

Stay Sharp: Theological Issues and Trends in Evangelicalism

Allegheny District
Waterdam Church
Canonsburg, PA
February 19-20, 2009



Introductory Matters



Fred Craddock, Preaching

Fred Craddock, *As One With Authority* (1971, revised 2001). He served as Professor of NT and Preaching at the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University. He proposed preaching was on trial in the contemporary church and that it was moving towards irrelevancy, an anachronism.



"Rarely, if ever, in the history of the church have so many firm periods slumped into commas and so many triumphant exclamation marks curled into question marks. Those who speak with strong conviction on a topic are suspected of the heresy of premature finality. Permanent temples are to be abandoned as houses of idolatry; the true people of God are in tents again. It is the age of journalistic theology: even the Bible is out in paperback."



"As a rule, younger ministers are keenly aware of the factors discussed above, and their preaching reflects it. Their predecessors ascended the pulpit to speak of the eternal certainties, truths etched forever in the granite of absolute reality, matters framed for proclamation, not for discussion. But where have all the absolutes gone? The old thunderbolts rust in the attic while the minister tries to lead his people through the morass of relativities and proximate possibilities, and the difficulties involved in finding and articulating a faith are not the congregation's alone; they are the minister's as well. How can he preach with a changing mind? How can he, facing new situations by the hour, speak the approximate word? He wants to speak and yet he needs more time for more certainty before speaking. His is often the misery of one who is always pregnant but never ready to give birth."



Donald MacLeod, Theology

"Theology exists in order to be applied to the day-to-day problems of the Christian church. Every doctrine has its application. All scripture is profitable and all the doctrine is profitable. Similarly all the application must be based on doctrine. In both the Philippians example-passage and the Corinthian example-passage, Paul is dealing with what are surely comparative trivia, the problem of vain glory in a Christian congregation and the problem of failure of Christian liberality. As a Pastor one meets with these difficulties daily. They are standing problems. Yet Paul, as he wrestles with both of them, has recourse to the most massive theology. It's not only that you have the emphasis on the unity between theology and practice but you have the emphasis on the applicability of the profoundest theology to the most mundane and most common-place problems. Who would ever imagine that the response to the glory of the incarnation might be to give to the collection for the poor? Who might imagine that the application of the glories of New Testament Christology might be to stop our quarreling and our divisiveness in the Christian *ekklesia*? That is what Paul is doing here. He is telling them: You have these practical problems; the answer is theological; remember your theology and place your behavior in the light of that theology. Place your little problems in the light of the most massive theology. We ourselves in our Christian callings are to be conscious of this. We must never leave our doctrine hanging in the air, nor hesitate to enforce the most elementary Christian obligations with the most sublime doctrines."

Donald MacLeod, *The Humiliated and Exalted Lord: A Study of Philippians 2 and Christology*, ed. J. Ligon Duncan (North Carolina, 1993).



Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

Question 1: What is thy only comfort in life and death?

Answer: That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own (Rom. 14:7-8), but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19); who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins (1 Cor. 3:23; Tit. 2:14), and delivered me from all the power of the devil (1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 Jn. 1:7; 2:2, 12); and so preserves me (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8; Jn. 8:34-35; 8:34-36) that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head (Jn. 6:39; 10:28; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5); yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation (Matt. 10:29-31; Lk. 21:18), and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life (Rom. 8:28), and makes me sincerely willing and ready (2 Cor. 1:20-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:16), henceforth, to live unto him (Rom. 8:14; 1 Jn. 3:3).



A. CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES



Global Issues

1. Post-Modern Relativism with Epistemological Implications
2. Pluralism or Multiculturalism
3. Personalized Globalization
4. Omnipresent Technology



Local Issues

1. "Twitter".
2. Biblical illiteracy.
3. A-theology and theology-ology.
4. Evangelicalism – Definition and Fragmentation.
5. Most Dangerous Trends We Do Not See.



B. THE GOSPEL



The Primacy of the Gospel

Don Carson, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-19), The Gospel Coalition, May 2007. (6 from Stott)

1. *Christological*: The gospel centers on the person and work (the life, death, and resurrection) of Jesus Christ.
2. *theological*: The gospel tells us that sin is first and foremost an offense against God and that salvation is first to last the action of God, not our own.



-
3. *biblical*: The gospel is essentially the message of the whole Bible.
 4. *apostolic*: The gospel is passed on to us by Jesus' disciples as authoritative eyewitnesses.
 5. *historical*: The gospel is not philosophy or advice on how to find God, but rather news of what God has done in history to find and save us.



13

-
6. *personal*: The gospel must be personally believed and appropriated.
 7. *universal*: The gospel is for every tongue, tribe, people, and individual.
 8. *eschatological*: The gospel includes the good news of the final transformation, not just the blessings we enjoy in this age.

From these exegetical inferences, Carson infers more broadly that the gospel is normally disseminated in proclamation.



