THE PNEUMA REVIEW

The Journal of Ministry Resources and Theology for Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministries and Leaders

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“Helping you equip others”
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The Journal of Ministry Resources and Theology for Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministries and Leaders.

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Contents

8 Forming a Community of the Spirit: Hospitality, Fellowship, and Nurture
Part 2 of 2
By Steven M. Fettke
How do we foster the kind of community the local church should be?

20 The Fire of Revival: John Lathrop interviews Eddie Hyatt about revival and his book Revival Fire
What does biblical revival look like?

24 The Third Wave: New Independent Charismatic Churches
Part 2 of 2
By Henry I. Lederle
In this excerpt from his latest book, Professor Lederle says the “third wave” should perhaps be called the rise of the new independent charismatic churches.

49 Book and Periodical Reviews
Eddie Gibbs, Churchmorph: how megatrends are reshaping Christian Communities. Reviewed by James Purves.

Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors to this Issue</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Next Issue</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Your Theological Vocabulary</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Glossary in Brief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Significant Articles**

Robert C. Crosby, “A New Kind of Pentecostal: It’s no longer just about raising a hand to God. It’s also about reaching out a hand to the needy,” *Christianity Today* (August 2011).


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*Artwork and Photographs*

By Stan Myers: *The Dove*, appearing on much of the Pneuma Foundation literature.


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Forming a Nurturing Community

A mother was preparing breakfast for her two sons, Kevin, age five, and Ryan, age three. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. “If Jesus were sitting here, he would say, ‘Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.’” Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, “Ryan, you be Jesus!”

Some people can get so caught up in their own agendas and schedules that they forget that there are others around who might be hurting. Sadly, they often come across as too selfish to take time out to help those who are hurting because that might mean they would get off their strict daily schedules or they might have to hurt a bit with someone. After all, don’t they have enough troubles of their own without having to take on those of others? Let someone else deal with those hurting people. I will deal with my own needs, thank you very much. Those other folks who are hurting can deal with their own hurts themselves, just as I do.

Other people simply find themselves stressed and in need of loving nurture to sustain their faith. They need the warm embrace of a loving and accepting community as they negotiate the difficulties of living in a fast-paced society that expects so much of them in terms of job success, family wholeness, and psychological health and well-being without providing the necessary supports for these things to happen. They need warm and loving nurture themselves, which often means they are unable to extend the same to others. They do not mean to be selfish and self-absorbed; they are just needy and weary.

This chapter is from Steven M. Fettke, *God’s Empowered People: A Pentecostal Theology of the Laity* (Wipf & Stock 2011). Used with permission.
To speak of love and nurture without recognizing real human stresses and strains is to ignore a common ailment of a hectic modern society. People are not surprised to be treated shabbily by a store clerk or fellow driver on the roadways. Who has not complained about a bored teenager who checked or bagged the groceries or a surly auto service manager who was barely civil when servicing the car? In such an atmosphere people become defensive because of the meanness encountered. Believers try not to be apathetic or mean in return, but often the atmosphere gets the
better of them. At least they try to conceal their feelings with the thought that no one cares anyway, and certainly they don’t want to contribute with their own cruelty to the overall meanness already prevalent.

In addition, the notions of love and nurture have been cheapened by casual sex in television programs and in most movies. It is also common for television programs and movies to present a casual view of marriage and relationship commitments, as well as to present scenes of friends in deep conflict and division; often perpetrating great acts of cruelty upon each other. It does not help when most adult believers can tell tragic stories of churches split over some sort of un-Christian and inhumane treatment of a par-

Speaking of love and nurture is a delicate task because so many have been hurt in some way by counterfeits or by selfish people whose words of love belied their selfish actions.

ticular group of believers or the unjust treatment of a capable pastor.

It takes great care to speak of love and nurture to believers who might be a bit jaded by a society so casual about love and relationships. These adult believers may have become cynics about love and nurture from hearing it widely proclaimed in churches they have attended where only anger and division was
experienced instead. Speaking of love and nurture is a delicate task because so many have been hurt in some way by counterfeits or by selfish people whose words of love belied their selfish actions.

To speak of love properly—without sounding insincere or weepy and sentimental—is a difficult task. Appeals could be made to the “love chapter” in 1 Corinthians 13 or to Shakespeare’s famous sonnets or even to the best Hallmark greeting cards prepared for Valentine’s Day. Reading about love and declaring that love is the foundation of the two most important commandments is one thing, actually practicing that love is quite another when people are involved. As the old joke goes, “I could love the whole world if it weren’t for all the people in it!” This is why the word “nurture” has been chosen instead of love. Of course, nurture must have love as its foundation and focus, but only speaking of love is inadequate; love requires sacrificial action. The apostle put it this way, “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Tom Long has told this story, which illustrates the loving nurture proposed here.

Several years ago I was at a church in Alabama, scheduled to preach in the morning service. A few minutes before the service, the pastor got up from his desk and beckoned me to follow. “Come here,” he said, “There’s something I want you to see.” I followed him down the stairs and into the educational wing. We approached a Sunday school classroom, and the pastor pointed to the glass window set in the classroom door. “Look,” he urged. I peered through the glass into a kindergarten class full of activity. In one corner of the room, a teacher was reading a story to a group of children. In another corner, a teacher was assisting children in building something with blocks. In still another area, children were gathered around an adult with a guitar, learning a new song. In the middle of the room sat an elderly woman, calmly and slowly rocking in a rocking chair. Every now and then, a child would break away from a group and come to sit on her lap as she rocked. Occasionally, the woman in the rocker would say something to one of the teachers, and the adult would respond with a laugh and a nod of the head. The actual teaching was being done around the edges and in the corners, but this aged woman in the center was radiating grace around the room. “She used to be the only kindergarten teacher,” the pastor informed me, “But now that she is late in her life, others do the teaching. But she still comes every Sunday morning to sit in the center of
the room and provide a blessing.¹⁴⁰

Believers might get a warm feeling about the children being nurtured by the elderly woman, but, if hard pressed, might be persuaded to admit that they, too, need the kind of loving nurture she was providing the children. Were the children there because of the other children, the activities, or because of the nurture they received from the woman? What radiates from the center of my faith community?

Surprisingly, love—the true kind of love, God’s love—is not an easy or casual subject. The power of the gospel to bring genuine empathy and relief to the hurts of others seems so remote in a busy, agenda-oriented, success-guided world. Yes, the local church is supposed to be a repository of such nurture, but for people harried and wounded by a hostile world there is great hesitancy and doubt of the possibility of love and nurture. And when we have spent six days protecting ourselves from verbal and emotional assaults, it is hard on the seventh day to break with old habits and believe the promise of God’s nurture or make an attempt to lend another such promised nurture.

People are practiced in guarding their hearts because life often breaks open hearts.

nurture. After all, won’t the other be suspicious or expect payment in return? Truly loving someone with the kind of nurture intended by my emphasis in this chapter might mean believers
become vulnerable, open, and even willing to help bear the pain of others. People are practiced in guarding their hearts because life often breaks open hearts. We don’t want to open our hearts and listen so that we do not run the risk of the hurts that can come in. Listening with our hearts can actually be risky because it means that we also might suffer with the sufferers.

... a life formed by love for others inevitably leads to one’s own suffering, and this is true in Jesus’ life and in the history of God ... Jesus on the cross is God ... made weak and vulnerable to worldly powers because of the perfection of divine love.\textsuperscript{41}

The poet Perry Tanksley put it this way in his poem, “My Unbroken Heart”:

Regardless of the cost I sought to avoid
The tragic hurt of being annoyed
With a broken heart from loving someone
To discover too late my love unreturned.
Alas, I discovered while living alone
My heart, unbroken, had turned to stone\textsuperscript{42}

A story is told about Nouwen (now deceased), a Catholic priest and brilliant psychologist and theologian at Yale and, later, Harvard, who suddenly resigned his prestigious position at Harvard to become Director of Daybreak, a ministry to the severely mentally and physically handicapped in Toronto.\textsuperscript{43} There were those who believed he had thrown away a brilliant career at Harvard to do something so insignificant and meaningless in regard to his gifts and talents—moving backwards from the way of soci-

\begin{quote}
\textit{“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”}

—Galatians 6:1–2
\end{quote}
ety’s recommendations and expectations. But this was certainly not his attitude about his decision.\textsuperscript{44} His reaction was to describe his resignation from Harvard and move to Daybreak as God’s call.

If handicapped people express love for you, then it comes from God. It’s not because you accomplished anything. These broken, wounded, and completely unpretentious people forced me to let go of my relevant self—the self that can do things, show things, prove things, build things—and forced me to reclaim that unadorned self in which I am completely vulnerable, open to receive and give love regardless of any accomplishments.\textsuperscript{45}

It is a Spirit-enabled community that practices the first of the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22: love. In such a community where love is practiced and people are nurtured in their faith, there has to be the realization that truly loving and nurturing others might usually mean that weak and sinful people are the ones most in dire need of loving nurture. We are reminded of what the apostle said: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1–2). No one has described more eloquently love’s particularity implied by that passage than Martin Luther.

There are no secret or mystical formulas by which a nurturing community might be formed. It will require humble people who truly value what a nurturing community can provide, and value it above all else.

If there is anything in us, it is not our own; it is a gift of God. But if it is a gift of God, then it is entirely a debt one owes to love, that is, to the Law of Christ. And if it is a debt owed to love, then I must serve others with it, not myself. Thus my learning is not my own; it belongs to the unlearned and is the debt I owe them. My chastity is not my own; it belongs to those who commit sins of the flesh, and I am obligated to serve them through it by offering it to God for them by sustaining and [forgiving] them, and thus with my respectability, veiling their shame before God and
Thus my wisdom belongs to the foolish, my power to the oppressed. Thus my wealth belongs to the poor, my righteousness to the sinners. It is with all these qualities that we must stand before God and intervene on behalf of those who do not have them, as though clothed with someone else’s garment. But even before we must, with the same love, render them service against their detractors and those who are violent toward them; for this is what Christ did for us.

There are no secret or mystical formulas by which a nurturing community might be formed. It will require humble people who truly value what a nurturing community can provide, and value it above all else. Such a loving, nurturing community should be the natural product of Spirit-enabled fellowship. If God’s love is really true, believers cannot help but convey that love in authentic, tangible ways. “There is no wavering in God’s intent to love us, no matter what … [and] when we love and live in a community where love counts, we are at once ourselves and like God.”

The only “secret” to be addressed here is the reality of human selfishness and self-absorption. Eugene Peterson says it is necessary for believers to “unself” themselves, moving from self to community. Commenting on the self-absorption of the psalmist in Psalm 77:4–9, Peterson has said, “The self meditating on the self is in a room without air, without oxygen. Left there long enough, breathing its own gasses, it sickens.” People are, by nature, selfish beings who need gospel transformation so that they might become children of God who “ … use whatever gift [they] have received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10). It is a kind of spiritual discipline believers acquire to be able to do this: “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (1 Cor 10:24).

A life of compassion must be nurtured. This can only be done in the midst of hurt and pain, where wisdom is inaccessible to self-pity. God does not answer our self-pitying request but our need for unselfing. He enters our lives and provides prophet and priest to lead us into and through the wilderness of temptation and trial. Only then can we learn the ways of providence and discover the
means of grace—a long, difficult, mercy-marked, grace-guided forty years that represents the middle of the journey for persons who live by faith. It is a journey through which we learn personal morality and social responsibility. Salvation is put to the work of building community, engaging in worship, encountering evil.\textsuperscript{50}

**Concluding Remarks**

Many believers would agree that their congregations should be more oriented to hospitality, fellowship, and loving nurture; however, just how these things are accomplished is the great mystery. I could outline some strategies by which such things might occur, but the reality is that no one congregation is the same and "cookie-cutter" approaches to ministry are usually not successful in every place.

To get believers to focus more on hospitality, fellowship, and loving nurture might mean extended prayer sessions, a call for fasting and prayer, a challenge to the congregation by both pastor and lay leaders to reorient their lives by these concerns, or all of the above. The whole church must ask itself, corporately and individually: What is the true focus of this congregation? What is the true focus of my life of faith?

The reality might be that many congregations just do not want change to occur; they are very comfortable with things just as they are, thank you very much. Angie Ward has written about this attitude which she discovered after she and her husband began their ministry right out of seminary at an older, established church.\textsuperscript{51}

While that church on the surface valued outreach, character, and innovation, the no-rocking ethos meant that its actual directive was “Don’t offend anyone; don’t take risks; and don’t deal with hidden sin.” It took more than three years for us to figure this out, by repeated trial and error, but also by looking at our church’s history, the personalities of its leaders, and even the culture of our surrounding community.\textsuperscript{52}

She learned that believers resisted change with great fervor. They had become comfortable in the way things were and did not
want to take any risks, make any changes. What was Ward’s advice about this?

Culture takes a long time to create, and even longer to change. Melting the tip of the iceberg does not eliminate the ice below the waterline. But in any church, the first step toward creating a healthy culture is identifying the existing ethos, whether positive or negative.53

Naturally, “melting the iceberg” can be a strenuous and often painful process. People will cling desperately to their old ways because change can be frightening and require from believers more than they are ready to give. Indeed, Ward reported in her article that she and her husband were unable to make the needed changes in that church; however, in their next pastorate, they were able to recognize the unstated core values and begin right away to make important changes. Nevertheless, those changes came slowly.

From spiritual growth to evangelism to giving to ministry, a church that was founded as a safe place for those wounded by religion became a place for long-time Christians to be comfortable and inactive. Changing that culture, of course, is an ongoing process. Slowly, but surely, our church is beginning to reflect a renewed purpose of “Life-changing relationships with God, with each other, and with the world around us.”54
If lay and professional church leaders would take my proposals for loving hospitality, Spirit-enabled fellowship, and a nurturing community seriously, they might have to consider first the hidden core values of the congregation as they try to “melt the iceberg” of resistance to change. The values I am proposing are most certainly worth the effort.

