



The Rev. Robert Wayne Anderson, D.D.

LIFE SKETCH & TRIBUTES

ROBERT W. ANDERSON—A BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

JOHN A. BATTLE

Robert (Bob) Wayne Anderson was born August 7, 1937, and grew up in Shannon City, Iowa, with his parents and two sisters.¹ There he attended one-room country schools. Years later, when his church in Tacoma, Washington, completed the building for its Christian school, Pastor Anderson was able to secure the school bell from one of his schools, and it now sits atop the building, ready to be used to start the school day in its new location.²

In 1956 Bob was converted to Christ under the preaching of the Rev. David Otis Fuller. He attended Sterling College in Kansas, and then transferred to Shelton College in New Jersey, earning his B.A. there.

Bob enrolled in Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, in order to prepare for the gospel ministry. While studying at Faith, he attended the Bible Presbyterian Church and sat under the preaching of Dr. Carl McIntire. It was there at the Collingswood church that he met a young lady, Nancy Titzck, who was later to become his wife.

While a student at Faith, Bob attended the convention of the International Council of Christian Churches in

Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1962. Bob actively supported this agency and its associated churches and missions for many years as a pastor, even traveling and speaking on a month-long mission tour of South Korea in 1969.

After his graduation from Faith in 1963, he became the pastor of the Bible Presbyterian Church in Maryville, Tennessee.³

In 1965 he attended the convention of the International Council of Christian Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. There, near the Reformation Wall with its statues of Calvin and the other Reformers, Robert proposed to Nancy and they became engaged. They were married in Collingswood on September 2, 1966.

Just six months later, in March 1967, the young minister was called to become the pastor of the historic Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, Washington. This church had come out from the Presbyterian Church USA in the 1930s, had been one of the larger Bible Presbyterian churches throughout the years, and had consistently and generously supported the agencies of the denomination.⁴ He and his new bride moved across the country to take on this work.

For thirty-seven years Robert Anderson served as pastor of the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church. During those years his consistent preaching and ministry bore much fruit in the lives of the congrega-

tion, and blessed other works as well. Bob's biblical, Reformed preaching and teaching through the years is arguably the greatest human cause for that church's present dedication to the doctrines of the Reformation.

In 1971 he was deeply involved in the founding of Heritage Christian School, which now includes kindergarten through grade eight. Over the years at Heritage thousands of children have been well taught in biblical and Reformed doctrines, as well as in the important academic subjects. Presently Heritage is the only Christian school in America sponsored by a Bible Presbyterian church.⁵

Bob was and still is very active in the Northwest Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Church. In 1969 he helped found, and then, for most of its early years, directed the annual summer presbytery youth camp near Kalispel, Montana. He has never missed a camp since, except one year in 1976, when he was attending the ICCC convention in Nairobi, Kenya.⁶ In addition, he frequently has traveled to preach in vacant pulpits throughout the presbytery, and to strengthen and encourage his fellow ministers.

In 1978 he was honored by his brethren in ministry to be elected and to serve as moderator of the 42nd General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church. Another highlight of his life and ministry was his Holy Land trip, taken in 1982.

Later, in the summer of 1982, Pastor Anderson and the session of the Tacoma church invited John Battle, Ron Bergey, and Chris Lensch to come to Tacoma to begin a new theological seminary in the Northwest, to meet in the spacious church

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building. This had been a desire of many in the church for years, to sponsor and support complete Christian education, from kindergarten through seminary! As a result, Western Reformed Seminary was established in Tacoma, being incorporated in 1983. For many years, until his retirement, Robert Anderson served on the board of the seminary, and he was one of its strongest defenders and supporters.⁷ Under his leadership the church labored and gave sacrificially so that the seminary could get off to a good start. Through the years the Tacoma church has continued to house the seminary.

When the Presbyterian Missionary Union was formed in 1985, Robert Anderson served on the organizing committee. He encouraged our sister denomination, the Independent Presbyterian Church of Kenya, when he was the graduation speaker for Faith College of the Bible in 1996.

His consistent preaching and ministry bore much fruit in the lives of the congregation, and blessed other works as well.

Pastor Anderson retired from the pastorate in November 2004. However, he continues to be active in ministry. He recently returned from a 2½ -month preaching trip in Australia, and more such trips are envisioned.

Robert Anderson's sermons are consistently well-prepared, biblical, and theo-

logically oriented. He normally types out all his sermons ahead of time, but delivers them from notes and memory. It would be profitable for his sermons to be collected and published. Some of his sermons can be found in the Minutes of the various synods of the Bible Presbyterian Church.⁸ He also has written several articles in the *WRS Journal*,⁹ and publications for Fundamental Presbyterian Publications.¹⁰

Bob Anderson has through the years, in one way or another, blessed the lives of thousands of people. He has served the Lord humbly and faithfully, through good times and adversities. The Lord has used him as a positive force for His church. He is an excellent example of the true pastor/theologian. 📖

¹ We thank Robert's wife, Nancy Anderson, for supplying most of the details for this article, as well as the photograph of her husband.

² The school children sign up in advance for the privilege of ringing the bell.

³ It was there that I first met Bob, in the summer of 1964. I was a part of the Highland College summer gospel team, traveling with Dr. Robert Kofahl. Bob cooked a breakfast for our team in his bachelor apartment, delicious Swedish pancakes! He also played one of his favorite stereo records for us—the sounds of steam and diesel locomotives passing by.

⁴ For a history of the beginning of the Tacoma church, see David C. Sinding, "Roy Talmage Brumbaugh: Bible Presbyterian Pioneer in the Northwest," *WRS Journal* 11:1 (February 2004): 8-15.

⁵ Heritage's website: <http://www.heritagecs.net/staff.html>.

⁶ One job is typical of his heart for

service. Every year, in addition to all his other tasks, Bob is the one who personally mashes all the potatoes for dinner for all the campers.

⁷ I remember vividly one late afternoon, after we had first moved to Tacoma, that our doorbell rang. There at the door was Bob Anderson! He was dirty and tired after an exhausting day of physical work. He had cut and hauled firewood for our wood stove, and presented us with a truckload of it on our driveway. Such acts of generous labor are typical of him.

⁸ These are noted in the article by Earl Brown in this issue of the *WRS Journal*.

⁹ "A Short Biography of Charles Hodge" 4:2 (August 1997): 9-13; "Andrew Melville: Lion of Scotland" 3:2 (August 1996): 42-46; "A Lament" (a look at Lamentations in the light of the terrorism of 9/11) 9:1 (February 2002): 25-29.

¹⁰ "A Bicentennial Remembrance—Charles Hodge" (1997), and "Infant Baptism" and "Marring of Marriage" (2004).

TRIBUTES

FROM HOWARD CARLSON

God's standards for a faithful pastor –
Ezekiel 13:4-16

America's pulpits are suffering a great crisis of identity over what constitutes biblical preaching. This was also true among God's people 2600 years ago. We must realize we are in a great spiritual war, and defensive as well as offensive steps must be taken.

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In Ezek 13:4-5, 10, God tells what is required by Him of His spokesmen. We derive the positive precepts from negatives in the text.

- First, there must be involvement in the issues of the day and not a convenient sidestepping, like a fox in the wilderness which flees at every hint of danger (v. 4).
- Second, there are “gaps” in the defensive walls of God’s people which must be plugged. Our children need the holes in their knowledge and emotional responses to be filled by the faithful preaching and teaching of the truth of God (v. 4).
- Third, a “hedge” or surrounding barrier must be built around God’s people. Theology and sound biblical preaching should be designed to present a consistent, biblical world view. Thus a strong barrier against the world, the flesh, and the devil (Ps 119:11), would prepare another generation to glorify and enjoy God (v. 4).
- Fourth, the truth must be preached and not popular fads, pop-psychology, or other fluff which seems to steam from our nation’s pulpits. Calvin perhaps rightly said that in so doing, such preachers have “no zeal for God’s glory.” Even when the truth is not in fashion, it is the only sure way for God’s faithful spokesman to please Him (vv. 6, 10-11).

- Fifth, the justice of God and the certainty of judgment for sin must not be minimized by unbiblical, false assurance (v. 10).

Here is the true interpretation of this passage. It refers to God’s spokesmen and not to literal building of walls and gaps but: “To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy” (v. 16).

I have alluded to this passage because in my observation, it was to a very great extent fulfilled in the long and fruitful ministry of Dr. Robert Anderson. Early on I dubbed him “McInHodge.” His preaching style was that of Carl McIntire and his content was that of Charles Hodge. His sermons did not daub “untempered mortar,” but with the tempered cement of sound biblical exposition he fortified his people against society’s current ills. While all about him pastors were building “hedges” with fluff and the “spectacular,” Dr. Anderson continued faithful—week after week—with the deeper things, the theology of the Word. His ministry of discipleship has stood the test. He has left a band of well-trained servants to carry on the work of Christ. For this we salute him who has been more faithful in this than we. 📖

FROM AL COOK

It has been my pleasure to serve with Dr. Anderson in our Bible Presbyterian Church for the past 43 years. He has my respect as a humble servant of God who has faithfully served His Lord and the Church.

We have had good times at Synod making jokes at Bob's expense and listening to stories of his courtship of Nancy. In it all Bob and Nancy just rolled with the tide.

I am thankful for Bob's work in Christian Education. He has contributed his many gifts both to Heritage Christian School and to Western Reformed Seminary, and God has blessed. It is very possible that our Bible Presbyterian Church would be without a Seminary today if it were not for the vision and hard work of Pastor Anderson, the session of the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church, and the dedicated professors who carried out the work.

In a very difficult time, I saw Pastor Anderson take his stand for biblical truth and ethics. It is not always easy to put God first, especially when the choice is between the Lord and a trusted leader of the Church. By God's grace, even this was resolved in due time. Bob is a Christian statesman, as was demonstrated in the way he conducted himself in the midst of controversy. He has worked to resolve issues in such a way as to build and strengthen the Church.

We thank the Lord for your life as a pastor, theologian, and educator. It is also good to call you our friend. Have a wonderful retirement in His service. Thanks, Bob! 📖

FROM KEN ORR

One of the greatest gifts the Lord ever gave me is the friendship of Pastor Robert Anderson; so no one had to twist my arm to write something about my good

friend and colleague in the Gospel ministry. Bob Anderson is a man I liked from the first time I laid eyes on him and have come to love the more I know him. He is one of the few people I have ever met who can lift your spirits with a rebuke and humble you with praise. He is one you can disagree with and still respect with great affection.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, was once invited to speak at a banquet in New York and couldn't make it. So he sent a telegram with only one word. That word was OTHERS. This is the one word that so defines my good brother. His phone calls, his counsel, and his compassion have not only melted my heart but set me straight. No one I know has come so close to fulfilling the Savior's words in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." He is a man who loves "in word, in deed, and in truth."

Someone penned the following words and they perfectly suit my friend Bob Anderson:

"O the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thought nor measure words, but pour them out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."

Thank you, Robert, for all your kindnesses. 📖

EXEGESIS

OBSERVATIONS ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

DENNIS W. JOWERS

I. INTRODUCTION

In his article in this issue, Prof. Battle draws heavily on 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, the so-called “Pastoral epistles,” for words of counsel and encouragement to other pastor-theologians. If the Apostle Paul composed these epistles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Prof. Battle is abundantly justified in so doing. It is important to note, however, that the vast majority of NT scholars presently deny that the Pastorals derive from the historical Paul and attribute them, rather, to a second century forger concerned to justify innovations in ecclesiastical polity.

In the context of this issue, therefore, it seems eminently appropriate briefly to vindicate the Pastoral Epistles’ Pauline authorship. The work of such distinguished students of the NT as Joachim Jeremias,¹ J. N. D. Kelly,² Ceslaus Spicq,³ and Luke Timothy Johnson,⁴ each of whom defends the authenticity of the Pastorals in his commentary on the epistles, renders extended comment on our part unnecessary. We shall argue, nonetheless, for three claims, which, in our view, are worthy of more attention than they have been accorded by both liberal and evangelical scholarship. First, we intend to show that P⁴⁶, the earliest extant collection of Paul’s letters, may in its original form have contained the Pastoral

Epistles and that one cannot, therefore, reasonably regard the absence of the Pastorals in present-day copies of P⁴⁶ as evidence of the Pastorals’ inauthenticity. Second, we intend to argue that Paul’s employment of multiple amanuenses in the composition of his letters suffices, to a great extent at least, to account for the differences in style and vocabulary that distinguish the Pastorals from the other Pauline epistles. Third and finally, we intend to argue that the techniques of statistical analysis frequently employed to discredit the Pastorals’ authenticity are unreliable guides in inquiries about the authorship of brief texts.

