness, deception, complacency, despair, murder, and the like.

The author's stories make prayer a priority, which is good. Yet to make God and angels *completely* dependent on human prayer questions His sovereignty. Sometimes He acts contrary to what men think best.⁷⁶

EVANGELISM: SATAN'S FORCES VS. GOD'S

Erwin W. Lutzer and John F. DeVries, *Satan's Evangelistic Strategy for This New Age*. Wheaton: Victor, 1989. 191 pp.

Besides sections dealing with evangelism in the surveys described above, there are specialized works such as this one by Lutzer and DeVries which labels the NA's approach as Satan's "four spiritual laws" from Eden: "you will be like God," "you shall not die," "you will know good and evil," and "your eyes will be opened."⁷⁷ Satan's evangelists, NA leaders and other New Agers, are infiltrating the church, home, schools, politics, music, and other realms with their philosophy. Yet Christians can beat Satan at his own game by majoring on the enjoyment of God, His Word, and other Christians. Though a section of chapter 12 shows the way out of the NA error, no detailed evangelistic method to counteract Satan's strategy is given.

Paul McGuire, *Evangelizing the New Age. The Power of the Gospel Invades the New Age Movement*. Ann Arbor: Servant, 1989. 169

⁷⁴Ibid., 10.

⁷⁵Ibid., 89.

⁷⁶For a fuller review of Peretti, see Robert L. Dean, Jr., and Thomas D. Ice, "Frank Peretti and the New Spiritual Warfare," *Biblical Perspectives* 2/5 (Sept-Oct 1989) 1-6.

⁷⁷Lutzer and DeVries, *Strategy* 16-21.

pp.

The theme of McGuire, a feature-film producer and member of The Church on the Way, Van Nuys, CA, is to show New Agers Christ's vibrant power and unconditional love. His prescription is the baptism of the Spirit, followed by speaking in tongues. Yet he backs away from dogmatism on this point by allowing that reliance on God for power is what counts rather than the necessity of the terminology "Spirit baptism."⁷⁸ Many will argue that biblical terminology must be used, however, and that his is wrong. The filling of the Spirit is what is needed.

Only a brief section covers methods of evangelization,⁷⁹ but it has good points, including prayer, genuine love for the person, a gentle manner, intelligent answers, and the leading of the Spirit.⁸⁰ The book is a call to power, love and vibrancy in Christian living as a means of providing an attractive Christian witness.

BOOKS BY FORMER NEW AGERS

As former New Agers, Baer, Brooke, and Miller write from their own distinct perspectives of the NA. Other works of this nature are more specialized.

Caryl Matrisciana, *Gods of the New Age*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1985. 224 pp.

The authoress, a native of India, describes eastern mysticism from an Indian perspective and tells of aquarian fairs and her early delights in a NA setting. Then she heard persuasive Bible teaching, delivered in the power and love of the Spirit. God saved her and delivered her from alcohol, drugs, immoral living, and out-of-body

⁷⁸McGuire, *Evangelizing* 78.

⁷⁹Ibid., 134-36.

⁸⁰McGuire erroneously calls this the "anointing of the Spirit," but later corrects it when he writes, "You should be led and guided by the Holy Spirit" (ibid., 135).

experiences. She served at a cult information center and exposed illegal drug and arms deals in the cults, practices of sterilizing women and children, prostitution, homosexuality, unethical fund-raising methods, and lusts for power (chap. 10). Her descriptions of NA festivals and seminars are like those of Baer. She attributes the masterplan of deception to Satan alone, but notes that NA leaders sometimes push for religious and political unity throughout the world (chap. 16).

NEW AGE APPEAL TO WOMEN

Wanda Marrs, *New Age Lies to Women*. Austin, TX: Living Truth, 1989. 252 pp.

Most of the material in this book by the wife of Texe Marrs is just as applicable to men and young people as it is to women. An example is, "Every New Age woman moves, walks and talks, and has her very being in the Goddess."⁸¹ The "Goddess" is Mystery Babylon, an anti-God system that pertains as much to men as to women.

The work details the NA return to ancient Babylonian practices such as Satanic rituals and preoccupation with sexual pleasures (chaps. 1, 14). Some statements appear rather exaggerated: "Today there is no area of a woman's life in which she can escape the intrusion of New Ageism."⁸² Mrs. Marrs has diligently researched the words and deeds of New Agers. An example is her work on "sacred sex" (chaps. 3, 5). One thing the NA "wants to see go is the joyous, wholesome, and god-fearing [*sic*] lifestyle of the Christian woman and mother."⁸³ She contends that the NA wants women to see sin and guilt as outmoded relics of fundamentalism and to label negative things such as judgment and the devil as illusions (chap. 13). New Agers say every woman should love unconditionally and do whatever her personal desires urge her to.

⁸¹W. Marrs, *Women* 17.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 34.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 205.

A lot of space is devoted to explaining how present NA developments will lead to the man numbered 666 and the Mystery Babylon of the Apocalypse. Her final chapter invites the searching woman to come to Christ, but gives little detail in counteracting NA belief and practice.

NEW AGE INFILTRATION TO CHILDREN

Two books about the NA impact on children are well researched and quite readable.

Berit Kjos, *Your Child & the New Age*. Wheaton: Victor, 1990. 180 pp.

The first, by a mother of three, tells of NA deceptions opposed to Judeo-Christian values in schools. She does not condemn the schools or the media, but wants to help families unite "in confident, loving resistance."⁸⁴ She is competent and articulate in contrasting humanist and Christian approaches. The book frequently furnishes practical help to parents in showing how to combat counterfeit spirituality in children, school influences such as NA value clarification, NA globalism, and the manipulation of children's minds via movies, TV, toys, games, magazines with offensive titillation, and music.

