

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF REFORMED THEOLOGY AND LIFE

# UNIO CUM CHRISTO<sup>®</sup>

UNION WITH CHRIST



## Packer, Stott, and Global Anglicanism



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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF REFORMED THEOLOGY AND LIFE

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## Packer, Stott, and Global Anglicanism

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# The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre and Reformed Resistance (II)<sup>1</sup>

PAUL WELLS

**S**aint Bartholomew's day (August 23, 1572) made it clear that royal power and papal oppression were twin enemies of the Reformation. It was widely thought that they would lead the counterattack and impose conformity to the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) throughout Europe. The massacre unleashed a flood of pamphleteering for freedom of conscience and for constitutional rights within the legal framework of the state. The leaders of this movement were members of a group called the Monarchomachs, who advocated resistance biblically and theologically.<sup>2</sup>

The Magdeburg Confession laid the foundation for the development of Protestant resistance theory. In 1548, after the imperial victory in the first Schmalkaldic War, two decrees, the Interims of Augsburg and Leipzig, were imposed on the Lutherans. They were not accepted by the “authentic Lutherans” (Gnesio-Lutherans) of Magdeburg, who advocated resistance rather than compromise. The Confession, written by nine pastors, stated

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Paul Wells, “The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre: The Huguenots and Taking up Arms,” in *My Kingdom Is Not of This World: Papers Read at the 2021 Westminster Conference* (Dewsbury, 2022), 119–42.

<sup>2</sup> From the Greek *μόναρχος* (*monarchos*—“sole ruler”) and *μάχουμαι* (*makhomai*—“to fight”). The term seems to have been coined by the Scottish lawyer William Barclay as a term of abuse in *De regno et regali potestate adversus Buchananum, Brutum, Boucherium, et reliquos Monarchomachos, libri sex* (Paris, 1600).

their position.<sup>3</sup> The central idea is found in the preamble:

If the superior authority does not refrain from unjustly and forcibly persecuting not only the lives of their subjects but even more their rights under divine and natural law, and if it does not desist from eradicating true doctrine and true worship of God, then the lower magistracy is required by God's divine command to attempt together with their subjects, to stand up to such superiors as far as possible. The current persecution which we are suffering at the hands of our superiors is primarily persecution by which they attempt to suppress the true Christian religion and the true worship of God and to reestablish the Pope's lies and abominable idolatry. Thus the Council and each and every Christian authority is obliged to protect themselves and their people against it.<sup>4</sup>

Against the doctrine of passive submission to political authority, the Confession brought up an arsenal of examples from the Bible, history, and natural law in favor of legitimate resistance. If the authority does evil, if Caesar takes what is God's, if the creation ordinances are flouted, the Christian cannot be passive but must defend God's honor. Excessive authority may be resisted by force as a form of self-defense, as against any common thug. Christians are responsible because of the priesthood of believers, which applies not only to the ecclesiastical but also to the civic domain, and failure to resist what is contrary to divine authority brings "eternal shame before the world and harm to their successors."

This was an inspiration for Theodore Beza's *Right of Magistrates over Their Subjects* (1574). Beza was the principal protagonist of resistance in France, with Francis Hotman and Philippe DuPlessis-Mornay as aides de camp, in what came to be known as the "Genevan triumvirate."<sup>5</sup>

Beza ran into difficulty publishing. The Genevan authorities were wary of French reprisals, and finally, his treatise appeared anonymously in Heidelberg. As John Witte remarks, "The title of the tract is ironic and strategic. Beza's real topics were the *duties of rulers and the rights of their subjects*."<sup>6</sup> His argument is based on four propositions, which may be summed up by

<sup>3</sup> *The Magdeburg Confession, 13th April 1550*, trans. M. Colvin (n.p.: Create Space Publishing, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by John Witte, "Rights, Resistance, and Revolution in the Western Tradition: Early Protestant Foundations," *Law and History Review* 26.3 (September 2008): 71–72; cf. also his *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Horde of Women* (1558); Francis Hotman, *Franco gallia* (1573); Lambert Daneau, *Treatise on the Taking up of Arms by the Christian Man* (1576); Stephanus Junius Brutus Celt (often thought to be Philippe DuPlessis-Mornay), *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579).

<sup>6</sup> Witte, "Rights, Resistance, and Revolution in the Western Tradition," 78.



the aphorism Beza adopted from Hotman: "A people can exist without a king ... whereas a king without a people cannot even be imagined":

1. Rulers exist for the welfare of the people and are created by election and consent.
2. Kingly authority is conditional, a legal compact binding sovereign and people.
3. Should the monarch violate the conditions on which authority was granted, the people are no longer bound and may remove him.
4. The king is a vassal to his kingdom and forfeits office by violating faith.

Beza put forward a legal argument for the constitutional rights of citizens based on the idea of a political covenant. "His argument in a nutshell was a Christian social and government contract theory."<sup>7</sup> Following Magdeburg's three-pronged approach, Beza argued biblically, historically, and legally for the rights of citizens. In fact, he turned the rights of kings into the rights of citizens, whereas the covenantal duty of rulers under oath was to exercise authority properly.

The second protagonist of the Genevan triumvirate was Hotman, whose *Francogallia* is a curious, rambling document. If Hotman did not hesitate to make the facts suit his argument, its relevance was obvious to his contemporaries. It gives a constitutional history of France, pointing to the elected nature of the early Frankish monarchy and the role of the Estates General of the people, both as kingmaker and in government. This council of the people is the ultimate power in the state. Hotman contended that its power had been undermined by the Roman church. Therefore, a legal cause was found for justified resistance to royal absolutism in legitimate assemblies of the people. This argument appealed to both Protestants and discontented Catholics after the massacre.

The third musketeer of the triumvirate was the anonymous writer of *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (*Defense against Tyrants*), published in Basel in 1579, widely thought to have been DuPlessis-Mornay.<sup>8</sup> It raises four questions about princely power, the third being the centerpiece:

May a prince who oppresses or devastates a commonwealth be resisted; to what extent, by whom, in what fashion, and by what principle of law?

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Johannes Althusius in his *Politica* (1603) developed a fully blown notion of social structures in a federal (covenantal) context.

<sup>8</sup> [Philippe DuPlessis-Mornay], *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, in Julian H. Franklin, ed., *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the 16th Century: Three Treatises by Hotman, Beza, and Mornay* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 137–200.

State authority depends on a series of covenants between God, the ruler, and the nation. The objective rule of God applies subjectively in a pact between ruler and people. A tyrant is the opposite of a king, since tyranny overthrows God's rule: A king promotes the public interest, a tyrant seeks his own.

To complete the picture, in 1576, Lambert Daneau, relying on both Hotman and Beza, wrote a treatise that focused explicitly on the taking up of arms. Against absolutism, he suggested that a tyrant should be resisted for the sake of the public good. This is the duty not only of the representatives of the people but also of local authorities and with them the citizens themselves.

Beza was the leading advocate for taking up arms in resistance against tyranny within certain limits. He virulently opposed disorderly rebellion, considering that "anarchy is worse than tyranny."<sup>9</sup> He recognized that opposition to power is no light undertaking, but without church intervention, people can resist abuse through their constitutional representatives.

Those who teach that notorious tyranny may be resisted in good conscience are not denying good and legitimate rulers the authority God has given them, nor are they encouraging rebellion. On the contrary, the authority of magistrates cannot be stabilised, nor that public peace which is the end of all true governance be preserved, unless tyranny is prevented from arising, or abolished when it does.<sup>10</sup>

In chapter X of his treatise, Beza deals with the question of offering resistance to persecution of the true religion by armed force. Faith concerns the conscience and can be neither subjected to nor advanced by coercion or arms. If believers are persecuted for their faith, then,

they should rather endure persecution patiently while continuing to serve God, or else go into exile. But if there are edicts, lawfully passed and promulgated by public authority, permitting exercise of the true religion, then the prince is even more bound to respect these than any other law since the religious order is of greater consequence than any other, and he may not repeal them at his own initiative and discretion. If he does, he is guilty of flagrant tyranny, to which opposition is permitted according to the distinctions previously laid down, and with all the better reason in that our souls and our consciences ought to be more precious to us than all the goods of this world.<sup>11</sup>

Three conditions are always necessary before resorting to the use of arms against the abuse of power:

<sup>9</sup> Theodore Beza, Letter to Bullinger, September 9, 1563.