II. THE ORIGINAL CONTENTS OF P⁴⁶

As to the first claim: it is by no means certain that the now only partially extant papyrus codex P⁴⁶ contained a collection of Pauline letters that lacked the Pastoral Epistles.⁵ Jeremy Duff, in particular, demonstrates in his “P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals: A Misleading Consensus?”⁶ that the circumstance that the number of pages⁷ which remained, but are no longer extant, after the transcription of 1 Thessalonians in the lone quire of P⁴⁶ which has survived, seems insufficient to contain the Pastoral Epistles, does not necessarily imply that the codex as it originally circulated lacked the Pastoral Epistles. For, as Duff explains, the scribe responsible for P⁴⁶ seems to have realized that he was running out of space and to have increased the amount of text transcribed per page in response; indeed, he increased the amount of text per page so much that, if he had maintained the word/page ratio characteristic of the quire’s last extant pages and included no material after Philemon, at least

nine pages of his quire would have remained blank.⁸ It seems quite probable, therefore, that the scribe in question intended to include further material in his quire.

Admittedly, even if the scribe had maintained the high word/page ratio established in the last extant pages of P⁴⁶, the inclusion of the whole of 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and the Pastorals in his quire would have required at least nine more pages than the quire contained.⁹ As Duff observes, however, the scribe in question could have made room for these epistles by either: a) adding extra leaves to his quire, as the scribes responsible for the Nag Hammadi codices seem usually to have done; or b) adding one or more extra quires to his codex as the scribes responsible for Nag Hammadi Codex I and the only extant manuscript of Origen's *On the Passover* certainly did.¹⁰ Although one could only with great difficulty, if at all, prove that P⁴⁶ as it originally circulated contained the Pastoral Epistles, then, the evidence currently available lends a degree of plausibility to the hypothesis that it did.¹¹ In any event, the purported absence of the Pastorals from

P⁴⁶ does not constitute solid evidence that a significant number of Christians in the post-Apostolic era, prescinding from Marcionites and Gnostics, denied the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles.

III. QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE

As to the second claim: a great mass of the qualitative evidence ordinarily alleged against the Pastorals' authenticity seems irrelevant to the questions of the epistles' authorship and date of composition. For many, if not all of the stylistic differences between the Pastorals and the rest of the Pauline corpus seem explicable by the hypothesis that Paul, when composing the Pastoral Epistles, employed an amanuensis other than those he employed when authoring the undisputed epistles. As E. Earle Ellis observes,

In the Graeco-Roman world the use of a secretary was a necessity for any extensive writing and it varied with the circumstances, from taking dictation to being a co-author. It is fully evident in Paul's epistles and need not have been limited to dictation *verbatim et literatim*, as some assume. [In fact] it probably went beyond that since in antiquity a trusted and gifted amanuensis customarily shaped the vocabulary, style and composition of an author's work.¹²

IV. QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE

As to the third claim: the quantitative analyses of the Pastorals' language that fueled opposition to the Pastoral Epistles' authenticity for much of the twentieth century seem now to be thoroughly discredited.¹³ In support of this not uncontroversial assessment, we offer three examples of authors whose work tends to undermine the stylometric case

When one follows the appropriate methodology in investigating the Pastorals' authenticity, giving priority to external evidence, therefore, the authorship of the Pastorals appears difficult to dispute.

against the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles.

Thomas Arthur Robinson, first, debunks a mainstay of the linguistic-mathematical case against the Pastorals' authenticity in his "Grayston and Herdan's 'C' Quantity Formula and the Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles."¹⁴ Specifically, Robinson demonstrates: a) that Kenneth Grayston and Gustav Herdan, in their classic 1959 article on the Pastorals' authorship,¹⁵ artificially inflate the "C" quantity¹⁶ of the Pastoral Epistles by treating the Pastorals as a literary whole rather than three, individual epistles; and b) that, when one treats the Pastorals as discrete units, their "C" quantities do not diverge dramatically from those of the undisputed Pauline Epistles.¹⁷

Anthony Kenny, second, in his *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament*,¹⁸ decisively refutes the claims of Andrew Q. Morton, who employs criteria like sentence length, the frequency and position of common words like $\delta\epsilon$ and $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$, and the grammatical category (nouns, verbs, etc.) of words that close sentences, to dispute the authenticity of all of the Pauline epistles except Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians.¹⁹ Specifically, Kenny shows that Morton's methods either: a) yield results susceptible to a more benign interpretation than Morton gives them; b) lead to absurd results; or c) are otherwise fundamentally unsound. For example, Kenny shows that the sentence-length distribution figures for Romans in Morton's 1978 *Literary Detection*²⁰ differ so markedly from those employed in Morton's 1966 *Paul: The Man and The Myth*²¹ that a consistent application of Morton's authenticity tests would lead one to conclude that the text of Romans

Morton uses in 1966 has a different author than the text of Romans employed by Morton in 1978.²² Kenny, similarly, demonstrates that Morton's authenticity tests based on (1) the frequency with which $\delta\epsilon$ and $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ appear as the second word in a sentence and (2) on the frequencies of various categories of last words in sentences, if applied to the Aristotelian corpus, yield the absurd conclusions, respectively, that (a) Aristotle wrote neither *Metaphysics Z* and H nor *Nichomachean Ethics Z*,²³ and (b) that Aristotle did not write *Nichomachean Ethics Δ* and I nor *Politics B* and Γ.²⁴ Morton's methods, in short, seem unreliable.

Kenneth J. Neumann, third, in his *The Authenticity of the Pauline Epistles in the Light of Stylostatistical Analysis*,²⁵ assesses the usefulness of 617 possible quantitative criteria of authenticity²⁶ and eventually rejects all but four as unreliable.²⁷ Even these four uniquely suitable criteria, however, prove unreliable in practice, identifying the letters to the churches in Rev 2 and 3, for instance, as epistles of Paul. Neumann, regrettably, does not so much as consider the possibility that the Pastorals might prove authentic in his study, whose principal significance, in any event, seems to lie in its unintentional demonstration of the inadequacy of quantitative methods of analysis for the purpose of determining the authorship of the Pauline epistles.

V. CONCLUSION

The text of the Pastorals itself, then, whether evaluated by qualitative or quantitative means, seems to have little worthwhile to contribute to the debate over the Pastoral Epistles' authenticity. In such a situation, it seems, one who would determine the authorship of the Pastorals

should rely principally on external evidence: quotations of the epistles, the opinions of early authorities, etc. The external evidence as to the Pastorals' authenticity, however, seems uniformly to favor the Pauline authorship of all three epistles. No one seems to have questioned the authenticity of the Pastorals in antiquity except Marcionites and Gnostics, and even in these cases, the examples of 1) Tatian, who, according to Jerome,²⁸ accepted Titus; and 2) those Marcionites who, according to Chrysostom,²⁹ appealed to 2 Tim 1:18 in defense of their doctrine of a twofold Godhead; prove that opposition was not universal. The only external evidence even potentially prejudicial to the case for Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, in fact, seems to be the supposed absence of the Pastoral Epistles from the original text of P⁴⁶. We have shown above, however, that P⁴⁶ in its original form may well have included the Pastorals and that the opposite conclusion, in any event, is undemonstrated. When one follows the appropriate methodology in investigating the Pastorals' authenticity, giving priority to external evidence, therefore, the authorship of the Pastorals appears difficult to dispute. This is good news, of course, for all who uphold the inspiration and inerrancy of all 66 books in the Protestant, biblical canon; in light of Prof. Battle's findings, moreover, it is especially good news for the discouraged pastor-theologian. 📖

¹ *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (NTD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953⁶), 3-8.

² *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus* (BNTC; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1963), 3-34.

³ *St. Paul: Les Épitres Pastorales* (EtB;

Paris: Gabalda, 1969⁴), 157-214.

⁴ *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (The New Testament in Context; Valley Forge, PA; TPI, 1996), 2-32. Cf. also the defenses of the Pastorals' authenticity in Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Leicester, England and Grand Rapids, MI; Inter-Varsity and Eerdmans, 1990²), 18-62 and George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI, and Carlisle, England; Eerdmans and Paternoster, 1992), 13-52 along with the argument for Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy in particular in Michael Prior's *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy* (JSNT.S 23; Sheffield, England; JSOT Press, 1989), passim.

⁵ Although P⁴⁶ is ordinarily considered a document of the early to mid-third century, Young Kyu Kim has cogently argued in his "Paleographical Dating of P⁴⁶ to the Later First Century," *Bib* 69 (1988), 248-57: a) that features of P⁴⁶ frequently thought to exclude an earlier dating, such as the omission of the *iota adscriptum* and the usage of *nomina sacra* (256-7) have parallels in papyri conventionally dated before A.D. 100; b) that the calligraphy of P⁴⁶ exhibits a number of traits, such as a consistent, "striking effort to keep to the upper line" (249) unparalleled in papyri dated later than A.D. 100; c) that its overall style closely resembles a number of papyri dated earlier than A.D. 100 (250-54); and d) that P⁴⁶, consequently, probably originated before A.D. 100.

⁶ *NTS* 44 (1998), 578-90.

⁷ Although the final pages of this quire are no longer extant, one can calculate the number of pages that it originally contained, because the middle leaf,

which: (a) in any quire is easily identifiable as the only leaf on which two recto pages face one another, and (b) in this quire contains legible page numbers, has survived.

⁸ Duff, "P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals," 584.

⁹ We offer the estimate of Eldon Jay Epp, which appears in his, "Issues in the Interrelation of New Testament Textual Criticism and Canon," in Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders, ed., *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 485-515 at 498, n. 49. Epp errs, incidentally, in attributing to Duff the claim that the scribe would have required "about four extra pages" and then "correcting" this claim with his own estimate of nine in n. 49. Duff, in fact, offers substantially the same assessment as Epp. "With only a fraction more compression [!] on the missing pages," Duff writes, "the scribe would have needed an extra four leaves [1 leaf = 2 pages] to be added to the end of the codex in order to fit in the Pastorals" ("P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals," 587).

¹⁰ "P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals," 587-8.

¹¹ Harry Y. Gamble, who earlier claimed that P⁴⁶ "almost certainly did not contain... Timothy (1-2) and Titus" (*Book and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995], 59, n. 74) has recently reversed himself in the light of Duff's findings, admitting that "it can be cogently argued that the Pastorals did have a place in it" ("The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," *Canon Debate*, 267-94 at 285).

¹² "The Pastorals and Paul," *ExpTim* 104 (1992), 45-7 at 45.

¹³ We are deeply indebted for the arguments of this section to Anthony E.

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Bird's "The Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles—Quantifying Literary Style," *RTR* 56 (1997), 118-37.

¹⁴ *NTS* 30 (1984): 282-88.

¹⁵ "The Authorship of the Pastorals in the Light of Statistical Linguistics," *NTS* 6 (1959-60), 1-15.

¹⁶ The "C" quantity of a literary work = [the number of words peculiar to the work in question + the number of words common to every work of the author's corpus] / [the total number of words in the work in question]. Cf. *ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷ Cf. Bird's account of these developments in "Quantifying Literary Style," 124-8.

¹⁸ Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

¹⁹ Kenny discusses Morton's work in his *Stylometric Study*, 101-15. Bird, likewise, discusses Kenny's work in "Quantifying Literary Style," 134-5 and Morton's in *ibid.*, 129-32.

²⁰ *Literary Detection: How to Prove Authorship and Fraud in Literature and Documents* (Bath: Bowker, 1978).

²¹ Morton and James McLeman, *Paul, the Man and the Myth: A Study in the Authorship of Greek Prose* (London: Hodder & Stoughton).

²² Kenny, *Stylometric Study*, 108.

²³ *Ibid.*, 113.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁵ SBL.DS 120; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

²⁶ Cf. Table III.A in *ibid.*, 120-23.

²⁷ Cf. Bird's discussion of Neumann's work in "Quantifying Literary Style," 135-7.

²⁸ *Commentarius in Titum, prologus*; CCL 77C, 3. We owe this reference to Duff ("P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals," 582, n. 12).

²⁹ *Homilia II in Epistulam II ad Timotheum*, PG 62, 613-18 at 615.

**PASTORAL IMPERATIVES:
PAUL'S USE OF THE
IMPERATIVE MOOD IN HIS
LETTERS TO TIMOTHY
AND TITUS**

JOHNA BATTLE

In the entire canon of the Bible, there is no part that so explicitly instructs the pastor as Paul's three Pastoral Epistles. Timothy and Titus had accompanied Paul on his mission journeys and had helped him in important ways in his dealings with the churches. They were then established to lead the churches in Ephesus and in Crete. In his later years Paul wrote to them, providing counsel, instruction, encouragement, warning, and directions.¹ Paul's inspired exhortations to these two younger pastors are timeless. After two thousand years we still receive them as God's word. Pastors, in particular, find here the guidelines for being a pastor/theologian, a workman of God, bringing the truth of God to our churches today.