C. DOING THEOLOGY



15

THE CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL



16



1. Gospel, Church, Culture

❖ Gospel + Culture – Church = Parachurch



17



❖ Gospel + Culture – Church = Parachurch

❖ Church + Culture – Gospel = Liberalism



18

EFCA

- ❖ Gospel + Culture - Church = Parachurch
- ❖ Church + Culture - Gospel = Liberalism
- ❖ Gospel + Church - Culture = Fundamentalism

EFCA

19

EFCA


- ❖ Gospel + Culture - Church = Parachurch
- ❖ Church + Culture - Gospel = Liberalism
- ❖ Gospel + Church - Culture = Fundamentalism
- ❖ Gospel + Church + Culture = Ecclesia Reformata et Semper Reformanda

EFCA

20

EFCA

2. Centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ

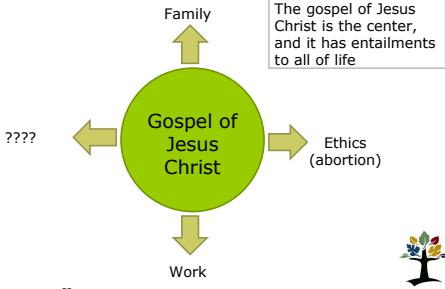


EFCA

21

EFCA

Centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ

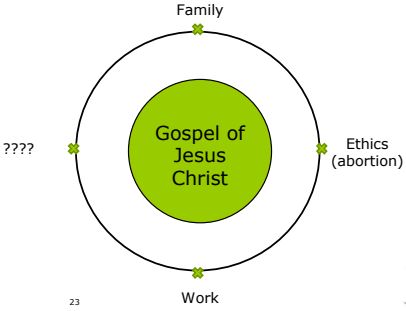


EFCA

22

EFCA

Gospel assumed, focus on entailments

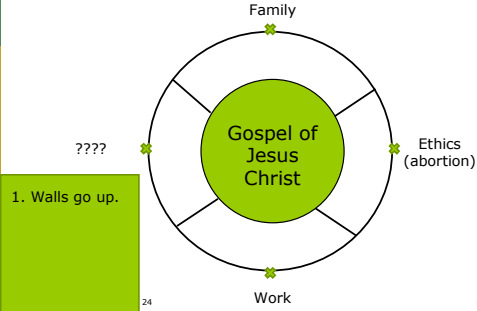


EFCA

23

EFCA

Gospel assumed, focus on entailments



EFCA

24

Gospel assumed, focus on entailments

25

1. Walls go up.
2. Gospel displaced. Lens changes. The center becomes a special interest.

EFCA

Gospel denied

26

EFCA

3. Black, White and Gray

27

EFCA

ORTHODOXY

28

EFCA

29

EFCA

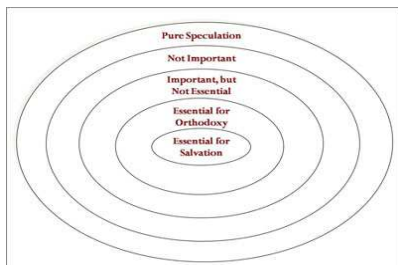
4. Theological Triage

The diagrams/grids are from C. Michael Patton (links included above and below), and the theological triage is from Al Mohler, "A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity":

http://www.albertmohler.com/commentary_read.php?cdate=2004-05-20

30

EFCA



31



Primary

First-level theological issues would include those doctrines most central and essential to the Christian faith.

32



The primary are determined in this manner:

1. exegetical certainty
2. theological importance
3. biblical emphasis
4. historical agreement in the church (historical theology, tradition with a small "t")

Michael Andrus, "Drawing Doctrinal Lines: Where? And How? - How do we distinguish between the Essentials and the Non-essentials of the Faith?"

33



Secondary

The set of second-order doctrines is distinguished from the first-order set by the fact that believing Christians may disagree on the second-order issues, though this disagreement will create significant boundaries between believers.

34



Tertiary

Third-order issues are doctrines over which Christians may disagree and remain in close fellowship, even within local congregations.

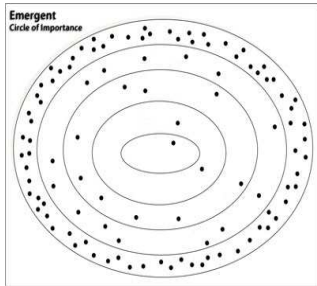
35



The mark of true liberalism is the refusal to admit that first-order theological issues even exist. Liberals treat first-order doctrines as if they were merely third-order in importance, and doctrinal ambiguity is the inevitable result.

36



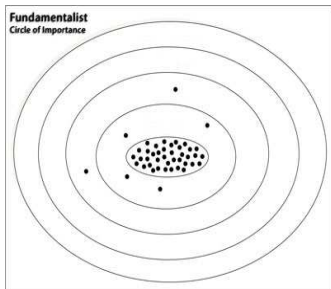


37



Fundamentalism, on the other hand, tends toward the opposite error. The misjudgment of true fundamentalism is the belief that all disagreements concern first-order doctrines. Thus, third-order issues are raised to a first-order importance, and Christians are wrongly and harmfully divided.

38



39



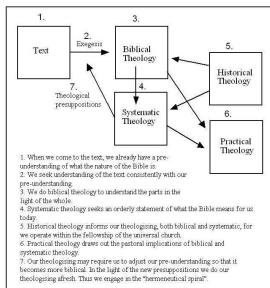
9 Marks Ministries info@9marks.org June 2005 eNewsletter Volume 2, Issue 5 "What is the Discipline of Biblical Theology?" By Graeme Goldsworthy Mutual Interdependence of the Theological Disciplines

1. Text
2. Exegesis
3. Biblical Theology
4. Systematic Theology
5. Historical Theology
6. Practical Theology
7. Theological Presuppositions

40



Mutual Interdependence of the Theological Disciplines



41



Spiritual Theology, J. I. Packer

1. Exegesis
2. Biblical Theology
3. Historical Theology
4. Systematic Theology or Dogmatics

These four are the foundation from which the others arise.