<sup>10</sup> Theodore Beza, *Right of Magistrates over Their Subjects*, in *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, ed. Franklin, 103.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 134–35.

- Tyranny has become obvious.
- All other attempted remedies have failed.
- Consideration has been given not only to what is permitted but also to what is expedient so that the remedy is not worse than the disease.

Beza limited the taking of arms in such a way that legal constitutional requirements must be respected and certain conditions met. No doubt, he considered that his participation in the French wars stood up to the scrutiny of what is legally legitimate and what is expedient because of the abuse of power by the monarchy and its connivance in the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre. His avowed goal was to save the Kingdom of France from ruin.

Subsequently, in the 1580s, Beza was discouraged when he saw anarchy spreading in France, unprecedented moral license among the Huguenots resulting from war, and the aggressive expansion of Jesuit evangelism. He must have wondered whether it had been worth it and whether the right course of action had been taken. Were the Monarchomachs justified in going beyond Calvin's passive submission and suffering under the cross? Was it a mistake to lead the Huguenots in a physical combat rather than a spiritual one? We may well wonder. Huguenot destiny became entwined with the military interests of the nobility and the intellectual elite. This social attachment held back growth among the lower classes through church planting and evangelism. The stark fact remains that in the following century, the Huguenots not only registered negative growth, but they were poorly prepared to stand up spiritually against the absolute monarchy of Henry IV's grandson, Louis XIV.

Whether the Monarchomach way of resistance was biblical, constitutional, or legitimate remains an issue that divides those who confess Christ down to the present. The Huguenots were a minority in France, as believing Christians have become in the West today, and they organized as such. We may take issue with their *practice*, recognizing the problems with taking up arms while acknowledging that we often lack their *principled attitude* of resistance, a spiritual opposition to the idolatry of the age. The Huguenots faced up to their enemies, considering that they were opposed to God, his word, and the freedoms that it brings.

Western Christians today have been gaslighted into thinking that their ruling superiors are benevolent or pragmatic neutrals. Maybe they were like that in the past, in the age when nations were "Christian," but they are not anymore. Governments, political parties, public services, legal systems, multinational corporations, and the media consistently promote perversity that is *opposed to* Christ and his word. Their fundamental presuppositions

are those of postmodern relativism at best and social Marxism at worst. They play fast and loose with God's law, both natural and revealed, and join together in a united front to celebrate every form of deviance imaginable. Christian values are scorned by the social codes of secular righteousness. Surely, believers must not follow this caravan of fools?

Freedoms gained by the Protestant Reformation are disappearing as Western culture falls apart. We are standing in an amoral wasteland as the bombs fall. The last fifty years bear witness to a sustained assault against God's creational law and its Mosaic republication in the Ten Commandments, particularly regarding family, marriage, and sexuality. Progressive legislation rejects God's law and replaces what is natural with unnatural progressive humanistic laws that are contrary to creational structures. This is *idolatrous* in its opposition to God because it erects state rights as absolute *above* God's creational mandate for the family.

Beza and his allies considered the family to be the fundamental social unit established by God prior to, and having precedence over, historical and cultural social structures, including the body politic. This is why Marxism and social Marxism invariably go about deconstructing the family and removing intermediate social organizations between the all-powerful autonomous state and isolated powerless individuals.

Beza and the Monarchomachs rooted their resistance in God's law, natural and revealed, and so established the values of individual freedom, rights, and conscience in civil society. Citizens have these rights, and rulers have duties toward them. The other path leads to unfreedom and untold human miseries, as the tyranny of Louis XIV was soon to demonstrate when he clamped down on the Huguenots. Today's absolutism is of a different kind: rights are now dictated by minorities, invariably against creational ordinances. The consequence is that Christians are increasingly stripped of God-given liberties through snooping, restrictions on freedom of speech, and exclusion from public places. Freedom of conscience is being hemmed in by the agenda that tolerates every deviance. We are being told how to think; more and more believers will have to shut up or get out of their professions. Pressure will increase; resistance will have to be justified and organized, and it will require a great deal of courage.

The believing church has now become a minority comparable to that of the early church or the Huguenots. However, it is hardly an *effective* minority in the way other minorities are. Do we have a game plan—the lucidity, the will, and the means for public resistance? Are we not all too often compliant with, and respectful of, the powers that be, even though they are no respecters of God's truth? When this is the case, the devil has an easy job:

Christianity self-destructs from the inside. The compliant Anglican Church in England provides a case in point.

A strategy is needed for the church to become an effective minority in an alien society. That strategy ought to be like that of Beza and the Genevan triumvirate: the honor of God, confession and promotion of biblical truth, resistance to the darkness that opposes it, and willingness to sacrifice everything for Christ's kingdom. The tactics will be different and will no doubt give rise to disagreement and debate among believers.

The need of the hour is to realize this by recognition of the situation, to react prayerfully through teaching, awakening those "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1), and to put spiritual *protest* back into Protestantism. Francis Schaeffer, in *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, quoted Martin Luther as an encouragement to do this:

If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1984), 50–51. This quote attributed to Luther is not actually from the great Reformer, although it is close to what he wrote in many instances. Cf. Martin Luther, *Briefwechsel*, in *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–1993), 3:81ff.



**J. I. PACKER**

1926-2020

# Strands in Packer's Theological Influence: One Appreciation

PAUL HELM

## Abstract

This essay explores J. I. Packer's theological influence through a consideration of his many writings. It classifies his input into six strands: Luther, Calvin, and the Puritans; Scripture; Anglicanism; universalism, revivals, and the Holy Spirit; Christ's work; and the book *Knowing God*. This survey reveals that Packer used his exceptional theological mind to educate both Anglicans and other types of Protestants.

## Keywords

*John Calvin, Martin Luther, Puritans, Scripture, Anglicanism, Holy Spirit, atonement, doctrine of God, spirituality*

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**T**his essay is an attempt to identify the theological topics and interests that J. I. Packer was concerned with as a young theological tutor and that endured throughout his life. Some of these strands made him a fortune; others caused him difficulties and heartache.

Packer was a Christian gentleman and a great theological figure. Striking in appearance, softly spoken, with every spoken word worth attention, he was remarkable, in a class by himself. Already as a young man, he seemed to have boundless theological knowledge and an appreciation of Christian

theological resources and their wisdom. For much of his life, in England and then in Canada, his influence spanned Evangelicalism, taking in both Anglicanism and to a lesser extent other Evangelical churches.

The plan of this article has pros and cons. It takes in what I think were the main theological strands, but there could have been further emphases. I shall identify these and how they came and remained during a long career that ceased only days before his death in 2020, aged 94. It will be noteworthy for its items referred to as well as those for which, alas, there was no room.

I knew Packer beginning in 1962 when he moved from teaching at Tyndale Hall, Bristol, to join the new center on Anglican Evangelical theology established in Oxford, but not again until I was briefly a colleague of his at Regent College, Vancouver.

He had been educated in Gloucester and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. But I was not then nor am now Anglican, nor a party to Packer's private conversations in any sphere, or with his family, or with his days in England and then in Canada. So this is an effort to give an account of Packer the public figure as a writer, which I have divided, or ordered, into six strands or themes of theological issues and interests that mark his life work.

### **Strand 1: Luther and Calvin, and Puritans and Puritanism**

In his student years Packer had encountered “by chance” a set of the writings of the leading Puritan John Owen in the basement of Northgate Hall, where the Oxford Evangelical Christians met. He was attracted by Owen's writings on indwelling sin and temptation in volume 6 of his *Works*, edited by William Goold, which chimed with Packer's self-knowledge as a new Christian rather than that of the Keswick preachers and their followers, which were useless for him in the face of his own failings. This was one impetus for the attention he gave to the Puritans at that time.