Such a faith community carefully formed with the values I am proposing just might provide the right environment for implementing successfully the mission of the local church as understood in the Pentecostal tradition: proclaiming the gospel to the local community. If effective gospel witness should occur and people were to respond to the gospel, it would be important to have a supportive community for new converts to the faith.

In concluding this chapter, I wish to emphasize just how important a solid, functioning, nurturing, loving community is. From such a loving and healthy environment, well-balanced and more mature believers will emerge to make significant impacts in their various workplaces in the local community. Like children reared in a loving and nurturing family who become well-adjusted and productive adults, believers in the local church—the family of God—can exemplify the love and nurture learned in their faith communities, becoming effective ministers for Christ in public schools, the business world, the factory, and govern-
ment services.55

Notes

45 Ibid.
49 Ibid, 103.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
The Fire of Revival

John Lathrop interviews Eddie Hyatt about revival and his book Revival Fire

John Lathrop: The word “revival” means different things to different people. How would you define “revival?”

Eddie Hyatt: Revival is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in response to the prayers of God’s people, breathing new life into His people and bringing a new passion for the honor and glory of God and a desire to see His name honored throughout the earth.

Lathrop: What prompted you to write the book Revival Fire?

Hyatt: As a new believer many years ago, I had the privilege of participating in a genuine move of the Holy Spirit that impacted many lives and an entire community. In contrast, especially recently, I have observed so-called revivals where there was so much hype, exaggeration and manipulation. This has grieved me deeply. I have a passion to see genuine Spiritual awakening but I know it must be based in Scriptural truth. I hope, through this book, to point people, who have a passion for revival, back to the Bible as their foundation for genuine Spiritual awakening.

Lathrop: What can be done to help Christians, especially Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians, to be more biblically knowledgeable?

Hyatt: We need to emphasize the foundational nature of God’s Word and show the transforming power the Word of God will have in our lives. We need to encourage people to have a personal daily time of prayer and reading the word. We need to encourage our people to memorize Scripture; for example like writ-
ing a Biblical passage on an index card and carrying it throughout the day, and at the end of the day you will have it memorized. We need to offer structured Bible studies for our people and more formal opportunities for Biblical studies.

Lathrop: Do you think that we give too much attention today to outward manifestations like shaking and falling?

Hyatt: It depends on the location. I have ministered in Pentecostal churches where they were, for one reason or another, opposed to outward manifestations and needed to be more open. Sometimes it is a fear of facing manifestations that may be fleshly or demonic and, instead of being willing to discern and confront, they reject all manifestations.

On the other hand, there are those who are off the deep end in the other direction—chasing manifestations and anything sensational, and not taking seriously the Biblical admonition to “test the spirits.” I have preached in churches where people had been trained—subtly of course—to fall when prayed for. In one particular church, I recall praying for a man who looked over his shoulder to make sure the catcher was there before he fell backward as I was praying for him. The bottom line is that we need to be focused on Jesus and His Word, not on manifestations.

Lathrop: What causes these manifestations?

Hyatt: There are three possible origins: God, Satan, or human—and it could be a combination of the human and God or the human and Satan. In a true revival, many of the manifestations are human responses to the presence of God. I think the cases are rare
where a person is so overwhelmed by the Spirit (as Paul on the Damascus Road) that they have no control over their behavior. Wise leaders who desire revival will give room for people to respond—even intensely—to the presence of God while not tolerating fleshly and demonic manifestations.

**Lathrop: Some people reject all manifestations, others accept them all. What should our response to these things be?**

Hyatt: We should be open without being naïve and discerning without being judgmental. While not rejecting manifestations, we should not be afraid to do what the Bible has commanded us to do, to “test the spirits” and “judge prophetic utterances.”

**Lathrop: Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to share with believers who are seeking the renewal of the church?**

Hyatt: In the midst of praying for renewal/revival, allow God to purify our motives for wanting revival. Our goal must never be revival itself, but Jesus Christ and conformity to His will. In his *Lectures on Revival*, Charles Finney tells of the many invitations he had received from churches and pastors wanting him to travel to their communities to promote revival. He said, however; “When I came to weigh their reasons, I have sometimes found every one of them to be selfish. And God would look upon every one with abhorrence.”

Some wanted revival in order to raise their social status and influence. Others wanted
revival to increase the numbers attending their meetings, which in turn would enable them to build new and larger buildings. Still others wanted revival so that they would feel superior to one or more congregations with whom they felt a sense of competition. They were not seeking the Lord. They were seeking revival, and that from self-centered motives. Finney rightfully refused their requests. So, as we spend time in God’s presence, allow Him to purify our hearts for, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

John, Thanks for the opportunity to participate in this.

Revival Fire: Discerning Between the True & the False is a follow-up to 2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity (Charisma House, 2002) and consists of Dr. Hyatt’s mature reflections on the state of spiritual renewal in America and the world today. He shows that the way forward is by striking a healthy balance between Word and Spirit and by taking the time to learn from revival movements of the past.

The Third Wave
New Independent Charismatic Churches
Part 2 of 2

Henry I. Lederle

Editor’s Note: In part two of this excerpt from Theology with Spirit, Dr. Lederle continues his examination of the major streams of the Third Wave, what he has renamed New Independent Charismatic Churches. The Pneuma Review editorial committee hopes you will be encouraged as you read this chapter and will purchase this excellent book for yourself.

Dominion (Postmillennial)

The second major group of Independent Charismatics is also characterized by its view of the kingdom of God. The distinctive teaching is known as Dominion theology and has been described by its pre-millennialist detractors as “Kingdom Now.” The recently deceased Earl Paulk, perhaps the most significant representative of this new thrust, became the Archbishop of the International Communion of Charismatic Churches, a global network representing at its zenith some 10 million members. The ICCC, however, may not be totally identified with Dominion theology. The ICCC was formed in 1982 by Bishop John Mearaes of Washington, DC, and Bishop McAlister of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Later, Bishop Idahosa of Benin City, Nigeria, and Bishop Paulk of Chapel Hill Harvester Church in Atlanta, Georgia, joined. They were all part of a global Pentecostal denomination named the International Evangelical Church, which, interestingly enough, joined the Geneva-based World Council of Churches in 1972 and was the first Pentecostal denomination to participate in...
officially in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue.

The origins of Dominion theology, however, do not lie within the Pentecostal-Charismatic arena but outside it in classically Reformed theology. (This is illustrated in the ICCC Handbook, which lists the Presbyterian Westminster Confession in its creedal statements that provide the proper interpretation of the Bible.) Dominion theology is the product of the Christian reconstructionist movement, which developed in the 1960s and '70s around the publications of scholar Rousas John Rushdoony. In order to understand their influence on the Dominion movement some reconstructionist views will be now outlined briefly. Rushdoony, an Armenian American, established the Chalcedon Foundation in Vallecito, California, in 1965. Another center is the Institute for Christian Economics in Tyler, Texas, founded by Gary North, who has also published widely. Central to the reconstructionist vision is the acknowledgement of the all-embracing cosmic headship of Christ, who has dominion over every dimension of reality, and the ensuing ideal of transforming society in accordance with God’s divine laws. Rushdoony had studied presuppositional apologetics with Cornelius van Til, who taught for many years at Westminster Theological Seminary. It is widely believed that in his book *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, Christian reconstructionist theologian Greg Bahnsen argues that the laws of Moses should be applied directly to contemporary public life. The vision is, first, to reclaim the United States as a Christian nation and then to work in a gradual postmillennial strategy to establish the kingdom rule of God over all the earth. This would, in fact, be theocratic rule, with obvious parallels to Puritan thinking. The moral decline in the Western world is seen as the direct result of forsaking the eternal laws of God.

This vision is radical and goes far beyond a mainstream Reformed understanding of the transformation of culture under the Lordship of Christ. Christian reconstructionists hold to a theonomy (law of God) which considers Old Testament laws to be normative for all times. That would entail such extremes as capital punishment for adultery, bestiality, homosexuality, and even for incorrigible children! Critics of this movement go so far as to allege that some reconstructionists condone slavery, and exhibit

**Dominion theology is unswervingly committed to postmillennial eschatology.**
Racist tendencies.

Reconstructionist advocacy starts with the regeneration of individuals, who are then restored to fulfilling God’s purposes and remade in God’s image, receiving His cultural mandate and dominion over the earth. In the political and economic realm, this vision is worked out along clear, free-market principles—limited government, decentralization, and a strong focus on private enterprise and individual rights.

Dominion theology is unswervingly committed to postmillennial eschatology. The Church is seen as the instrument of God, aggressively reoccupying the world in the name of Christ. The kingdom is already established and is advancing. The Second Coming of Christ does not break into world history suddenly in an apocalyptic fashion but only after the Church has fulfilled the Great Commission and established global dominion.

Gradually Dominion thinking also started to influence a number of leaders in the Independent Charismatic movement. This aggressive and encompassing vision for the transformation, not only of the Church but of all of society, proved to be attractive to them. Originally, Classical Pentecostalism had aligned itself to anti-cultural tendencies, withdrawing from secular society. Premillennialist and dispensational views with a pretribulation rapture of believers tended to discourage any active involvement in societal and, especially, political matters. Later initiatives, however, such as the Moral Majority of Jerry Falwell and the Christian Coalition associated with Pat Robertson, decisively changed the attitude of many evangelical Christians towards involvement in the public sphere and political life. Rushdoony’s influence even reached the Reagan White House.

Bishop Paulk caused a stir in Pentecostal circles when he defected from the traditional cause of premillennial eschatology, denied the doctrine of the rapture, and questioned the relevance of the nation of Israel to biblical prophecy. He taught that the Church is the spiritual Israel and has replaced the Jews, and that current events in the Middle East have no bearing on prophetic fulfillment. The fact that an imminent return of Christ is not expected is reflected in the title of his 1985 book Held in the Heav-
ens Until... Christ must remain until the restoration of all things—a reference to Acts 3:12. The Church needs to accept its responsibility first to attain unity and maturity as the bride of Christ. The doctrine of the rapture is also reinterpreted: the new hope of the church is achieving victory in this world. Paulk maintains that his “Kingdom Now” principles transcend traditional millennial categories, but there is an unmistakable postmillennial slant to his teaching. God is effecting restoration through His Church, and we now have to assume the dominion that was lost in the Garden of Eden. It needs to be noted that Bishop Paulk’s church is well integrated racially and heavily involved in outreach to the African-American community in Atlanta.

The vision of cosmic societal restoration has had a broader impact among Charismatics than the sphere of Bishop Paulk. Bob Mumford, one of the “Fort Lauderdale five” of the Restoration movement, was also attracted to it and gradually incorporated dominion perspectives into his public teaching. At the same time, these ideals also influenced people very critical of the Discipleship movement, such as Pat Robertson. The university he founded in Virginia Beach changed its name from CBN University to Regent University, thereby reflecting the idea of Christ’s regency over the world. Dominion thinking, in a more general and balanced sense than the rigid theonomist views of Christian reconstructionists, pervades the whole University as it seeks to train Christian graduate students in a variety of disciplines such as law, education, global leadership, psychology, divinity, and government. The ongoing influence of this perspective can be seen in initiatives such as the legal advocacy of the American Center for Law and Justice (Jay Sekulow) and the Republican presidential primary race in 1988 of Pat Robertson—although unsuccessful, he surprised many by winning the Iowa caucuses.

Maranatha Ministries, under the leadership of Bob Weiner, had also propagated a postmillennial vision of societal transformation to thousands of college students before it disbanded in 1989.

An intriguing aspect of the whole Independent Charismatic movement is the fact that influence from the “Latter Rain” movement keeps reappearing. Although this brief revival was snuffed out by vehement opposition by Classical Pentecostals, its seminal ideas seemed to go underground and resurface time and again. The Latter Rain has also come to be known by other names such as Sonship, Manifested Sons of God, or the Body of Christ. Leaders such as Bill Britton and Sam Fife continued to propagate their
ideas through publications and meetings in Lubbock, Texas. Their major teaching of the restoration of the five-fold ministry was viewed as a threat to the authority of denominational leaders and local pastors. Another key concept of the New Order of the Latter Rain that resurfaced in the whole Third Wave was a high view of prophecy, sometimes including predictive and personal prophecy—the ongoing revelation of truth to apostles and prophets. Some critics attacked Paulk for his concept of revelation, which was viewed as equating revelation gained through contemporary prophecy with the Bible. Paulk denied this and affirmed a closed canon.

Personal prophecy also occurred in the Latter Rain circles. Bruce Barron’s study *Heaven on Earth: The Social & Political Agendas of Dominion Theology* notes that George Hawton of North Battleford supposedly rejected the concept of the imminence of Christ, teaching that Christ could only return after the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21; p. 76). It was said that Earl Paulk taught the very same thing. Barron declares that Paulk “mainstreamed” Latter Rain ideas, presenting them in a more respectable form (p. 78). Bishop John Meares, who founded the ICCC, also represented a clear link to the Latter Rain through Bethesda Temple in Detroit, which was a leading Latter Rain church.

While Paulk reshaped traditional premillennialism into a postmillennial vision with a societal involvement, the “Christ against culture” stance (as expressed in H. Richard Niebuhr’s classic *Christ and Culture*), or otherworldliness of early Pentecostalism, has been retained by Bill Hamon, who, for a time, was also a Bishop of the ICCC and who authored *The Eternal Church* (p. 76). It presents a very negative view of church history reminiscent of Restorationism.

Since Bishop Paulk, who died in 2009, had been sidelined due to accusations of immoral conduct going back several decades, this grouping and its teachings have unfortunately lost influence in the public arena and in Independent Charismatic circles.