Mrs. Kjos sees NA thought as ancient occultism with a beautiful facelift to mask the evil about which Paul warns (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 4:3-5). She has no problem with teachers who use meditation and guided imagery because of its effectiveness, but she objects to others who use it to push NA ideas because of a connection with the Essence or Force.⁸⁵

Johanna Michaelsen, *Like Lambs to the Slaughter*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1989. 352 pp.

Michaelsen, the sister of Hal Lindsey's wife, also wrote *The*

⁸⁴Kjos, *Your Child* 7.

⁸⁵Ibid., 24.

Beautiful Side of Evil (Harvest House, 1982) in which she described personal involvement in occultism and psychic surgeries before her conversion to Christ. In the earlier book she contrasts the seemingly beautiful side of evil offered by the occult with a false "Jesus" and the real beauty she found in the genuine Jesus.

Like Lambs graphically appeals to Christian parents and educators to become aware of occult influences in schools, toys, games, TV cartoons, etc., which lead away from biblical beliefs. She devotes chapters to the singling out of gifted children to receive occult teaching, meeting one's spirit guide in school, the roots and dangers of certain Halloween practices, and witches and Satanism. The book, though not as practical as the one by Kjos, has one chapter of practical counsel. Spirit-filled Christian parents who pray to God for protection and guidance of themselves and their children are the greatest need. The miscellaneous appendices treat such topics as what witches believe, sympathy for the devil in NA teachings, the folly of claiming to be God, how to approach teachers, and tips for writing effective letters to congressmen and editors.

CONCLUSION

The best scholarly surveys, in order, are Miller, both works of Groothuis, and Hoyt. The best popular surveys are Martin and Amano/Geisler. The best works by former New Agers are Miller, Baer, Brooke (two works), and Matriciana. The most valuable on special subjects are Albrecht and Geisler/Amano (reincarnation), Smith (answer to Shirley MacLaine), Ankerberg and Weldon (astrology), and Reisser/Reisser/Weldon (medicine). Baer, Martin, and McGuire are best on evangelism. Peretti's novels are fascinating, but must be carefully screened. Of the books on children, Michaelsen's is better for detail and Kjos for practical help. If he could afford only four volumes, this reviewer would choose, in order, Miller, Groothuis (*Unmasking*), Baer, and Martin.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gonzalo Baez-Camargo, *Archaeological Commentary on the Bible*.
Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1986. 288 pp. \$9.95 (paper).
Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Gonzalo Baez-Camargo (deceased 1983) was a distinguished journalist, lecturer, biblical scholar, and author who wrote from a scholar's reservoir of knowledge but with a pastor's need for quick-reference volumes in view. The sequence of material in this helpful work follows the biblical text from Genesis to Revelation.

Over seventy percent of the book covers the OT and twenty percent the Gospels and Acts. Thus the NT epistles receive little space. The bibliography has the literature through 1980 but no later.

Baez-Camargo is weakest in discussing the historical accuracy of the Bible (pp. xx-xxii). At various points he explains miracles as natural events (e.g., Josh 3:16). The book's strengths include its arrangement, its index of persons and places, and its cross-references to a wider range of archaeological journals and books.

When used with caution to avoid its theological defects, this digest of background information can enrich a pastor's preaching, particularly in the OT and the Gospels and Acts.

Richard P. Belcher. *A Layman's Guide to the Lordship Controversy*.
Southbridge, Mass: Crowne, 1990. 123 pp. \$6.95 (paper).
Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Dr. Richard Belcher, teacher of Bible, Theology and Greek at Columbia Bible College serves the interest of Christian laymen by analyzing the most visible and important theological issue of our day: the true biblical explanation of authentic saving faith. In his introduction, he correctly notes that the debate on salvation has replaced the debate on inerrancy in the evangelical community. He points to John MacArthur and Zane Hodges as the most articulate spokesmen for the lordship and non-lordship positions respectively. He opts for Hodges rather than Charles Ryrie, believing that Hodges

has the strongest and most persuasive presentation of the non-lordship side. For those who believe the debate is about little more than semantics, Belcher presents a convincing case otherwise.

The author fairly represents both parties, deals with issues and not personalities, evidences clear thinking, writes well, and is thorough and well organized. The book has three sections: (1) a presentation of both sides, (2) a comparison of the sides, and (3) a critique of the non-lordship side. In the final section, he points out six straw-men used by Hodges in representing the lordship position, six major exegetical errors of Hodges, and six telling theological errors in Hodges's work.

Belcher strives for objectivity throughout and achieves his goal commendably. Yet with intellectual honesty, he does not shun major conclusions, based on a thorough biblical evaluation.

To the best of this reviewer's knowledge, Professor Belcher has no personal axe to grind, so his conclusion is very significant. About Hodges's position, Belcher says, "Yet as this author has studied the logic, the exegesis, the arguments and statements of Hodges in his book, it has been concluded that the non-lordship position he presents is based on straw-men, exegetical inaccuracies, flawed theological thinking, and some illogical and unbelievable statements" (p. 71).

In contrast, about MacArthur's view he writes, "This writer wants to go on record that though he is in strong agreement with MacArthur in the basic tenets of his book, that does not necessarily mean he agrees with every statement that MacArthur makes or a level of emphasis he gives each issue in his book. . . . It is a valuable and well written and challenging book, but certainly not infallible" (pp. 105-6).