At something of a crisis time soon after my conversion, John Owen helped me to be realistic (that is, neither myopic nor despairing) about my continuing sinfulness and the discipline of self-suspicion and mortification to which, with all Christians, I am called. ... Without Owen I might well have gone off my head or got bogged down in mystical fanaticism, and certainly my view of the Christian life would not be what it is today.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. I. Packer, *Among God's Giants: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway, 1991), 12.



He was deeply influenced by “the Puritans,” but it should be noted that “puritan” can apply to a wide spectrum of seventeenth-century Christians. In particular it is worth bearing in mind that in 1662, most of the members of the Westminster Assembly (1647) refused the 1660 Act of Uniformity, but there was a minority that conformed to the law, accepting the restored Church of England, while their erstwhile colleagues were suffering—men such as William Gurnall (1618–1679), the author of *The Christian in Complete Armour*, and Edward Reynolds, prominent in the Westminster Assembly, who was Owen’s successor in Oxford University and who became Bishop of Norwich, leading worship in accordance with the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. While Packer relished the theology of Owen, he did not follow his independency. We shall note further evidence of the character of Packer’s unqualified commitment to the Church of England later. The state of Anglican theology in 1660 was different from that of the mid-twentieth century, notably by the presence of the Anglo-Catholic party, the “high” church, and the naturalism of radical theologians such as Geoffrey Lampe (1912–1980), Dennis Nineham (1921–2016), and Maurice Wiles (1923–2005).

In this early phase, he wrote for the student paper of Tyndale Hall, *Discipulus*, of his commitment to the Church of England and his concerns about its state.

I am an Evangelical Christian. I hold that Prayer Book Evangelicalism expresses the authentic Anglican outlook, and that the task of Evangelicals in the Church of England is no more—and no less—than to present to (the) one Church its true self .... I suspect (I hope I am wrong) that the Evangelical cause in the Church of England today is in a more parlous state than at any time during this century. A programme of change is under way—canon law; Prayer Book revision; perhaps the Articles after that—and in this situation we Evangelicals are not saying enough to make our own outlook intelligible, either to ourselves or to others, let alone to safeguard it.

Packer held that the Thirty-Nine Articles, with other Reformed confessions, were “catholic” in that they upheld patristic Trinitarianism and Christology expressed in the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedon formula. In addition, it is in his *“Fundamentalism” and the Word of God* (1958)<sup>2</sup> that we find evidence of what I shall call his gradualism. In the chapter “Faith,” he makes clear that the ways in which people exercise faith in Christ are not in the manner of “one size fits all” but are filtered through a variety of circumstances, experiences, and temperaments in the varied character of the lives of believers. People may positively respond to the gospel in varied ways, but

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<sup>2</sup> J. I. Packer, *“Fundamentalism” and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958).

with sufficient common ground that the differences are tolerable. Hence he could later operate with high churchmen like Eric Mascall and Bishop Graham Leonard. When bishops repudiated the limits of such catholic theology, as in the case of the Bishops of Woolwich and Durham and other radical theologians, they in effect denied the supernatural in Christian theology, and Packer's tentacles were quickly revealed. His name for them was "myth-men."<sup>3</sup>

This is some of what he said:

It will be asked why, if the whole Church does in fact experience the witness of the Spirit to Scripture, any Christian should ever deviate from the Bible's view of itself. The same question arises in connection with unscriptural views of any doctrine. It does not seem hard to answer. Christians fall into mental error, partly through mistaking or overlooking what Scripture teaches; partly through having their minds prepossessed with unbiblical notions so that they cannot take scriptural statements seriously. All heresy begins so .... Radicals who query the truth and worth of much of Scripture are yet devout Bible-readers and vigorous preachers of the Gospel, and that from texts whose credit they would deny in the lecture-room.<sup>4</sup>

From John Calvin he drew the shape of his own theology, and in particular the basis of Calvin's high view of Scripture, the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit to God's sovereign grace. For Calvin the same Spirit that inspired the Scripture testifies also in the heart of his disciples, who feed on the promises of God in his word. Coming to have this view of Scripture's basis is part and parcel of Christian discipleship.<sup>5</sup>

Packer was also indebted to B. B. Warfield's work on the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture while distancing himself from Warfield's "abstract, Butlerian, anti-Deistic, and basic rationalistic" approach.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps it was

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<sup>3</sup> J. I. Packer, *Collected Shorter Writings of J. I. Packer* [hereafter, *CSW*] (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 1998–1999), 1:77, compare with 1:82. This set gives a wealth of articles until the seventies, while other articles of the new millennium of his career have not been collected, nor has his journalism in *The Church of England Newspaper* in England. and *Christianity Today* in North America. See, however, the book review on pages 232–34 below.

<sup>4</sup> Packer, "Fundamentalism," 123–24. There are similar comments in J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), 119, on patience in evangelism, and a later paper, J. I. Packer, "What Is Evangelism?," in *Theological Perspective on Church Growth*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976), 91–105, reprinted in *CSW*, 1:243–52; comments on "conversion experience" are contributions to the same theme.

<sup>5</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), trans. Henry Beveridge (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1.7 (68), "The Testimony of the Spirit is Necessary to Give Full Authority to Scripture." John Owen held the same view. John Owen, *The Reason of Faith*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), vol. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *CSW* 3:101.

Cornelius Van Til's rejection of natural theology that gave Packer a soft spot for him. He contributed a paper to Van Til's *Festschrift*.<sup>7</sup>

Packer received his doctorate in 1954. His thesis was "The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter."<sup>8</sup> Rather surprisingly, Packer published little about Baxter until much later in his career.<sup>9</sup>

In 1955, he published "'Keswick' and the Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification,"<sup>10</sup> displaying that the view of the Christian life sponsored by the Keswick Convention was a form of perfectionism. "*Keswick teaching is Pelagian through and through*,"<sup>11</sup> he wrote, not that of the Reformed view of the believer's presence of indwelling sin and of progressive sanctification, which he had himself experienced in his early life as a Christian. It is strange that Packer has never again produced this powerful piece, though it was later reprinted in the *Free Grace Record* (now defunct), a Particular Baptist magazine edited by John Doggett.

He handled the modern charismatics with patience and grace. In the later version, his line was to present the movement as understanding the work of the Spirit as an instrument of *power* rather than of *holiness*, which he thought was the need in all the churches of Evangelicalism. In this he was following an Owenian pattern, though it was not presented in that form to his readers. However, he made a point of showing that Owen treated the gifts of the Spirit as seen in Paul's teaching to the church at Corinth and elsewhere. He gave a separate account, "John Owen on Spiritual Gifts," in one of his papers to the Puritan Conference in 1967; it was collected later in *Among God's Giants*, a testimony to the thoroughness of Owen's scope of the Spirit's work.<sup>12</sup>

After a curacy in Birmingham, he was appointed Tutor in Christian Doctrine at Tyndale Hall, Bristol, where he remained, on and off until

<sup>7</sup> J. I. Packer, "Biblical Theology, Hermeneutics, and Inerrancy," in *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. E. R. Geehan (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 141–53, one of several on hermeneutics published around this time.

<sup>8</sup> Published as *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2000). There are papers on Baxter in *CSW* 4, chs. 3, 15.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see J. I. Packer, *Marriage, Depression, Anxiety and the Christian Life: Practical Wisdom from Richard Baxter* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2018).

<sup>10</sup> J. I. Packer, "'Keswick' and the Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification," *Evangelical Quarterly* 27.3 (1955): 153–67. In his *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 2nd ed. (1984; repr., Grand Rapids: Revell, 2005), 27, the author says of the 1955 article, "I gave great offense, but my point would, I think, be more widely taken today." His language then was undoubtedly brusquer and more urgent than in the gentler tone of the later book.

<sup>11</sup> Packer, "'Keswick,'" 158 (italics in the original).

<sup>12</sup> J. I. Packer, "John Owen on Spiritual Gifts," in *Among God's Giants*.

1970.<sup>13</sup> He produced (with his close friend O. R. Johnston), a fresh edition of Martin Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* in 1957. In it the writers were not shy to ask a question or two.