**Empowered Evangelicals**

The third major group of the Independent Charismatic movement is quite different. It is closely connected to the ministry of John Wimber and the Association of Vineyard Churches and is said to consist of about 1,000 churches world-wide. It is sometimes called the Power Encounter movement or the Signs
and Wonders movement. The term “power encounter” comes originally from use in missiology and refers to the force of the supernatural in spreading the gospel; often the references are to victory over demonic spiritual forces. “Signs and Wonders” highlights the role of the miraculous and the fact that churches seem to grow rapidly, especially in the Majority World, based on testimonies of dramatic healings and powerful signs. This is sometimes called Power Evangelism. More recently, some have preferred to use the designation “Empowered Evangelicals.” It is this category that C. Peter Wagner identified with the term Third Wave. (In this book, Third Wave is used to designate the whole Independent Charismatic movement.) The term Empowered Evangelicals captures the essence of this current well. This group is self-consciously not Pentecostal or Charismatic. It represents

**A distinctive aspect of Empowered Evangelicals is the present day reality of signs and wonders. They recognize that healing can play a pivotal role in evangelism.**

those evangelicals who have become open to the present-day occurrence of the full range of the charisms of the Spirit. (An important book by several scholars that is a kind of progress report showing Empowered Evangelicals grappling with the ideas discussed in this section is *The Kingdom and the Power: Are Healing and the Spiritual Gifts Used by Jesus and the Early Church Meant for the Church Today? A Biblical Look at How to Bring the Gospel to the World with Power*, edited by Gary Greig, J.I. Packer, and Kevin N. Springer, with a foreword by C. Peter Wagner, published in 1993. **Editor’s Note:** Most of the chapters and appendices from *The Kingdom and the Power* have been reprinted serially in *The Pneuma Review.*)

**Worldview**

The distinctive core of this second grouping of Independent Charismatics is made up of three interrelated concepts. First is the awareness of the importance of *worldview* and philosophical presuppositions. The Empowered Evangelical movement has become profoundly aware of the role of naturalism, materialism, and rationalism in the heritage of the Western Enlightenment.
This insight has its origins in academic circles and missiologists such as Paul Hiebert and Charles Kraft, who have published along these lines and have strongly influenced the leadership of the Vineyard movement. Nevertheless, the concept of worldviews and their impact on how we perceive reality is profoundly practical. It is through a rejection of rationalist modernity that the dimension of the miraculous is often discovered and reclaimed. More so than any other group, the Power Encounter movement has opened our eyes to the role played by these pervasive frameworks or mindsets in church as well as in culture.

Every-member Ministry

Second, the Vineyard Bible Churches have a unique focus on an every member ministry. This is a form of democratization. The usual way of referring to it is “equipping the saints.” Although the principle of what Martin Luther called “the priesthood of all believers” dates back to the sixteenth century, most churches still maintain a rigid demarcation between clergy and laity, and they concentrate most of the “ministry” in the hands of ordained leadership. The Empowered Evangelical movement objects to this. For example rather than create “healing lines” in which one gifted individual would pray for all the sick, Wimber encouraged the whole body of believers to become involved in healing prayer. The practice of healing lines actually originated with the controversial healing evangelist William Branham. In concrete terms, the Vineyard approach was quite different. It usually started by asking people requiring prayer to stand up in a meeting, with those who happen to be sitting around them then simply laying hands on them, uniting in prayer for healing. The presumption is that God would grant gifts of healing across the congregation as needed. The Empowered Evangelicals emphasize the healing ministry.
Signs and Wonders

The third distinctive aspect of this grouping is quite simply the present-day reality of *signs and wonders*. The reclaiming of the miraculous is, of course, the heritage of a number of movements in the twentieth century. The Vineyard movement, however, has a different perspective on them. Healings and miracles are consciously seen as a means of evangelism and church growth. The concept of church growth, as developed by Donald McGavran of Fuller’s School of World Missions, had a significant impact on John Wimber. It was the testimony of students from the Majority World that first opened the eyes of Charismatic leaders to the fact that healing can play a pivotal role in evangelism. This is certainly the case in many churches in Africa and Asia. What Wimber discovered was that the proclamation of God’s kingdom needs to be accompanied by the demonstration of God’s power. The concept of power was to become crucial, as can be seen from Wimber’s book titles *Power Evangelism, Power Healing, Power Points*. Here was a new strategy—the growth of the church in numbers and in maturity is consciously and intentionally linked to the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

*The Kingdom of God: Already but Not Yet*

An important theological impulse behind this movement was an understanding of the kingdom of God. George Eldon Ladd, of Fuller Seminary, developed this as a central motif in his book *Jesus and the Kingdom*. The Lordship of Christ is of paramount importance and presents a challenge to the contemporary church, with its focus on meeting people’s needs and fulfilling human potential. Equipped with kingdom power, the believer receives the authority to drive out demons in what has become known as spiritual warfare. Crucial to Wimber’s understanding of the kingdom of God is the creative tension between the *already* and the *not yet*. This polarity was originally formulated by Geerhardus Vos, developed by Oscar Cullmann, and popularized in North America by George Eldon Ladd. The Christian life is lived out between the First and Second Comings of Christ. Certain aspects of God’s rule are *already* apparent, such as salvation, fellowship in the Spirit, forgiveness of sins, and Charismatic manifestations, but others will only become evident at the final consummation of the kingdom. They are *not yet* manifest due to the fallenness of
creation and include such things as the elimination of death, total healing, and moral perfection. Wimber argues powerfully that physical healing is affected by this tension. Against the traditional Classical Pentecostal doctrine of healing as included in the atonement, he advocates, rather, healing through, or as a result of, the atonement. With this formulation, he desires to break loose from an automatic guarantee of healing. Wimber also advocates a holistic understanding of healing that includes an inner healing of the memories and emotions as well as deliverance of people who are demonized.

John Wimber was converted as an adult. He had an Evangelical Quaker background and was generally Reformed in his theological leanings. He was initially associated with Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel and the Jesus Movement of the 1970s. He led the Vineyard movement from 1982 until his death in 1997. It was Wimber who gained notoriety by teaching the controversial course MC510: Signs, Wonders and Church Growth at the Fuller School of World Mission between 1982 and 1985. This course was eventually canceled due to widespread objections, including opposition by the theological faculty at Fuller. One of the concerns expressed in their report Ministry and the Miraculous, edited by Lewis Smedes, is that it is inappropriate to include the practice of healing within the academic setting of a classroom. (No such reservation seems to exist with regard to preaching in homiletics courses!) They furthermore argue that the answers to prayers for healing should not be called “Signs and Wonders” because that detracts from the uniquely revelatory events of salvation history (p. 28). The course had become immensely popular, and the demonstrations of healing in the laboratory, or practical, part of the class had an extensive impact. The cancellation of the course may have illustrated that the broader evangelical community has not yet fully moved beyond its heritage of cessationism and dispensationalism.

The fact that Classical Pentecostals were also critical of Wimber’s approach illustrates the tension between the First Wave and this particular form of the Independent Charismatic movement. This tension is illustrated further by the whole concept of spiri-
tual warfare, which has become as contentious as the concepts “faith” and “prosperity” in the Word of Faith grouping of Independent Charismatics. Classical Pentecostals generally have supported the conviction that Christians cannot be demon possessed and, consequently, have grave reservations about much of the deliverance ministry practiced in Empowered Evangelical circles.

Spiritual Warfare

John Wimber explained his approach in battling demonic spirits in Power Points, warning against a pre-occupation with the satanic realm. There is an age-old heritage of exorcism found within Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches and, to a lesser degree, in mainline Protestant churches, such as the Anglican and Episcopal communion. Usually specific priests have this as a designated ministry, and ritual formulas and prayers are used. In practice, however, little of this has remained in operation due to the Western scientific mindset and the preeminence of rationalism. It is mainly among some denominational Charismatics that this more liturgical ministry is being practiced. In evan-

Neil Anderson concentrated on spiritual warfare as a conflict between truth and error, but for Wimber this was a power encounter in which the victory and liberation are demonstrated after the lies and false teachings of Satan are exposed.

gelical Protestantism, however, there is a new a growing awareness of the importance of spiritual warfare that is quite independent of any Pentecostal or Charismatic influence. Often the focus of these groups is on preserving doctrinal truth. As with Wimber, there is an acknowledgement and interest among these non-charismatic evangelicals of the role that worldview plays in our thinking, but Neil Anderson, in his well-known book The Bondage Breaker, concentrates on spiritual warfare as a conflict between truth and error. For Wimber, it is not merely a “truth encounter,” exposing the lies and false teachings of Satan, but also a power encounter, in which victory and liberation are demonstrated.
Independent Charismatics from the Empowered Evangelical movement deal with the thorny issue of Christians and demon possession by relying on a new approach among scholars that suggests it is better for Christians to change our terminology. The New Testament word usually translated as “demon possession” should rather be rendered “demonized.” A Christian cannot be possessed by Satan in the sense of ownership, but a high degree of oppression or evil influence is possible as people give a foothold to demonic spirits through habitual sinful practices. It is appropriate to pray prayers of deliverance in such situations.

A further contentious issue is the concept of territorial spirits. With some humor, the question has been raised: Do demons have zip codes? Are they to be associated with specific geographical areas? Peter Wagner advocates this understanding and encourages Christians to do “spiritual mapping”—discerning the prevailing spirits over cities and nations according to the most prominent sins (such as drug abuse, prostitution, greed, racism, divorce, etc.), and doing battle against them in the Spirit. Although there are references in Scripture to demons exerting influence over specific locations, such as “the Prince of Persia” in Daniel 10, one needs to be cautious about generalizing this idea. The role of intercessory prayer and prayer walking as a practical strategy against these powers and principalities has been vividly illustrated by ministries in Argentina. Wimber himself cautions that it is God who sends angels into battle. Perhaps prayer for God to deploy angelic forces is more appropriate than intercessors commanding angels themselves.

The understanding of Ephesians 6 and the believer’s battle against demonic forces is of pivotal significance in this understanding. Bishop Michael Reid of England, formerly of Peniel Church in Essex, England, who is a bishop with the International Communion of Charismatic Churches, has written a book whose title expresses his view: Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare: A Modern Mythology? Reid rejects this Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare approach associated with C. Peter Wagner and George Otis, Jr. and warns against demon-phobia and quasi-pagan concepts. While Reid’s view is supported by some senior Classical
Pentecostals, it is clear that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, and I believe the Bible reveals a physicality to grace as well as to evil that our rational minds find difficult to accept and grasp. Response to such manifestations of spiritual evil may lapse into an animistic superstition, but that is not necessarily the case.

The Vineyard movement grappled with two contentious issues in the late 1990s, which caused it, at first, to reevaluate its identity as Empowered Evangelicals. Then, eventually, it recognized that it wished to retain its original identity and the ideal of a democratizing of ministry and so severed ties to two new movements that it had initially embraced.

Prophecy

The first was the encounter with a new style of prophecy. The Kansas City Fellowship joined the Association of Vineyard Churches in 1990. Prominent leaders with a prophetic ministry included Mike Bickle, Bob Jones, and, especially, Paul Cain. Cain had been involved in the New Order of the Latter Rain. Predictive prophecy as practiced by leading individual prophets introduced an element into the movement that threatened the thorough-going democratization of Wimber’s original vision. Just as the healing ministry had been concentrated in the hands of prominent leaders in the 1940s and ’50s, so prophecy was becoming concentrated in a small number of gifted prophets. The leadership of the Vineyard movement weighed the situation and decided to steer back to its more mainstream evangelical roots. Reservations were expressed about some of the prophecies as well as behavioral issues. Wimber did not come to reject the gift of prophecy, but ultimately he did not find the Kansas City Fellowship’s expression of it in line with his vision.

Toronto Blessing

The encounter with the “Toronto Blessing” followed the same pattern of initial support, followed by a gracious, if contentious, parting of ways. The Toronto Airport Vineyard Fellowship had begun as a home group founded by John and Carol Arnott in 1990. It soon became associated with the Vineyard movement as it grew into a church. Then revival broke loose. What came to be known as the “Toronto Blessing,” started on January 20, 1994. Arnott had invited Randy Clark, a Vineyard pastor from St. Louis, to come and minister at his church. Clark had recently
been exposed to the ministry of Rodney Howard-Browne, a South African-born evangelist from Tampa, Florida, whose meetings were characterized by involuntary fits of laughter. Howard-Browne had been reared in the Word of Faith teaching at the Rhema Bible Church in Randburg, near Johannesburg, South Africa. This laughing revival drew much attention. Howard-Browne had led a revival at Karl Strader’s Carpenter’s Home church in Lakeland, Florida for fourteen weeks. He also ministered powerfully at Oral Roberts University, where students were so overcome by the Spirit that many still needed help walking in order to return to their dormitories three hours after the service had ended.

As Clark ministered in Toronto, similar manifestations of holy laughter and being “drunk in the Spirit” occurred. Wimber initially supported this awakening, but by December 1995, the Toronto Airport church was ousted from the Vineyard Fellowship. The reason given by the Vineyard leadership was not that they did not recognize this blessing as a genuine move of God but that they realized that they themselves were not called to give further leadership to it because of differences in style. The awakening continued. Membership has skyrocketed from 350 to 4,000, and it is estimated that 2.5 million people from all over the world visited Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship between 1994 and 2000. The Toronto Blessing touched several thousand churches in England, most notably Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, in London that later launched the Alpha courses for new believers that is now used across the world.

Criticism from traditional anti-Charismatic sources as well as from Classical Pentecostals has focused on some of the more unusual phenomena that have accompanied the revival, especially uncontrollable laughter and some animal noises. (Actually animal noises such as barking are not unknown in the history of revivals. As far back as 1801 there was a practice of barking, known as “treeing the devil,” at the Cane Ridge revival in Kentucky!) According to their critics the centrality of Christ, sound preaching,
and a discernment regarding miracles was judged to be somewhat lacking in the revival, but the 5,000 professions of faith and many more transformed lives have testified to the great impact of this movement. Theologian James Beverly has written about the Toronto Blessing and gives a balanced and helpful critique. Wimber was unwilling to go too far beyond the confines of North American evangelical culture, and so disassociated the Empowered Evangelical movement from the Kansas City prophetic movement and the exuberance of the Toronto blessing. The Vineyard churches are growing into an organized denomination, representing the more Reformed and evangelical sector of the Independent Charismatics. They have left behind the theology of subsequence and the requirement of tongues, but practice the full range of the charismata, acknowledging the supernatural dimension very clearly in their Power Encounters with the demonic.