When a new minister is ordained, or a new pastor is installed in a church, very frequently the sermon or the charge to the minister will be taken from the Pastoral Epistles. They provide a wealth of appropriate texts for the occasion. But which of these injunctions are the most important? One way to get a complete picture of Paul's instructions is to examine all the imperative statements in the letters. By looking at all his imperative statements, we see what his emphases were. We see that Paul desired ministers to be pastor/theologians.

There are several ways that a writer could express commands or other impera-

tive ideas. The most common is the imperative mood of the verb. Prohibitions are formed by using the negative particle μή *me* with the present imperative. Another way to express prohibitions is *me* plus the aorist subjunctive.² Simple indicatives also could convey the imperative idea, as when Paul might say, "I command, urge, exhort such-and-such."³ However, the number of simple imperatives far outnumbers these other methods.⁴ This article will examine these imperative verb forms in the Pastoral Epistles. By doing this, we should be able to appreciate the importance and emphasis Paul associated with each pastoral duty.

PRESENT AND AORIST IMPERATIVES

Some older grammarians have sought to distinguish from the tenses of imperative verbs the type of action commanded or prohibited.⁵ However, a more thorough study of the examples of these constructions in the New Testament has clearly demonstrated that these conclusions are not justified.⁶

Rather, as the modern term "aspect" for the older word "tense" would indicate, these tenses show us the author's view of the action, the way he wants us to think about the action, not necessarily the action itself. It may be that the action prohibited is already in progress, or it may not be in progress; the context has to determine each case.

In general, the aorist tense indicates that the action commanded or prohibited is viewed as a single whole. We frequently find this tense used for commands that are more "one-time" events. For example, when Paul asks Timothy and Titus to greet certain individuals when they receive his

letters, he uses the aorist.⁷ The aorist does not mean the command is necessarily more urgent,⁸ but that it simply is viewed overall, not as a particularly durative or repeated action.

Unlike the aorist, the present tense “looks at the action from an internal viewpoint. It is used for the most part for general precepts—i.e., for habits that should characterize one’s attitudes and behavior—rather than in specific situations.”⁹ In the Pastoral Epistles Paul uses the present imperative more frequently than the aorist. In general his commands and prohibitions are permanent injunctions, which were to apply to their entire ministries, as well as to ours.

This table shows how often Paul uses the present and aorist imperative forms in the Pastoral Epistles.

	Pres. Impv.	Aor. Impv.	Total
1 Tim	41 (95%)	2 (5%)	43
Titus	11 (79%)	3 (21%)	14
2 Tim	17 (52%)	16 (48%)	33
Totals	69 (77%)	21 (23%)	90

Paul uses the present imperative 77% of the time, total. The spread in Titus is about average for these letters. In 1 Timothy Paul nearly always uses the present imperative (95%), perhaps because he is concerned to establish Timothy’s ministry on a permanent foundation. However, in 2 Timothy he uses the aorist much more frequently, perhaps because he is soon to die, and he sees all these commands, both the personal, “punctiliar,” actions as well as more permanent injunctions, in a more immediate light.

INDIRECT COMMANDS USING THE THIRD PERSON IMPERATIVE

Greek is unlike English in that it uses a third person imperative (“let him do something”) in addition to the more common second person imperative (“you do something”). When Paul tells Timothy to “let them serve as deacons,”¹⁰ he is commanding, not only that the deacons should meet their qualifications and do their duty, but that Timothy should exert himself to see to it that they indeed meet those qualifications and do that duty. In that sense, the third person imperative is an indirect second person imperative. The person who receives this command is to take appropriate action, to be consistent with the other person’s fulfilling the stated command.

The Pastoral Epistles use the third person imperative sixteen times. Five times these commands are directed to the congregation as a whole: “let no one despise you [Timothy, Titus]” (used twice),¹¹ “let them [the elders] be honored,”¹² “let our people learn of good works,”¹³ and “let everyone abstain from wickedness.”¹⁴ In three of these cases Paul commands the pastors to conduct themselves and to teach so that the church members will respect and honor them and the elders, and twice to teach the people to live godly lives, separate from the sinful culture.

The other examples of the third person imperative are directed to specific groups within the church. Once he instructs Timothy to “let a woman learn in all submission.”¹⁵ Three times he directs the choosing and responsibilities of deacons: “let these men be tested first,”¹⁶ “let them serve as deacons,”¹⁷ and “let deacons be husbands of one wife.”¹⁸ Four times he gives orders concerning the sup-

port of widows: “let them [the families] learn to take care of their widows,”¹⁹ “let not a widow be enrolled,”²⁰ “let her [younger Christian woman in family] support them,”²¹ and “let not the church be burdened.”²² And three times he directs the activities of church members who are slaves: “let them regard their own masters,”²³ “let them not despise [their masters],”²⁴ and “let them serve.”²⁵

In all these cases, whether addressing the congregation as a whole or groups within the congregation—women, deacons, widows and their families, slaves—the third person imperative is directed to the pastors so that they will teach, instruct, and organize their churches so that all those in the congregation will fulfill their respective duties.

DIRECT COMMANDS USING THE SECOND PERSON IMPERATIVE

Paul uses the second person imperative (“you do something”) most frequently, seventy-four times in the Pastoral Epistles. While the third person imperatives address the need to instruct others in their particular duties, the second person indicatives refer primarily to the pastors’ lives and ministries themselves. These imperatives cover a wide area of the pastor’s life and ministry. I have divided them into five different categories: immediate commands, church life, personal life, study, and preaching.

Immediate Commands

The Pastoral Epistles contain eight examples of Paul’s using the imperative to request or command an immediate particular action on the part of Timothy or Titus. These are grouped at the ends of Titus and 2 Timothy. 1 Timothy contains

no such immediate command. He tells Titus to “be diligent to come to me,” to “help Zenas and Apollos on their way,” and to “greet those who love us in faith.”²⁶ Just before his martyrdom Paul made similar commands to Timothy: “be diligent to come to me,” “bring Mark with you,” “bring the cloak,” “greet Priscilla and Aquila,” and “be diligent to come before winter.”²⁷

Since these commands are one-time events, they normally are given in the aorist tense.²⁸ The six aorist imperatives in this category account for many of those in the Pastoral Epistles. If we remove the eight examples in this category, the aorist imperative is used only 18% of the time in the rest of these letters.

Although these commands are the most time-bound of those in the Pastoral Epistles, they are significant nonetheless. The commands to greet Paul’s friends instruct us in the importance of maintaining personal contact and friendship within the church, and his personal requests show us the duty of helping one another in the ministry, especially those who are in any kind of need.

Church Life

There remain sixty-six imperatives in the Pastoral Epistles that can be divided among this and the remaining three categories. However, many of these imperatives are applicable to more than one category. Therefore, I will be including some usages in more than one category, and the total of the four categories will exceed sixty-six.

Twenty-one imperatives in the Pastoral Epistles address the pastor’s con-

duct in the church, the way he lives among the people. Most of these command him to treat particular people or groups of people in the church in a particular manner: “exhort him [an elder],”²⁹ “honor widows,”³⁰ “refuse young widows,”³¹ “do not receive an accusation against an elder,”³² “rebuke [the ones sinning],”³³ “do

ues all through the week, as they make contact with people in and out of their congregations.

Personal Life

Not only does Paul instruct pastors concerning their lives in the church, but also in their own personal lives and walk with the Lord. This aspect of the ministry is vital. Paul twenty-three times in these letters commands pastors in this area, notably in his letters to Timothy.

In one case these commands are very practical in nature: “do not drink water” and “use a little wine for your stomach’s sake.”⁴⁶

Paul commands Timothy to share in his life of suffering for the gospel: “join with me in suffering,”⁴⁷ “suffer hardship with [me],”⁴⁸ and “endure hardship.”⁴⁹

Usually, Paul exhorts the ministers to avoid snares of sin and to live consistently with their preaching: “exercise yourself for godliness,”⁵⁰ “be an example for believers,”⁵¹ “be in these things [contents of preaching],”⁵² “give attention to yourself and to the teaching” and “remain in them,”⁵³ “keep yourself free from sin,”⁵⁴ “flee these things [love of money and related sins],”⁵⁵ “pursue righteousness,”⁵⁶ “fight the good fight of faith” and “take hold of eternal life,”⁵⁷ “be strong in the grace,”⁵⁸ “avoid worldly empty chatter,”⁵⁹ “flee youthful lusts” and “pursue righteousness,”⁶⁰ “avoid these [godless] men,”⁶¹ “remain in the things you learned,”⁶² “be sober,”⁶³ and “fulfill your ministry.”⁶⁴

All these imperatives speak to the pastor’s life as a whole. We are to live the

The preaching in the pulpit must be founded on the labor in the study. An effective pastor must first be a sound theologian.

not lay hands [ordain a new elder] quickly” and “do not [thereby] share sins of others,”³⁴ “command the rich,”³⁵ “reprove them [sinners like the Cretans] sharply,”³⁶ “encourage the young men,”³⁷ “reject a heretic,”³⁸ “entrust to faithful men,”³⁹ “reprove, rebuke, exhort [these may be directed to individuals as needed],”⁴⁰ and “against whom [Alexander] guard yourself.”⁴¹ It can be seen that frequently the ministries of Timothy and Titus concerned their daily contacts with people in their congregations. They were to be pastors at all times, applying the word of God to them as appropriate.

A few of these examples concern the pastor’s life in the church in a more general way: “avoid foolish controversies,”⁴² “think about what I say [concerning the church supporting the pastor],”⁴³ “refuse foolish questions,”⁴⁴ and “do the work of an evangelist” and “fulfill your ministry.”⁴⁵ All the imperatives in this category remind pastors that their calling contin-

gospel we preach, constantly guarding ourselves against sin and people who would lead us into sin. We are to pay attention to our lives, so that they may enhance the gospel testimony, and that we ourselves would be blessed by God.

Study

Eighteen times in these epistles Paul encourages and commands the pastor, Timothy in this case, to study God's word and theology, so as to preach truth to the people.

Three times Paul encourages "negative study," that is, keeping away from false teaching and scholastic distractions: "keep away from foolish myths,"⁶⁵ "avoid foolish controversies,"⁶⁶ and "refuse foolish questions."⁶⁷ The reason for this caution is emphasized in another imperative, showing what Timothy must be remembering: "know this: difficult times will come."⁶⁸

The other fourteen examples in this category encourage continual study, to master and guard the teaching Paul committed to him, and to prepare to preach them to the people: "do not neglect the spiritual gift that is in you,"⁶⁹ "take pains with these things" and "be in these things,"⁷⁰ "give attention to yourself and to the teaching" and "remain in them,"⁷¹ "guard what has been committed to you,"⁷² "have the pattern of sound words,"⁷³ "guard the good thing entrusted to you,"⁷⁴ "be strong in the grace,"⁷⁵ "remember Jesus Christ,"⁷⁶ "be diligent to present yourself,"⁷⁷ "remain in the things you learned,"⁷⁸ "be ready in season, out of season,"⁷⁹ and "fulfill your ministry."⁸⁰

The preaching in the pulpit must be founded on the labor in the study.⁸¹ An effective pastor must first be a sound theologian.

Preaching

The final category of imperatives in the Pastoral Epistles is that dealing with preaching. I would place thirty-seven examples in this large category. Most of these examples have been included in previous categories as well, especially the categories of church life and of study. Clearly, however, Paul viewed the pulpit ministry as a central task of the ministry.

As with the warnings in the previous section, Paul commands the pastors to resist the temptation to preach on unprofitable subjects: "keep away from foolish myths,"⁸² "avoid foolish controversies,"⁸³ and "refuse foolish questions."⁸⁴ These same three imperatives refer to preaching as well as to study.

Preaching is to be Scripturally based: "pay attention to the [public] reading [of the Scripture]."⁸⁵ Paul commands loyalty to the apostolic doctrine: "take pains with these things" and "be in these things,"⁸⁶ "give attention to yourself and to the teaching" and "remain in them,"⁸⁷ "guard what has been committed to you,"⁸⁸ "speak the things that are fitting for sound doctrine,"⁸⁹ "have the pattern of sound words,"⁹⁰ "guard the good thing entrusted to you,"⁹¹ and "preach the word."⁹² Note also that the three imperatives in 2 Timothy 4:2, "reprove, rebuke, exhort," are all connected to the phrase "with all longsuffering and doctrine." Paul clearly expects pastors to preach theologically. The great body of Christian truth

contained in the Bible is to be the subject when the pastor ascends the pulpit.