Is our salvation wholly of God, or does it ultimately depend on something that we do for ourselves? Those who say the latter (as the Arminians later did) thereby deny man's utter helplessness in sin, and affirm that a form for semi-Pelagianism is true after all. It is no wonder, then, that later Reformed theology condemned Arminianism as being in principle a return to Rome (because in effect it turned faith into meritorious work) and a betrayal of the Reformation (because it denied the sovereignty of God in saving sinners, which was the deepest religious and theological principle of the Reformers' thought).<sup>14</sup>

These things need to be pondered by Protestants today. By what right may we call ourselves children of the Reformation? Much modern Protestantism would be neither owned nor even recognized by the pioneer Reformers. *The Bondage of the Will* fairly sets before us what they believed about the salvation of lost mankind. In that light, we are forced to ask whether Protestant Christendom has tragically sold its birthright between Luther's day and our own. Has not Protestantism today become more Erasmian than Lutheran? Do we not too often try to minimize and gloss over doctrinal differences for the sake of interparty peace?<sup>15</sup>

There are other later papers by him published on Luther and Erasmus.<sup>16</sup>

He and Raymond Johnston were instrumental in persuading Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the minister of Westminster Chapel, to form an annual conference, beginning in 1952, that came to be known as the Puritan Conference. Its growth was one factor in the growing worldwide interest in Puritan theology and piety.

There is also more evidence of what I called earlier his gradualism, a view of Christian conversion that it may be gradual and that it is influenced by character and upbringing. There is no standard conversion experience, but each is as unique as the converted are. In Scripture are there not disciples who did not know that there was a Holy Spirit? And could not a modern liberal call out that "Jesus is Lord"? The thief on the cross, and the teaching

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<sup>13</sup> The chronology of Packer's various appointments at this time and later in his career can be found in Alistair McGrath, *To Know and Serve God: A Biography of James I. Packer* (London: Hodder & Stoughton 1997); *J. I. Packer: His Life and Thought* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston, "Historical and Theological Introduction," in Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1957), 59.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–60.

<sup>16</sup> For example, J. I. Packer, "Luther against Erasmus," in *CSW* 4:40.

of Christ's parables, were examples of graduation of fruitfulness also. Packer would no doubt have said that in such cases we need to be careful in our judgments; after all, we are not in the place of God.

## Strand 2: The Word of God

We have mentioned Packer's "*Fundamentalism*" and *the Word of God*. On Scripture's testimony to itself, he relies on Warfield, but not on what he regarded as Warfield's tendency to rationalism. In apologetics Packer relied not on the proofs of natural theology but on exposure to the good news of Jesus Christ.

It is fundamental to the nature of faith to take God's word for things; acceptance on the authority of God is the biblical analysis on its intellectual side. The first manifestation of faith is cognitive; it appears in the recognition of affirmations made by men—prophets, apostles, the man Christ Jesus, any biblical writer—as truths uttered by God. Faith apprehends their testimony to God as being God's own testimony to Himself, and receives and responds, to it as such.<sup>17</sup>

He mentions the classic Reformed hermeneutics, that Scripture interprets Scripture. He quotes the Westminster Confession:

The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, ... it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.<sup>18</sup>

Packer had reason to reaffirm this hermeneutical view later on in the light of some developments among his fellow Anglican Evangelicals. He cites Calvin's classic view in his *Institutes*:

They who labour to raise up a firm faith in Scripture by arguing are acting absurdly. ... For as God alone is competent to bear witness of himself in his own word, so that word will not find evidence in the hearts of men till it is sealed upon them by the inner witness of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must make his way into his hearts to assure us that they faithfully delivered that which was divinely entrusted to them.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Packer, "*Fundamentalism*," 117–18.

<sup>18</sup> Westminster Confession of Faith 1.9 as quoted in Packer, "*Fundamentalism*," 106.

<sup>19</sup> Calvin, *Institutes* 1.7, as quoted in Packer, "*Fundamentalism*," 120–21; see also, 125, 132, 174.

This is an instance not of fideism but of the discerning of the evidence of Scripture about itself by careful reading and the work of the Holy Spirit in heart and mind.<sup>20</sup>

So the stance of the book was that of “faith seeking understanding.” Packer is following Calvin, and also Owen, in the stress of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. His early purpose in 1958 is enlarged in another book on Scripture, *God Has Spoken*, which was an enlargement of a shorter book for Anglicans to have more general appeal; after that, his work on the defense of Scripture blossomed in the United States with his work on inerrancy. The book, published in 1979, reproduced the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), the work of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Packer stated, “I shared in drafting it and myself subscribed to it.” This was shortly before he went to live in Canada, where his commitment to biblical inerrancy was, if anything, redoubled. In addition, there was a stress on hermeneutics based on the Bible being its own interpreter, as against it in the modern, post-Kantian sense, as was the work of his colleague Anthony Thiselton, notably in *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (1980).<sup>21</sup> By then Packer was in Canada and free from the difficulties that Thiselton was making for him in the English Evangelical Anglican scene.<sup>22</sup>

Besides this, the book on fundamentalism revealed the argumentative, polemical side of Packer’s treatment of theology. For him theological ideas have logical consequences, sometimes many of them, in the life of the reader, and it is part of the role of the theologian to trace these. Thus, such uses of the intellect in the study of the Bible by human minds are not the same thing as rationalism.

The future would see commitment to Scripture of a different kind, in connection with his work for the English Standard Version. Packer was the theological editor of its study Bible, with its 1.1 million words. That alone was an abiding achievement. It is said that after a lecture Packer was signing books and was approached by a lady who was holding only a Bible. Would he sign that? Packer paused for some moments, and then said, “I am afraid that I cannot do that, I did not write a word of it.”

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<sup>20</sup> See also J. I. Packer, *God Has Spoken: Revelation and the Bible*, rev. and enlarged ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), ch. 6.

<sup>21</sup> CSW 1, chs. 10, 16. For details see McGrath, *To Know and Serve God*, 214–16. There were several papers of Packer’s at this time, e.g., James Packer, “Hermeneutics and Biblical Authority [1975],” in *Solid Ground: 25 Years of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Carl Trueman, Tony Gray, and Craig L. Blomberg (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 137–54.

<sup>22</sup> In CSW 3:158, Packer has positive things to say about Thiselton’s book.

### Strand 3: Anglican Theology

His concern for Anglican theology had been early expressed in the *Discipulus* article. This concerned him throughout his life in England for the Church of England and in Canada for wider Anglicanism. It was a source of trouble for him early in England and later in Canada. In March 1963, J. A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God* was published, and Packer, by then the Warden of Latimer House, responded in the pamphlet *Keep Yourself from Idols*. This marks his first public encounter with the anti-supernaturalism of the theological leadership of Anglican theology at that time. Worse was to follow.

It is, therefore, a grave matter when a bishop appears to be driving a coach and four through the plain and acknowledged sense of Scripture, the teaching of the Thirty-nine Articles, and the beliefs of the mass of English churchmen.<sup>23</sup>

This concern for the popular radical theology, if the term theology was appropriate, was soon overtaken by the role he was to play in developing the Evangelical view to the ongoing conversations of unifying the Church of England with the Methodists. Latimer House, located in Oxford, was a new center for Evangelical research established under the chairmanship of John Stott. It had gathered momentum with the need to engage in publication regarding the Church of England-Methodist conversations on the prospects for unity between the two.

His attitude to joining these talks was to work on an alliance with the Anglo-Catholics to prevent the radical theologians—who were, theologically speaking, naturalists, not supernaturalists—from prevailing. He was later to write,

Thus, whatever reservations I may have about the ecclesiology, Mariology, and eucharistic teaching of such a man as my learned friend Dr. Eric Mascall, I am profoundly grateful to him for books like *Up and Down in Adria*, *The Secularization of Christianity* and *Theology and the Gospel of Christ*, and I hope you are too. Should the future see a catholic renewal in the Church of England, having the same non-triumphalist, non-partisan character as has marked the evangelical renewal of the past generation, I am bold to predict both that the church will benefit and that evangelical-catholic solidarity against views which erode the supernatural in the realm of redemption will become yet stronger. Such co-belligerence will not compromise either side, and will be tactically appropriate for furthering faith in those fundamentals concerning our incarnate Lord on which we are truly agreed.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> J. I. Packer, *Keep Yourself from Idols* (London: Church Book Room, 1963), 1.