**Word of Faith**

The fourth major grouping of the Independent Charismatic movement is known as Word of Faith or Faith Confession Churches. (This movement will be discussed again in detail in chapter 7 because of the prominent role it plays in the current situation.) It has probably been more misunderstood and maligned than any other part of the movement but surprisingly has retained its vibrancy and exhibits great potential for the future as it moves beyond some of the unfortunate excesses of the past. Other names for the movement reflect this criticism: the Health and Wealth Gospel, Prosperity Theology, Positive Confession teaching, or even the derogatory phrase “Name It and Claim It” movement. After an initial spate of knee-jerk reactions, such as critiques by Hunt and McMahon, Hank Hanegraaff and Dan McConnell, the movement itself seems to have undergone some self-correction. This current of the Third Wave has a lot of continuity with the Classical Pentecostal teachers and healing evangelists of the 1940s and 50s. What are the origins of this movement?

Although the father of the movement undoubtedly is Kenneth E. Hagin, founder of the Rhema Bible Church and Training Cen-
ter in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, the originator is seen as E. W. Kenyon (1867–1948). Essek William Kenyon grew up in New York State where he joined the Methodist Church. In 1892, he moved to Boston and enrolled in the Emerson School of Oratory, where he was exposed to New Thought and the Christian Science of Mary Baker Eddy, who also had her headquarters in Boston. Classical idealism was coming into vogue at this time, and the concepts of Plato and Ralph Waldo Emerson formed part of the curriculum. Mind was seen as superior to matter, and through mental attitudes and positive confession, circumstances could be transformed. McConnell, who evaluated the Faith movement with a degree of harshness, relates an anecdote about Ern Baxter (also a link between the Latter Rain and the Discipleship movements) once happening upon Kenyon engrossed in reading Mary Baker Eddy’s *Key to the Scriptures*. When Baxter commented on that, Kenyon responded that a lot of good could be gained from her perspectives.

Kenyon was ordained as a preacher in the Free Will Baptist Church and traveled extensively. He often spoke in Pentecostal churches but clearly did not consider himself Pentecostal. He had serious reservations about the gift of tongues and the importance

*When the Shepherding movement ran into difficulties in the late 1970s, it seems the momentum and growth among Independent Charismatics passed on to the Word of Faith movement.*

placed upon it. He was inspired by the work of George Mueller in Britain and ran his Bethel Bible Institute on the same “living by faith” principle.

Kenyon responded sharply to the higher criticism of the Bible that was fashionable in his day by firmly rejecting the claim that Paul had exaggerated the importance and stature of Jesus, making Him into the divine Son of God. Many scholars of that day (and in later so-called Jesus Quests as well) were seeking the “historical Jesus” behind the Gospel narratives, stripped of His divinity. Reacting to this, Kenyon, in fact, believed that the epistles were superior to the Gospels and built his thinking mostly on Pauline theology.

The major contribution of Kenyon to the Faith movement was
distinguishing knowledge into two radically different categories: “sense knowledge,” based on the physical world, and “revelation knowledge,” which is vastly superior and is based on supernatural revelation from God through the Scriptures or through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, communicating with the human spirit. When these two kinds of knowledge conflict, the believer needs to transcend empirical understanding and act in faith upon God’s Word. This action may even necessitate the denial of physical symptoms of illness. At this point, the danger of a radical Gnostic dualism between the natural and the supernatural as 

**Life in the Spirit walks the fine line of ongoing openness to the miraculous on a daily basis.**

two mutually exclusive realms becomes apparent. The issue becomes even more troubling when the biblical tension between the flesh and the spirit is superimposed on this polarity. Kenyon found support in Hebrews 11:1—“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (NIV). William DeArteaga points out that this faith-idealism is in line with the Christian Science healing practice which teaches “corresponding action.” This practice entails acting upon the revelation knowledge even before the change has taken place. Scriptural support and illustrations of this are not hard to find—the ten lepers of Luke 17 were healed as they headed off in faith to go and show themselves to the priests. Kenyon considered the taking of medication after a prayer of faith for healing to be inappropriate.

Kenyon taught that through identification with Christ, the believer can approach God without guilt (DeArteaga, Quenching the Spirit, p. 219). Through this Pauline concept of identification (being in Christ, Christ lives in me), which is found abundantly in Paul’s letters and is well expressed in Galatians 2:20, believers have the same power that Jesus did on earth. By exercising faith, believers can become “Christian Supermen” with power over diseases and demons. The only limitation that Kenyon recognized in his faith idealism was that one can ask in faith only for things that are promised in Scripture. They could be claimed and confessed without any qualification. In his teaching, Kenyon provided all the theological building blocks on which Kenneth Hagin would later construct his teachings.
Kenneth E. Hagin was born in Texas in 1917. He suffered from a congenital heart defect and was bedridden by the age of sixteen. He then had an experience that stamped his whole ministry. He had a revelation or vision from God (the first of several) and gained a new understanding of Mark 11:24: “Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.” Meditating on this verse, he realized that “the having comes after the believing.” Previously he had been reversing it. One needs to believe you have it before you actually receive it. This led to his getting out of bed and being healed after some days of struggling with his paralysis. Total recovery took sixteen months.

Hagin did not receive formal theological training, but a number of amazing visions and personal encounters with Jesus form the foundation of his ministry. He considers his calling to be that of a prophet and a teacher. Because of its origins, there has long remained a critique of Word of Faith or Faith Confession teaching that it is implicitly anti-intellectual and somewhat anti-medical. (The genius of the ministry of Oral Roberts was to bring perspective into this realm of thinking by his building both a university and a hospital.) Today the objection of Faith teachers is not against scholarship as such, but only against a certain type of scholarship that exalts itself above God’s revelation and denies the realm of the miraculous!

Hagin became well known through his radio program and the Rhema Bible Training Center, founded in 1974, where hundreds of thousands of students received Bible training—many coming from overseas. It seems that when the Shepherding/Discipleship movement ran into difficulties in the late 1970s, the momentum and growth among Independent Charismatics was passed on to the Word of Faith movement. This shift of momentum led to a substantial growth in the ministries of Faith leaders, such as the Hagins, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Jerry Savelle, Fred Price, Robert Tilton, and, further afield, Ray McCauley in Randburg, South Africa, Ulf Eckman in Uppsala, Sweden, David Yonggi Cho of Seoul, Korea, Benson Idahosa of Nigeria, and Hector Giminez of Argentina.

The pivotal doctrinal issue is how faith is understood. Nico Horn of Namibia describes the Word of Faith movement’s concept of faith thus:

It may be described as “a special emphasis on faith as a mechanism at the disposal of the believer to make him or
her victorious; the belief that positive confession creates faith, and, linked with faith, changes circumstances; the belief that everyone who has faith can receive either healing from sickness or eternal health; and the belief that financial prosperity is, like healing, provided for in the atonement.”

Here is a brief outline of three of the major teachings of the Faith movement (from Barron, *Health and Wealth*, p. 9).

Positive Confession

The doctrine of *positive confession* comes directly from the idealism of E. W. Kenyon. Perhaps it was inevitable that in the pioneering stage, the newness of this teaching would lead to unfortunate excesses. For many centuries, Western culture has been dominated by a realist worldview in which physical matter and the material world are seen as fixed and closed. The world is seen as a “space-time box” and is accessible to our knowing only through empirical investigation by the five senses and through analytical reasoning. Any involvement of a supernatural being, such as God, is at best *indirect* and, in line with the cessationist teaching of many conservative Christians, should be limited to “the age of miracles,” which has passed. This doctrine of cessationism is based on a dispensational theory of God’s using different strategies in different epochs of history. In our present Church age, God no longer operates with the miraculous but rather only through the Scriptures. William DeArteaga, in his book *Quenching the Spirit*, defines idealism as the philosophical position that mind and matter can interact, with mind having some influence over matter (p. 335). The classic expression of an extreme *ideal-ist* view would be sorcery, magic, or alchemy, in which officiants incant formulae in order to change reality magically. DeArteaga himself argues rather for a moderate idealism, which he sees as being in accordance with Scripture. (More about this in chapter

*The prayer of faith and the spoken word do have power and, when used in accord with God’s purposes, they can miraculously change circumstances.*
7. In the face of the strong realist tradition of the Western Church, any ascendancy of idealist thought represents a radical shaking of the foundations. Knee-jerk reactions abound. Positive confession is portrayed as manipulating God, deifying humans, and disregarding God’s sovereignty. It is possible to supply several quotations from Word of Faith teachers’ sermons that are vulnerable to such portrayals. A fine line separates believing that what you say can have an impact on concrete reality from lapsing into claiming things just for one’s own comfort and gratification. It is distressing when speakers “guarantee” material wealth seemingly in direct connection with contributing financially to a particular Christian ministry. Unfortunately, this is a perception that is widespread among people today, based both on limited exposure and on some unbalanced preaching on television. Reality has a way of catching up with those who distort the truth in such a way. It is possible that such overblown claims may seem to

**God is our hope, not a particular key phrase from Scripture.**

“work” for a season, but the ultimate fall and collapse of such extreme teaching is inevitable. We also know that God in His mercy is longsuffering and patient, wanting us to repent.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the prayer of faith and the spoken word do have power and, when used in accord with God’s purposes, they can miraculously change circumstances. Two Scripture references will suffice—Mark 9:23, “All things are possible to him who believes”; and Mark 10:27, “With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.” Naturally the danger exists that faith may be placed on particular historical promises in the Bible that are then automatically transposed to contemporary circumstances in a one-to-one relation (without any confirming quickening of the Spirit’s guidance, often called a rhema word). Ultimately, faith rests securely as a trusting in Christ Jesus; in God the Father, who calls us to covenantal relationship and whose love is unfailing; and in the Holy Spirit, who is our Helper and dependable Guide.

Prosperity

The teaching on prosperity is also is an area fraught with po-
tential pitfalls. In the Protestant Reformation, a spiritualizing tendency abounded. God’s preeminent blessing was the forgiveness of sins, grace for the soul, and spiritual liberation from bondage. Long neglected was the rich Old Testament tradition of an encompassing shalom or peace that includes the promise of land, offspring, and material blessings—sitting under your own fig tree and vine, and the integral concept of salvation in the New Testament, which includes not only salvation for the soul, but physical healing for the body. As a result, money itself is often considered suspect, rather than just the love of money (1 Tim 6:10). Western asceticism and the monastic cult of poverty have further clouded the issue. The Faith movement bucks this trend by teaching that the blessings of Abraham may come to the Gentile peoples through Christ (Gal 3:13–14) and that these include material blessings. Usually, preaching of this nature also emphasizes tithing. Despite some extravagant portrayals, most Word of Faith teachers make it clear that giving from egotistical and selfish motives is unacceptable. Hagin himself denounces the type of faith that is focused on “getting Cadillacs” for oneself. Prosperity is defined as having sufficient for one’s needs and the ability to bless the poor.

The ministry of Oral Roberts was revolutionized by the simple statement from 3 John 2, that God desires for us good health and welfare or prosperity. He later developed the concept of seed-faith, which underscores three principles: God (and not our abilities) is our Source and Provider; Give generously to others—the so-called law of seed time and harvest (or give and it shall be given to you); and, Be expectant in your faith—Expect a miracle! This is not the language of automatic manipulation or mechanical guarantees, although it can sometimes be twisted to sound that way. The reference in Mark 10:29–30 that selfless service in evangelism will bring a hundredfold return is preceded by Jesus’ admonition to the wealthy man (the so-called rich young ruler) to sell his possessions and give to the poor. Human covetousness can take these verses out of context and turn them into a calculating attitude of giving one item in an attempt to receive a hundred back for oneself.

"Expectation" is not the language of automatic manipulation or mechanical guarantees.
Remarkably, Faith teaching here shows a similarity with Liberation theology by acknowledging the importance of material possessions and rejecting an over-spiritualized salvation that focuses only on the soul and the life hereafter. Rightly understood, both stand in stark contrast to secular, materialistic culture and the narcissism of postmodern society.

The last central teaching of the Faith movement may be discussed under the rubric …

A Right to Healing?

With regard to the healing of the body, the Faith movement stands in direct continuity with Classical Pentecostalism. In fact, the recovery of the doctrine of divine healing in evangelical Christianity preceded the Pentecostal movement by a good fifty years, as has been pointed out above. On the fringes of Christianity, divine healing has probably never been absent. Through the Pietist and Holiness movements, physical healing became part of a crucial stream of Christianity. The first advocates were generally skeptical about medical work. In time, the anti-medical

stance of such people as John Alexander Dowie of Zion City, Chicago, Illinois, was replaced by an integral or holistic approach in which medical, psychological, and spiritual aspects were all incorporated, as we see, for example, in the ministry of Francis MacNutt.

The Faith movement represents only one group of a broad spectrum that acknowledges the reality of divine healing today. There is a growing emphasis in all Three Waves of the whole Pentecostal-Charismatic movement that God desires wholeness and health for His children. Sickness and disease are of the devil, and Jesus came to liberate those under demonic influence and to destroy Satan’s evil purposes. The term “Healing in the Atonement,” which correctly links the biblical passages Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 8:17, and 1 Peter 2:24, was originally conceived in anti-medical circles and still carries that baggage. Today its focus is to emphasize that the death of Christ on the cross has consequences not only for our eternal salvation but also for our bodily healing.

The most radical form of the Word of Faith teaching claims absolute victory in this present life.
The reference is to the messianic prophecy in Isaiah that “by His wounds we are healed.”