42



-
5. Ethics
 6. Spirituality
 7. Apologetics
 8. Missiology
 9. Liturgy/Worship
 10. Ministry

43



Spiritual Formation, J. I. Packer

1. Doxology
2. Humility
3. Intensity
4. Solidarity

44



Some Key Principles

1. The position of an issue can change depending on the circumstances, and how it is being raised. E.g. circumcision (1 Cor. 7:19).
2. The closer an issue touches upon the gospel and our response to it, and the clearer the teaching of the Bible is about it, the more seriously we must deal with it, and the more weighty are the consequences of disagreement.

Cf. "Fight the Good Fight (Part 2)," Tony Payne, *The eBriefing* 355 (April 2008), 26.

45



Concluding Challenge

I've been teaching for a lot of decades now, and if I've learned anything, it's that students don't learn everything I teach. What they tend to learn is what I am most excited about. So if the gospel and church planting and outreach and seeing men transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and regeneration and the transformation of families and all the rest – if this is not my passion, but is the assumption after which you focus on the transformation of society and culture, then you are in trouble.

"Carson on Culture," Interviewer Tony Payne, *The eBriefing* (November 2008), 32.

46



D. LOVING PEOPLE

47



How to Deal With Those Who Differ From Us?

Roger R. Nicole, "Polemic Theology: How to Deal with Those Who Differ From Us."

48



We have obligations . . .

1. We have obligations to people who differ from us . . . we owe them love.

First, we want people to know what we are saying or meaning.

Second, we seek to understand their aims.



49

In sum, we owe it to our opponents to deal with them in such a way that they may sense that we have a real interest in them as persons, that we are not simply trying to win an argument or show how smart we are, but that we are deeply interested in them – and eager to learn from them as well as to help us.



50

What can we learn?

2. What can I learn from the person who differs from me? When we are sure that our outward approach is proper, we need secondly to safeguard the inward benefits of courtesy. We need to ask the question, "What can I learn from those who differ from me?"



51

- Could I be wrong? I may be wrong and the other person may be right.
- What are the facts? While our presentation may be correct as far as it goes, it may fail to embody the truth in its entirety on the subject in view. Many of the main elements of Christianity are "two-railed," e.g. unity yet threeness of God, immanence and transcendence, deity and humanity, body and soul, justification and sanctification, divine inspiration of Scripture and human authority.
- What are the dangers? I may learn from those who differ from me that I have not sufficiently perceived certain dangers to which my view is exposed and against which I need to be especially on guard.
- What about ambiguities? We may learn from those who object that we are not communicating as we should and that they had not rightly understood what we wanted to say.



52

How can we cope?

3. How can I cope with the person who differs from me? In this one, coping involves two aspects known as defensive and offensive, but because these are pejorative, it is better to use the adjectives protective and constructive.



53

- Biblical Arguments
- General Arguments: the appeal is to something other than Scripture – logic, history and tradition.



54

Goal

Christian's Goal - Are we attempting to win an argument in order to manifest our own superior knowledge and debating ability? Or are we seeking to win another person whom we perceive as enmeshed in error or inadequacy by exposing him or her to the truth and light that God has given to us?



55

ILLUSTRATION: A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE



56

Responding to People in SOF Discussion

How did we carry on the discussion during the SOF?

1. We *want* to respond in a godly and charitable manner, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23 - this was my regular prayer as we led discussions at district conferences).
2. We desire to *model* a godly response to others in the midst of this important dialogue (1 Tim. 4:11-16, esp. vv. 12, 15). What we believe is evidenced in how we behave, thus we do not want to belie with our responses what we are confessing we believe with our lips.



57

3. In reading and responding to others, we want to engage in a "hermeneutic of love" rather than a "hermeneutic of suspicion." This is, of course, what Christian charity is about (1 Cor. 13:4-7; Eph. 4:15). This is also one of the marks of the Free Church, or at least is to be in principle. This needs to be true of us in practice.

- a. Along these lines I appreciate Alan Jacob's *A Theology of Reading: The Hermeneutics of Love*. He writes that the Christian obligation in reading is to listen because listening, truly listening is the first ingredient in a hermeneutics of love. His goal is for Christians "To read with intelligent charity. . . . To read lovingly because of and in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the author and guarantor of love."
- b. We ought to remember the wise and helpful words of N. T. Wright who says that we best understand something not merely by critiquing, dissecting, and doubting it, but also by trusting, loving and respecting it. When critique and questioning come in the context of love, they yield even more insight than otherwise.



58

- c. John Frame writes something similar in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (p. 155). In his chapter on "Perspectives on Justification" he writes (p. 155), "Thus ability to come to cognitive rest concerning Christian teaching comes with sanctification, with growth in holiness. Many doctrinal misunderstandings in the church are doubtless due to this spiritual-ethical immaturity. We need to pay more attention to this fact when we get into theological disputes. . . . often there is in one of the disputers - or both! - the kind of spiritual immaturity that prevents clear perception. We all know how it works in practice. Lacking sufficient love for one another, we seek to interpret the other person's views in the worst possible sense. (We forget the tremendous importance of love - even as an epistemological concept; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:5ff.; 1 Jn. 2:4f.; 3:18f.; 4:7ff.). Lacking sufficient humility, too, we overestimate the extent of our own knowledge. . . . Do you see how theological problems may sometimes, in effect, have practical solutions?"



59

4. It is likely written responses that convey correctives or pointing out inaccuracies to those opposed to revising our SOF will be passed on to others. We want to work hard at stating the corrective, but doing so lovingly. This gets back to the other things mentioned above. Though we know the truth from Proverbs "a gentle answer turns away wrath" (15:1), we also know and have experienced that this is wisdom literature and thus it is a general truth, as sometimes a gentle answer stirs up wrath (Frame's statement brings perspective to this)! But even more importantly, we can stand before God knowing we did what was right; we spoke the truth in love.