<sup>24</sup> CSW, 1:82.



He seemed to have formed a firm friendship with Mascall. Packer was appointed to the Doctrine Commission of the Church of England in 1968. It was presumably a consequence of the role he was taking in talks with the English Methodists. Alas, the first business that Packer had as a member was to consider the Thirty-Nine Articles and assent to them. The Commission, chaired then by Ian Ramsey, who died in 1972, was succeeded by Maurice Wiles, one of the current Anglican radicals. He, along with like-minded fellow members, considered the *Subscription and Assent to the 39 Articles* (London: SPCK, 1968)—or rather denied it a place—and Packer was cruelly humiliated. Throughout this period of his career, he and other senior Evangelicals routinely underestimated the political skill and determination of the radical theologians to control the theological agenda of the Church of England.

Nevertheless, a helpful way of noting Packer's theological development in Anglican theology in the years 1964–1984 remains his periodic defense of the historic Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, notwithstanding their demotion.

His first published defense was a contribution to articles by a mixed bag of Anglicans.<sup>25</sup> In his contribution Packer dealt with “the history of the Articles, their clarity, and unambiguity, designed to be the rule of faith of every English Christian” (28).<sup>26</sup> It was intentionally minimal. There were different Anglican traditions following the devaluing of clerical subscription: the Articles were “treated as ‘articles of peace’” that described “authority, functions, and our attitude”; these traditions set out what status they should have currently, that of a faithful witness and theological identity card.

In the following years there were at least three other Packer publications on the Articles: *A Guide to the Thirty-Nine Articles Today*,<sup>27</sup> “Towards a Confession for Tomorrow's Church,”<sup>28</sup> and *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*.<sup>29</sup> Packer was by then a Canadian citizen, and no doubt there were other interventions. In this period, he was the busy author of *The Church of England and the Methodist Church*<sup>30</sup> and *All in Each Place: Towards*

<sup>25</sup> J. I. Packer, “The Status of the Articles,” in *The Articles of the Church of England* (London: Mowbray, 1964), 25–57.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> J. I. Packer, *A Guide to the Thirty-Nine Articles Today* (London: Church Book Room, 1969).

<sup>28</sup> J. I. Packer, “Towards a Confession for Tomorrow's Church,” *Churchman* 87.3 (1973): 246–62.

<sup>29</sup> J. I. Packer with R. T. Beckwith, *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*, Latimer Studies 20–21 (Oxford: Latimer House, 1984)

<sup>30</sup> J. I. Packer, ed., *The Church of England and the Methodist Church: A Consideration of the Report, Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church; Ten Essays* (Marcham: Marcham Manor, 1963).



*Reunion in England*.<sup>31</sup> Packer's tenacity was certainly needed.

But Packer suffered another setback in this period. During the Puritan Conference, an annual gathering of Evangelical ministers of varied denominations that had Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones as its chairman, the non-Anglicans could not comprehend Packer's efforts in the conversations, especially his alliance with the Anglo-Catholics. With the latter Packer coauthored *Growing into Union*,<sup>32</sup> the publication of which scuttled the talks.

Even his friend Lloyd-Jones had thought it was possible to turn Packer from Anglicanism, but stung by *Growing into Union*, the Doctor and his faction abruptly terminated the meetings. A fellow Welshman and a sometime deacon of Westminster Chapel, Gaius Davies, commented,

Dr. Lloyd-Jones wrote to Packer to say there would be no Puritan Conference at Westminster Chapel in December 1970. It was effectively rather like being sent a Papal Bull, even though it did not excommunicate Packer. Thankfully Packer survived what many of us still feel was very scurvy treatment by Lloyd-Jones and his like-minded colleagues. Quickly it became that Dr. Packer was now, for them, *persona non grata*, and he was cold-shouldered and rejected by people with whom he had worked out closely.<sup>33</sup>

This treatment did not dint Packer's estimate of the Doctor. There are at least two papers of Packer's on Dr. Lloyd-Jones, each of them laudatory. The second ends with these words:

To have known him was a supreme privilege, for which I shall always be thankful .... He embodied and expressed "the glory"—the glory of God, of Christ, of grace, of the gospel, of the Christian ministry, of humanness according to the new creation—more richly than any man I have ever known. No man can give another a greater gift than a vision of such glory as this. I am forever in his debt.<sup>34</sup>

Not a sign of a sour grape.

It was the setbacks of this period that helped Packer to form the intention to leave the United Kingdom for British Columbia, Canada, to take a teaching post at Regent College, Vancouver, where he was to spend the rest of his life from 1974 to 2020.

<sup>31</sup> J. I. Packer, ed., *All in Each Place: Towards Reunion in England; Ten Anglican Essays with Some Free Church Comments* (Abington, UK: Marcham Manor, 1965).

<sup>32</sup> Colin O. Buchanan, E. L. Mascal, Graham Leonard, and J. I. Packer, *Growing into Union: Proposals for Forming a United Church in England* (London: SPCK, 1970).

<sup>33</sup> Gaius Davies, *Genius, Grief and Grace*, 2nd ed. (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2001), 366.

<sup>34</sup> CSW, 4:87.

Although Regent College is not an Anglican college, there was a set of options in the MDiv curriculum for those Presbyterians and Anglicans intending to enter the ministry to take an appropriate course. For Packer there were places to exercise his concerns in Anglican theology.<sup>35</sup> Saint John's Shaughnessy was a church in which he could continue pastoral work.

There were periods when Packer was challenged about Canadian Anglicanism. The bishop of the diocese in which Saint John's Shaughnessy was situated adopted a policy that permitted same-sex marriages. For the first time in his career Packer left his local church and by implication Anglicanism. This was publicized widely due to his article "Why I Walked" in *Christianity Today*, a periodical with which he became closely connected after coming to Canada. In it he wrote,

Why did I walk out with the others? Because this decision, taken in its context, falsifies the gospel of Christ, abandons the authority of Scripture, jeopardizes the salvation of fellow human beings, and betrays the church in its God-appointed role as the bastion and bulwark of divine truth.

My primary authority is a Bible writer named Paul. For many decades now, I have asked myself at every turn of my theological road: Would Paul be with me in this? What would he say if he were in my shoes? I have never dared to offer a view on anything that I did not have good reason to think he would endorse.

In 1 Corinthians we find the following, addressed, it seems, to exponents of some kind of antinomian spirituality:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (6:9–11, ESV).

To make sure we grasp what Paul is saying here, I pose some questions.

First: What is Paul talking about in this vice list? Answer: Lifestyles, regular behavior patterns, habits of mind and action. He has in view not single lapses followed by repentance, forgiveness, and greater watchfulness (with God's help) against recurrence, but ways of life in which some of his readers were set, believing that for Christians there was no harm in them.

Second: What is Paul saying about these habits? Answer: They are ways of sin that, if not repented of and forsaken, will keep people out of God's kingdom of salvation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> His lectures on Anglican Theology, given at Regent College, have recently been published as J. I. Packer, *The Heritage of Anglican Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021).

<sup>36</sup> J. I. Packer, "Why I Walked: Sometimes Loving a Denomination Requires You to Fight," *Christianity Today* 47 (January 21, 2003): 47–48.

He was later renewed as an Anglican minister via ordination by the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON).

Packer's subscribing to "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" in 1994 brought accusations from some that he was selling out to Rome. There was misunderstanding on both sides. Packer had forgotten that he was a public figure, and his critics no doubt took his joining as an opportunity to put his "off the record" chats on the record; they were not prepared to give him that sort of personal liberty.

During this period of trouble, he continued teaching at Regent College, fulfilling numerous invitations to conferences and seminaries, and advising *Christianity Today*, which involved regular travel. This spawned a joke from his students: "What is the difference between God and J. I. Packer? Answer: God is everywhere, but Packer is everywhere except Vancouver!"