How this is worked out in practical details brings us to divergencies within the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. The most radical form of the Word of Faith teaching claims absolute victory in this present life. Christians are entitled through Christ’s atoning death to the blessings of Abraham, which include salvation, health, and material prosperity. Physical healing is considered a right of every believer that may be expected and claimed boldly after the devil has been rebuked. Sometimes it is even stated that praying is not necessary. The believer just needs to make a positive confession of faith. Most problematic are the situations in which people are taught that all lingering symptoms of illness are to be denied and not to be treated medically. Unfortunately, there have been examples where this has led to deaths that easily could have been avoided by timely medical treatment. (Denying symptoms is a more extreme approach than that of temporarily disregarding symptoms when one is convinced that this is what God is requiring.) One is often dealing with the hardness of human hearts that have difficulty focusing on the seen rather than the unseen dimension.

Inevitably, a one-sided focus on faith may lead to the loss of acknowledging God’s sovereign freedom. It seems as if God has no choice but to respond to human proclamations and requests. Support for this view is offered from Isaiah 45:11, which in the King James Version states: “Concerning the work of my hands, command ye me.” Modern translations capture the implied irony by rendering it: “Would you command me?” Once more it needs to be said that reality and experience soon trip up those who follow on this path. God, as a personal loving and responsive being, is our hope, not a particular key phrase from Scripture.

Examples of foolhardy and presumptuous faith in fact amount to over-realized eschatology. Claiming total healing as an absolute right in the here and now for every believer denies the element of mystery that remains in our fallen condition. There is a
creative tension between the *already* and the *not yet*, as was explained above. The continued occurrence of death is a conclusive indication that some aspects of fallenness still remain and will be resolved only in the life hereafter.

*The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the Second Coming, and even individual rebirth are the *not yet* becoming the *already* through God’s inbreaking grace and sovereign rule.*

Although this polarity or creative tension may bring some balance, it should nevertheless not come to function as a way to evade the biblical call to prevailing expectation and robust faith. The concept of the *already / not yet* tension itself is helpful, but the major episodes of salvation history illustrate that God works not only *from the already to the not yet*, but regularly does miracles—something totally new, that allows the power of the future to invade the present. Creation is a radical creation out of nothing. The exodus is encircled by the wondrous inflicting of plagues and miraculous deliverances. The incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are all unexpected, apocalyptic events through which God reveals Himself and His majesty. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the Second Coming, and even individual rebirth are the *not yet* becoming the *already* through God’s inbreaking grace and sovereign rule. Paul states that we live by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). Life in the Spirit walks the fine line of ongoing openness to the miraculous on a daily basis.

These insights of radical biblical truth the Word of Faith movement presents to Christianity at large.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter the four major groupings of the Independent Charismatic churches have been discussed. The first two groupings Restorationism and Dominion-minded Charismatics have premillennial and postmillennial perspectives respectively. For differing reasons their impact has decreased. The third grouping, Empowered Evangelicals, has moved away from traditional Pentecostal and Charismatic distinctives but retains a strong ministry of the full range of biblical charisms and openness to the super-
natural realm. They have moved into the position of a new denomina- 
tion as a global Vineyard Fellowship.

The roots and fruits of the Word of Faith movement were probed in the final section. Despite some initial excesses which 
discredited the whole movement, it continues to grow internation-
ally and challenges traditional Christianity with an innovative 
perspective on the role of faith and the spoken word. The pivotal 
position of these churches in the twenty-first century will be ex-
plored further in the next chapter.

Theology with Spirit
The Future of the Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements in the 21st Century
Henry I. Lederle

**crosier** or **crozier** — a symbol of high church office, a staff with a hooked end stylistically representing a shepherd’s crook. The crosier staff may have a stylized cross instead of a hooked end, particularly some of the oldest known examples. Christian traditions that use the symbol as part of their ceremonial garments, often with the miter and episcopal ring, include Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox churches, the Anglican Communion, some Lutheran churches, and the Church of God in Christ.

**cimmerian** — perpetually dark and gloomy. In Greek mythology, the Cimmerians dwelt in a land of perpetual darkness.


**short shrift** — a rushed sacramental confession, such as immediately preceding execution. *Shrift* is an archaic term for the confessional aspect of Last Rites as practiced in sacramental Christian traditions such as Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Eastern Orthodoxy. The phrase *short shrift* has come to widespread use as a metaphor for that which is quickly dismissed.

Alister McGrath, an Anglican priest, theologian, and Christian apologist, is currently Professor of Theology, Ministry, and Education at Kings College London and Head of the Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture. He was previously Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Oxford, and was principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford until 2005. McGrath is noted for his work in historical, systematic, and scientific theology, as well as his writings on apologetics and his opposition to anti-religionism. He holds both a DPhil (in molecular biophysics) and an earned Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Oxford. His *The Passionate Intellect* is an interesting and readable offering for those wishing to understand or defend the intellectual viability of the historic Christian faith. Scholars and clergy alike as well as informed laity will benefit from reading it. This collection of diverse essays, lectures, and presentation or talks is divided into two parts, “The Purpose, Place, and Relevance of Christian Theology,” and “Engaging with Our Culture.” *The Passionate Intellect* is well written in a warm, personal style but has a “take no prisoners” approach to its opponents. It is scholarly without being pedantic and witty without being trite. Overall, it’s both an enjoyable and informative read.

In 2006 the movement now widely known as the new atheism exploded on the cultural scene in an aggressive manner. In this vein, Richard Dawkins’s *The God Delusion* (2006) and Christopher Hitchens’s *God is Not Great* (2007) created a quite stir. Debate often centered on the rationality of faith and the coherence of the Christian vision of reality. For the new atheists Christianity represents an antiquated way of explaining things that cannot be accepted in the modern scientific age. For example Hitchens has
declared that since the invention of the telescope and the microscope religion “no longer offers an explanation of anything important.” In large part, *The Passionate Intellect* (McGrath has debated Dawkins publically several times) responds to such statements and presents a view of an exciting and stimulating version of intellectual Christianity. McGrath thinks Christians can and should be well prepared to respond to any and all intellectual challenges from today’s culture (cp. 1 Pet 3:15). Too many Christians seem to feel intimidated by atheists; but, the fact is that Chris-

**McGrath thinks Christians can and should be well prepared to respond to any and all intellectual challenges from today’s culture.**

...tian thought is more than strong enough to stand up to the task of refuting them. McGrath concurs with the statement of C.S. Lewis that, “I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen—not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else.”

McGrath suggests the defense of the intellectual credibility of Christianity has become increasingly important in recent years, in part due to the rise of the new atheism. Christians must see themselves as standard-bearers for a vibrant faith. Accordingly, they must expand our vision of the Christian gospel. The need for a Christian presence and voice in our culture has never been greater. Apologetics, or rationally defending the faith, has become a critical task for all believers. In order to do so effectively, believers need to know the Bible, Christian history and tradition, and be able to reason calmly and clearly with doubters.

The new atheists tend to portray the Christian view of the natural world as naïve and unscientific. However, McGrath persuasively argues, that is not at all true. Some seem to want a war between religion and science. In fact, historically some of the greatest scientists have been devout Christians. A problem between the two only arises today when science and/or religion forget their place and try to do the other’s proper work. Science deals with observable phenomena of the natural world but has no authority in the realm of metaphysics or religion. Religion deals with ultimate values and purpose but is not authorized to make scientific pronouncements. McGrath adheres to the idea that true religion and true science are completely compatible. The personal testimony (included in this book) of Alister McGrath, once an
atheist and himself a scientist coming to faith in Christ and be-
coming a leading theologian is a powerful example of that possi-
bility.

McGrath explains that Dawkins and his followers among the
new atheists tend to make several errors. First, they fail to under-
stand the Christian notion of “God.” They challenge Christians to
prove God exists, and then accuse them of failing. However,
McGrath argues that Christians don’t believe God is “entity”
within the world order that stands alongside other smaller beings.
God is the source, ground, and explanation of all that exists. God
is the creator of all things, not a member of this class of things
that can be called out and lined up for inspection. The God that
Dawkins and the atheists don’t believe in is not the God of the
Bible and of the Christian faith anyway.

Second, the new atheists often smuggle metaphysics into sci-
ence when they try to use science to disprove God’s existence.
Real science is a neutral study of the phenomena of nature. When
anyone tries to use science to go beyond that realm, that is, into
metaphysics, they bring in their own preconceived ideas about
the nature of reality. That’s an unscientific step! Of course, Chris-
tians say that one’s attitude toward the reality of God is a matter
of faith. Nevertheless, Christians rightly argue that faith in God is
an “empirical fit” with the verifiable discoveries of science. In
other words, there’s nothing necessarily unscientific about faith
in God.

Third, the new atheism is mistaken to take a dogmatic view of
science. It argues that science is able to explain, or at least has the
potential to explain, everything in the universe, and then sets it up

The new atheism is mistaken when it takes a
dogmatic view of science.

as a rival to religion. Actually, science can only explain natural
properties or phenomena. There are actually different levels of
explanation for anything. Physics, chemistry, biology, and so on,
can explain the composition of a cake but this wouldn’t tell
whether it was baked to celebrate a birthday. Science can tell us
about the composition of the natural world but not about its pur-
pose. That’s the realm of religion.

Fourth, the new atheists often rely on shoddy science for their
criticisms of Christians. A major example is Richard Dawkins. In
his *Selfish Gene* he posited a human gene which he called a
“meme” that he claims is responsible for why people believe in God. It’s all in the genes! The problem with memes is that they don’t exist. No one has ever been able to find them—not even Dawkins. However, he and other new atheists will often use the meme argument to explain why people insist on believing in God. Other scientists, even other honest atheist scientists, have called memes a delusion! This is also an example of why it is important for Christians to appreciate the value and verity of true science.

McGrath also takes on the relation of religion and violence. Hitchens’s God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything claims that religion is to blame for the bad and evil in the world. Of course, Hitchens’s work has been roundly criticized for ignoring all the evidence that contradicts his claim while emphasizing that which appears to confirm it. However, this “religion is poison” position plays on the fears of today’s Western culture. The new atheists use the 9/11 attack by fanatic Muslim jihadists to press their point. However, studies on terrorism have actually indicated that terrorism is politically motivated rather than religiously motivated. If anything, religious devotees are often among the most victimized by terrorist violence. Communism in Eastern Europe is an example of politically motivated violence against religious groups. Here the evidence of history indicates that atheists who rose to political power used their position to violently attack people of faith. McGrath thus exposes the hypocrisy of Hitchens’s main thesis.

Christians, McGrath reminds, believe that sin is a problem in human nature. This explains how some people will use politics or religion or economics (or almost any other excuse) to commit atrocious acts against other human beings. This is true of individuals and governments as well as other groups and organizations. Sometimes it has been true of religions too, including Christianity. However, the vast majority of believers insist that this kind of behavior is a misuse of their religious faith. In any case, it is apparent that fanaticism generates violence by terrorist groups—not religion or politics per se.

The Passionate Intellect sees Christian theology as one of the most intellectually stimulating and exciting subjects of study. It is rich in resources for the life of faith and the ministry of the
Church. As the title implies, it has the capacity to excite, inspire, and illuminate the human intellect, and to give it a new passion and focus. This book is an intellectual defense of the place of theology in the Christian life, and also a plea for Christians to take the life of the mind seriously. However, it is not a systematic treatise on theology or demonstration of apologetics. As with any collection of originally unrelated essays, lectures, presentations, and talks, there’s some noticeable disjointedness evident in *The Passionate Intellect*. However, the chapters are not unconnected and actually flow well enough. Endnotes and an Index are helpful aids.

McGrath skillfully translates his own deep learning into a delightfully accessible and enjoyable reading experience. *The Passionate Intellect* might be a great gift for a friend or relative struggling with his or her faith, especially if they are experiencing intellectual misgivings. Reading it as a former agnostic myself, I certainly experienced the soul-stirring thrill of a sharp, devout mind debunking the old familiar, dubious claims against Christianity’s intellectual coherence and credibility.

*Reviewed by Tony Richie*


*Across the Spectrum* contains seventeen short chapters which give a good introduction to a variety of debates spanning across the topics of systematic theology including: biblical inerrancy, divine providence, divine foreknowledge, how to interpret the Genesis creation narratives, the image of God, the relation of Christ’s human and divine natures, models of the atonement, Calvinism and Arminianism (including a chapter on eternal security), sanctification, the destiny of the unevangelized, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the presence of charismatic gifts today, women in ministry, the millennium, and hell. The book is concerned specifically with evangelical theology, particularly concerns raised in the American context, therefore the book does not aim to dis-
cuss every conclusion that the Christian traditions have taken on the topics covered. So, for example, the chapter on “The Lord’s Supper Debate” does not discuss the transubstantiation view, since this view is not held by evangelical theologians. Each chapter begins by briefly introducing questions that have lead to the debate and then notes the consensus among the diverse views. The authors also briefly note views that contrast with these evangelical proposals. The majority of each chapter discusses the biblical and theological arguments that support each viewpoint while also responding to potential objections to each viewpoint. The “Further Reading” sections at the end of each chapter and the glossary at the end of the book well serve students who seek to do further research on these topics.

This 2009 publication is a revision of the book as first published in 2002. The major changes from the first edition involve the reduction of a chapter on the “Human Constitution Debate” (e.g., body, soul, spirit) down to a section in the appendix, the expansion of the chapter on divine foreknowledge to distinguish “The Arminian View” from “The Calvinist View,” and the addition of a very helpful appendix (formerly available online), which very briefly introduces the diverse evangelical approaches to the following topics: theological method, models of the Trinity, the extent of Noah’s flood, the relation of wives to their husbands, Christians and politics, what happens to babies who die, baptism in the Holy Spirit (as well as its relation to speaking in tongues), the relation of Christians and demons, how to interpret the book of revelation, the timing of Jesus return (with respect to Preterism and the ‘rapture’) and, (as noted above) what constitutes humanity. Between the main chapters and the appendix, the book already offers a wealth of information. The book could be further strengthened by expanding the chapter on divine foreknowledge to consider additional attributes of God as well as by adding a discussion of the diverse evangelical views regarding original sin, the historicity of Adam and Eve, and forms of church governance.