60

EFCA Statement of Faith

Strengthened SOF to Address
Contemporary Theological
Issues



Preamble – This emphasizes the kind of association we are, i.e. “autonomous churches,” with an emphasis on our unity centered in “theological convictions” as stated in the articles.

62



Article 1 – The doctrine of “God” clearly gives guidance regarding His “limitless knowledge and sovereign power” (over against open theism). It also acknowledges that God “has purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.”

63



Article 2 – The doctrine on “The Bible” is strengthened by acknowledging that it is “the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged.” This is important in our postmodern day that relativizes all truth claims. Moreover, it is also important to recognize that no matter the discipline, it submits to the Lordship of Christ as revealed in the Word. And that this Word is to be “believed,” “obeyed” and “trusted.”

64



Article 3 – The doctrine on “The Human Condition” is strengthened by explicitly including Adam and Eve as historical personages. Satan is also identified, which acknowledges his historical reality and of evil and the spiritual world. Both of these historical references reaffirm the inerrancy of the Bible. It also addresses that in sin, men and women are “under His [God’s] wrath.” This truth is being denied by many today.



Article 4 – The doctrine of “Jesus Christ” has a wonderfully rich, theologically profound statement – “Israel’s promised Messiah” – that becomes the key for Christians as they read and understand the whole Bible.

66



Article 5 – The doctrine on “The Work of Christ” has been strengthened in that Christ is “our representative and substitute . . . the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death . . .” It clearly states the doctrine of substitutionary atonement – He is “the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins,” not “a sacrifice for our sins” (cf. article 3, 1950 SOF).



67

Article 6 – The doctrine of “The Holy Spirit” is strengthened by clarifying the various aspects of His ministry from pre-conversion, to conversion to growth in Christlikeness. It also emphasizes our union with Christ, our adoption as children and heirs in the family of God. It provides a place for both Arminians and Calvinists in that it emphasizes the essential of the Holy Spirit’s ministry, i.e. He regenerates sinners, and does not address the specific order of regeneration and belief.



68

Article 7 – The doctrine on “The Church” is strengthened by emphasizing justification by “God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone.” Moreover, our commitment to the ordinances is stated more strongly, and we acknowledge, in a positive, affirming way, they are to be celebrated by believers, with both an individual (“the believer”) and corporate emphasis (“the church”).



69

Article 8 – The doctrine on “Christian Living,” which consists of a statement on orthopraxy, is a great addition to our Statement of Faith. It addresses a problem of our day in many Christian circles – orthodoxy divorced from orthopraxy and orthopraxy divorced from orthodoxy (justification and sanctification).



70

Article 9 – The doctrine on “Christ’s Return” has been strengthened by referring to Christ’s return as “bodily.” It consists of a statement of humility regarding the precise timing of Jesus’ return (“at a time known only to God”), and it states strongly that the coming of Christ “demands constant expectancy” and is to motivate the believer.



71

Article 10 – The doctrine on “Response and Eternal Destiny” completes the Statement of Faith by calling people to believe the gospel (“repentance and receiving”), acknowledges a judgment for all, affirms the bodily resurrection of the dead with the unbeliever condemned to eternal conscious punishment and the believer to be with the Lord in the new heavens and earth – many of these truths being denied today – and then it gloriously ends on a doxological note, “to the praise of His glorious grace.”



72

Theological Issues



GOD

74



Transcendence and Immanence

Knowing God, J. I. Packer
Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby

Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992).



75

Yes, it does engage their emotions in a huge way. This is, I believe, why so many have resonated with it. It also leans very heavily on the relational side, viz. God is personal. In fact, He is so personal not only is He like us, he (note I did not capitalize it) is one of the guys or gals, more accurately.

When we ponder God and His relationship with us, we must remember both His transcendence and His immanence. Often, theological discourse in the local church with the average Christian will evidence a ping pong between these two truths. We are now in the pong side of emphasizing God's immanence, but, as is often the case, it comes at the expense of His transcendence. This means He becomes less than the God of the Bible, the God who is! This can be captured well in the difference between the two books *Knowing God* (J. I. Packer) and *Experiencing God* (Henry Blackaby). To be fair, Packer does not deny or downplay experiencing God, nor does Blackaby deny knowing God. But the titles alone mark a shift in thinking about this issue.

76



The Shack, Wm. Paul Young

Paul Grimmond's Review of *The Shack*, "We need more shack time," *eBriefing* 362 (November 2008):

<http://matthiasmedia.com.au/briefing/library/5395/>



77

How should we respond to *The Shack*? My first response was to run away as quickly as I possibly could. But then I realized that *The Shack* gets one thing right when it encourages us to meet God in the difficult issues. 'The shack' functions as a metaphor for two things: it is the place where we stuff the things that are too hard to think about, and the place where we meet with God face-to-face. Young is dead right to suggest that we need to get to know God in the midst of the hard questions. The problem is that he brings us face-to-face with a God who is not God at all. In his zeal to 'free' God from the chains of misunderstanding, Young has shackled God beyond recognition.

78



The solution, though, isn't to run away from 'the shack'; the solution is to spend more time there—not in William P Young's 'shack', of course, but in the place where the living God speaks for himself about the big issues of life. We need to spend more time gazing into the face of the God who reveals himself in the Bible. We need to think about the big questions of suffering and obedience and truth while we sit at the feet of our Lord. In fact, if we have been reading our Bibles, we will have found that these are issues that he is only too willing to discuss. Indeed, it is the triune God of Scripture alone who is both sovereign enough and good enough to deal with evil.