#### **Strand 4: Universalism, Revivals and Revivalism, and the Holy Spirit**

We shall begin this section by looking at Packer's emphasis on evangelism, beginning with *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, published in 1961. The occasion of the book was a meeting of the University of London Inter-Faculty Christian Union in which the stress on divine sovereignty led to the charge that belief in it hampered evangelism. There is literary evidence that Packer's rise as a Calvinist worried the work of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), which had an outlook that encompassed all sorts of Evangelical commitment among students. Packer thought it important to comment:

It must not be thought that in all the points with which I deal I am trying to lay down some sort of "I.V.F. orthodoxy". The limits of "I.V.F. orthodoxy" are set out in the Fellowship's doctrinal basis. ... On the subject now to be dealt with, it may well be that some members of the Fellowship will think differently from the present writer. Equally, however, an author has a right to his own opinion, and he cannot be expected to conceal his views when he believes them to be biblical, relevant, and (in the strict sense) edifying.<sup>37</sup>

The topic of universalism has several sides to it. There is the clear teaching of Scripture of the uniqueness and sufficiency of the work of Jesus Christ about which the universalism of radical Anglican theologians had little or nothing to say. For example, John Hick, a radical theologian who, though not an Anglican, made his views clear in the title of his book, *The Myth of*

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<sup>37</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 8; see also, e.g., *CSW* 3, chs. 16, 17, 21.

*God Incarnate* (1977).<sup>38</sup> Besides this, the trends in the culture and media, whenever the topic came up, had become more and more universalistic.

Against this, Packer's own attitude to evangelism had been made clear in his lucid exposition of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. However, it was something of a surprise to find that when he brought the two together, he had the idea that the result was antinomy, with its associations with Kantian philosophy.

For the whole point of an antinomy—in theology, at any rate—is that it is not a real contradiction, though it looks like one. It is an *apparent* incompatibility between two apparent truths. An antinomy exists when a pair of principles stand by side by side, seemingly irreconcilable.<sup>39</sup>

And he goes on to compare antinomy with paradox. The puzzle is that all this seems unnecessary; as he points out, if there are verses in Scripture where the two are brought together, that would suffice. And there *are* such verses, as in Luke 22:22, “For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man to whom he is betrayed,” and Acts 2:23, “This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”<sup>40</sup>

It has not been possible to find any other place in which Packer uses this argument again when dealing with the sovereignty of God and human responsibility. Had he wished to, he could have given a Puritan answer to the problem, say, that to be found in Edward Elton's exposition of the ninth chapter of Romans, *The Mystery of Godliness Opened* (1653). Nevertheless, his modest book has become a standard treatment of evangelism since its appearance.

Within the walls of Regent College, Packer was challenged by his view over the ordination of women<sup>41</sup> and his denial of universalism. In fact, this topic engaged him throughout his career. Early on he was challenged by conditional immortality, a position represented by some of his fellow Evangelical Anglicans in England, such as John Wenham and later by Philip Edgecumbe Hughes.

Packer seems to have spent time on other factors that get in the way of communication of the gospel of any kind, as with the growing belief in universalism. In 1971, before his move to Canada, he had given the Payton Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary on universalism and later on in

<sup>38</sup> Packer, *CSW* 3, chs. 3, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 18.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>41</sup> *CSW* 3, chs. 13, 16.

lectures at Dallas Theological Seminary, published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* in 1972–1973.<sup>42</sup> During his time at Regent, he took part in his defense of the traditional view of divine retribution in the face of arguments for conditional immortality.

Packer shared his thinking on revival and revivals in shorter writings.<sup>43</sup> These perhaps bear the marks of the thinking of Dr. Lloyd-Jones, who held that the remedy for the contemporary malaise is not education or organization but revival, a sovereign act of God the Holy Spirit “refreshing” the people of God, the means of which was the combination of word and Spirit. The other factor was his critique of what he called Charles Finney’s revivalism: Revival cannot be organized; rather, it is a refreshing of God’s sovereign grace.

As far as the work of the Holy Spirit was concerned, Packer wrote of his internal witness and guidance as the source of holiness, indwelling, and gifts. The wave of charismatic phenomena from the 1950s required appropriate new research.<sup>44</sup> His book *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, with its critical stance on perfectionism and semi-Pelagianism, was in line with his 1955 critique of the Keswick movement, and it was probably the weightiest book during his time in Canada, the first edition appearing in 1984 and a second edition in 2005. The argument of the book is to pose the question: What is the Holy Spirit for? His answer, in a Packer alliteration: not for power (e.g., Keswick) or performance (e.g., gifts of various kinds) but presence.

By this I mean that the Spirit makes known the personal presence in and with the Christian and the church of the risen, reigning Savior, the Jesus of history, who is the Christ of faith .... what the Spirit is doing all the time as he empowers, enables, purges, and leads generation after generation of sinners to face the reality of God. And he does it in order that Christ may be known, loved, honored and praised, which is the Spirit’s aim and purpose of God the Father, too. This is what, in the last analysis, the Spirit’s covenant ministry is all about.<sup>45</sup>

Those who trace Packer’s relationship with Owen will recognize a similarity to the theme of the latter’s *A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit* (1647),<sup>46</sup> that holiness is not a matter of practicing the virtues (as the Restoration

<sup>42</sup> Cf. in particular, J. I. Packer, “The Way of Salvation, Part II: The Problems of Universalism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130.517 (1973): 3–11; “The Way of Salvation, Part IV: Are Non-Christian Faiths Ways of Salvation?,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130.518 (1973): 110–16.

<sup>43</sup> CSW 2, chs. 7, 8, 9 and CSW 4, ch. 4.

<sup>44</sup> How much this work required can be seen, for example, in the scope of his forty-page paper, “Theological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement” (CSW 4, ch. 12).

<sup>45</sup> Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> John Owen, *Discourse on the Holy Spirit*, in *Works*, ed. Goold, vol. 3.

theologians taught), but an inward renovation in faith and love in accord with John 16:5.

## Strand 5: The Work of Christ

Naturally, the person and work of Christ were central to Packer's conception of evangelism. Christology figured in two other separate productions, his "Introductory Essay" to the Banner of Truth republication of John Owen's *Death of Death*<sup>47</sup> and his Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture, "What Did the Cross Achieve?" (1973). The first is a defense of the view that Christ intended the salvation of the elect only and so was a "definite" atonement. He could have met Owen's view while writing his doctoral dissertation, but it did not register with him then. The second is, in my view, the most finished and learned account of the satisfaction of the substitutionary death of Christ that Packer endeavored. Though published separately, the two themes were connected, as Packer shows in the footnotes of the Tyndale paper as he had in *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*.<sup>48</sup> The scope and tone of his Tyndale lecture give the reader an idea of how a systematic theology from Packer might have looked had he produced one.

Evidence that he had "bedded down" with American and Canadian Christian leaders was the publication in 2008 of *In My Place Condemned He Stood*.<sup>49</sup> This collection contains the two Christological pieces for which Packer was best known, "Penal Substitution Revisited" and "The Heart of the Gospel" (a chapter from *Knowing God*), as well as writings by Mark Dever, Ligon Duncan, R. Albert Mohler Jr., and C. J. Mahaney. It was dedicated to John Stott.

## Strand 6: Knowing God

Before his migration for Canada, Packer was an editor of the new English periodical *Evangelical Magazine*, to which he regularly gave chapters on Christian doctrine. Writing these chapters must have been a release from the stress of the issues that seem to have dogged him, several at a time.

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<sup>47</sup> J. I. Packer, "Saved by His Precious Blood," introductory essay to John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ: A Treatise in which the Whole Controversy about Universal Redemption Is Fully Discussed* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959).

<sup>48</sup> J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 43, n. 40; *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 67, n. 3.