Across the Spectrum is helpful for anyone looking for a brief outline of the debates in evangelical theology. The format succeeds at informing people at more than their own presuppositions, even though it is limited to focusing on evangelical theology. In a classroom format, the book could serve well as a supplement to a full introduction to Christian theology. One strength of the book is that it clearly illustrates how evangelicalism in-
cludes diversity on many theological topics (however, those who would define evangelical theology very narrowly might question if a few of the viewpoints in this book are in fact reflective of evangelical theology). Recognizing these strengths, a potential hazard of the book is that, if used alone, a person could read the book and conclude that theologians are only busy debating many topics and miss the depth of the key teachings of Christianity that are found within the consensus of the Church.

Reviewed by Andrew K. Gabriel.

Publisher’s page: www.bakeracademic.com/Book.asp?isbn=978-0-8010-3793-1
Preview this book: books.google.com/books?id=4tj2N1QaaO4C


This work is the product of a teacher and scholar’s lifetime experience. Eddie Gibbs has taught at Fuller for many years, and before that had extensive experience in England. He has intimate knowledge of the development of both church growth and missional thinking, and has been a studied observed of both Fresh Expression and Emerging Church. The result is this work in which he masterfully grasps and communicates the compass of his subject, presented in simple yet profound prose. I found reading this to be quite compulsive, bringing both insight and spiritual enrichment.

Gibb explores the thesis, ‘There are five megatrends impacting the churches of the West. These are the transition from modernity to postmodernity; the transition from the industrial to the information age; the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom contexts; the transition from production initiatives to consumer awareness; and the transition from religious identity to spiritual exploration’ (p 19).

To these five I would add a sixth: the transition from an understanding of personhood defined by (i) complex, plural relationships; towards personhood perceived in terms of (ii) frag-
mented individualism.

This 6th megatrend is amplified by each of the 5 megatrends that Gibbs identifies and describes. The trend from modernity to postmodernity reduces descriptors and definitions that supported societal traditions and identities, further reinforced by the retreat of people from discursive interface face-to-face into detached interaction at information terminals. The diminution of awareness towards the traditions of Christendom and the increase of the pursuit of consumption prompts an easing away from the essence of Judaeo-Christian traditions and their emphasis on plural, organic identity.

But community itself as an emphasis is not enough. Many who have experienced the too often introspective emphasis on relationships of the Charismatic renewal of the 1980’s can bear witness to how community can turn in on itself. An emphasis on being relational must also be intentionally missional. Gibbs observes that one identified factor of succeeding church is a stress upon, ‘Communitas Not Community: The most vigorous forms of community are those that come together in the context of a shared ordeal or those that define themselves as a group with a mission that lies beyond themselves—thus initiating a risky journey’ (p 36).

In looking at new attempts in mission and outreach, Gibbs opines that these ‘will only gain significance as they reach out to the de-churched and never-churched segments of the population, rather than providing the latest attraction for bored, frustrated, or angry current churchgoers. They also need to be strongly in evidence in urban contexts, recognizing that our culture is driven by urban values and images, with suburbia increasingly becoming culturally marginalized’ (p 44).

Gibbs reappraises the nature of effective leadership in a postmodern environment, stressing the role of the leader as a catalyst, encouraging creative thinking and initiative. In the post-Christendom environment, churches need to recognized that they have not yet arrived, but are to move forward experimentally in mission. A focus on place needs to be replaced by a focus on people; a community of people on pilgrimage.

This book is genuinely informative, not prescriptive. It will help you address the issues yourself. Read it.
The name of John Stott is widely known in the evangelical world. He was one of the most respected leaders in Christianity. For many years he served as pastor of All Souls Church in London, England. The thing that made him well-known to the wider Christian world was his writing. Dr. Stott was certainly one of the most prolific evangelical writers prior to his death in July 2011. *The Radical Disciple* is his last published book.

This is one of Stott’s shorter books; however, while it is relatively short in length it is not short on substance. This book contains the words of a man who has thought much about what it means to be a Christian and what is important in the Christian life. In *The Radical Disciple* Stott addresses eight areas of discipleship that he feels are often neglected but need to be taken seriously (pg. 16). The topics that he covers are: nonconformity, Christlikeness, maturity, creation care, simplicity, balance, dependence, and death.

In chapter one, “Nonconformity,” Stott warns Christians about being like the world. Specifically, he addresses the challenges of pluralism, materialism, relativism, and narcissism. After telling us what we should not conform to the author tells us whom we should conform to: we are to be like Christ. In chapter two, “Christlikeness,” Stott tells us that we are to be like Jesus in His incarnation, service, love, patient endurance, and mission. In this chapter he also tells us that suffering helps us to be like Christ, that the effectiveness of our evangelism is related to how much like Christ we are, and that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary in order for us to be like Christ. Chapter three, “Maturity,” deals with the need for the growth of the believer. Christians need to have some spiritual substance. One may be surprised to see
chapter four, “Creation Care,” included in this book. While concern for the environment is not a subject we frequently hear in the church, it is a subject that the scriptures address. “Simplicity” is the subject of chapter five. In this chapter Stott reproduces a rather long document called “The Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle.” This document came out of The International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle and covers topics such as these: the church as the new community, the need for a simple personal lifestyle, international development, justice and politics, evangelism, and the Lord’s return. Chapter six is titled, “Balance” and here Stott looks at a number of images in Scripture that refer to believers: babies, living stones, holy priests, God’s own people, aliens and strangers, and servants. He tells us what can be learned from these images regarding the kind of people we are to be. Chapter seven is “Dependence” and in this chapter Stott tells us that dependence is the only appropriate attitude for the radical disciple (pg. 109). This is a very personal chapter in which the author shares a very difficult time in his own life. Chapter eight is “Death,” in this chapter Stott traces the themes of death and life as they relate to salvation, discipleship, mission, persecution, martyrdom, and mortality. In all of them, he says, death leads to life.

There are a number of things that impressed me about this book. First, was Stott’s assessment of the “Christian scene in the world today,” in chapter three (pg. 38). He described it as “growth without maturity” (pg. 38). Stott then cited other Christian leaders whose remarks supported his assessment of the situation. This lack of maturity manifests itself in doctrinal shallowness and aberrant behavior. Stott reminds us that the mission of the church is not just to make converts but rather to make disciples, who are mature in Christ.

The second thing that impressed me about this book was Stott’s vulnerability in chapter seven. In this chapter he recounts a fall that resulted in him receiving a hip replacement. He found himself helpless on the floor and dependent on others. The aftermath of the accident and his subsequent surgery took its toll on him. He experienced disorientation and hallucinations (pg. 103). He was also moved emotionally. His usual calm reserve gave

“Dependence is the only appropriate attitude for the radical disciple.”
— John Stott
way to times of weeping (pg. 103-104). I was impressed that a man of the spiritual stature of John Stott would publicly admit this. It is certainly nothing to be ashamed of but he did not have to volunteer this information. He did it to help teach us a lesson about dependence.

The last thing that I will say about this book is that John Stott knew that this one would be his last. The notes on the back cover describe it as “his farewell address to the worldwide church.” In chapter eight he states “the end is in sight” (pg. 128), and on page 130 he mentions “reflecting on death and seeking to prepare for it.” The postscript of the book is titled “Farewell.” Like Paul of old he knew that his pen would soon be stilled and so for one last time he writes to pass on some parting instructions to encourage and instruct succeeding generations of believers. The last line of the postscript is “Once again, farewell!” (pg. 137).

The apostle Paul wrote that God gave to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11). John Stott was without question one of the teachers that the Lord gave to the body of Christ. Dr. Stott has gone to be with the Lord but he has left behind for us a rich legacy of biblical exposition. Read his final words in The Radical Disciple.

Reviewed by John Lathrop

Publisher’s page:
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John Wyckoff’s 1990 Ph.D. dissertation has finally come to print and is long overdue. In fact, it is perplexing how a scholarly treatise on such an intriguing topic was not snatched up by a publishing house in search of book candidates on controversial topics of perennial interest. Pneuma and Logos is just such a book. It sharply focuses on a hermeneutical question that has commanded the attention of church fathers and theologians from the earliest times of theological reflection in the
Church. Simply put the question is, “Does the Holy Spirit have a role to play in the interpretive process called hermeneutics?” A necessary follow-up question, if the first is answered in the affirmative, is “How and to what extent does the Holy Spirit facilitate a person’s understanding of the Scriptures?”

Scholars and teachers interested in biblical hermeneutics are well aware that the central focus of this book is one well worth considering, if for no other reason than the Bible itself raises the question in passages like 1 Cor 2:10-15 and 2 Cor 5:5-17, not to mention John’s gospel where the “teaching” function of the Holy Spirit is amply attested. Oddly, seldom do hermeneutical textbooks contain a substantive treatment of the question at hand. In his introduction to the problem, Wyckoff describes a paradox. Scholars representing a wide spectrum of Christian tradition recognize the importance and challenges of biblical hermeneutics. Many of these hold to a high view of Scripture as the inspired Word of God and posit an active role of the Holy Spirit in its production. Yet pneumatology has received short shrift when it comes to hermeneutical reflection. Our author seeks not only to speak to this neglect, but make a major move toward remedying it.

In the space of five compact and well constructed chapters, Wyckoff conducts a historically-informed exercise in philosophical theology around the issue of the Holy Spirit’s relationship to biblical hermeneutics. Chapter one clearly states and defines the nature of the problem, establishes the need for the present study, circumscribes its scope and describes its internal organization. Admittedly the complex and multifaceted character of hermeneutics will raise a host of issues and questions beyond the scope of this book, but the author is determined to stay focused on the primary question which he argues deserves our singular attention.

Chapter two surveys the history of biblical interpretation from Early Church to the Reformation; the Reformation to the Enlightenment; and the Enlightenment to mid-twentieth century.

As a teacher I thoroughly enjoyed this helpful historical sur-
vey of the Church’s consideration of the Holy Spirit’s relationship to hermeneutics because it also serves as a primer to the field of historical hermeneutics in general. It provides a needed supplement to most textbooks in hermeneutics. Wyckoff conducts an overview of the major schools of biblical interpretation, their major figures and a succinct statement of their contribution to the field. Students will especially appreciate the summaries that appear after each historical period and the author’s conclusions at the end of the chapter. He lingers over major figures such as Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Turretin, Schleiermacher, Barth etc. to highlight their specific contributions to hermeneutics and specifically how they related the Spirit to a believer’s understanding of Scripture. Numerous choice quotes from the early Church Fathers and theologians demonstrate their high view of Scripture owing to their conviction of its divine origin and inspiration. It is this theological conviction which naturally led to their hermeneutical consideration of how the Holy Spirit continues to function as a mediator of Divine truth through the Scriptures. Nevertheless, while most affirmed this role of the Holy Spirit, some denied or de-emphasized it. The author provides sharp insight into why this was so by revealing the theological, philosophical and epistemological presuppositions at work.

The historical background supplied by Chapter two is just the foundation and perspective needed to evaluate contemporary scholars in their treatment of this same question. Wyckoff samples widely from a broad stream of Christian tradition, including numerous Protestant and Catholic scholars. Nevertheless, he sharpens his focus on evangelical scholars who view the Scripture as the work of the Holy Spirit through inspiration. The question to examine is whether these same scholars posit a role for the Spirit in the hermeneutical process. He broadly divides these scholars into two camps: those that deny or limit the Holy Spirit’s role and those that affirm and emphasize it. Once again, which camp one finds oneself in depends on theological and philosophi-

**Wyckoff conducts a historically-informed exercise in philosophical theology around the issue of the Holy Spirit’s relationship to biblical hermeneutics.**
cal presuppositions regarding the nature of Scripture itself and how one understands what transpires when a person reads or seeks to understand it. Our author exposes us to scholars who all, to one degree or another, affirm that the Holy Spirit has a place at the hermeneutical table. However, they fail to agree concerning his portion and exact placement. Wyckoff next explores why these scholars posit the necessity of the Spirit in the hermeneutical enterprise. The answer to the question is found in the sinfulness of man and its inherent limitations; limitations that are both ontological and epistemological and must be overcome if God is to communicate his divine truth. What follows is a carefully nuanced theological discussion of the epistemological role of the Spirit as it relates to and merges with the doctrines of divine inspiration and illumination by the Spirit. The consensus that emerges is one that clearly affirms the Spirit’s contemporary role in aiding humanity in understanding the Scriptures. What becomes equally clear is that, due to the transcendent reality being considered, scholars find it nearly impossible to conceptualize or describe this role with any specificity. Dr. Wyckoff should be

**Hermeneutics is fundamentally pneumatic.**

commended for venturing out and working toward conceptualization no matter how elusive or difficult.

Wyckoff devotes the lion’s share of Chapter three to hermeneutical questions and controversial issues that erupt when asking, “If the Holy Spirit assists the reader in understanding Scripture, ...how does the message differ from that understood by ordinary means?” (p.65). The student of hermeneutics is introduced to such issues as the *sensus plenior* and its relationship to the message intended by the author, the challenges of hermeneutical methods that deny the need or relevance of original authorial intent, and mediating positions that seek to affirm the importance of both the author’s meaning and the “God-intended meaning” supplied by the Spirit. Some may balk at the author’s attempt to find a satisfactory position that allows for “special revelation” mediated by the Spirit, one which the author “may or may not have fully understood.” Our anxiety should subside when we read Wyckoff’s qualifier. Such special revelation via the Spirit enables the interpreter “to gain fresh insight into the meaning of the text”... but “this does not include new revelation” that is divorced from and alien to the meaning of the text originally intended by the
biblical author. Nevertheless, our author works hard to articulate the character of this “special revelation.” A variety of terminology is used: “ultracognitive... beyond ordinary human comprehension.” It is what Torrance called “Supreme Truth” that constitutes Scripture’s “spiritual meaning.” It communicates an experiential knowledge of the heart (p.72) which is inherently spiritual (pneumatikos), calling for the mediatory role of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately the illumination via the Spirit communicates the person and work of Christ himself. Consistent with Johannine pneumatology, the Spirit’s illumination is fundamentally Christocentric.