While Belcher has not commended MacArthur for perfection, he has clearly concluded that MacArthur is biblically on target and Hodges has missed the mark widely. Belcher by his incisive survey has contributed significantly to the theological literature written for laymen. He understands that few untrained Christians will even read MacArthur or Hodges and fewer will understand the issues. This reviewer recommends Belcher's book to all who are confused by the issues or have yet to grapple with them.

Sidney Greidanus. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 341 pp. \$19.95 (paper). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Sidney Greidanus is professor of theology at The King's College, Edmonton, Alberta. The present work, an outgrowth of the author's doctoral dissertation, "brings together the results of recent biblical scholarship as they pertain to preaching, and . . . links the disciplines of biblical hermeneutics and homiletics" (p. xi), a link that is badly needed today.

The present volume seeks not only to unite hermeneutics and homiletics but also, within the field of hermeneutics, to link historical and literary studies. Greidanus writes, "Biblical studies has recently entered a new world: it has undergone a paradigm shift from historical to literary studies" (p. xi). He recognizes that such a shift presents some "precarious hazards" but some "exciting possibilities" as well (p. xi). Having read the literature, the author observes that "scholarly interest today is focused not so much on history as on genres of biblical literature with a concomitant shift in homiletics to forms of sermons" (p. xi). But he also sees the necessity of keeping historical controls in order to retain objectivity.

The author not only advocates expository preaching but also carefully defines what the expression means so as to avoid confusing it with topical preaching. To refute the commonly held conviction that topical preaching may also be called biblical preaching, the author argues, "One might say that expository preaching is preaching biblically. But 'expository preaching' is more than a mere synonym for biblical preaching; it describes what is involved in biblical preaching, namely, the exposition of a biblical passage . . ." (p. 11).

Greidanus proposes an interpretive methodology that seeks to understand a passage in its historical and cultural context without ignoring the literary dimension, which was also part of the author's intention, or the canonical referents which compose the broader context of the book. Having defended his method in chapters two through four, he discusses theological interpretation the only basis for application (p. 121). The biblical message must be "a word *from* God and a word *about* God" (p. 120). Through this theological objective the sermon achieves its purpose.

One of the most helpful discussions for pastors, and at the same

time perhaps one of the most controversial, tells how to identify a literary unit in Scripture. How large a text does the nature of a passage require a preacher to take? Besides the artificial boundaries of verse, chapter, and in some instances even book divisions for textual units, what other criteria isolate a textual unit? In answering this question, the author differs with Yoder's (*From Word to Life*) view that the paragraph is the smallest organized unit, arguing "the Bible contains both smaller and larger thought units than paragraphs" (p. 127). On the one hand, the sentence in prose and the line in poetry are smaller textual units; on the other hand, the biblical author may deal with a single major point in a lengthy narrative.

Citing his agreement with Yoder, Greidanus concludes this section by recommending that the preacher ask questions of the text: "Is the goal of the unit reached? Is the story finished, the tension resolved, or the topic completed?" (Greidanus, p. 128, quoting Yoder, p. 57).

Other guidelines for isolating a textual unit may be the literary constructions employed by the biblical writer, such as chiasm, inclusion, or other parallel structures (p. 133). The author gives helpful hints on how to identify and use these structures.

Every preaching text (complete literary unit) has a theme—a truth that may be expressed in propositional form. A literary unit is an independent thought unit, a thematic unit. Yet not all agree that this equation covers all types of biblical texts, such as narrative, for example. The author considers the pros and cons of thematic-textual preaching and concludes with this advice: "The text's theme should be formulated from the author's viewpoint and not that of different characters in the text . . ." (p. 135).

After a discussion of the sermon's form and relevance, Greidanus suggests how one should preach from the major literary genres found in the Bible: Hebrew narratives, prophetic literature, the Gospels, and the epistles. Greidanus's work is not a "how to" text in homiletics. He does offer many helpful suggestions regarding sermon preparation, but the strength of the book is its relative breadth of research and consistent hermeneutical system.

But perhaps this strength may also be its major weakness: in spite of the 340 pages of rather small print, the breadth of issues covered may leave some readers dissatisfied. So many theoretical givens receive attention that some questionable ones are neither

sufficiently explained nor critiqued. The author anticipates this criticism and responds,

One of the risks in writing on this subject is that, because of the knowledge explosion, one spreads oneself too thin. . . . What encouraged me to carry out this broad inquiry is that preachers cannot be experts in all of these areas and yet they need to be knowledgeable about them in order to preach responsibly (p. xi).

The writer defends his work by noting that he has taught courses in many of the areas and has solicited the help of "experts in history, literature, systematic theology, and Old Testament, New Testament, and homiletics, as well as some pastors and church members" (pp. xi-xii).

In short, this is a helpful treatise on Greidanus's method of sermon preparation. Readers will question some of the principles, but the book meets the need for a relatively comprehensive analysis of research from both hermeneutics and homiletics and from writers who have sought to bridge the gap between the two. This reviewer highly recommends the book to those who wish to evaluate some difficult hermeneutical and homiletical assumptions behind our interpretation and preaching, particularly of the OT.

Michael Horton (editor), *The Agony of Deceit*. Chicago: Moody, 1990. 284 pp. \$12.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

This courageous volume confronts the errant theology that dominates Christian television. Well-known conservatives such as R. C. Sproul, Walter Martin, and C. Everett Koop are among the contributors. The book will undoubtedly be the most significant analysis of teaching on Christian television to date.

The teaching ministries of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Fredrick K. C. Price, Paul and Jan Crouch, Jimmy Swaggart, Robert Schuller, Robert Tilton, and Earl Paulk receive the most space.

Though they teach widely and have access to anyone watching TV, popular teachers are rarely (if ever) accountable to anyone except themselves for the scriptural accuracy of their teaching. This book

attempts to make them answerable for what they teach.