79

I am not pretending that there won't be difficult questions. Nor am I suggesting that the answers will be totally satisfying for everyone. We may even need to accept that God is not willing to answer some of our questions right now. But we will certainly be better off hearing from the God who sent his Son to die for us, than listening to the god of our imaginations.



80

If western Christianity had spent more time in 'the shack' with the true and living creator, and less time wallowing around in our felt needs, then, just maybe, less people would have been fooled. We might have recognized *The Shack* for the empty shell that it is. Our churches might even have become places where people could meet face-to-face with the holy God of Scripture. Only when we come into the presence of the loving, holy, majestic, glorious, gracious, judging, rescuing, creating, sustaining and redeeming God, who holds the future in his awesome hands, will we have a real message to offer a world obsessed with pain.



The key to responding to this material is to get behind the veneer and figure out what it is that is attracting so many Christians. Rather than just blasting it, which at times is appropriate, we need to figure out what it is that resonates with Christians. I found this with John Eldridge's material as well. I thought it was weak and in some places quite unorthodox. But I could not deny that many men were drawn to his books, and many churches used his material for their men's ministries. He struck a chord with many. We need to work hard at figuring that out so we can provide a more excellent way. I also find it interesting that many former (recovering!) fundamentalists use story and questions to teach, and then when questioned about it they can go under the guise of "I am simply asking questions." ala McLaren.



82

THE BIBLE



83

Challenges Today

1. The postmodern shift in epistemology (i.e. post-foundational) has led some evangelicals to question propositional revelation.
2. A significant number of conservative students have/are graduating with doctorates in biblical studies and theology from non-evangelical institutions.
3. Relevance and respectability in the guild is often desired more than faithfulness.



84

4. The notion of parallelomania is used when doing background study, and if a similar account is found in some other ANE document, it flattens and possibly even negates the supernatural nature of the Word.
5. Modernism's strength was an emphasis on truth; its weakness was that it came at the expense of God's overarching story. Postmodernism's strength is an emphasis on story; its weakness is that it comes at the expense of Truth.
6. There is a healthy focus on the church doing theology (e.g. Vanhoozer, Green). This is good. But the problem is that it is often theology that is tangentially related to the Bible.

85



Questioning Inerrancy and Authority

Craig D. Allert, *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon*. Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).
 Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).
 Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).
 Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008).

86



Responses to and Defense of

- G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008).
 D. A. Carson, ed. *The Scripture Project* (projected release – Eerdmans, 2012).

87



Inerrancy - ICBI

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (October 1978, which was followed by a Statement on Hermeneutics in 1982 and Application in 1986: ICBI)
http://www.alliancenet.org/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID307086%7CCHID750054%7CCIID2094584,00.html

88



A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

89



Inerrancy - Meaning

Geisler, Norman L., ed. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
 Paul D. Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy" (chapter 9), 267-304.

Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences.

90



Observations

- 1.No doctrine of inerrancy can determine in advance the solution to individual or specific problem passages.
- 2.Inerrancy is a doctrine that must be asserted, but which may not be demonstrated with respect to all the phenomena of Scripture.



91

Qualifications

- 1.Inerrancy applies equally to all parts of the Scriptures as originally written (autographa).
- 2.Inerrancy is intimately tied up with hermeneutics.
- 3.Inerrancy is related to Scripture's intention.



92

Misunderstandings

- 1.Inerrancy does not demand strict adherence to the rules of grammar.
- 2.Inerrancy does not exclude the use either of figures of speech or of a given literary genre.
- 3.Inerrancy does not demand historical or semantic precision.
- 4.Inerrancy does not demand the technical language of modern science.



93

5. Inerrancy does not require verbal exactness in the citation of the Old Testament by the New.
6. Inerrancy does not demand that the Logia Jesu (the sayings of Jesus) contain the ipsissima verba (the exact words) of Jesus, only the ipsissima vox (the exact voice).
7. Inerrancy does not guarantee the exhaustive comprehensiveness of any single account or of combined accounts where those are involved.
8. Inerrancy does not demand the infallibility or inerrancy of the noninspired sources used by biblical writers.



94

THE DEATH OF CHRIST: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ATONEMENT



95

I. INTRODUCTION



96

A. EFCA Statement of Faith (2003, 2008)

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. **In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath.** Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

5. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.



Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. **He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.**

3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High He now is our High Priest and Advocate.



The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as **our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection** constitute the only ground for salvation.

6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and they become children of God.



B. Evangelical Alliance UK, Basis of Faith

□ The **substitutionary sacrifice** of the incarnate Son of God as the sole all-sufficient ground of **redemption from the guilt and power of sin**, and from eternal consequences. 1970

□ The **atoning sacrifice** of Christ on the cross: **dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.** 2005



C. Evangelical Theological Society

4. Since the fall, the whole of humankind is sinful and guilty, so that **everyone is subject to God's wrath and condemnation.**

6. Sinful human beings are redeemed from the **guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death once and for all time of their representative and substitute, Jesus Christ**, the only mediator between them and God.

(Shift from a Doctrinal Basis to a Statement of Faith

To Be voted Upon November 2008)



"The cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse – a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith." Chalke and Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (2003), 182.



II. CONTEMPORARY CONVERGENCES

103



-
1. Postmodernism
 2. Post-foundational epistemology
 3. Hermeneutics
 4. Theologizing
 5. New Perspective on Paul
 6. Emergent

104



III. IMAGES/VIEWS/MODELS

105



"Images of salvation (or of the atonement) is a better term than "theories." For theories are usually abstract and speculative concepts, whereas biblical images of the atoning achievement of Christ are concrete pictures and belong to the data of revelation." John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (1986, 2006)

106



Four Views/Images (*The Nature of the Atonement*)

1. Christus Victor
2. Penal Substitution
3. Healing
4. Kaleidoscope

107



Summary

Three views recognize various views, but make their own image preeminent such that it becomes the dominant, controlling image.