Frequently Paul commands simple instruction in the truth. This is shown in most of the examples quoted in the previous paragraph. In addition, other passages show how Paul wants pastors to encourage and instruct the congregation, or parts of the congregation, in knowledge and in their duties as Christians: “encourage [believers to do these things],”⁹³ “encourage the young men,”⁹⁴ “speak these things” and “encourage,”⁹⁵ “remind them to be subject [to rulers],”⁹⁶ “entrust [the doctrine] to faithful men,”⁹⁷ “remind [them] of these things,”⁹⁸ and “do the work of an evangelist.”⁹⁹

Sometimes preaching must be negative, attacking false beliefs and practices, and warning against sin: “rebuke [the ones sinning],”¹⁰⁰ “fight the good fight of faith,”¹⁰¹ “reprove them [Cretans] sharply,”¹⁰² “reprove with all authority,”¹⁰³ and “reprove” and “rebuke.”¹⁰⁴

This matter of authority in preaching was important to Paul. Timothy, especially, seemed to need this encouragement. In addition to rebuking sin while preaching, other aspects of preaching also need to be done with authority: “command these things” and “teach these things,”¹⁰⁵ “command these things,”¹⁰⁶ “teach these things,”¹⁰⁷ “command the rich,”¹⁰⁸ and “exhort.”¹⁰⁹

All of a pastor’s ministry must be based on the enabling work of the Holy Spirit, and it is the pastor’s duty to cooperate with that work, and to constantly renew his spiritual strength to preach the gospel: “do not neglect the spiritual gift that is in you,”¹¹⁰ “be strong in the grace that is in Christ

Jesus,”¹¹¹ “be diligent to present yourself to God,”¹¹² “be ready in season, out of season,”¹¹³ and “fulfill your ministry.”¹¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Paul’s final letters to Timothy and Titus are the best and most concentrated source of instructions for ministers. Ninety times Paul commands pastors, using the imperative verb. Analysis of these occurrences reveals that, in addition to personal requests made at the time, he addresses their personal lives, their personal contacts with Christians, their studies, and their preaching. He also instructs them to be the conduit for his commands to the believers in their churches. Pastors are to be true pastor/theologians, living, studying, and preaching the faithful apostolic tradition recorded in Scripture. 📖

¹ This article is assuming the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. For a defense of this position, see the accompanying article in this issue of the *WRS Journal* by Dennis W. Jowers, “Observations on the Authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles.”

² This form is much less frequent than *me* with the present imperative. Daniel B. Wallace notes that of the 50 prohibitions in the NT using one of these two forms, only 10 use the aorist subjunctive, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 724, n. 29. I detected two of these uses in the Pastorals, 1 Tim 5:1, “Do not rebuke an elder,” and 2 Tim 1:8, “Do not be ashamed.”

³ For example, 1 Tim 1:3; 2:1. In addition, there is one example in the

Pastoral Epistles using the optative mood with *me*, 1 Tim 4:16, “Let it not be counted against them”; here the force is that of a prayer.

⁴ I tallied 90 examples of the imperative mood in the Pastoral Epistles. These will be referenced throughout this article.

⁵ E.g., H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 301-302, state categorically, “A prohibition expressed with the *present tense* demands the cessation of some act that is already in progress,” while “a prohibition expressed in the *aorist tense* is a warning or exhortation against doing a thing not yet begun” (emphasis theirs). They refer to the famous “barking dog” story involving a grammarian who, while traveling in Greece, heard a barking dog’s master command his dog not to bark, using the present indicative. From that clue, and a similar usage found in Plato, he deduced that this grammatical construction in the NT implies the stopping of an action in progress; for the story, see James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Vol. 1 of the 4-vol. set; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906; reprinted 1988), 122.

⁶ See, e.g., the excellent discussion in Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 714-725. My dissertation advisor in postgraduate school, James L. Boyer, was one of the pioneers in this work, as he was involved in the GRAMCORD project, using the new computer technology (this was in the 1970s!) to identify and catalog in a searchable database all the examples of various grammatical forms and constructions in the NT. See his “A Classification of Imperatives: A Statistical Study,” *Grace Theological Journal* 8:1 (1987) 35-54. In

class he mentioned a counter-example to the barking dog story. When he was in Greece riding a bus he saw inside the bus a Greek sign posted, “Do not be talking to the driver”; it was in the present imperative; however, it certainly did not imply that the passengers were then talking to the driver and had to stop!

⁷ Titus 3:15; 2 Tim 4:19.

⁸ Boyer, “Classification of Imperatives,” 45-46.

⁹ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 721.

¹⁰ 1 Tim 3:10.

¹¹ 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:15.

¹² 1 Tim 5:17.

¹³ Titus 3:14.

¹⁴ 2 Tim 2:19.

¹⁵ 1 Tim 2:11.

¹⁶ 1 Tim 3:10.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 1 Tim 3:12.

¹⁹ 1 Tim 5:4.

²⁰ 1 Tim 5:9.

²¹ 1 Tim 5:16.

²² Ibid.

²³ 1 Tim 6:1.

²⁴ 1 Tim 6:2.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Titus 3:12, 13, 15.

²⁷ 2 Tim 4:9, 11, 13, 19, 21.

²⁸ All are aorist except “bring Mark with you” and “bring the cloak” in 2 Tim 4:11, 13. Perhaps he used the present indicative in those two cases, with the subconscious thought of the planning and preparation necessary to carry out those tasks. These commands could be expanded, “[and while you are coming] be bringing Mark with you,” and “[and while you are coming] be bringing the cloak.”

²⁹ 1 Tim 5:1.

³⁰ 1 Tim 5:3.

³¹ 1 Tim 5:11.
³² 1 Tim 5:19.
³³ 1 Tim 5:20.
³⁴ 1 Tim 5:22.
³⁵ 1 Tim 6:17.
³⁶ Titus 1:13.
³⁷ Titus 2:6.
³⁸ Titus 3:10.
³⁹ 2 Tim 2:2.
⁴⁰ 2 Tim 4:2.
⁴¹ 2 Tim 4:15.
⁴² Titus 3:9.
⁴³ 2 Tim 2:7.
⁴⁴ 2 Tim 2:23.
⁴⁵ 2 Tim 4:5.
⁴⁶ 1 Tim 5:23.
⁴⁷ 2 Tim 1:8.
⁴⁸ 2 Tim 2:3.
⁴⁹ 2 Tim 4:5.
⁵⁰ 1 Tim 4:7.
⁵¹ 1 Tim 4:12.
⁵² 1 Tim 4:15.
⁵³ 1 Tim 4:16.
⁵⁴ 1 Tim 5:22.
⁵⁵ 1 Tim 6:11.
⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
⁵⁷ 1 Tim 6:12.
⁵⁸ 2 Tim 2:1.
⁵⁹ 2 Tim 2:16.
⁶⁰ 2 Tim 2:22.
⁶¹ 2 Tim 3:5.
⁶² 2 Tim 3:14.
⁶³ 2 Tim 4:5.
⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
⁶⁵ 1 Tim 4:7.
⁶⁶ Titus 3:9.
⁶⁷ 2 Tim 2:23.
⁶⁸ 2 Tim 3:1.
⁶⁹ 1 Tim 4:14.
⁷⁰ 1 Tim 4:15.
⁷¹ 1 Tim 4:16.
⁷² 1 Tim 6:20.
⁷³ 2 Tim 1:13.
⁷⁴ 2 Tim 1:14.
⁷⁵ 2 Tim 2:1.

⁷⁶ 2 Tim 2:8.
⁷⁷ 2 Tim 2:15.
⁷⁸ 2 Tim 3:14.
⁷⁹ 2 Tim 4:2.
⁸⁰ 2 Tim 4:5.
⁸¹ My high school debate coach used to tell us, "Debates are won in the study, not on the platform." His debate teams frequently won honors in regional and state competitions.
⁸² 1 Tim 4:7.
⁸³ Titus 3:9.
⁸⁴ 2 Tim 2:23.
⁸⁵ 1 Tim 4:13.
⁸⁶ 1 Tim 4:15.
⁸⁷ 1 Tim 4:16.
⁸⁸ 1 Tim 6:20.
⁸⁹ Titus 2:1.
⁹⁰ 2 Tim 1:13.
⁹¹ 2 Tim 1:14.
⁹² 2 Tim 4:2.
⁹³ 1 Tim 6:2.
⁹⁴ Titus 2:6.
⁹⁵ Titus 2:15.
⁹⁶ Titus 3:1.
⁹⁷ 2 Tim 2:2.
⁹⁸ 2 Tim 2:14.
⁹⁹ 2 Tim 4:5.
¹⁰⁰ 1 Tim 5:12.
¹⁰¹ 1 Tim 6:12.
¹⁰² Titus 1:13.
¹⁰³ Titus 2:15.
¹⁰⁴ 2 Tim 4:2.
¹⁰⁵ 1 Tim 4:11.
¹⁰⁶ 1 Tim 5:7.
¹⁰⁷ 1 Tim 6:2.
¹⁰⁸ 1 Tim 6:17.
¹⁰⁹ 2 Tim 4:2.
¹¹⁰ 1 Tim 4:14.
¹¹¹ 2 Tim 2:1.
¹¹² 2 Tim 2:15.
¹¹³ 2 Tim 4:2.
¹¹⁴ 2 Tim 4:5.

HISTORY

TWO EARLY AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR- THEOLOGIAN: SAMUEL DAVIES AND ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER

CHRISTOPHER K. LENSCH

INTRODUCTION

American Presbyterianism has a rich tradition of producing pastors who have been interested in theology. Since the Reformation, Presbyterianism has stressed the importance of an “educated ministry.” If pastors are to teach their flocks how to “love the Lord your God with all your mind,”¹ then they themselves must cultivate this faculty in pursuit of the knowledge and enjoyment² of God.

Besides requiring extensive training in theology and biblical studies, Presbyterianism encourages its prospective pastors to gain a solid foundation in the liberal arts. One reason for this is because pastors will be ministering to souls from almost every social strata and from many levels of education and life experience. His breadth of knowledge and his maturity of thought will open opportunities for the pastor to relate to people from different strata in life. A college education can accelerate and collocate what otherwise might take 20+ years of adult life experience.

MASTERS OF DIVINITY SHOULD MASTER THE SUBJECT

The initial rigorous and then on-going study of theology by the pastor serves several purposes. Of first impor-

tance for the servant of the Lord is the necessity of knowing Whom he serves. There are plenty of false prophets today and mercenary shepherds who view the ministry as just another profession that is part of the care industry, albeit within a religious context. These blind leaders of the blind will bear a greater judgment before God’s throne. To serve the living God, however, is to serve as His duty-bound ambassador, declaring and doing His will without regard to one’s personal desires.

Secondly, because the study of God is unfathomable, pastor-teachers should make it their life-long pursuit to begin to know the perfections and purposes of God. To plumb the excellencies of God should, *ipso facto*, lead pastors and their flocks to glorify God for who He is. Some pastors complain of dry wells after a number of years of preaching; oftentimes the dearth is the result of doing all ministry and not “doing theology.”

Of course, the study of theology should be more than an academic exercise. Pastors pursue the knowledge of God for God’s sake, and a third reason is to learn practical uses of that knowledge. Pastors are spiritual leaders who must lead God’s flock into green pastures.

Finally, the mastery of theology coupled with the tools of logic and rhetoric will enable pastors to defend revealed truth³ against its adversaries, because not all men have faith.⁴

PRESBYTERIAN PARADIGM FROM EARLY AMERICA

Francis Makemie, the earliest Presbyterian church planter in the new world, had taken formal training in theology before receiving his ministerial credentials from the Presbyterian church in Ulster. His advanced training served him well in planting churches on the eastern seaboard and in organizing the first presbytery of ministers who had been arriving from the Old World (1707). His liberal arts training and his Reformation perspective also were particularly useful when he was forced to defend his right to preach against the unjust governor of New York.

While other early American denominations⁵ did not always encourage formal training for their ministers, colonial Presbyterians insisted upon maintaining their hallmark of fielding educated ministers. Presbyterian ministers of the colonial 1700s found training at institutions either in the British Isles or at New England Congregational bastions like Yale University. Many also were tutored by skilled ministers at the tutor's home church. Often an annex to the church was erected and dedicated to the training of prospective ministers. These rough-hewn cabins became derisively known as "log colleges."⁶

Out of these log colleges, however, came some of America's most skilled churchmen and pastors for that era. Chief among these were Gilbert Tennant with his brothers, and Samuel Davies. These men were classically trained. To them were imparted the great truths of historic Christianity. Their grasp of true doctrine coupled with the Reformation spirit that they imbibed from their Presbyterian forefathers gifted them for fruitful ministries.