Even if convinced that the Spirit has the hermeneutical role described above, the question of how still remains. Our author devotes most of the remaining two chapters in responding to the challenge of explaining how the Spirit provides illumination. While admitting he is seeking to explain a “mystery,” he nonetheless asserts that imperfect articulation is better than none at all. And so Wyckoff looks to the metaphors of Scripture itself as a window into the mystery of pneumatic activity in the hermeneutical task. He lists such verbal metaphors as “enlightening”(Eph 1:19), “guiding” (Jn 16:13) and “unveiling” (2Cor 3:12) as instructive and discusses models that help conceptualize how the Spirit conveys or transmits understanding. After critiquing and rejecting two inferior models, the author adopts the teacher metaphor as the most helpful and instructive. His choice is prompted by the prevalence of this metaphor in Scripture and the epistemological contexts that surround it. It also underscores the cooperative participation between interpreter and the Holy Spirit in the hermeneutical process. The testimony of numerous scholars establishes a broad consensus that it is a collaborative effort that does not marginalize the input and involvement of the Holy Spirit or the interpreter. Moreover, the task is synergistic in the fact that Spirit and his illumination works “through the normal processes of human understanding.” These are the critical procedures of
biblical exegesis and hermeneutical principles. Among these principles the one that I believe is ripe for elaboration and further reflection is “responsiveness.” This principle points to the Spirit’s impact on the reader volitionally. What is not completely clear is whether the reader’s response is an internal or external one, and whether it is a prerequisite for illumination or its attendant result.

Who are candidates for the Spirit’s illumination of Scripture? Believers of course are the primary recipients, Wyckoff acknowledges, but what about non-believers? His answer is one that requires careful theological analysis or readers might be led to false conclusions; perhaps by what is not stated more than what is. The author states plainly that some measure of the Spirit’s enlightenment must be available to unbelievers or the gospel message would then have remained veiled and hidden from their understanding. How then could they be converted? Confusion may result when we fail to distinguish contexts. Unbelievers confronted with the gospel on the way to conversion, are not in the same situation as believers, regenerated by the Spirit, seeking to understand God’s Word.

Wyckoff’s most novel and original work is clearly found in Chapter four where he presents a model and method for conceptualizing the work of the Spirit in the process of interpretation. Here is where he combines models of teaching gleaned from educational theory with the teacher metaphor for the work of the Spirit found in Scripture. Educators acknowledge three basic teaching/learning paradigms: authoritative, laissez-faire and facilitator. Our author carefully describes the role of the teacher, the mode and manner of teaching, and the anticipated outcomes or results under each paradigm. He then explores how one would view the work of the Spirit as teacher under each paradigm as it relates to the scripture-reader and the spiritual results of that educational transaction. The teaching/learning paradigm of facilitator is shown to be most reflective of the Spirit’s work in the collaborative hermeneutical enterprise previously discussed. Educators and theologians alike will resonate with his conclusion that this paradigm facilitates learning that results in a higher order of knowledge, one that is both experiential and transformational.

John Wyckoff has done the Church a great service in fostering
theological and hermeneutical reflection on a timeless topic of continuing relevance. Pentecostals and charismatics, in particular, ought to be grateful for his strong insistence that hermeneutics is fundamentally pneumatic; the Spirit retaining an active role in the interpretive process, one that is in continuity with (albeit distinct from) his inspiration of the Scriptures. Moreover, our author is to be congratulated for his courage to deal with the tough and sticky hermeneutical and theological questions that arise when one seeks to articulate the transcendent reality and work of the Spirit. In Chapter five he summarizes the results of his study with a humble acknowledgement of its limits and anticipates some criticism that is sure to follow. Nevertheless, he has pushed us forward in theological and hermeneutical reflection and refined and clarified our task of defining the Spirit’s role in biblical interpretation. He has given us a workable model (Spirit as Teacher) that helps, but does not exhaust the nature of the task. He has even dared broach the subject of how the Spirit’s illumination works. The most daring aspect of his proposal is to distinguish interpretation through normal human intellect on the one hand, and that aided by the Spirit’s illumination on the other. In the latter he hints at a different epistemology that produces not only a “contemporary significance” of Scripture, but a divine-human transaction whereby the reader-interpreter experiences the being of God himself. As controversial and abstract as this proposal may be, it is one cogently argued within the parameters of theological orthodoxy and anticipated or confirmed by more than a few theologians.

Wyckoff is his own best critic and he ends his work with suggestions to refine and amend his proposal. The reader is challenged not only to critique that proposal, but through additional research, to refine it or even offer one of their own. In *Pneuma and Logos*, Dr. Wyckoff has presented us with an illuminating work, an engaging proposal and a provocative challenge.

*Reviewed by James D. Hernando*

Trajectories in the Book of Acts is an anthology of fifteen essays by fifteen different writers in honor of John Wesley Wyckoff, who in 2010, completed thirty-four years as Professor of Bible and Theology at Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, where he is still actively teaching. Wyckoff re-introduced biblical hermeneutics into the curriculum in 1978 and laid great emphasis upon the teaching of Biblical Theology. During his tenure, Wyckoff has taught extensively on the New Testament book of Acts and it has became the subject of much of his work in biblical interpretation. It is by virtue of his great attention to Acts that the essayists chose their title. By the use of the term “trajectories” the different writers refer to the paths or “lines of development” that Wyckoff followed to make clear Luke’s intent when he wrote Acts of [the] Apostles.

The different contributors are both former students of Wyckoff and fellow academic colleagues both within and without the Assemblies of God affiliation of which Wyckoff is an ordained minister. Byron D. Klaus, the President of Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri, supplies a forward to the work edited by Alexander, May, and Reid, all former students of Wyckoff.

This reviewer does not know John W. Wyckoff personally, he is well familiar with his reputation as a skilled biblical interpreter and with his seminal work, Pneuma and Logos: The Holy Spirit in Biblical Hermeneutics (Wyckoff’s Ph.D. dissertation, originally). It is also difficult to ascertain which of the essays written by former students reflect Wyckoff’s own investigations and lectures in the area of biblical interpretation. There are statements honoring Wyckoff’s work but nothing said about his influence upon their own personal reflections. There is no question about the inspiration he left upon those writers.

Chapter one, written by Brue E. Rosdahl, furnishes a brief biography of Wyckoff and supplies a summary of Wyckoff’s subsequent ministry and theological “positions” leading to his eventual concentration in biblical theology and biblical hermeneutics. Wyckoff holds to basic “reformed” convictions: the unity of the Biblical witness, its covenantal theme, and the sovereignty of Christ Jesus along with the leading power of the Holy Spirit in faith and life.

In one way or another, all the essays explore avenues of biblical interpretation that Wyckoff opened up in understanding Luke’s intentions when he related the spread of the gospel in Acts
of [the] Apostles. The one exception is the contribution by Roger Stronstad, a good friend of Wyckoff’s who has taught for many years at Regent College and Summit Pacific College, both in British Columbia. Stronstad reiterated his perception of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, as recorded by Luke in Acts, as having more of a vocational significance than a soteriological one. He first expressed this understanding in his 1984 book The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke (Hendrickson, 1984, pp. 1,12,83). Other essays opened some doors of understanding not before apparent to this reviewer and forcing this reviewer to re-read both Luke and Acts. A former student of Wyckoff’s, Mario Escabedo II, who, himself teaches at Southwestern Assembly of God University, explored Luke’s ecphrastic vocabulary and phraseology which has a visual effect as much as it has an acoustical or auditory one. Rob Starner, also a colleague of Wyckoff and Escabedo at SAGU, investigated passages in Luke, Acts, and Hebrews that were not just similar to each other but were triplicates of each other. Starner proposes that Luke and Paul were both co-laborers and collaborators.

Three of the contributors represented the Reformed Church in America, the Roman Catholic Church, the National Baptist. Two were identified as Non-Denominational. One of the latter, Janet Meyer Everts, teamed with Rachel Schutte Baird (Reformed Church in America), in examining Acts 2:17-18, and its influence on women in ministry. They began with the impact of Phoebe Palmer upon Pentecostal woman ministers and inductively connected them with the women mentioned not only in Luke’s gospel but also in Acts 2:17-18 and Paul’s letters, thus legitimizing the role of women in evangelism and teaching. Craig Keener, a National Baptist, concentrated on Acts 19:9 and Paul’s “academic” (P.56), ministry which attracted Greek listeners along with Jewish ones, after being rejected in the synagogue in Corinth. “Paul’s ‘Christ-centered academic ministry in Acts 19:9 impacted the local culture, showing that the gospel message can succeed wherever open and intelligent dialogue is available” (p.56).

Robert G. Reid, one of the editors of the book, an associate pastor of the non-denominational Rock-Point Church in Flower Mound, Texas, did “An Imperial-Critical Reading of Acts 2” in which he focused upon the statements of Christ being Lord, Savior, and Son of God, in Peter’s sermon at Pentecost as presenting an “alternative empire”—the “empire of God” (p.23), thus sub-
verting “Rome and its most powerful instrument of subjugation—crucifixion” (p.23). He follows this trajectory of study on through by examining Paul’s preaching and teaching as recorded throughout Acts.

Probably the most interesting to this reviewer was the contribution made by James B. Shelton, a Roman Catholic and Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at Oral Roberts University. He focused upon a rhetorical “oddity” which lent itself to an intertextual study of Paul’s and Luke’s writings. The oddity was that of the frequent use of the parresia word-group in Acts and in Paul’s writings. Often accompanied by “meta”, it refers to boldness of speech or address. “Boldness in the Holy Spirit is the source of the essential attributes of Luke’s church” (p.311).

Each of the foregoing five were as familiar with the pioneering work of John Wyckoff as any of Wyckoff’s fellow Assemblies of God scholars. They praised his pioneering work in biblical hermeneutics and biblical theology.

This reviewer did leave some out in this review, such as Paul Alexander, Jeff C. Magruder, Roger D. Cotton, James D. Hernando, Byron Klaus, Robert Menzies, and Jordan May. The purpose was not to neglect them but to highlight a select few so as to “tease” the prospective reader to get into this very well-done work of 373 pages. Scholarly, but generally easy to follow, the book includes brief statements of who the contributors are, lists of the abbreviations used, an index of literary references, and an author index. There was one contribution in Trajectories in the Book of Acts that interfaced Acts 13:47 with Isaiah 49:6. Dr. May’s discussion on the use of the Old Testament within the New, particularly Luke-Acts, was not the easiest to follow until close to the end of the essay. It was, nevertheless, invaluable for its insights on how prophecy has impact upon the Gospel of Christ Jesus. The book is well-worth reading for both student and for the man on the field, particularly the preacher and evangelist.

Reviewed by Woodrow E. Walton

Every time I read N. T. Wright I come away edified, instructed, inspired, and even transformed. This book is no exception. As in much if not all of his other work (I am reluctant to be emphatic about the all since I do not want to give the misleading impression that I have read all of Wright’s books—I do not think that I will live long enough to do that, especially since the former bishop of Durham writes books faster than I can read!), Jesus is lifted up; the benefit of this book is that we also get a glimpse of how Wright sees St. Paul lifting Jesus up as well. Let me explain through a cursory overview of the two parts of this book.

As a product of the nineteenth annual Wheaton Theology Conference (at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois) held in April 2010, the volume features eight chapters responding to the work of the newly appointed chair of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews. Half engage Wright’s focus on Jesus (in part I) while the other half interact with Wright’s understanding of Paul (part II). Each chapter includes a brief rejoinder by Wright at the end, while each part concludes with a lengthier reflection by Wright on whither historical Jesus and whither Pauline studies in the life of the church, respectively (in part I on Jesus, quite a bit lengthier—about 45 pages worth, the longest chapter of the book). To be sure, the conference organizers had to be selective in inviting respondents to Wright’s work, so the essayists engage Wright’s corpus from their respective vantage points.

For instance, Marianne Meye Thompson (Fuller Theological Seminary) probes the relative absence of the Fourth Gospel in Wright’s christology that has so far been the focus of his multi-volume *Christian Origins and the Question of God* series, while Richard Hays (Duke Divinity School) takes up methodological questions (in dialogue with Karl Barth and Hans Frei, among others) in Wright’s quest for the historical Jesus. The contemporary socio-economic relevance of Wright’s understanding of Jesus’ inauguration of the reign of God is dialogically and creatively presented by Sylvia Keesmaat (Institute for Christian Stud-
ies and Toronto School of Theology) and Brian Walsh (University of Toronto). Jesus’ eschatology is also discussed by Nicholas Perrin (Wheaton College) vis-à-vis the ethics of the reign of God. On the Pauline side, topics such as the gospel and of the righteousness of God (Edith Humphrey, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), the doctrine of the church in relationship to “Emerging” ecclesiology (Jeremy Begbie, Duke University), St. Paul’s eschatology (Markus Bockmuehl, University of Oxford), and the Reformation doctrine of justification (Kevin Vanhoozer, Wheaton College) are taken up. Each of the authors writes insightfully and engages with the broad spectrum of relevant scholarship, while the back-and-forth “theological dialogue with N. T. Wright” (the book’s subtitle) effectively keeps readers tuned in.