One view levels all views such that there is no priority.

This means there is either a lessening of the importance of the substitutionary view, or an outright denial of it.

The key is not "that" but "how" the cross operates.¹⁰⁸



IV. OBJECTIONS TO PENAL SUBSTITUTION

109



This describes a few specific ways in which the contemporary convergences affect our view of the atonement.

1. Does not do justice to all the biblical data.
2. Modern view of the biblical data (story over against exegesis).
3. Reformational lens, not a biblical lens.
4. Legal view of the cross, not a relational view.
5. Condone and even fosters violence.
6. No longer culturally compelling.



-
1. Changes God from a loving Father into an angry, vengeful tyrant.
 2. Expounds a view of "redemptive violence."
 3. Contradicts the character of God ("God is love")
 4. Separates the persons of the Trinity from the community of the Trinity.
 5. Turns Jesus into an enemy.
 6. Contradicts the teaching of Jesus ("love your enemies")
 7. Emphasizes universal sin rather than human goodness.

111



-
8. Impacts on Christian mission in a negative fashion.
 9. Encourages an image of evangelicals as harsh and lacking grace.
 10. Is ultimately unjust, since it is unjust to knowingly punish one person for another's crimes.

Richard Turnbull, *Anglican and Evangelical* (Continuum, 2007), 73.

112



Christopher Marshall affirms the penal nature of Christ's substitutionary atonement, but he does so in a way that separates the penalty from propitiation, i.e. he reinterprets it.

"God suffers the penalty of sin not because God transfers our punishment onto him as substitute victim, but because Christ fully and freely identifies himself with the plight and destiny of sinful humanity under the reign of death, and pays the price for doing so." *Beyond Retribution*, 62.

113



V. KEY ISSUES

114



A. Deficient and Dangerous to the Gospel

"Though the sheer bluntness of my imagery shocked some, I contend that, in truth, it represents nothing more than a stark unmasking of what I understand to be the violent, pre-Christian thinking behind the popular theory of penal substitutionary atonement. Thus, whilst having a great respect for many of those who hold what, I readily concede, is currently regarded as orthodoxy within modern evangelicalism, I will attempt to set out through this essay why **I believe it to be biblically, culturally and pastorally deficient and even dangerous.**" Steve Chalke, "The redemption of the cross," in *The Atonement Debate*, 34-35.



"So whilst I applaud these attempts to manufacture a kind of 'penal substitution theory lite' . . . in my view, what we need is not a reworking but **a renunciation.**" Chalke, 42.



B. Essential to the Gospel

"We believe this doctrine **to be central and essential to the gospel.** While the atonement accomplished by Christ cannot be reduced to this understanding alone (and no one should claim that it should), to deny or confuse this doctrine is to deny that Christ died on the cross *for our sins and as our substitute.*" Al Mohler, *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, forward, 15.



C. Interconnectedness of Doctrine

"Does not the present debate over penal substitutionary atonement fall into this category of issues that require separation? I find it impossible to agree with those who maintain that the debate is just an intramural one which can be conducted within the evangelical family. It is hard to maintain this when it has been acknowledged by all parties that **we are arguing about who God is, about the creedal doctrine of the Trinity, about the consequences of sin, about how we are saved, and about views which are held to encourage the abuse of women and children.** So long as these issues are the issues, and I believe that that they have been rightly identified, then I cannot see how those who disagree can remain allied without placing unity above truths which are **undeniably central to the Christian faith.**" "Penal Substitution: a response to recent criticisms," Garry Williams, *The Atonement Debate*, 188.



V. IMPORTANCE



Biblical –

- ❑ misunderstanding of Scripture, in whole or in part;
- ❑ Bible's storyline is wrong such that God, sin and the work of Jesus are misconstrued.



Theological –

- rendering of God and His attributes;
- God's holiness, justice and righteousness define his love as his love defines those attributes;
- PSA and justification by faith are inextricably linked;
- anthropomorphic views of God such that human forgiveness is the model for God;
- huge hermeneutical issues



121

"We forget that the necessity of retribution for sin is an integral expression of the holiness of God, and we sentimentalize his love by thinking and speaking of it without relating it to this necessity." Packer and Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, 149



122

Pastoral –

"PSA is not only pastorally defensible but also pastorally indispensable. At heart, all theories of the atonement relate to our view of God, and to set PSA aside is to lose sight of a God who is wrathful because he is love. . . . Without such anger, God would not love us but would be indifferent to us. Without such wrath, forgiveness would be trivialised." Derek Tidball, "Penal Substitution: a pastoral apologetic," *The Atonement Debate*, 356.



123

Atonement

- Beilby, James and Paul Eddy. *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006.
- Boersma, Hans. *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Chalke, Steve and Alan Mann. *The Lost Message of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Girard, Rene. *The Scapegoat*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1989.
- Green, Joel B. and Mark Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Heim, S. Mark. *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Hill, Charles E. and Frank A. James III, ed. *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Holmes, Stephen. *The Wondrous Cross: Atonement and Penal Substitution in the Bible and History*. Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2007.
- Jeffrey, Steve, Mike Ovey and Andrew Sach, ed. *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.