<sup>49</sup> J. I. Packer with Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

And he turned these briefish pieces into a book of twenty-two chapters, *Knowing God*.<sup>50</sup> It “circled the globe,” as Packer put it, becoming a best-seller, with sales of over a million, first in the United Kingdom and then in North America. It is important to note its foreword on the angle of the book. He called it a “devotional” work<sup>51</sup> because it was intertwined with what the Puritans called application, not a work of systematic theology. He distinguished between its approach to the knowledge of God, his character in the lives of his people, and what he called the heart of the gospel: the propitiation, the adoption into the family, and the leadership of God through the temptations and trials of our pilgrim lives. The style is conversational, relaxed, and yet sharp and clear, full of precise and serious inferences and applications.

At the beginning, Packer stated that the tone was that of a traveler with the biblical text opened before him rather than of an observer. Like his mentor Calvin, he used the language of accommodation. Such accommodation was an instance of divine condescension, his coming down to us. Such a style was patristic and that of a favorite of Calvin's, John Chrysostom, as well as that of Augustine of Hippo.

Clearly, this is what he liked best, extolling the glories of Christ. Sometimes he gives the impression that he alone thinks like this—a consequence of his intensity—while in fact he gives a *tour de force* of Reformed theology and piety. In it he discloses himself as well as his Savior—not knowing about Jesus so much as knowing him.

“Are you Reformed?” he asks. He stresses the transcendence of God and reiterates the argument that depictions of Christ are idolatrous. Pictures of Jesus put us in control,<sup>52</sup> making God a thing we depict or speculate on, activities akin to each other. He emphasizes the place of “mystery” and God's incomprehensibility,<sup>53</sup> including that the believer possesses the internal witness of the Spirit.<sup>54</sup> There are sessions on limited atonement (“What Did the Cross Achieve?”),<sup>55</sup> divine immutability and impassionedness,<sup>56</sup> God's wisdom and ours,<sup>57</sup> and other divine attributes. We also find disconcerting applications,<sup>58</sup> his stress on God's covenant and his people as his

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<sup>50</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 50, 54, 59.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–63.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 161–80.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 67–72.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 81–82.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 227–27.

covenant partners,<sup>59</sup> the divine promises,<sup>60</sup> and Bible studies (Ecclesiastes and Romans 8).<sup>61</sup> He also expounds on divine judgment,<sup>62</sup> goodness and severity (brilliant, cf. Rom. 11:22),<sup>63</sup> adoption,<sup>64</sup> grace and predestination,<sup>65</sup> trials,<sup>66</sup> limited atonement,<sup>67</sup> perfectionism, and the method of grace.<sup>68</sup> In chapter 21, we encounter his gradualism once again. He elaborates on Christian snobs and other phenomena of the modern godless mind and of modern theology.<sup>69</sup> Another chapter deals with the education in discipleship of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>70</sup> A bonus is hymns of grace that adorn the second half of the book, epitomizing its themes, Augustus Montague Toplady linking arms with Charles Wesley, “the poet of the new creation,” inviting the reader to sing along with its author.<sup>71</sup>

Packer used to say his style was “packed”: “Packer by name and packer by nature,” he confessed. It is no good trying to do justice to the essence of a book when every time it is picked up the reader finds something new in it.

## Conclusion

What I have tried to do is to recall in a few words the tireless theological energy, ability, and courage of this talented Reformed theologian, uncommon among his contemporary Anglican colleagues, the most talented theological mind that I ever met, and the contexts in which he worked, with its tensions and opportunities. He was, of course, instrumental in educating his generation in the Reformed faith, not only his fellow Anglicans but what might be called Protestant dissenters as well. Many of them relished his preaching and lecturing to them as well as his writings.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 114–15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 93–97, 232–54.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 125–33.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 223–24.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 122–23.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 221–29.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 200–203.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 56, 63, 184.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 82–86.

<sup>71</sup> See *ibid.*, 119–24, 133, 175, 179, 189, 194–95, 209, 220, 225, 229, 240, 249, 252.



# Global Anglican, Global Evangelical: The Paths That Led to Stott's Lasting Influence

MARK MEYNELL

## Abstract

John Stott (1921–2011) had a unique influence in the global church despite being associated with only one church (All Souls, Langham Place) and never moving far from central London throughout his life. This article explores the contributory factors behind his reach and influence.

## Keywords

*Evangelicalism, Anglicanism, Lausanne Movement, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), integral mission, preaching*

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In the months following John Stott's death in 2011, an extraordinary range of memorial events took place. Quickest out of the starting blocks was the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) member movement in Kerala, India, with a service just two days after the announcement. This was quickly followed by several services across Canada, the USA, India, and Australia, as well as individual events in Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Jamaica and the Caribbean, Kenya, South Korea, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, and

Uganda.<sup>1</sup> Stott's international reach was then reflected in the "official" memorial service held at London's Saint Paul's Cathedral in January 2012, with tributes from John Chew, (Anglican) Archbishop of South East Asia; Robert Aboagye-Mensah, Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Ghana; and Ruth Padilla de Borst, General Secretary of the Latin American Theological Fellowship. Stott's old friend and biographer, Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith, preached, while the three most senior Anglican clergy of the day, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London, participated. It was evident to any with even a cursory awareness of global Christianity that Stott had been a man of international stature.

Yet, for someone whose impact was felt far beyond the bounds of the Anglophone sphere, it is hard to conceive of an ecclesiastical tribute more reflective of British "establishment" respectability. Here was a church statesman widely hailed as both a significant shaper of global Evangelicalism and perhaps the most consequential leader of his generation within the Church of England. Of the many anomalies of Stott's life and ministry, then, the strangest is perhaps that the former came about though he lived in the same London borough for eighty-five of his ninety years and the latter though he never attained high office. How did this come about?

## 1. *Intellectual Paths: Humble Rigor*

When Stott retired in late 2000, the progressive bishop in the Episcopal Church of the United States, John Shelby Spong, greeted the news in characteristically vituperative terms.<sup>2</sup> Despite Stott having been at great pains for decades to distinguish Evangelicalism from fundamentalism and liberalism,<sup>3</sup> building on thinkers such as Carl Henry,<sup>4</sup> Spong trampled over such niceties.

John Stott is quoted as saying that "the great tragedy of the Church today is that evangelicals are biblical, but not contemporary, while liberals are contemporary,

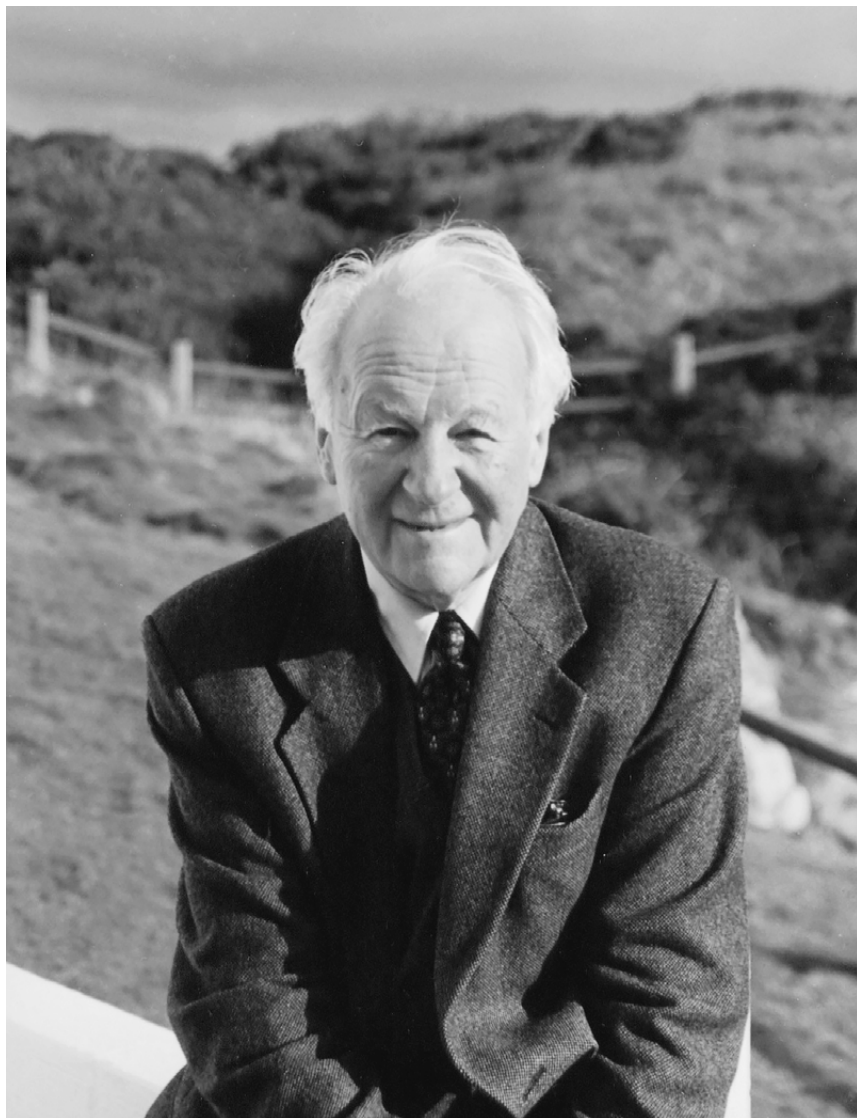
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<sup>1</sup> Fuller details on the archived memorial site, "John Stott Memorial: Events," Langham Partnership International, updated February 14, 2013, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130214073520/http://www.johnstottmemorial.org/events-updates/>.