Using documentation from the books of these people and tapes of their programs, the contributors are systematic in exposing their major Scriptural errors. This book is not just a mild invitation for these to reconsider their positions. Rather, it severely labels their fallacies as "heresy." For example, C. Everett Koop writes, "When a faith healer commands God to perform a miracle, in the absence of a prayer that says, 'Thy will be done,' it is, as far as I am concerned, the most rank form of arrogance" (p. 176).

Reputable evangelical leaders have now publicly informed the "positive confession" movement, the "ye are little gods" advocates, the self-esteem teachers, the faith healers, and the "health and wealth" hucksters that their teachings have decisively wandered from the historic Christian faith.

The book should assume a role alongside Walter Martin's classic *The Kingdom of the Cults* in educating the Christian public and protecting them from doctrinal error trying to enter their homes via television.

Michael J. Hostetler. *Introducing the Sermon: The Art of Compelling Beginnings*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. 89 pp. \$5.95 (paper). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

This is a book by a pastor designed to help other pastors with sermon introductions. After quoting advice from several great practitioners of homiletics, the author concisely builds his own case for a carefully planned sermon introduction: "If the introduction falters, the exposition may never be heard" (p. 12). This raises a host of questions, five of which are posed and answered in chapter one: "What is the purpose of an introduction?," "Is an introduction always needed?," "How long should the introduction be?," "Must I write it?," "How about unconventional introductions?"

In the second chapter Hostetler proposes four "contact points" essential to every sermon introduction: the secular, the biblical, the personal, and the structural. He writes, "Omit the secular and you stand a good chance of losing the audience before you really get

started. Omit the biblical and you have nothing to say. Omit the personal and the sermon drifts over the listeners' heads and out the back door. Omit the structural and your audience faces a rough ride to an unclear destination" (pp. 25-26). He continues, "No contact, no start. Your precious sermon, reflecting hours of diligent Bible study and careful organization, will evaporate into the rafters of the church building unless its introduction makes contact with the secular world, the Bible, the needs of people, and the main body of the sermon. Don't settle for two or three of these contact points. Go for all four" (p. 85).

Chapter three recommends placing the secular contact point first because the preacher must first lead his listeners from their world to Scripture. Though sermon preparation moves from Scripture to application, sermon delivery must lead the listener to the text in stages. Otherwise, he may never arrive there. The congregation needs to hear a very explicitly stated "contact point" first, ideally one directly from the biblical text.

Opening lines are critical, but the author perhaps overdoes it in offering eight pages of typical first lines to be avoided. He divides these into four categories: biblical, religious, historical, and referential. He finds all of these deficient in comparison to secular contact points. Chapter four deals with secular contact points and is weak in failing to allow for different audience tastes. Some listeners prefer one or more of the four opening sentence types ruled out by the author. Hostetler generalizes too much about audience interests and about the universal appeal of a secular contact point.

Because even secular contact points may fall flat, the sermon's opening line must generate interest or curiosity. Two litmus tests for the opening-line effectiveness are specificity (detail) and relevance. Specificity of detail creates sharper images in the minds of listeners and enhances the speaker's credibility, but too much detail is counter-productive, dulling the interest of the listener.

The relevance of an opening line is measured in two ways: appropriateness to the sermon's biblical content and relationship to the audience. The subject of the sermon must guide the choice of a contact point. Awkwardness and confusion in transition from introduction to sermon body results from an unrelated initial statement. "You need to establish an initial contact with the text in the introduction in order to demonstrate how and why the sermon really is biblical" (p. 57).

In a series of sermons the introduction can both introduce the

individual sermon and link it with the preceding and following sermons. Chapter six proposes several principles to aid in making transitions in a sermon series.

To accomplish personal contact, the topic of chapter seven, one should address universally felt needs of people. Yet the particular needs of subgroups within the congregation should not be ignored. In fact, the sermon should use the second-person pronoun to be "downright personal." If the sermon does not so engage the listeners regarding their sins and failures, their fears and hopes, "it is both a homiletical and a pastoral failure" (p. 68).

To ensure secular, biblical, and personal contact, the sermon's introduction must be packaged so as to take the listener from his world to the Bible. In view of this, the final chapter addresses another critical issue, the transition into the sermon's body. This structural contact point bridges the gap between the introduction and the individual points of the sermon through the proposition, the sermon's main idea. While on the one hand the introduction "does not determine what the main points will be, . . . it does greatly affect how they will be described" (p. 81).

Several statements of the author need clarification. In maintaining that "Bible lectures need introductions as do sermons," the author argues, "Though often passed off as sermons, they [Bible lectures] are different in both purpose and thrust. The Bible lecture is essentially *educational*. Its primary purpose is to explain the biblical text. The sermon, on the other hand, is essentially *motivational*. It uses the explanation of the text as the basis for a personal or corporate response to God" (p. 13). Hostetler's main purpose for this dichotomy is to emphasize the need for an introduction to Bible lectures, but in so doing, he establishes a rigid distinction between sermons and Bible lectures and omits a category of sermons whose objective is both educational and motivational. In fact, one could question the existence of a worthy motivational sermon that does not educate or a worthy Bible lecture that does not motivate.

The author dislikes historical introductions, contending that the older the historical data, the less interesting it is. This is not altogether true. Much depends on how historical information is presented. Old human problems repeat themselves and provide a framework for examining contemporary struggles. David's struggles with sin are not unlike our own.

Hostetler's primary emphasis on bringing the congregation from their world to the Bible's is refreshingly sensitive. The book echoes John Broadus' timeless wisdom regarding sermon introductions: "Our aim should be to excite not merely an intellectual interest, but, so far as possible at the outset, a spiritual and practical interest" (Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 267).