Early America was blessed with many noted pastor-theologians, with none greater than Jonathan Edwards.⁷ While numerous examples could be cited, this article will survey two key Presbyterians: *Samuel Davies*, a leader in the first Great Awakening before America's independence, and *Archibald Alexander*, who helped cultivate the groundwork of the second Awakening and who labored during the formative years of the new nation.

SAMUEL DAVIES

Edwards, who sparked the Great Awakening in New England in the early 1740s, was interested in revivals in other colonies, especially after he met George Whitefield, who was the common denominator in the spread of the Awakening. In 1749 Edwards took note of the activities of the young Samuel Davies in Virginia, and wrote,

I have heard lately a credible account of a remarkable work of conviction and conversion among whites and Negroes at Hanover, Virginia, under the ministry of Mr. Davies, who is lately settled there, and has the character of a very ingenious and pious young man.⁸

Samuel Davies, of Welsh descent, was born in Delaware in 1723. His Baptist mother named him "Samuel" because she had asked him of God after a time of not being able to bear children. Samuel late in life confessed that he believed his most important blessings were the result of the prayers of his pious mother.

His pious parents also guided him toward the ministry. Unable to afford a university education, young Samuel was given into the hands of Samuel Blair at

Faggs Manor, Pennsylvania. Davies would write fondly in his journal of those days at the Log College,⁹ and he was happy whenever he could return there even after Mr. Blair had passed to glory.

At age 22 Samuel Davies was licensed to preach the gospel by the New Castle (Delaware) Presbytery, and a year later he was ordained as an evangelist to Virginia. In his new assignment he pastored seven churches spread through five wilderness counties. His later principle area of activity became Hanover County in eastern Virginia. There he left his mark in three significant ways:

1. Davies was the driving force in organizing the Hanover Presbytery, of which he was the first moderator.¹⁰ This presbytery included all Presbyterian ministers in Virginia and North Carolina.
2. Davies ministered in a colonial era when the Anglican Church was the only legal church—all others were “sects” that had to apply to the crown for a license to preach and assemble.¹¹ Samuel Davies was the leading voice of his day in advocating religious liberty and early civil rights, and through his prudent and gracious approach to the governor, a measure of liberty was attained. When the college of New Jersey asked him to visit England in behalf of the college to raise funds for a new campus at Princeton, he refused twice. Upon reconsideration at the third appeal, a major factor in moving him to take leave from

his ministry and dear family was the knowledge that he might be more useful in England than in Virginia in seeking religious freedom for dissenters.¹²

3. Finally, Samuel Davies had a formative influence on the young Patrick Henry.¹³ Henry’s Anglican mother, who had embraced Presbyterianism during the Great Awakening, first took her son at age eleven to hear the evangelist Davies. Many more visits to the Hanover Meeting House followed during Henry’s teenage years. Young Patrick delighted as much in Davies’ rhetorical flare as in the gospel message and the message of personal freedom in Christ. Patrick Henry later revealed the beginnings of oratorical aspirations: *“I was first taught what an orator should be by listening to Davies preach.”*¹⁴

A gifted public speaker with the noblest of messages, Davies used his gifts and organizational skills to bring the light of the gospel to America’s first colony. Many call him the “Apostle of Virginia.”

In demand as a gifted preacher and colonial leader, Davies’ last change of course as a pastor-theologian came when he reluctantly responded to a call to serve as the President of the College of New Jersey at Princeton. Jonathan Edwards had just died in that position after a short tenure, and the board wanted someone with wide recognition like Edwards’, who had scholastic talents and ministerial experience, and who also was sympathetic to New Side (revivalistic) Presbyterianism.

Samuel Davies, who had raised money for Princeton, was that servant leader.

Davies served from 1759-1761 and influenced a host of graduates who would enter service to the new country as judges, congressmen, signers of the Declaration of Independence, and chaplains in the Continental Army, as well as a host of faithful ministers of the gospel. He died of pneumonia, burned out from a life of over-exertion before age 38.

Out of these log colleges, however, came some of America's most skilled churchmen and pastors for that era. Chief among these were Gilbert Tennant with his brothers, and Samuel Davies.

A poet in his own right, Davies had been asked on different occasions to compose burial epitaphs for the tombstones of his church members. Christian hymns that he left Christ's church are part of his own lasting legacy. Recognized as America's first hymn writer in the mold of Isaac Watts, one of his most famous is "Great God of Wonders," set to music by John Newton:

"Great God of wonders! All Thy ways are matchless, God-like, and divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace more God-like and unrivaled shine.
In wonder lost, with trembling joy, we take the pardon of our God:

Pardon for crimes of deepest dye, a pardon bought with Jesus' blood.
O may this strange, this matchless grace, this god-like miracle of love,
Fill the whole earth with grateful praise, and all th'angelic choirs above.

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER

Archibald Alexander was born in 1772 in a log cabin on the western slopes of the Blue Mountains of Virginia. His grandfather Alexander had immigrated to Pennsylvania from Londonderry, Ireland, just a few years before the Great Awakening, from which time he counted his conversion. Archibald's father was a Presbyterian elder and prosperous farmer in the central valley of Virginia.

Archibald's early farm experiences taught him personal responsibility and self-reliance. He loved the outdoors, from which he later would relate vivid yet homey sermon illustrations. He was reading the New Testament at age five, and by the age of seven he had memorized the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

In 1774 the Hanover Presbytery had established a training institute in Alexander's neighborhood, the "Liberty Academy."¹⁵ There his early teen years were spent under the tutelage of William Graham, who had sat under the august John Witherspoon at Princeton. Graham taught his students classical languages, science, and Archibald's favorite subject, philosophy. Graham exercised considerable personal influence over his students, and one of his dictums left a lasting impression on Archibald Alexander: "If you ever mean to become a theologian... you must come at it not by reading but by thinking."¹⁶

His time at the academy polished his critical thinking skills and exposed him to the world of ideas. Young Alexander showed scholarly promise early, and by age 16 he himself was tutoring his own pupils in eastern Virginia. Teaching Latin forced him to master the language, a tool that would open for him the theological works of western Christianity.¹⁷ He had a gift for languages, and their mastery cultivated in him a precision of thought and facility of expression. A life-long habit was to read daily a chapter from the Hebrew Testament.

While tutoring away from home, the writings of the Puritan, John Flavel, deeply impressed young Archibald. In fact he counted his own spiritual transformation from a Sunday evening when he was reading a Flavel sermon to friends. Thereupon he drank deeply from many Puritan writers, but confessed his greatest debt to Flavel.¹⁸

At the encouragement of Graham, his old mentor, Archibald Alexander was licensed to preach in 1791. He was only 19 years old. Between this time and his ordination three years later by the Hanover Presbytery, he ventured into an extended period of itinerant preaching, often composing his sermons in the saddle. David Calhoun captures the critical importance of this development for the budding pastor-theologian: "Alexander's whole ministry was shaped by the experiences of these years. He learned to preach simple sermons in plain language, combing the great doctrines and themes of the Bible with searching application."¹⁹ Later as a seminary professor he would prescribe itinerant preaching to his own students.

God was preparing the young Alexander to play a pivotal role in the formation of Princeton Seminary, renowned for its balance of scholasticism and evangelical piety. By age 24 he had taken over the presidency of Hampden-Sydney College, an institution founded by the Hanover Presbytery to train pastors in Virginia. Showing the heart of a pastor, he kept one of his congregations in the early stages of this new duty.

After several years at the helm of the college, he left to re-enter the pastorate. He also married, "finding a good thing" in Janetta, the daughter of one of the leading Presbyterian preachers of Virginia.²⁰ As he began his labors at the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Archibald Alexander could not see that he was shortly destined to serve for the rest of his life as a seminary professor and administrator. Janetta would be God's gift²¹ to reinforce in him the supreme importance of preaching God's Word.

America was growing westward in the early 1800s. In response to pleas from the pastor of Philadelphia's influential Third Presbyterian Church and other like-minded colleagues to produce more laborers for the harvest, the General Assembly determined to establish a new seminary at Princeton. The location would give access to the resources of the College of New Jersey there, and it was located on the border of the two largest synods of Philadelphia and New York. Archibald Alexander was drafted to lead the fledgling endeavor.

With his pastoral experience on the frontier as well as in the urban setting of Philadelphia, and with his academic and administrative credentials from his time at

Hampden-Sydney College, Alexander was the right choice. In 1812 he moved his family of six to Princeton. That year his home served as the seminary's classroom, library, chapel, and dining hall.²² Alexander undertook the burden of developing a new curriculum while teaching every subject in every department. A later student wrote of that first year, "We are appalled at the burden that was laid on one pair of shoulders!"²³

CONCLUSION

Such is the heart of the pastor-theologian. Ministry means sacrificial service, even for those who minister God's Word inside ivy-covered halls. Ministry means diligent labor in the Word²⁴ even when one is called to shepherd the sheep. The ministry is more than the method, and it is even more than the message. Gifted men like Alexander and Davies modeled the standard of the apostle—they imparted their own lives along with the message.²⁵

Samuel Davies put his life at risk and he had to commit his family to God when he crossed the stormy Atlantic during the winter in order to raise money from England to relocate the College of New Jersey to Princeton. He saw God bless that endeavor and he gained his own desire of a greater measure of freedom for dissenting preachers in Virginia. Davies' theological and classical training prepared him for these opportunities and for others that followed.

Alexander's first year as the sole professor at Princeton Seminary was difficult but rewarding. His reward was to set the course of the institution and to shape the tenor of the ministries of its graduates for more than a hundred years. This pastor-theologian marked his imprint upon

Princeton Seminary in his inaugural message when he preached from the words of Jesus: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and these are they which testify of me."²⁶ That is the theological duty of all pastors who are called to know Christ and to make Him known. 

¹ Mark 12:30.

² Westminster Shorter Catechism #1.

³ "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

⁴ 2 Thess 3:2.

⁵ Methodists and Baptists kept up better with frontier expansion after America's independence by ordaining willing, though untrained, lay leaders.

⁶ The most famous account of one of these log colleges was written by Archibald Alexander and is available from Banner of Truth Press. *The Log College* describes the setting and training that William Tennant, who was trained in Ireland, offered his sons and other young men. This log college was at Neshaminy, Penn., northeast of Philadelphia. Another famous log college was the Rev. Samuel Blair's at Faggs Manor, Penn., south west of Philadelphia. Samuel Davies was trained in theology there. The "graduates" of the log colleges played prominently in promoting the first Great Awakening.

⁷ Edwards, a Congregationalist, is justly recognized as one of the top five theologians in Christian history, and one of the best thinkers that America has produced. Edwards did the preponderance of his theological writing during his 35+ years as a pastor and frontier missionary. Holding Presbyterian sympathies, he spent the last few

months of his life as president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton), but otherwise he must be recognized as the classic “pastor-theologian.”

⁸ Cited at <http://www.pastwords.net/pw222.html>.

⁹ Davies wrote, “Oh, how dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

¹⁰ The Hanover Presbytery was the mother of Presbyterianism in the South. Its spiritual heir still exists today under the same name. More information on the modern Hanover Presbytery may be found at <http://www.rpchanoover.org/>.

¹¹ Davies was the first dissenter ever to receive a government license to preach in Virginia.

¹² During his year in England he actually did preach for King George II.

¹³ Delegate to the Constitutional Convention, George Mason, described Henry’s oratorical skills: “He is by far the most powerful speaker I have ever heard. Every word he says not only engages, but commands the attention, and your passions are no longer your own when he addresses them.” Cited in “Foundations of Liberty: Patrick Henry,” p. 26.

¹⁴ “From Davies, young Patrick grasped the force and devastating effect of well-directed forensics,” wrote Eva C. Hartless in her 1977 biography of Henry’s mother, Sarah. “The skills of speaking—measured enunciation, carefully structured thinking, the harmony of words, the rhythm of language, the subtle persuasion of spontaneous gesticulation—all were evidenced in Davies’s sermons. Patrick looked upon him as the greatest orator he ever heard. In addition, he caught from him the inspiration of the free and

patriotic spirit flashing in the tapestry of fire he wove with every message.” –

Cited at <http://www.pastwords.net/pw222.html>.

¹⁵ Not quite a “log college,” this church sponsored 24’ X 28’ cabin was a prep academy.

¹⁶ Cited in Calhoun’s *Princeton Seminary*, I: 48.