124

- Jersak, Brad and Michael Hardin, ed. *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Marshall, Christopher D. *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment*. Studies in Peace and Scripture. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *Aspects of the Atonement: Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity*. Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2007.
- McKnight, Scot. *A Community Called Atonement*. Living Theology. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.
- Packer, J. I. and Mark Dever. *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.
- Peterson, David, ed. *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*. Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2004.
- Pinnock, Clark H. and Robert C. Brow. *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the 21st Century*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994.
- Sanders, John, ed. *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006.
- Tidball, Derek, David Hilborn and Justin Thacker, ed. *The Atonement Debate: papers from the London symposium on the theology of the atonement*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- Weaver, J. Denny. *The Nonviolent Atonement*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Wells, Paul. *Cross Words: The Biblical Doctrine of the Atonement*. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2006.



125

**THE GOSPEL AND
'DEEDS OF MERCY'**



126

1. Early church, cf. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1997).
2. Social gospel
3. Gospel affecting the 'soul' with no concern for the body, cf. Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947, 2003).
4. Renewed interest in 'deeds of mercy'
5. It is important we address this issue, and it is imperative we get this right.



127

Don Carson, *Themelios* 33/2 (September 2008), writes of "deeds of mercy" in "Christian witness." Specifically Carson addresses "the debate between those Christians who say that we should primarily be about the business of heralding the gospel and planting churches, and those who say that our responsibility as Christians extends to the relief of oppression, suffering, and poverty in all their forms."



128

"These pastors approached the subject out of the conviction that gospel proclamation must occupy pride of place in our priorities, but they represented quite different position on what follows from this, some of them hoping for a new Evangelical Awakening and others fearful of a new round of gospel-destroying liberalism." After much discussion, Carson writes that there was "a broad consensus that Christians who understand the priority of preparing people for eternity must also help people here and now, and that gospel proclamation must not be set antithetically against deeds of mercy."



129

Despite this agreement, the gathered pastors returned to this pointed question: "Granted that we ought to be engaged in acts of mercy, what safeguards can be set in place so as to minimize the risk that the deeds of mercy will finally swamp the proclamation of the gospel and the passionate desire to see men and women reconciled to God by faith in Christ Jesus and his atoning death and resurrection?" Carson gave two answers. "First, it is helpful to distinguish between the responsibilities of the church qua church and the responsibilities of Christians." And second, "Preach hell."

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/33-2/editors>



130

Tim Keller, "The Gospel and the Poor," *Themelios* 33.3 (2008), 8-22.

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/publications/33-3/the-gospel-and-the-poor>



131

Jonathan Edwards, "Christian Charity: or, The Duty of Charity to the Poor, Explained and Enforced."

1. Believing the gospel will move us to give to the poor.
2. Ministry to the poor is a crucial sign that we believe the gospel.



132

What about the ministry to the poor and the ministry of evangelism?

1. Evangelism is distinct.
2. Evangelism is more basic than ministry to the poor.
3. But ministry to the poor is inseparably connected to evangelism.
4. Inseparable does not mean a rigid, temporal, order.



133

They go together theologically. The resurrection shows us that God not only *created both* body and spirit but will also *redeem both* body and spirit. The salvation Jesus will eventually bring in its fullness will include liberation from *all* the effects of sin – not only spiritual but physical and material as well. Jesus came both preaching the Word and healing and feeding.



134

They go together practically. We must be ever wary of collapsing evangelism into deed ministry as the social gospel did, but loving deeds are an irreplaceable witness to the power and nature of God's grace, an irreplaceable testimony to the truth of the gospel.



135

CHURCH: EMERGING-EMERGENT



136

A. INTRODUCTION



137

Which emerging?

1. Emerging Ecclesologically
2. Emerging Sociologically
3. Emerging Theologically
4. Emerging Epistemologically
5. Emerging Politically



138

B. EMERGING DELINEATIONS



139

"First Person: Understanding the emerging church" by Ed Stetzer, January 6, 2006

<http://www.sbc Baptist press.org/bpnews.asp?ID=22406>

- ▣ Relevants - emerging
 - ▣ Reconstructionists - emerging/emergent
 - ▣ Revisionists - emergent
- (the quotes to follow are from Stetzer)



140

Relevants

There are a good number of young (and not so young) leaders who some classify as "emerging" that really are just trying to make their worship, music and outreach more contextual to emerging culture. Ironically, while some may consider them liberal, they are often deeply committed to biblical preaching, male pastoral leadership and other values common in conservative evangelical churches. They are simply trying to explain the message of Christ in a way their generation can understand.

They are, instead, intentionally reaching into their communities (which are different than where most Southern Baptists live) and proclaiming a faithful biblically-centered Gospel there. I know some of their churches -- they are doctrinally sound, growing and impacting lostness.



141

Reconstructionists

The reconstructionists think that the current form of church is frequently irrelevant and the structure is unhelpful. Yet, they typically hold to a more orthodox view of the Gospel and Scripture. Therefore, we see an increase in models of church that reject certain organizational models, embracing what are often called "incarnational" or "house" models.



142

Revisionists

Revisionists are questioning (and in some cases denying) issues like the nature of the substitutionary atonement, the reality of hell, the complementarian nature of gender, and the nature of the Gospel itself. This is not new -- some mainline theologians quietly abandoned these doctrines a generation ago. The revisionist emerging church leaders should be treated, appreciated and read as we read mainline theologians -- they often have good descriptions, but their prescriptions fail to take into account the full teaching of the Word of God.



143

C. PARAMETERS



144

The diagrams/grids to follow are done by C. Michael Patton in his writing, "Would the Real Emerger Please Stand Up":

http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/ParchmentandPen/files/Michael-Patton/Would_the_Real_Emerger_Please_Stand_Up.pdf



145

Diagrams/Grids or labels can sometimes hinder meaningful dialogue. That certainly is not my intent.