H. Wayne House. *The Role of Women in Ministry Today*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990. 192 pp. \$9.95 (paper). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

The co-chairman of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood provides a comprehensive biblical appraisal of the contemporary issues related to the role of women in the local church. Most of his positions agree with those of The Master's Seminary faculty. Like House, we disagree with the statement from Christians for Biblical Equality (*CT*, April 9, 1990, pp. 36-37) that allows women the role of doctrinal and worship leadership in the church.

The author has studied extensively, thought carefully, assembled material logically and comprehensively, and written clearly. The book reflects his studies at Abilene Christian University and teaching at Dallas Theological Seminary.

He does not divide his book into sections, but four areas of thought are apparent: contemporary Christian feminism (chaps. 1-2), women in the NT and NT times (chaps. 3-4), women in the second and third century church (chap. 5), and the biblical role of women in the church today (chaps. 6-9).

House asserts correctly that the *raison d'être* of this contemporary issue has little to do with biblical exegesis. Rather, it stems from the influence of secular feminism on the church (pp. 11, 14, 159, 161). Not all who are sympathetic toward the Christian feminist movement agree with all the tenets of secular feminism, but they espouse its general spirit that role equality is a must for our day. Both House and The Master's Seminary strongly believe this to be out of harmony with biblical teaching regarding women's role in the church.

Key topics covered well by House include the purpose of

creation (1 Cor 11:9), the order of creation (1 Cor 11:8; 1 Tim 2:13), and the nature of the fall (1 Tim 2:14) (pp. 26-27). He discusses significant sections on "headship" (pp. 29-34, 109-112) that clearly support the biblical teaching of male leadership. The word for "head" does not mean "source" as alleged by the "equality of role" position.

Galatians 3:28 (pp. 100-7) teaches redemptive equality, not role equality, according to House. He also treats 1 Cor 14:33-35 and 1 Tim 2:8-15, concluding, "Paul's prohibition on teaching is specifically directed toward the authoritative exercise of spiritual authority, such as that of an elder, of women over men" (p. 139).

One major flaw slightly tarnishes an otherwise fine work. On 1 Cor 11:1-16, House concludes that "public prayer by a woman of the congregation should be no less enthusiastically received in public prayer than by a man" (p. 124). He also allows for the public reading of Scripture by women. Yet he redeems himself somewhat with a strong concluding statement: "The ministry of authoritatively expounding and proclaiming the Written Word is one that falls most definitely within the confines of biblical restriction for women."

House's work is not so much reactionary as it is proactive. His concluding chapter, "Where May Women Minister in the Church Today?," first discusses the doctrinal and leadership roles of male only elders, then the role of deaconesses, and concludes with a helpful section on principles to use in establishing women in ministry.

The author has wide documentation from literature written on both sides of the issue. His "Notes" and Bibliography are marred by the misspelling of Nancy Hardesty's name ("Herdesty") (p. 189). The volume is enhanced by an extensive Scripture index (pp. 190-92).

This excellent one-volume summary on women in ministry from a biblical perspective is most useful for serious laymen, seminarians, and pastors.

Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *The Book of Ruth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 317 pp. \$26.95 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The author introduces his commentary with a detailed and comprehensive analysis of canonicity, literary criticism, authorship

and date, purpose, setting, genre, legal background, themes, theology, analysis of contents, and selected bibliography.

Because much of the secondary source material on the book of Ruth has been written in German or French or appears in scholarly journals, it is inaccessible to pastors. Hubbard, Professor of Hebrew at Denver Seminary, has rectified this situation with his new commentary. He not only explains such details as the alleged gender disagreements (following Gary Rendsberg) as common duals, but also delves into compositional issues such as the book's unity, including the genealogy that concludes the book (Ruth 4:18-22). Although the first verse of the book (1:1) places the story chronologically within the period of the judges, the genealogy (again assuming the book's unity) puts the composition during or subsequent to David, but pre-exilic.

The author has carefully brought together much recent research on the literary dimension of Ruth and included with this his own literary analysis of the book.

Two themes intertwine, tying together both the book's story line and its concluding genealogy: God's gracious rescue of Elimelech's family from extinction and Ruth's journey from Moabites to ancestress of King David (pp. 63-64). The author contends that in spite of its secular appearance, the book speaks inferentially of the presence and faithful activity of God as He controls the course of events leading from disaster to deliverance.

Hubbard's commentary offers the Bible student a wealth of research and personal insight into an OT book whose timeless message often receives too little attention. The reviewer highly recommends the book to those interested in a careful analysis of Ruth.

Kent and Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1987. 204 pp. \$9.95 (cloth).
Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Anyone in the ministry who has grappled with depression and/or perceived failure will identify with Kent and Barbara Hughes's diary of trying times in ministry. Currently pastoring College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, Kent, along with his wife, Barbara, chronicle their expectation of outward success in ministry that ran aground in the

shoal waters of unexpected ministry reversals. After following all the pragmatic principles of church-growth experts with their promise of success, they discovered that their flock had dwindled rather than grown.

They write candidly about unbiblical hopes that almost caused them to leave the ministry. In the midst of despair, they reconsidered "the book" on ministry, Scripture. In a down-to-earth style, they tell of their redefinition of success (chaps. 3-10) and the sources of their encouragement (chaps. 11-15) that helped lift them to sustaining levels of joy and a more biblical definition of ministerial fruitfulness.

Particularly good are helps from the pastor's wife and the congregation that complete their discussion. This is must reading. While the book may have its greatest use as preventative, for those already in "the slough of despond" it could be a lifesaver.