¹⁷ Alexander confessed that in the last half of his life he had read more works in Latin than in English. Cited in Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, I: 45.

¹⁸ “To John Flavel I certainly owe more than to any uninspired author.” J.W. Alexander’s *Life of Archibald Alexander*, p. 44.

¹⁹ Calhoun, I: 49, 50.

²⁰ Janetta was the daughter of James Waddell who had been encouraged to undertake the ministry by none other than Samuel Davies. An eloquent pulpiter, Patrick Henry claimed inspiration from Waddell’s preaching also.

²¹ Alexander’s decision to take a detour to meet the famous Rev. Wadell, who by then was blind, proved to be life-changing. Alexander could confess with Eleazer, “I being in the way, the Lord led me” (Gen 24:27).

²² How fitting that the first building on the campus of Princeton Seminary should be renamed “Alexander Hall” following the founder’s years of service and since the school had grown out of his home.

²³ Cited in Calhoun, I: 59.

²⁴ 1 Tim 5:17.

²⁵ “We were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives [viz., souls]” (1Thess 2:8); ctr. v. 6.

²⁶ John 5:39.

THE SHEPHERD STUDENT
EARL L. BROWN, JR.

Breath of Breath says Qoheleth, the whole is breath. Not only was Qoheleth wise but he also taught knowledge to the people; he studiously weighed and arranged many proverbs. Qoheleth sought to find delightful words, and to write true words with precision. The words of the sages are like prods, and the collected sayings are like firmly fixed nails; they are given by one shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. There is no end to the making of many books, and much study is wearisome to the body. Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will evaluate every deed, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:8-14
[Brown adaptation of NET Bible¹]

The text set before us is not only the key to the interpretation of the book, but it accurately coalesces the convergent philosophy of life as a précis of the life of Solomon,² as it is paraphrased in the lives of Robert Dick Wilson, Allan MacRae, and Robert W. Anderson.³

LIFE TRANSITIONS: FROM SOLOMON TO JESUS, FROM DAVID'S SON TO DAVID'S GREATER SON

Solomon was the Old Covenant prototype for the masterful Shepherd Student. Unlike Solomon, however, Jesus learned in his earthly human nature, obedience

“through the things which he suffered” (Heb 5:8). It is in this capacity that Christ in the New Covenant provides a superior Shepherd and student (see 1 Pet 2:21). The active obedience of Christ merited the passive obedience of Christ upon the cross. His atonement was worthy because He was worthy.

Only a definite atonement of Christ for his people could do proper honor to His name as the Shepherd of the sheep (John 10:11). The dying words of J. Gresham Machen were apt: “The active obedience of Christ, no hope without it.”⁴

FROM PALESTINE TO PRINCETON: FROM FIRST CENTURY TO TWENTIETH CENTURY

We travel almost twice the time distance from the last interval, the first century A.D. to the scholarly defense of the faith as it existed at Princeton Theological Seminary.⁵ In the tradition of William Henry Green (1825-1900),⁶ Robert Dick Wilson (1856-1930) expressed his educational philosophy as best quoted by his protégé Allan Alexander MacRae (1902-1997)⁷:

Build solidly. Prepare thoroughly. Never be satisfied with superficial answers. God's Word can stand the most thorough investigation. Do not shirk the difficult problems but seek to bring the facts to light; for God's Word and God's world will never contradict one another.⁸

FROM CALIFORNIA TO PRINCETON: FROM THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES TO PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

In 1912 Reuben Archer Torrey (1856-1928) became academic dean of Biola, which was founded in 1908.⁹ Dr. Torrey

was a mentor to many. Briefly, we contrast two of his protégés.

Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960) at seventeen enrolled at Biola, the year Torrey became academic dean.¹⁰ The young impressionable Barnhouse quickly emulated his mentor, to the chagrin of Dr. Torrey. Barnhouse became so bombastic with regard to dispensational truth, that when he enrolled at Princeton in 1915, as a junior in his first theology class with Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921), in bibliology, he engaged his professor in the intricacies of dispensational premillennialism.¹¹

The same characteristic of being unassuming and unpretentious would characterize the life of Dr. Robert W. Anderson.

When Allan MacRae enrolled at Biola in 1925, Dr. Torrey impressed upon this young protégé to unlearn the bad example of Barnhouse, who had blemished the reputation of the fledgling institute.¹² MacRae, much more disciplined than Barnhouse, never relied upon a bombastic personality to intimidate by means of strength of personality. His hard work paid off. In two years he earned two degrees, the Th.B. from the seminary and an M.A. from the University of Princeton.¹³

FROM PHILADELPHIA TO CORAL RIDGE AND DALLAS: FROM THE BIBLE STUDY HOUR TO

A DANCE INSTRUCTOR AND AN INSURANCE SALESMAN

Donald Grey Barnhouse, commanding Bible teacher with explosive Walter Winchell delivery technique, was highly regarded by two of his converts. The first was Samuel Lewis Johnson, Jr. (1915 - 2004), who was affectionately dubbed “the Barnhouse of the South.”¹⁴ The second was D. James Kennedy (b. 1930).¹⁵ Both Johnson, who was originally by trade an insurance agent, and Kennedy, who was an Arthur Murray dance instructor, were originally natives of the South.¹⁶ Both men became ministers of the gospel, one a seminary professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, the other a chancellor of Knox Theological Seminary.¹⁷ These men, like Torrey and MacRae, were to become “men who mastered one Book,” who mastered other books as conduits to channel people back to the Bible.¹⁸

FROM PRINCETON TO PHILADELPHIA AND TO TACOMA: FROM THE REORGANIZATION OF PRINCETON TO THE REORGANIZATIONS OF FTS

Allan Alexander MacRae was unassuming and unpretentious, yet in many ways was the embodiment of Old Princeton after its reorganization in 1929.¹⁹ He was greatly misunderstood by his friends at Westminster for his resignation from its faculty in the spring of 1937.²⁰ He found great solace in his friendship with James Oliver Buswell, Jr. (1895-1976), which later became strained due to the first reorganization of Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park in 1956. MacRae would find solace in a former student, John W. Murray (1913-1996).²¹

Nineteen years elapsed, from 1937 to 1956, before the first reorganization of Faith Seminary. Unexpectedly, the next

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reorganization would come some fourteen years later.²² The great solace Dr. MacRae found in his friendship with Dr. John W. Murray would sustain him in the task of the founding of Biblical Theological Seminary.²³

Twelve years after 1971, another crisis developed at Faith Theological Seminary. This time the man, Dr. John Allen Battle, Jr., had to turn to a former student of Dr. MacRae's, Dr. Robert W. Anderson and the Tacoma church, to establish a Bible Presbyterian seminary on the West Coast, originally intended to complement the work of FTS in Philadelphia. This new seminary became Western Reformed Seminary of Tacoma, Washington.²⁴

The same characteristic of being unassuming and unpretentious would characterize the life of Dr. Robert W. Anderson. His love of history and zeal for both the Reformed faith and the premillennial return of Christ demonstrated on numerous occasions his depth of knowledge of one Book buttressed with that of many other books.²⁵

LIFE TRANSLATIONS: MACRAE'S APPROACH AND ROBERT W. ANDERSON: ULTIMATE DESTINATION, THE SHEPHERD STUDENT IN TRANSLATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Robert W. Anderson, much like his mentor Dr. MacRae, absorbed the spirit of Old Princeton.²⁶ Dr. Anderson is as acutely and keenly aware that life, not only history, consists of objective realities, subjective assessments, and providential arrangements.²⁷

One has to keep straight current application of life to personages, in their placement of events in movements enact-

ing various settings in time with clarity, charity, and brevity.²⁸ Robert Anderson excels in this.

Dr. Anderson, now as a father in the Bible Presbyterian Church, demonstrates that "for the faith and by faith" was not merely the advertising slogan of Dr. McIntire's replicated in the next century.²⁹ He demonstrates one who consistently, constantly and concisely appreciates the mastering of biblical *musar*.³⁰ Robert W. Anderson, with cunning skill as a hunter, in his analytical skill strips off the camouflage of liberal reconstructions with probing acumen and exemplifies a well-trained Christian Warrior.³¹ He continues the MacRae and Princeton tradition: "On essentials unity, on distinctives clarity, but on application of universals, charity."³² 

¹ The author has supplied a number of footnotes concerning the translation of this passage. Because of space limitations they are not included in this printing. They will be available in the electronic version of this article on the WRS website (www.wrs.edu/wrs_journal.htm).

² See Thomas Vernon Taylor, "The Significance of Ecclesiastes 12:8-14 for the Authority, Inspiration, and Interpretation of the Words of Coheleth" (unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Faith Theological Seminary, Elkins Park, Pa., 1967), 134. Worthy of note recently, Peter Enns, "The Whole Duty of Man and the Evaluation of Qoheleth's Wisdom in Qoh 12:13, or "The A is so and what's more, B, Theology of Ecclesiastes" in *The Ideas of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. by Hindy Najman and Judith Newman (Lieden: Brill, 2004), 125-137. This author, as Taylor, would

disagree with Enns's adaptation of Michael V. Fox's framework hypothesis for the composition of the book and Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 15-20. For a discussion which updates commentary survey on Ecclesiastes see: James C. Pakala, "A Librarian's Comments on Commentaries 12 (Ecclesiastes)," *Presbyterion* 27:2 (Fall, 2001): 147-149.

³ Robert Dick Wilson (1856-1930) is treated in *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Walter a. Ewell and J. D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), "Robert Dick Wilson," by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., pp. 73-81; D. G. Hart's article concerning Wilson appeared in both *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, ed. by Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, Harry S. Stout (Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 1999), and *Dictionary of the Presbyterian & Reformed Tradition in America*, ed. by D. G. Hart and Mark Knoll (Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 1999). He is barely mentioned in Randall Balmer, *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism* (Louisville: John Knox/Westminster Press, 2002). For a full treatment on the life of Dr. Allan A. MacRae, see: Earl L. Brown Jr., "Scholastic Legend and Legacy in the Bible Presbyterian Church, 1938-1956," *WRS Journal* 11 (February, 2004): 20-34. The connection between Allan MacRae and Robert W. Anderson will shortly be advanced.

⁴ On the dying words of John Gresham Machen (1881-1937) see Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 508; Stephen J. Nichols, *J. Gresham Machen: A Guided Tour of His Thought* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2004), 230, 235-237. See also Earl L.

Brown, Jr., "Christianity and Culture," *Tenth: An Evangelical Quarterly* 11:4 (October, 1981): 2-13. In this article the author compared the attitudes of the church to culture at the beginning of the Twentieth Century via four prevailing views and compared them to similar views in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, by four premillenarians: Carl Curtis McIntire, Donald Grey Barnhouse, James Oliver Buswell, Jr., and Francis August Schaeffer, Jr.

⁵ Our focus is upon the Old Testament scholars at Princeton; they are covered in David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary 1812-1869: Faith and Learning*, and *Princeton Seminary 1869-1929: The Majestic Testimony* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1994, 1996).

⁶ William Henry Green (1825-1900) is treated in *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century*. ed. by Walter A. Ewell and J. D. Weaver: "William Henry Green" by Marion Ann Taylor, pp. 22-36. Both *Dictionary of Christianity in America* and *Dictionary of the Presbyterian & Reformed Tradition in America* contain the same article by Richard B. Gaffin. Peter Ennis, "William Henry Green and the Authorship of the Pentateuch: Some Historical Considerations," *JETS* 45:2 (September 2002): 385-403.

⁷ Although Oswald Thompson Allis (1880-1973) is generally regarded as the successor to Robert Dick Wilson (see: *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century*, 22-130, and the article by D. G. Hart in both the *Dictionary of Christianity in America* and the *Dictionary of The Presbyterian & Reformed Tradition in America*), recent evidence has come to light from the MacRae papers at Covenant Theological Seminary which leads one to suspect

that Dr. Wilson had a closer relationship with Allan A. MacRae than with Dr. Allis. On page two of a two page letter, presumably written by Dr. MacRae to his parents, dated 10/14/30, Allan MacRae wrote that Mrs. Wilson, as executrix of Dr. Wilson's will, invited Allan MacRae to assume the task to oversee the manuscripts that Dr. Wilson had written. This document can be found: <http://www.pca.net.org/history/findingaids/wilson/decease.pdf>. [cited 18 April 2005].

⁸ Robert Dick Wilson, "Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?" (Philadelphia: *Sunday School Times*, 10th printing, 1922), preface. In addition to this dictum Dr. MacRae also believed in two other dictums that I have not been able to trace to either R. D. Wilson, or to R. A. Torrey: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes sense, seek no other sense." David L. Cooper: "Always interpret the obscure in light of the clear and the incipient antecedent by the relevant progressive revelation." "Build upon the explicitly clear, the sufficiently near; avoid the insufficiently clear and the obscure, reduce speculation to a modicum."