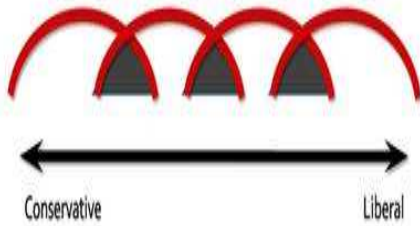
They can also be helpful in giving us ways of thinking about various movements or groups, including ourselves.

My purpose for including them is to foster and nourish humble dialogue and discussion, ultimately for the sake of Truth-Jesus Christ.



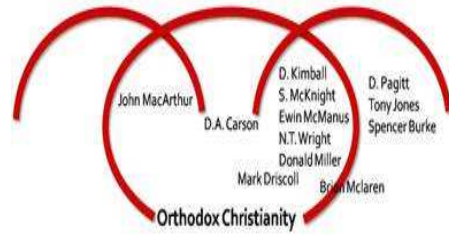
146

Fundamentalism Evangelicalism Emerging Emergent Liberal



147

Fundamentalism Evangelicalism Emerging Emergent



148

D. TODAY



149

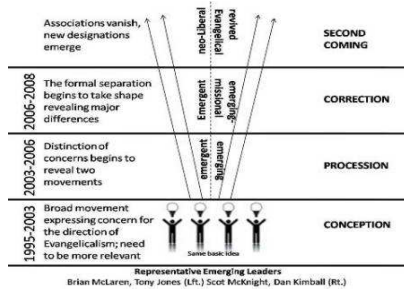
C. Michael Patton, "The Second Coming of Emergers":

<http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2008/09/the-second-coming-of-emergers/>



150

Assessment



151

New Alliance

Scot McKnight and Dan Kimball

They have not yet named this new community, but those who are participating share an "urgency about the mission of Jesus and evangelism." Here is how it is further described:

- Friends, pioneers, innovators and catalysts who want to dream and work for the Gospel together rather than alone.
- Leaders, entrepreneurs, pastors, misfits, and artists who share a high view of Scripture and a radical commitment to evangelism while being faithfully committed to what is expressed in the Lausanne Covenant.
- Missionally-minded people from different backgrounds who use different methods in different cultural contexts but share the same experimental passion and risk-taking heart for serving, loving, and helping people connect to God through Jesus.

What is going to unite this new alliance is the Lausanne Covenant, which consists of a strongly worded statement of the Bible and a strong commitment to the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ in evangelism, among other pertinent doctrinal matters: http://www.lausanne.org/lausanne1974/lausanne_covenant.html



PROSPERITY GOSPEL



153

The Early Word of Faith Leaders

Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Benny Hinn

The Contemporary Word of Faith Leaders

Creflo Dollar, founder and pastor of the World Changers Church International, College Park, Georgia.

T. D. Jakes, pastor of The Potter's House, Dallas, TX.

Joyce Meyer, founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries and Enjoying Everyday Life, a daily television and radio show.

Joel Osteen, pastor of Lakewood Church, Houston, TX.

Rod Parsley, pastor of World Fellowship Church, Columbus, OH.



154

"Most of the proponents of this movement do not seek to downplay the significance of spiritual salvation. What they believe about the basic doctrines of the faith is well within the parameters of orthodoxy. If, indeed, theirs is 'another gospel,' it is so not because any basic doctrines have been subtracted, but because certain questionable doctrines have been added" (p. 191).

Douglas J. Moo, 'Divine Healing In the Health and Wealth Gospel, *Trinity Journal* 9/2 (1988), 191-203.



155

"At least some of the leading teachers of the movement do teach heresy," but the movement as a whole should be classified as "aberrant or sub-orthodox." There are a number of doctrinal reasons for this conclusion.

First, Word of Faith teachers do not explicitly reject orthodox doctrine.

Second, they sometimes affirm orthodox doctrine.

Third, the movement belongs to a radical wing of an orthodox Christian tradition, viz. Pentecostalism.



156

"Fourth, the movement teaches "patently unbiblical ideas about the nature of God, the nature of human beings, and the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ."

Fifth, some Word of Faith teachers "have espoused blatantly heretical and even blasphemous ideas."

Last, Word of Faith teaching is "demonstrably detrimental to a sound Christian life" (pp. 226-227).

Bowman, Jr., Robert M. *The Word-Faith Controversy: Understanding the Health and Wealth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001). ¹⁵⁷



A few things to ponder . . .

1. The priority given to the Word of God.
2. Belief in a powerful God.
3. A thoroughgoing optimism.
4. Subordination of mammon to the kingdom of God.
5. A theology of godly prosperity.
6. Affirmation of material and immaterial, body and soul.

158



A few things to question . . .

1. Understanding of the Bible and interpretation.
2. Over-realized eschatology.
3. Isolation and lack of accountability, both in the area of theology and finances.
4. Little to no place for suffering.
5. Ethical and practical dangers.
6. Temptation of materialism and hedonism.

159



Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *The Word-Faith Controversy: Understanding the Health and Wealth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001).

Andrew Perriman, ed. *Faith, Health and Prosperity: A Report on 'Word of Faith' and 'Positive Confession' Theologies by The Evangelical Alliance (UK) Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2003).

Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis: The 21st Century* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009)

Peter L. Berger, "You Can Do It! Two cheers for the prosperity gospel," *Books & Culture: A Christian Review* 14/5 (September-October 2008), 14.

<http://www.ctlibrary.com/bc/2008/sep/oct/10.14.html>

160