John M. Lozano, *Praying Even When the Door Seems Closed*. New York: Paulist, 1989. 183 pp. \$9.95 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

The Catholic author has taught theology and forms of prayer for years. He wants to help strugglers who approach prayer as a barred door that they must overcome to get answers, thereby sometimes developing wrong attitudes about God (p. 1). He has sections on such topics as Prayer as Conversation, Prayer and Intimacy, Jesus Prays, Prayer and Faith, Prayer and God's Will, Praying in the Blood of Christ, and Prayer at Work.

Some comments are helpful. Lozano says that Origen took the exhortation to pray without ceasing "as an exhortation to live our whole life and work as an implicit prayer" (pp. 56-57). What he says about meeting God in the rush hour and in ministry, using times of intense activity to be in a spirit of prayer (pp. 58-59) is good. He sees all proper prayer as a response to the Word of God (p. 72). Chapter seven, which deals with mystics, tells experiences of some Catholics in feeling God's presence.

Certain statements are strange and do not communicate well. For example, "a radical interiorization to the point of finding ourselves, beyond ourselves, in the infinite being who creates us" (p.

12). Later Lozano explains this as becoming aware of God's presence (p. 13). It would have been simpler to say this in the first place. Some statements seem unwise or at best need qualifications, e.g. "God is in each person we meet, behind each object we desire, in the depths of every action we perform" (p. 41).

Another puzzler is, "If every neighbor is an image and a son or daughter of God, those who are oppressed, humiliated, wounded, abandoned, hungry, ignorant, subject to constant insecurity, etc., are so in a particular way" (p. 49). Does this agree with Scripture? Again, Lozano writes, "We may not exactly know whether Moses saw a bush that burned without being consumed, because the burning bush may well be a metaphor to indicate religious experience" (p. 50). Where is the contextual indicator that this is a metaphor? Later we read: "No, we don't have to pray expressly for all the needy. Even when we don't invoke God's grace in so many words for those who suffer, we are still interceding for them. All we have to do is stand like beggars before God and look at God with humility, or simply to kneel before the crucified, because praying is always interceding" (p. 52). How can this be true?

On p. 54, the wording seems to make nature itself God. For John of the Cross, "God is the nearby hills, the farthest mountains of the Sierra Nevada, the shady valleys. . . . But God is also the exotic beauty of the distant islands. . . ." This is just a careless use of words, because later Lozano distinguishes God as Creator from His creation (p. 55). Another perplexing statement is, "We pray for those we serve, even when we don't mention them expressly, because we immerse ourselves in God and God enriches us through them" (p. 61).

The author approves the fathers' allegorizing of the Song of Solomon by having the bride represent the Christian in search of the Word, Christ, and marriage with God (pp. 67-68). The writing style often does not stimulate practically, as in Lozano's discussion of his first three degrees of prayer, i.e. reciting formulas learned from others, meditation, and prayer in pouring our affection to God (pp. 73-82).

Some statements have departed from clarity into a dense fog: e.g. if one feels dryness in prayer and cannot meditate or express affections, God is just preparing him for a stage in which *He* will do the praying. The person will feel invaded by powerful forces from within (pp. 88-89, 101). This is just subjective opinion, and does not offer satisfying help. Many readers will ponder whether to try to figure the

chapter out or seek a better book.

Chapter 8 on "The Higher Degrees of Prayer" recommends various techniques. An example is St. Bernard's idea of three degrees (p. 131): kissing Christ's feet (conversion), hands (ascetic progress), and mouth (contemplation). The experiences may help some readers and disturb others. Some of the latter type claimed "visions accompanied by images and . . . conversations with supernatural beings" (p. 142).

Chapter 10 on fullness of love theorizes that prayer can progress to a final degree, a transforming union with God. Gal 2:20 is used for this (p. 161). Is not Gal 2:20 Paul's conversion experience and, in *some* measure, the experience of every Christian even if he has not experienced the maturity and consistency of life in Christ? Lozano sees God's grace penetrating the believer progressively "until it unites our being with the divine being" (p. 164). Is not every true Christian united with God from the moment of regeneration, with a process of sanctification in God's grace from there on?

The book has its better moments in offering practical help, but is far down the list of books that will help motivate and instruct Christians on effective prayer. It vividly illustrates how little help a work by a non-evangelical can contribute to an evangelical in the realm of practical Christian living.

Larry W. Osbourne, *The Unity Factor*. Dallas, TX: Word, 1989. 156 pp. \$11.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Leadership Journal polled pastors with the question, "What causes you to feel discouraged in ministry?" Nearly forty percent of the respondents answered, "Board meetings." To meet this obvious need, Larry Osbourne, pastor of North Coast Evangelical Free Church in Oceanside, California, writes from his own experiences.

Why worry about unity? According to Osbourne: (1) If leadership is not unified, the flock will be divided. (2) It is impossible to sustain spiritual growth without unity. (3) Because unity is so fragile, it constantly needs attention.

In his twelve chapters, Osbourne assumes a biblically based

theology and builds on it practical discussions ranging from the pragmatics of meeting location to establishing the pastor's salary. Each chapter stands alone, but together they all contribute constructively to eliminating common sources of disruption.

Several discussions stand out. Leadership selection (chap. 3), clarifying the pastor's role (chap. 5), a basic philosophy for preaching (chaps. 8-9), and change diplomacy (chap. 10) all help make *The Unity Factor* "must" reading for every pastor and elder-level leader in the church.