⁹ Reuben Archer Torrey is treated in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* ed. by Timothy Larsen, David Bebbington, Mark A. Noll (Downer's Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2003), s.v. "Reuben Archer Torrey," by William Vance Trollinger, Jr. J. Kennedy, *Maclean, Torrey and Alexander: The Story of Their Lives* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1905). Roger Martin, *R. A. Torrey: Apostle of Certainty* (Murfreesboro, TN.: Sword of The Lord, 1976). Paul C. Wilt, "Reuben Archer Torrey," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Randall Balmer, "Reuben

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Archer Torrey," in *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*.

¹⁰ Donald Grey Barnhouse is treated by Bill J. Leonard, "Donald Grey Barnhouse," *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, and by Joel A. Carpenter in both *Dictionary of Christianity in America* and *Dictionary of The Presbyterian & Reformed Tradition in America*. Randall Balmer, "Donald Grey Barnhouse", *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*; Allen C. Guelzo, "Barnhouse," *Making God's Word Plain* (Philadelphia: Tenth Presbyterian Church, 1979), 63-87, reproduced in Philip G. Ryken, ed. *Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia: 175 Years of Thinking and Acting Biblically* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P.& R. Publishing, 2004). For a critical assessment of Dr. Barnhouse's position on biblical separation see Earnest Pickering, *Biblical Separation: The Struggle for a Pure Church* (Schaumburg, Ill.: Regular Baptist Press, 1979), 199-200 and Miles J. Stanford, "Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse and Neo-Evangelicalism, <http://www.withchrist.org/MJS/neoevan1.htm>; <http://www.hrist.org/MJS/neoevan1.htm> [cited 18 April 2005].

¹¹ Personal interview of the author with Dr. Allan A. MacRae, spring of 1978. Paul Hokins, "What Made the Man?" *Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals*. <http://www.alliancenet.org/> [cited 18 April 2005].

¹² *Ibid.* At the time Biola had only been in existence some seven years. Students coming from Bible institutes were beginning to obtain a reputation for themselves as being individuals who came to seminary to teach and not to learn. Unfortunately, young Donald Barnhouse fit the stereotype.

¹³ See: Earl L. Brown, Jr. "Scholastic

Legend and Legacy in The Bible Presbyterian Church, 1937-1956," p. 25. The attitude of "student vs. teacher" is being described. Note that Barnhouse graduated late from Biola for not having his notes completed on time. Paul Hopkins, "What Made The Man?"

¹⁴ For Barnhouse's love affair with radio, see Editors of *Eternity* magazine, "They Grew Up Together," Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, <http://www.alliancenet.org/> [cited 18 April 2005]. For biographical information on Samuel Lewis Johnson, Jr., see: "S. Lewis Johnson Now with the Lord," *Dallas Morning News* (30 January 2004) at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/religion/1068322/posts> [cited 18 April 2005]. For a complete listing of extant sermons via the internet see: <http://www.believerschapel.org/authors/authors.htm>.

¹⁵ For biographical information on D. James Kennedy see Randall Balmer, "D(ennis) James Kennedy," *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*. For a full biography see Herbert Lee Williams, *D. James Kennedy: The Man and His Ministry*, (n.p.: n.p., 1990). For further biographical summary, see: Coral Ridge Ministries, "About D. James Kennedy," at www.coralridge.org.

¹⁶ Ibid. for the information on S. Lewis Johnson and D. James Kennedy.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism in American Culture* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1980), 129-130, cited in Earl L. Brown Jr., "Christianity and Culture," pp. 4-5 (quote concerned R. A. Torrey and James M. Gray, and this author applied it to Barnhouse). This application could equally be made of Dr. Allan A. MacRae and Dr. Robert W. Anderson.

¹⁹ Those who knew Allan A. MacRae would defend that statement but understand that he would be the first to deny it. After the 1956 division in the Bible Presbyterian Church, as long as Dr. MacRae was still associated with Dr. McIntire, McIntire still retained a degree of credibility with the world outside the confines of the Twentieth Century Reformation Movement. Once Dr. MacRae and his associates were found to be outside the pale of the movement, Dr. McIntire never quite enjoyed the same degree of credibility that he once enjoyed being associated with Dr. Allan A. MacRae. In McIntire's mind, as in others', MacRae was the tie back to Old Princeton.

²⁰ The MacRae resignation from Westminster Theological Seminary on Sunday, April 25, 1937, was indeed a sad but necessary move on the part of Dr. MacRae. The resignation has been criticized as being precipitous. See: Edwin H. Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940), 212-214 (pagination identical in the 1992 reprint by The Committee of The Historian of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church). In an interview with Dr. MacRae, spring 1978, Dr. MacRae stated that he had sent all relevant correspondence to the seminary, and to the newspapers, but for some reason the mail had been delayed that Monday, and the newspapers received his resignation before the seminary officially did. MacRae's remarks addressed legitimate concerns about the public perceptions of Westminster Theological Seminary at that time. MacRae felt that it was morally duplicitous to raise funds for the seminary from premillennial sources and have some premillennial board members, but

have that viewpoint unmercifully criticized both in the classrooms and in print by professors of the seminary. The item that pushed MacRae over the edge was an article by Dr. Kuiper: R. B. Kuiper, "A Plea for Peace," *Presbyterian Guardian* 4 (24 April, 1937):20. For a most helpful discussion of the matter see R. Todd Mangum, "The Falling Out Between Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; Dallas Theological Seminary, May 2001), 107-109.

A further perspective is in order. Princeton under the tutelage of Charles Hodge moved in theological instruction from Turretin to his own notes and *Systematic Theology*. Princeton went from a no-future-millennium emphasis to a postmillennial one. Charles Erdman was the only premillennial professor at Princeton, teaching practical theology. Beginning in 1930 there was a new resurgence felt in the theological world concerning this old position but recently coined "amillennialism," which was felt at Westminster. The new militant resurgence of "amillennialism," in order to reestablish its credibility, vociferously and vituperatively attacked both premillennarians who were making outlandish claims, and dispensational premillennarians, whose system was perceived as being out of harmony with the Westminster Standards. What appeared to be the demise of postmillennialism and the false confidence premillennialists imbibed was soon shaken by the influx of insurgent amillennialism, as it had been dubbed enthusiastically by Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).

MacRae felt that he did not want to be a token premillennialist, with the exception of Paul Wolley who taught

church history. Wolley did not see the attack on dispensationalism as one on premillennialism. MacRae felt that in the final analysis no form of premillennialism would eventually be acceptable to "the Dutch school." His warm friendship with professor John Murray (1898-1975) became somewhat strained. However, over the years they remained cordial. Dr. MacRae had an enduring friendship with Dr. John Hamilton Skilton (1906-1998). It was common knowledge that Dr. MacRae felt that Dr. VanTil's apologetics was "dangerous."

²¹ I call these upheavals reorganizations because they resemble the reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary, which caused it to become something other than what the institution was originally intended to be. In 1956 Dr. MacRae had to build almost from scratch a new faculty at Faith Seminary, largely due to the mass exodus of faculty to the newly founded Covenant College and Seminary. The essential core with the exceptions of Drs. Alfred Winfield Eppard (1906-1977) and Albert Franklin Faucette (1900-1995) helped Dr. MacRae start Biblical School of Theology, now Biblical Theological Seminary since 1977. Faith Theological Seminary divided again in 1976. Those leaving then founded the American Presbyterian Church. For more information on the American Presbyterian Church site, see <http://www.amprpress.com/>. Faith Seminary had to be reconstituted again after the founding of Western Reformed Seminary in 1982-1983.

²¹ During the 1956 division in the Bible Presbyterian Church it was often said that the Collingswood Synod was run by the three M's, McIntire, Murray and

MacRae. For more information on John Weir Murray (1913-1996) see *Philadelphia Inquirer* March 29, 1996. A lengthy biographical sketch goes beyond the scope of this article. Dr. "Jack" Murray and Dr. Allan A. MacRae were born not far from each other. Dr Murray was born in Laurium, Michigan, and Dr. MacRae in Calumet, Michigan, just over one mile from each other.

²²Although events developed over a period of time, the straw that broke the camel's back occurred within the time period of 24 hours, on May 25, 1971. In the spring of 1971, Dr. Murray contacted Dr. MacRae for consultation in the possibility and feasibility of founding a Bible Institute. Dr. Jack Murray founded a Christian organization in each room in his house in Abington. Tension was great the academic year of 1970-71. Pressures placed upon the administration by the President of the Board of Directors, Dr. Carl McIntire, were keenly felt by the president of the faculty, Dr. Allan A. MacRae. When MacRae drove from Western Pennsylvania, he heard Dr. McIntire's Twentieth Century Reformation Hour broadcast and his announcement that Dr. Gary Cohen was leaving the seminary to become a curator of a Christian museum which Dr. McIntire was going to establish at the Cape Canaveral Bible Conference. Without prior consent of all parties involved it appeared that Dr. McIntire wanted to be able at whim to move faculty into any independent agency at his beck and call.

²³The night of commencement May 25, 1971, proved equally disastrous. At the commencement Dr. McIntire announced three things not even discussed in the afternoon board meeting: (1) Dr. MacRae was going to retire, which was

news to Dr. MacRae; (2) Faith Seminary was going to relocate to Cape May, another decision without any prior consultation; and (3) Faith Seminary was going to start to charge tuition, something unheard of in its history to that time, again without prior consultation. Only the third proposal ever materialized. Dr MacRae and most of the faculty felt that they could no longer serve in an institution which was being conducted in such a manner. Dr. MacRae accepted Dr. Murray's invitation to start a school, but instead of a Bible Institute it would be a theological seminary. For Dr. McIntire's interpretation of the founding of Biblical Theological Seminary, see: *Faith Theological Seminary: Training Leaders for the Twentieth Century Reformation Movement* (1971), 16, and *Faith Theological Seminary 1937-1977* (1977), 40. Note his already evident and verifiable reconstruction of the "facts" between 1971 and 1977, p. 28. Contrast these materials with the written transcript of Dr. McIntire's address at the commencement in 1971, p. 6. Materials exonerating Dr. MacRae include: 1) Allan A. MacRae, "Report to The Board of Directors of Faith Theological Seminary, May 25, 1971, p. 13, and an untitled, seriatim rebuttal of Dr. McIntire's first booklet; it is unsigned but the style of the document betrays Dr. MacRae's hand.

Similar disottrions transpired with the beginning of Western Reformed Seminary, with ensuing events leading up to the schism of 1984. Drs. Battle and Anderson are of the similar MacRae mind-set to forgive rather than further circularize the church.

²⁴Western Reformed Seminary was

originally conceived as a West Coast seminary that would complement the work of Faith Theological Seminary in the East in training Bible Presbyterian ministers. For the history of Western Reformed Seminary, see: <http://www.wrs.edu>. WRS stands proudly in the theological line of tradition of Princeton, Westminster, Faith, Covenant, and Biblical Seminaries.

²⁵ The most striking example of Dr. Anderson's preaching ability under duress was when he preached at the funeral of Dr. Carl McIntire. Although during the schism of 1984, which took place in the Tacoma Church, Dr. McIntire proved to be extremely untrustworthy, the spirit of Christian love genuinely poured forth from Dr. Anderson at Dr. McIntire's funeral on 26 March, 2001; see <http://www.bpc.org/resources/mcintire/rwanderson>.

Other examples of Dr.

Anderson's sermons found in print from Synod minutes include: "Christ Lifted Up," Outline of a Communion Meditation, Minutes of the 49th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 1-6, Nashville, Tenn., 1985, 54-55; the following minutes are available on the internet from the Bible Presbyterian General Synod web site: <http://www.bpc.org/synod/index.html> "Revelation 3:3b," (Minutes of the 60th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 5-10, Cincinnati, Ohio 1996, 86-91); "Abraham Leaving Ur of the Chaldees: Facing A New World," (Minutes of the 64th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 3-8, Cincinnati, Ohio 2000, III 7-11); "Christ The King over His Church (Matthew 28:19-20)" (Minutes of the 68th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 5-10, Cincinnati, Ohio,

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2004, IV.20-24).

²⁶ For example, Dr. Anderson wrote a short treatise on Charles Hodge, Robert W. Anderson, *A Bicentennial Remembrance: Charles Hodge 1797-1878: A Look at the life and Witness of the Great Princeton Theologian* (Charlotte, NC.: Fundamental Presbyterian Publications, 1997). See, also: Robert W. Anderson, "Why Charles Hodge Is the Person I Quote the Most," (A Sermon delivered at the 61st General Synod of The Bible Presbyterian Church) in Minutes of the 61st General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, July 31-August 5, 1997, Tacoma, Washington, III. 63-66.