As Vanhoozer points out, Wright’s body of scholarship is slowly but surely initiating a paradigm change, not just in historical Jesus or historical Paul scholarship but also in the fields of New Testament Studies and even of historical, dogmatic/doctrinal, and systematic theology. Of course, this is happening in tandem with other developments such as postliberal theology and the New Perspective on Paul initiatives, the latter especially to which Wright has made his own substantive, even if also critical, contributions. The result, methodologically, is a sure-footed via media between conservativism and liberalism, between orthodoxy and historicism, between modernism and postmodernism, between biblical theology and theological interpretation, etc. More importantly, it is precisely in and through a careful rereading of the New Testament in particular and the biblical canon as a whole that Wright is forging a fresh understanding of the Gospel in Jesus Christ as it relates to God’s election of Israel, to the formation of the church as new people of God in relationship to the restoration of Israel, and to the mission of the people of God in the present time. To be sure, there will be detractors a plenty given all of the ground covered across the Wrightian corpus, but even if he is only half right, there are many implications for what that means for faithful Christian discipleship in our present time. (And again, even if Wright is only half right, there will be even more implications to be discerned from out of the process of correcting his proposals.)

Renewalists—those who find themselves within and/or identify with pentecostal and charismatic Christianity—need to take up and read Tom Wright’s many books, if they have not begun to do so already. For the uninitiated, this volume under review will
serve as an excellent introduction to what Wright has been up to, in particular his two chapters concluding each part of the book. Four major points of intersection deserve mention (among many others that constraints of space and time prevent from registration here). First, Wright’s dogged quest for the historical Jesus presents us with a fresh perspective on the identity of the Galilean Jew occluded by the theological tradition. This is a fully-human Jesus who yet fulfills through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven God’s plans to restore Israel and redeem the world. The Gospel is thus about what God accomplishes in Jesus of Nazareth. I wonder what might ensue in a conversation about Jesus, about God, and about God’s saving purposes when, for instance, Oneness pentecostals engage with the work of N. T. Wright? Renewalists in the pentecostal tradition—both Oneness and trinitarian—love Jesus; it is also palpably evident that N. T. Wright does as well. How might a reconsideration of the person and work of Christ unfold in a dialogue between pentecostal renewalists and Wright’s understanding of Jesus? Such a conversation may be best positioned to revisit the scriptural witness afresh, especially in light of the anti-creedal postures that animate Oneness readings of the Bible.

Second, renewalists are people of mission. What shows forth plainly in Wright’s scholarship is not only that Jesus was a person on a divinely ordained mission, but also that those who embrace his name—beginning with St. Paul, for example—are also called and empowered to engage with that same mission, one that involves the renewal of Israel and the redemption of the world. Renewal missiologies, however, can receive a major boost in light of Wright’s insistence that the salvation intended by Jesus involves not only individual hearts and lives but also has socio-political and economic dimensions. Renewalists who proclaim a “five-fold” or “full” gospel often still are not as holistic as they might be. N. T. Wright shows how the basic thrust of the Gospel involves these domains as well. In turn, might renewalists also show that the full Gospel includes the charismatic and empowering work of the Holy Spirit that transforms even the ends of the earth?

Third, renewalists are eschatologically oriented. They are, as Steven Land notes, people who have a passion for the kingdom or reign of God. Wright’s Jesus is the eschatological king who inaugurates God’s final plans to save the world, and Wright’s Paul proclaims this eschatological Gospel while inviting the people of
God to inhabit, embrace, and work out its meaning in the world. Here then is a vision of the coming reign of God that does not get hung up with elaborate “end-time” charts but is nevertheless deeply and palpably motivated by what the Spirit of Jesus is doing in these “last days” (Acts 2:17) to save the world. What emerges is a partially realized eschatology, but one that is replete with ecclesiological, discipleship, ethical, and missional implications. In conversation with Wright, renewal missiologies not only can affirm the basic thrust of at least some versions of the prosperity theology (those emphasizing the difference God makes in the material aspects of our lives) without embracing its greed, consumerism, and materialism, but also can be emboldened to bear the kind of prophetic witness to the world that characterized the ministry of Jesus and the message of Paul.

Last, but not least, I read N. T. Wright and am driven back to the scriptures that he carefully attends to. Wright is no biblicologist; but he is committed to the apostolic testimony as preserved in the biblical canon. Renewalists are also people of the book, although their “this-is-that” hermeneutic oftentimes collapses the distance between the scriptural and the present horizons. Wright’s critical and historical realism is a solid reminder to renewalists that “what happened back then” is fundamentally important for Christian life today; but renewalists can also contribute to Wright’s accomplishments the testimony that what happened back then continues to happen today—thereby providing concrete witness to the possibilities inherent in Wright’s own emphasis that the drama of scripture needs to be lived into, replayed, and improvised by each generation. The point is that the Bible is a living book, and Wright’s writings and renewal testimonies both bear complementary witnesses to that fact.

In each of these ways, I as a renewal theologian am challenged by Tom Wright. Reading Wright invites me to love Jesus more, to be more emboldened in testifying to the risen Christ, to long for the coming of the ascended one to finally redeem all of creation, and to return again and again to the wellsprings of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ as mediated through the apostolic testimony. When I was a child I went to the altar regularly to give my heart to Jesus. N. T. Wright invites me not to stop converting to Jesus even as an adult.

Reviewed by Amos Yong

If you’ll pardon a somewhat tacky pun, the subject of Hell has been hot lately. First, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* by Rob Bell (March 2011) stirred up a national controversy, especially within Evangelicalism, by suggesting the possibility of universalism. Immediately came responses to Bell such as Mark Galli in *God Wins: Heaven, Hell, and Why the Good News is Better than Love Wins* (July 19, 2011). Even more quickly was Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle’s *Erasing Hell: What God said about eternity and the things we made up* (July 5, 2011). The writers of both of these books, as well as a host of blogs and other books, mention Rob Bell repeatedly (and sometimes heatedly). Jersak doesn’t mention him at all. Mainly, this absence is probably because Jersak was writing *Her Gates* before this frenzied fanfare got underway. Indeed, readers should remember the current context is not the pretext for Jersak’s work. But it could’ve been; it’s that similar in its concerns. Only Jersak would be closer to Bell than to Galli or Chan and Sprinkle. However, Rob Bell doesn’t reference Bradley Jersak either, even though he wrote afterwards; but, Bell’s book is more conversational, less scholarly and so isn’t cluttered up with a lot of explanatory footnotes or supporting references. So it’s best to interpret Jersak, an author and seminar speaker based in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on his own terms. Yet Jersak also identifies himself as an Evangelical, so the context is not unconnected. And this work is quite recent as well.

Anyone interested in studying about the fate of human beings from a Christian perspective will probably benefit from this book. It’s written in accessible language with a conversational and quite personal style, but Jersak also supplies careful documentation without sidetracking the reader too much with secondary issues. A few well-placed charts are helpful too. *Her Gates* is probably a
rare offering in that moves along at a pace where both scholars and non-scholars may follow and keep up without either feeling shortchanged or overwhelmed. In other words, *Her Gates* may be described as deep but not dense. It’s probably perfect for most clergy and students. Pentecostals and Charismatics will likely appreciate Jersak’s creative use of dreams and visions as part of a meditative and reflective process that enhances the intellectual and literary aspects of such a study. I especially enjoyed the non-critical and (again, pardon the pun) non-judgmental tone that Jersak maintained toward those of differing views throughout the work. He really does seem to understand that equally good Christians may have profound differences on this topic. However, that is not to say that he doesn’t have his own very strong opinion as well.

*Her Gates* is laid out in three slightly unequal parts. Part 1 theoretically looks at the biblical possibility of ultimate judgment. I say “theoretically” because although Jersak does a well enough job explaining differing views, usually with tact and diplomacy, he cannot resist debunking the opposition and defending his own view as he goes along. So this is not a neutral, unbiased, impartial work at all. From the beginning, Jersak is out to persuade us that what he prefers to call “ultimate redemption” (rather than universalism) is a real possibility. And Part 2 takes that task up a little more directly by surveying (and defending) this position. Part 3 is an extended study of Revelation 21 and 22, which for Jersak really points to an open-ended (literally, thus the title, *Her Gates Will Never Be Shut*) possibility of all being eventually redeemed. The book closes with an Afterword by Nik Ansell on “Hell: The Nemesis of Hope” that basically presents the same position as Jersak.

For me, Jersak’s biblical exposition is both strength and weakness in *Her Gates*. He really tries to make his case biblically, and he often offers fresh and suggestive insights that are well worth the reading. In spite of his no doubt earnest and honest efforts otherwise, some may suspect that his theological biases all-too-clearly affect his hermeneutic and distort his conclusions. Of course, we’re all prone to that problem. However, in my opinion Jersak sometimes goes beyond acceptable limits to make Scripture agree with his own theological presuppositions regarding ultimate redemption.

A major example would be Jersak’s treatment of Revelation 21:25. This is a serious issue since this text is central to his main
thesis (and title). Jersak surveys the Book of Revelation and especially the last two chapters, tentatively concluding that the open gates of 21:25 implies no one will ever be shut out of the New Jerusalem; that is, no one will be finally excluded from eternal salvation in the presence of the Lord. Yet Pentecostal exegetes such as Timothy P. Jenney point out that the context of Revelation 21:25 primarily expresses the purity of the population of the Holy City (see Full Life Bible Commentary to the New Testament, edited by French L. Arrington and Roger Stronstad). Accordingly, the idea of exclusion of impurity is explicit. In sum, the gates are always open but impure people still can’t pass through them. That doesn’t seem to bode well for universalism (or “ultimate redemption”).

Actually, Jersak identifies three perspectives on this topic. First, are those he calls the infernalists, that believe in some kind of permanent judgment (aka, everlasting torment in Hell); then, the universalists (proper), who believe in no ultimate judgment for anyone (aka, no Hell at all); and then, those who believe in ultimate redemption. This last group admits the possibility of ultimate judgment (Hell) but suggests it may not be permanent (aka, Hell as Purgatory—although carefully nuanced as corrective or therapeutic, not punitive or retributive). Thus, for Jersak, there would be at least a hopeful possibility that all may eventually be saved. With these defining differences in mind, universalism and so-called ultimate redemption are essentially alike in denying final damnation.

Notably, Pentecostal theologians have traditionally rejected universalism (e.g., Foundations of Pentecostal Theology, Guy P. Duffield and N.M. Van Cleave). Nevertheless, historian Grant Wacker suggests some early and important Pentecostals “may have privately embraced universalist views of some sort” (Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture). Yet he also says that for most “Holy Spirit-filled saints” committed to “the evangelization of the lost…the damnation of the recalcitrant never moved very far from the center of their attention”. Many Pentecostals and Charismatics will perhaps be familiar with Carlton Pearson’s controversial teaching on “universal reconciliation,” “universal redemption,” or “universal salvation” (see his The Gospel of Inclusion: Beyond Religious Fundamentalism to True Love of God and Self). At the very least, the burden of proof would seem to rest with those wishing to convince Pentecostals of the validity of universalism as a viable op-
Undoubtedly, the majority of Pentecostals will not accept the doctrine of universalism. That being said, Bradley Jersak’s *Her Gates Will Never Be Shut* will probably not resonate well with Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians as a whole. At best, it might be profitable reading for those interested in an intelligent and irenic presentation of the ultimate redemption position for purposes of understanding and discussion.

In closing, I applaud Jersak for sensitively working through the controversial but timely topic of universalism/ultimate redemption—even if, at least in my opinion, it is not finally convincing. Of course, readers will decide for themselves regarding its persuasive merits or lack thereof. Everlasting punishment may be a difficult doctrine but it is also very important. I’m reminded of the words of C. S. Lewis on Hell. Lewis was an ardent admirer of the writings of George MacDonald, a kind of evangelical universalist (like Bradley Jersak, who references him). Lewis himself even admitted that, if possible, he would quite gladly remove the doctrine of Hell from Christianity. He confessed that he could not so, however, because of its “full support in Scripture”, particularly on the lips of our Lord, and the “support of reason”, particularly regarding human freewill (*The Problem of Pain*). Accordingly, we may be sensitive to the motives of those who wrestle with the morbid reality of everlasting punishment, but still we must ever endeavor to be fully faithful to the biblical witness. Perhaps some Pentecostal preachers might take the liberty to declare that instead of trying to get rid of Hell we would be better served to warn people to avoid it (Matt 23:33). If so, then such warnings should be delivered in firm, loving tones (Eph 4:15).

Reviewed by Tony Richie

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1 Readers will notice that Jersak prefers the technically accurate but somewhat odd feminine gender to the more usual neuter translation of the third person genitive of the pronoun *auteés*.

*Other Significant Articles*  
**Reviewed by the Editors**

Robert C. Crosby, “A New Kind of Pentecostal: It’s no longer just about raising a hand to God. It’s also about reaching out a hand to the needy,” *Christianity Today* (August 2011), pages
Southeastern University professor Robert Crosby says that there is an awakening for social concern and whole life transformation among today’s Pentecostals. 
christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/august/newkindpentecostal.html

How influence is exercised by the leader can have many faces. Carter reminds us that as Christians, we have an obligation to derive and express our power in biblical ways.

Montanism was a prophetic movement that arose in the late second century, calling the church of their day back to the spontaneity of the Spirit. But the movement was eventually condemned as heretical and imperial edict called for the destruction of all Montanist documents. How heretical was the movement? What have scholars learned about potential connections to today’s charismatic movements?

The cover article of the October 2011 issue of Christianity Today offers a brief introduction to Theological Interpretation of Scripture from a Reformed perspective, inviting all believers to read the Bible with confidence and humility.
christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/october/how-to-read-bible.html
Coming in the Summer 2012 (15:3) Issue:

Historian Paul King invites us to look at the “Hermeneutics in Modern and Classic Faith Movements.”

Craig S. Keener speaks with us about his new book, Miracles.

Some reviews to look for in the Summer 2012 issue:

Amos Yong reviews Karl W. Giberson and Francis S. Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith* from InterVarsity Press.

Tony Richie reviews the third edition of William Lane Craig’s *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Crossway).

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