Robert L. Reymond, *Preach the Word*. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1988. 89 pp. \$4.95 (paper). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The author is a professor of systematic theology and apologetics at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis. This work originated as a series of lectures to ordained ministers and ministry candidates of the Church of Scotland at Rutherford House, Glasgow, Scotland, in 1986. Reymond's introduction argues,

Never has the need been greater for Spirit-anointed preachers who can stand in the pulpits across the world and with power "rightly handle" the unsearchable riches of the Word of God (p. ix).

He expresses concern over the subtle tendency of ministerial candidates to focus on the "practical matters" of the pastorate to the exclusion of the real priorities:

But in his zeal to become an effective administrator or personnel manager, the ministerial candidate must never neglect to acquire and to hone to a razor-sharp edge his biblical-theological skills, for it is this area of his training above *all others* which will provide him the content of his message and which will even determine in large measure the degree to which his preaching, teaching, and counseling ministry will be true to God's Word and taken seriously by those who hear him (p. ix).

In light of this concern, Professor Reymond's first chapter addresses the need for a scripturally based theology. Because revelation is "informational" by nature (pp. 14-15), the two testaments exhibit a

"unitary wholeness" (p. 1), and the "Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God to men" (p. 3), a pastor "will have to be able to respond as his spiritual forebears did before him [to those who object to such a position] with careful research and accurate exegesis" (p. 3). In this regard, the author challenges two common objections: "religious truth will always be existential truth" (p. 3) and "human language is incapable of expressing literal truth" (p. 9). His detailed response to both objections is bold and clear: Scripture is propositional truth and is capable of conveying the intentions of God. He concludes:

This propositional or informational revelation the preacher must make the *bedrock* of the instructional aspect of his ministry if he would have a teaching ministry approved of God, for it is only as he teaches and preaches truth originating from God Himself that he can speak with authority and demand that his audience do what he says (pp. 14-15).

Several erroneous challenges underscore the need for a "rational" theology. The first is that "God's knowledge and man's knowledge never coincide at a single point" (p. 17). The second is "Christian truth will often, if not always, be paradoxical in appearance" (p. 27). Reymond's response to both objections may be reduced to the simple premise that revelation is eternally self-consistent or non-contradictory (p. 34).

"Every preacher will have either a God-centered or a man-centered theology" (p. 36). The author's third chapter forcefully appeals for the former. A God-centered theology affirms both the total sufficiency and sovereign control of God and the total insufficiency and, by implication, lack of control by man. This chapter responds primarily to the question, "If this [the above] is the case, men are neither free nor responsible agents" (p. 39). Because Clark Pinnock's position on this issue is objectionable, Reymond responds specifically to Pinnock.

The fourth and final chapter builds on conclusions from the first three: the Bible is propositional truth, conveying the very intentions of God; truth revealed is eternally self-consistent (non-contradictory) and is both systematic and God-centered. The need for a ministry to articulate the system of belief found in Scripture is the topic of this chapter. It may be summarized as follows: "Only when the church is taught what it is to believe, and obeys what it has been taught, will it

manifest the glory of God and enjoy Him and His blessing as it should" (p. 74).

Reymond's book is well written and organized. It clarifies several areas of confusion that confront churches and pastors almost daily. The reviewer recommends the book particularly for those struggling with the nature of God's Word and the manner in which to apply it in the believer's life.

One typographical oversight needs correcting: "meets" (p. 4) should be "meet."

Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. 281 pp. \$18.95 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The author, an English teacher at Wheaton College, initially expresses a threefold purpose for his book: (1) to correct an almost universal misunderstanding of what the Puritans really stood for, (2) to bring together into a convenient synthesis the best that the Puritans thought and said on selected topics, and (3) to recover the Christian wisdom of the Puritans for today (p. xvii).

By returning to original sources, Ryken both addresses and refutes some of the unjust allegations against the Puritans, such as they were against sex, they never laughed and were opposed to fun, they were opposed to sports and recreation, they were money-grabbing workaholics who would do anything to get rich, and they were hostile to the arts.

J. I. Packer in the forward similarly responds to criticism of earlier Puritan scholarship and expresses appreciation for Ryken's work in which "at last the record has been put straight" (p. x). Packer argues, "The typical Puritans were not wild men, fierce and freaky, religious fanatics and social extremists, but sober, conscientious, and cultured citizens, persons of principle, determined and disciplined, excelling in the domestic virtues, and with no obvious shortcomings save a tendency to run to words when saying anything important, whether to God or man" (p. x).

Having restricted the definition of "Puritan" to a movement of those adhering to "Puritan religion" (p. xviii), Ryken explains

Puritanism as a social and historical phenomenon. In order to facilitate the understanding of how seventeenth century Puritanism came into existence, he provides a helpful time-line on which he locates a few Puritan antecedents and some of the landmark dates in Puritan history.

In chapter two the book begins a topical format that continues through chapter ten. In these chapters the author discusses the Puritan perspectives on work, marriage and sex, money, family, preaching, church and worship, the Bible, education, and social action.

The chapter entitled "Puritan Preaching" is a detailed picture of the Puritan pulpit ministry. Pastors will delight both in the model of teaching ministry espoused and its pervasive effect on the home life. Specific discussions include Puritan expository preaching, sermon organization, practical application of doctrine, affective preaching, and style of preaching.

Chapter eleven, "Learning from Negative Example: Some Puritan Faults," adds a necessary touch of realism to a book defending Puritan integrity. The author summarizes, "We find it easy to admire their courage, their faithfulness to God and the Bible, their effectiveness in changing the course of history. But we also sense their remoteness from us, their somewhat forboding austerity, their rigidity, and their tendency to be looking for an argument" (p. 186).