²⁷ *Interpretation and History: Essays in Honor of Allan A. MacRae*, ed. by R. Laird Harris, Swee-Hwa Quek, and J. Robert Vannoy (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1986); s.v. Thomas Vernon Taylor, "Church History Revisited," pp. 253-271. Taylor's observations about MacRae's philosophy of teaching church history can be seen in the person of Dr. Robert W. Anderson.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Rev. Carl McIntire, as a proud 1931 alumnus of that institution, originally advertised Westminster Theological Seminary as: "For the Faith and by Faith" prior to the inception of Faith Theological Seminary (interview with Allan A. MacRae, spring 1978). This motto was then applied to Faith Theological Seminary.

³⁰ The noun מִיָּסַד occurs 50 times in the Old Testament. Dr MacRae would begin each year at Biblical Theological Seminary, at least during the years of 1975-1979, with a practical sermon on this noun. The following entry by Eugene Merrill from NIDOTTE is

noteworthy: “The common deverbial carries all the nuances . . . instruction, correction, chastisement, discipline, punishment. Fundamentally, it has to do with teaching/learning by exhortation and example, with warning as to the consequences of disobedience, and with the application of penalty following failure to adhere.”

³¹ “Training Christian Warriors” became the motto of Shelton College (1907-1992). Robert W. Anderson graduated from Shelton College in 1960. Dr. Anderson is a true “son of the movement” in the sense in which it was originally conceived by Dr. McIntire, but not to the perversions to which it had befallen by a vocal minority in the student body of FTS in 1971. The original concept of “Twentieth Century Reformation,” as conceived by Rev. Carl C. McIntire in his first and only theoretical work on the concept meant a simple basic concept. According to McIntire, the Twentieth Century Reformation was “to redeem the word Christian” from the Liberal abuse of the concept; Carl Curtis McIntire, *Twentieth Century Reformation* (1st ed.; Collingswood, N.J: Christian Beacon Press, 1944, 2nd ed., 1945, 3rd rev. ed., 1946), pp. 3-10 in all three editions. Dr Robert W. Anderson has striven in excellence to be foremost a Christian gentleman who has adhered to Niagara Fundamentalism in Reformed and Presbyterian form. Unlike some of his detractors he organized both car caravans for protest meetings and also for evangelistic meetings with equal fervor.

³² Rupertus Meldenus (1627) paraphrased the thought of Augustine thusly: “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.”

SERMON

THE CENTRALITY OF PREACHING

TOMLYON

[A sermon delivered in June, 2005, before a gathering of ministers in Dublin, Ireland.]

Preaching has fallen on hard times. Calvin wrote: “At the present day there are many who are well-nigh sickened by the very name of preaching, because there are so many stupid, ignorant men who blurt out their worthless brainwaves from the pulpit.”¹ That was 450 years ago! Today, not only has preaching been decentralized, but the greater part of what is called “preaching” no longer deserves to be at the center. This has created a vacuum, and few have raised a voice while a Pandora’s Box of replacements has rushed in to fill the void.

A. W. Tozer saw the danger:

“One of the most popular current errors, and the one out of which springs most of the noisy, blustering religious activity in evangelical circles, is the notion that as times change the church must change with them. That mentality which mistakes Hollywood for the Holy City is too gravely astray to be explained otherwise than as a judicial madness visited upon professing Christians for affronts committed against the Spirit of God.”

And John MacArthur aptly described it:

“Worship services in many churches today are like a merry-go-round. You drop a token in the collection box; it is a good ride. There’s music and lots of motion up and down. The ride is carefully timed and seldom varies in length. Lots of good feelings are generated, and it is the one ride you can be sure will never be the least bit threatening or challenging. But though you spend the whole time feeling as if you’re moving forward, you get off exactly where you got on.”

The 16th century Reformation, 17th century Puritanism, and the 18th century Great Awakening were all revivals of preaching! Whatever else they were, they brought preaching back to the center. Similarly, periods of decline were marked by a corresponding decline in preaching. The 19th century languished under the influence of Finney’s “new measures.” Preaching was reduced to “moral suasion.” This is reflected in modern “crusade evangelism,” in which the sermon has become a mere prelude to the “invitation.” The 20th century dawned with the pulpit histrionics of Billy Sunday. Preaching had become “pulpiticism.” A more sophisticated retreat was found in the “quiet talks” of inspirational liberalism. “Sharing” rather than preaching marked the advent of a “kinder, gentler” Christianity.

“The miserable phrase, *sharing Christ*, which so sickens those of us who believe that the work of preaching is not that of sharing an experience but of proclaiming a message” (Machen).

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From these influences preaching has not recovered. Lloyd-Jones saw the connection:

“Is it not clear that the decadent periods and eras in the history of the Church have always been those periods when preaching has declined? What is it that always heralds the dawn of Reformation or of a Revival? It is renewed preaching.”

There is much discussion among the pundits of religion to account for the decline in preaching. “At one time we were told that poverty was the explanation. Today we are being told that affluence is the great problem” (Lloyd-Jones). This confusion is multiplied by the fact that the assault is joined on two fronts: both the modern pew and the pulpit have agreed to place everything but preaching at the center. Moreover, the center now being occupied, nothing short of a Copernican revolution would restore preaching to its rightful position. In the midst of this, apparently no one has had the temerity to ask the question: *What has God called for to be placed at the center?*

TWO PRIMARY FORCES ARE AT WORK

The *first* is anti-intellectualism. Nowadays, especially in religion, it is considered an insult to be called upon to think. Preaching declines with the decline of doctrine, and preaching has faded today for the simple reason that nowadays there is a lot less to preach. The modern pulpit has been dumbed-down because the gospel is no longer considered to be a theological discipline.

“Many a preacher has been warned about preaching over the people’s heads. I ask, ‘What are people’s heads

for? God Almighty gave them those heads and I think they ought to use them!’ As a preacher, I deny that any of the truths of God are over the heads of the people. I deny it!” (A. W. Tozer)

“The Puritans understood that a mindless Christianity will foster a spineless Christianity. An anti-intellectual gospel will spawn an irrelevant gospel that does not get beyond “felt needs.” That’s what is happening in our churches today. We’ve lost our Christian mind, and for the most part we do not see the necessity of recovering it” (Joel Beeke).

The *second* is individualism. Whereas preaching declines with the eclipse of doctrine, it is equally frustrated with the decline of a robust view of the church. Preaching is an “event”—an event which occurs only in the midst of a church gathered for worship. “There is something in the very atmosphere of Christian people meeting together to worship God and to listen to preaching” (Lloyd-Jones). That “something” is lost where the gathered church is jettisoned in favor of privately reading sermons (even the best) or listening to tapes. Today, sermons may be accessed electronically, but the ethos of preaching is lost. This arm-chair, atomistic view of private religion is the bane of preaching.

“Among ourselves, are there not many that reject the ordinance of God? Is not, say they, reading of good books at home as good as going to church? Do not such confess that the rivers of Damascus are as good as Jordan? We must come to heaven by the foolishness of preaching” (Richard Sibbes).

“Despise not prophesyings” (1 Thess 5:20). “By the term prophesying I mean the science of the interpreting of Scripture. The statement is remarkable for its commendation of outward preaching” (Calvin).

“True preaching, and the obedient hearing of revealed truth, are an acceptable form of worship to the Most High, and perhaps one of the most spiritual in which the human mind can be engaged” (Spurgeon).

Where this “science” and “obedient hearing” is de-centralized, the present vague and vapid state of religion is the melancholy result.

Returning to the previous thought: What has popularly filled the void left by the dereliction of preaching? Perhaps the most obvious answer is found in Rome’s substitution of the “mass” for the exposition of the Bible (and their “homilies” do not answer to any sensible definition of expository preaching). This is sadly reflected in the architecture of even Protestant churches where the pulpit is tellingly shifted to one side in favor of a centralized altar.

Then there is the entrance of counseling which has in no small part contributed to the demotion of preaching—a re-

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definition of the business of the Christian minister, who now transfers his energy from handling the word of God to handling people. One noted author in this field (Jay Adams) has defined preaching as nothing but group counseling, and observed no difference between counseling and preaching except that the latter is louder. But J. Gresham Machen warned 70 years ago the danger of “the minister ceasing to be a specialist, and becoming merely a sort of general manager of the affairs of a congregation.” Spurgeon opined, 100 years before the modern counseling craze, this trend “criminally sacrifices the study to the parlour.” Lloyd-Jones similarly observed: “As preaching goes down personal counseling goes up.” The Scriptures are not “God’s advice for successful living”!

And there is this contemporary notion that preaching is not an end in itself, but rather a device to equip for “every-member ministry.” The preacher is re-cast as the coach and cheerleader of the congregation, who sends them onto the field to “win one for the Gipper.”

A century ago Warfield warned:

“If the minister comes to be thought of, for example, fundamentally as merely the head of a social organization from whom may be demanded pleasant manners and executive ability; or as little more than a zealous ‘promoter,’ if the minister’s whole function is summed up in these or such things, if the whole function of the minister is ‘inspirational’ rather than ‘instructional,’ then, no doubt, we may dispense with all serious study of the Scripture.”

Beyond this there is a thesaurus of departures from preaching itself. A blizzard of unregulated proxies intrude. A parade of concerts, dramatic skits, celebrity “testimonies,” and the occasional “miracle” await the congregation. If there is any time left, perhaps a moment for “popular preaching.” The operative word here is “popular.” It is anecdotal, performance oriented, even exhibitionistic. Preaching is become a jejune personality cult. Symptomatic of this is the charismatic “preacher” who announced as he walked to the pulpit: “I can’t wait to hear what I am going to say.” Rather than faithful exposition there is spontaneity and novelty, aiming at the perceived needs of the congregation rather than the real needs determined by Scripture. This quest for modernity and relevance, this “penchant to articulate the Christian faith in the idiom of everyday affairs, this vernacularizing of the Christian message” (D.G. Hart), supposes modern man to be wiser than God, and people to be more important than truth. A constellation of modern phobias are dictated to the pulpit. This “Tell us where you hurt and what you hope for, and we will show you how Christ can satisfy your needs” opts to listen to the voice of our inner child rather than to the voice of the living God!

OUR CONFIDENCE MUST BE IN PREACHING

What confidence in preaching is required for it to be placed at the center?

1. Confidence that preaching is the only conveyance which enjoys God’s blessing.

Namely, that preaching is an “ordinance” of God. A sacrament in the truest sense. Preaching can claim the center because God

has placed it there, and has left no room for it to be contested.

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching...” (1 Cor 1:21). True, it is not preaching *per se*, but “the thing preached.” But it is that thing *preached*: “the preaching of the thing.” The content cannot be disassociated from the vehicle. The word of God is “manifested in preaching” (Titus 1:3).

Spurgeon always wrote his notes in purple ink, considering it to be color of royalty. He viewed his pulpit-work as an ambassadorial charge from the King Himself!

2. Confidence that preaching is the word of God.

Praedicatio Verbi Dei Verbum Dei Est—“The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God” (2nd Helvetic Confession).

“It is put to us whether our people should not be taught to come to church for the purpose of speaking to God rather than in order to be spoken to by a man. This has a pious sound, but there is a fallacy in it. Preaching is not merely the speaking of a man. If it is, then it is certainly not worth coming to church for. Preaching, if it is of the right kind, is the voice of God” (James Stalker).

3. Confidence that God’s capacity to bless preaching is greater than my ability to preach.

James Henley Thornwell, reputedly one of the greatest preachers produced in 19th century America, lamented: “My own performances fill me with disgust. I have never made, much less preached, a sermon in my life, and I am beginning to despair of ever being able to do it.”

Lloyd-Jones confided: “I can say quite honestly that I would not cross the road to listen to myself preaching.”

And James Stalker: “I always seem to myself to be only beginning to learn my trade; and the furthest I ever get in the way of confidence is to believe that I shall preach well next time.”

The church today is beset with problems. It is continually stumbling upon new measures. Problem is, these measures exacerbate rather than solve its problems. It dreams of answering felt-needs, building self-esteem, and motivating “purpose-driven” or “promise-keeping” lives. But amidst all these fads and inventions, the one thing, the only thing which will serve to overcome its distress is a return to God-honored and God-honoring preaching. 📖

¹ Documentation details are not supplied in this sermon. For questions regarding individual quotations, please contact the author (tlyonup@harbournet.com).