In the final chapter, Ryken forsakes the topical format to "attempt an anatomy of underlying principles . . . each of which would apply to a whole cluster of earlier topics" (p. 205). After the analysis of divergent topics (chaps. 2-10) this chapter is a satisfying conclusion in integrating "the entire book into a unified final impression" (p. 205).

Twentieth-century evangelicals may learn several significant lessons from the Puritans: "the integration of their daily lives; . . . the quality of their spiritual experience; . . . their passion for effective action; . . . their program for family stability; . . . their sense of human worth; and . . . the ideal of church renewal" (pp. xi-xv).

Ryken's sensitive use of language adds to his grasp of the Puritans and their times to make the book pleasurable reading. The wealth of quotations from numerous Puritan writers on various topics establish this as a welcomed resource for the pastor searching for challenging quotations and illustrations. The craft with which the author weaves together these gems of wisdom and examples is commendable.

J. A. Thompson, *Handbook of Life in Bible Times*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986. 384 pp. \$34.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Thompson writes to show how the reality of life underlies the narrative of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The book has twenty-two chapters arranged under seven sections: (1) Introduction; (2) People at home; (3) Food and drink; (4) Industry and Commerce; (5) Culture and Health; (6) Warfare; and (7) Religion.

This storehouse of helpful background material is easily accessed through indices by place, people, and general references. Relevant biblical references to a subject frequently fill the margins. At the end of each chapter the author provides a bibliography for further reading.

Pictures, drawings, and maps enhance the written discussions. This is one of the more complete, helpful, and easily usable volumes of its kind. With a minimum investment of time, the book can be a treasured companion yielding frequent rich rewards for an overloaded pastor.

Jerry Vines, *A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery*. Chicago: Moody, 1986. 170 pp. \$12.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

This prominent Southern Baptist leader, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, writes on a neglected topic: the science and art of sermon delivery. Vines exhibits the passion of a pastor who faced the prospect of surgery on his vocal cords only to discover the source of the problem was the misuse of his voice.

The material divides conveniently into four sections: (1) Mechanical Aspects of Sermon Delivery; (2) Mental Aspects of Sermon Delivery; (3) Rhetorical Aspects of Sermon Delivery; and (4) Psychological Aspects of Sermon Delivery. Vines minors in the theoretical and majors in the realistic and practical.

The scarcity of books on this aspect of preaching, even fewer in the last decade, makes Vines' contribution valuable. It is a primer on the subject, suitable for use as collateral reading at the Bible college and seminary level. Pastors who have never considered this aspect of preaching or those who need a refresher will also benefit from it.

Hans Walter Wolff. *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary*. Trans. by Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986. 191 pp. \$29.94 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The author, professor emeritus of OT at the University of Heidelberg, views Obadiah and Jonah as addressing issues between Israel and the Gentile world by interpretation and the church and all humanity by application (p. 11). Yet in spite of this surface similarity, the books, the people addressed, and their contemporary counterparts differ considerably. Obadiah gathers prophetic sayings and has in view the suffering people of God, but Jonah is couched in narrative and struggles conversely with the duration and extent of God's mercy.

As the prophetic composition indicates, Obadiah was probably delivered as a sermon to the despondent few left behind in Jerusalem after the Babylonian armies had pillaged the city. Obad 1-14 could be a commentary on Joel 3:19, and Obad 15-21 a commentary on Amos 9:12 (p. 17). The relationships of these three books with Jer 49:14-16 have generated much discussion. If Obadiah is an exposition of portions of Joel and Amos respectively, it may have been proclaimed during special services of worship, such as the ones spoken of in Zech 7:3, 5; 8:19. It may also have been accompanied by the recitation of Lamentations as a prayer lament (p. 19). Obadiah's sermon does not reflect, as it may first appear, a primitive hatred toward Edom but rather punitive justice, because the brother nation had broken its covenant by look, word, and act (pp. 22-23). Only a careful reading of the book will clarify the context from which the message arises:

Anyone who is prepared to enter imaginatively into the historical hour in which these sayings were written discovers a wretched people in a ruined city, in dire need of comfort. It is only if we try to picture the service of mourning in the rubble of Jerusalem after the days of

catastrophe in 587 that we can begin to understand the proclamation of the prophetic spokesman (p. 22).

Jonah's message, like Obadiah's, was directed toward a violent foreign people, but Jonah, unlike Obadiah and the other ten prophets, is a self-contained story about the prophet himself with only one brief prophecy (3:4b) (p. 75). In fact, the book more strongly resembles the narrative portions of two other prophets (Isaiah 36-39; Jeremiah 37-43) or such narratives as those about Elijah in Samuel and Kings. Yet Jonah is more of a specialized didactic form similar to the genre called "the novella" (p. 82) as in Job, Ruth, and Esther. In contrast to the opinions of many commentators,

What we have here is not really a story about Jonah at all. It is a story about Yahweh's dealings with Jonah. Yahweh has the first word (1:1f.) and the last (4:10f.). It is what he does that thrusts the story forward from phase to phase (1:4; 1:17; 3:1; 4:6ff.), even at the points where Jonah recedes completely into the background for the time being (1:15f.; 3:10) (p. 81).

The final question and closing line of the book, a question directed not only to Jonah but also to all who read of his struggles, evidences the book's didactic character.

The commentary's format is very pleasing. Treatments of both books have introductions dealing extensively with issues such as canonical order, composition, and date. An extensive and well-organized bibliography encourages further research into these areas.

Each section of the biblical text has its bibliography, the author's translation, philological notes, discussions of form, setting, commentary, and purpose. The reader may differ with the author on issues of composition, theological synthesis, points of interpretation, and the like, but Wolff's philological insight and general thoroughness make this commentary attractive for pastors, teachers, and other students of the Bible.