<sup>2</sup> John Shelby Spong, "John Stott: A Fundamentalist in Sheep's Clothing?," BeliefNet, October 2000, <https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/2000/10/john-stott-a-fundamentalist-in-sheeps-clothing.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 218–19.

<sup>4</sup> See, in particular, Henry's groundbreaking 1947 essay, Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947).



**JOHN R. W. STOTT**

1921-2011

John Stott at The Hookses, his writing retreat on the coast of Wales  
Courtesy of [johnstott.org](http://johnstott.org)

but not biblical.” It is a nice try, a clever, even-handed approach, but it does not work. It is not biblical to read the Bible in a superstitious, ill-informed manner. It is not biblical for John Stott to justify every prejudice, to whitewash chauvinism, racism, homophobia, and a not-so-subtle hatred for everyone who does not affirm the evangelical value system ....

John Stott’s Christianity and the fundamentalist, evangelical tradition he espouses will finally do nothing except justify the human divisions between the saved and the unsaved. That religious stance will ultimately victimize every person who does not reside inside the definition of the Bible as “revealed truth,” as Stott interprets it.

So John Stott has decided to retire. What he needs to recognize is that all of his major ideas have also retired long before him. Perhaps they will now be happy together.<sup>5</sup>

The ironies are plentiful. Far from retiring, many of Stott’s “major ideas” had become globally mainstream, which could hardly be said for Spong’s (beyond the dwindling pockets of adherents in the Western church). Furthermore, Stott had done more than many to confront *in detail* many of the charges leveled by theological liberals, in particular in the project with David Edwards, published as *Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue*.<sup>6</sup> Close friends expressed misgivings when Edwards first proposed it because it entailed almost microscopic scrutiny of Stott’s published output for the purposes of critique. Stott was, of course, given space for a response, but there cannot be many who would be prepared to endure such a grueling process with such grace and humility. After working through Edwards’s first draft, Stott wrote to a former study assistant, describing it as “a pretty devastating critique (once he’s through with the flattery!) .... I’ve taken 35,000 words to respond chapter by chapter, seeking to defend our precious evangelical faith against this liberal attack!”<sup>7</sup> *Essentials* caused some controversy, much to Stott’s deep and lasting regret, because of his tentatively suggested alternative scriptural readings on annihilation, although he had by no means been categorical.<sup>8</sup> Stott was frustrated by how often he was attacked by those who had demonstrably failed to read what he had carefully written,<sup>9</sup> so he made a statement available to inquirers (written with evident discomfort):

One scholar has referred to me as “that erstwhile evangelical.” But the hallmark of authentic evangelicalism is not that we repeat traditional beliefs however ancient, but rather that we are always willing to submit them to fresh biblical scrutiny. This is not adjusting to liberalism, but being open to Scripture.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Spong, “John Stott.”

<sup>6</sup> David Edwards and John Stott, *Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Religious, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: A Global Ministry*, 348.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards and Stott, *Essentials*, 315–20.

<sup>9</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: A Global Ministry*, 354.

<sup>10</sup> John R. W. Stott, “A Statement about Eternal Punishment,” news release, April 1993; quoted in Dudley-Smith, *Stott: A Global Ministry*, 354.

Of concern here is not the controversy itself but how it illustrates Stott's mindset. A hallmark of his intellectual approach, from his days as a wartime theology student at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, was determined rigor, even if that left him isolated from those around him. Converted through the youth camps at Iwerne Minster (renowned for their pietistic zeal and strains of anti-intellectualism), Stott might easily have devoted his time to ministry among undergraduates, as many contemporaries did. Not only that, but the war had also severely depleted student and faculty numbers (resulting in inevitably slackened academic standards), and Stott found that the prevailing winds in Cambridge theology were highly critical, while Ridley itself had a new principal who (in the eyes of some contemporaries) seemed ill matched for the needs of ministry.<sup>11</sup> Stott had every excuse to avoid academic engagement.

Nevertheless, he plowed his own furrow, cultivating a deep concern "for the precision of exact exegesis"<sup>12</sup> despite the lack of contemporary Evangelical scholarship in the library. He was determined to engage with current scholarship and to preempt challenges for his own integrity's sake as much as anything. He thus began a lifelong habit of grappling with the best of opposing arguments to buttress his own theological convictions. He could never be satisfied with a theological position derived purely from churchmanship or expediency. This could at times leave him vulnerable or isolated, but it was surely one factor in his magnetism. People soon recognized in Stott someone who could be trusted to be both fearless in the face of difficult, even intractable, questions and resolute in his theological convictions as an Evangelical. A statement written toward the end of his life might stand as a summary, one which, in fact, tackles the likes of Spong and his comrade in theological arms, James Barr:

Evangelical Christians are understandably dismayed by such books as *Fundamentalism* by Professor James Barr and *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism* by Bishop Jack Spong, which, whether from ignorance, misunderstanding or malice, perpetuate the old identification. They write as if the only choice before the church is between an enlightened liberalism and an obscurantist fundamentalism.<sup>13</sup>

If there was one failing that Stott was determined to avoid more than any other, it was the charge of obscurantism. The barb that would no doubt

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<sup>11</sup> Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012), 194–97.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>13</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity*, ed. David Smith and Joe M. Kapolyo, Global Christian Library (Carlisle: Langham Publishing, 2013). 5.

have been flung throughout his student days and beyond, but he would not give it credence. Thus, when commenting on Jesus revealing kingdom realities to children rather than the wise and learned, Stott writes,

“Babies” in the vocabulary of Jesus are sincere and humble seekers; from everybody else, Jesus said, God actively hides himself.

Please do not misunderstand this. This is not obscurantism. It is not to copy the ostrich and bury our head in the sand. It is not to murder our intellect or deny the importance of thought, for we have been told to “stop thinking like children” and instead in our thinking to be adults (1 Corinthians 14:20).<sup>14</sup>

He would wrestle with texts and ideas for as long as was required.

Two publications illustrate this well. Challenged by All Souls colleagues such as his New Zealander curate, Ted Schroder,<sup>15</sup> Stott started preaching on questions of pressing concern to people in 1970s Britain but which were rarely mentioned in pulpits apart from in passing: industrial relations and strikes, nuclear disarmament, matters of sexuality, and so on. In time, these would be developed and expanded into *Issues Facing Christians Today*,<sup>16</sup> a book subsequently given three full revisions (in 1999, 2006, and 2011). Of course, Stott was hardly the first Evangelical to enter the marshes of contemporary ethics, but it was unusual for a man whose primary calling was to the pulpit to do so with such intellectual alacrity and depth. It was no doubt this priority that preserved him from an ivory-towered scholasticism, driven as he was by the desire “to stir up evangelicals to godly ambition in society.”<sup>17</sup>

And when society does go bad, we Christians tend to throw up our hands in pious horror and reproach the non-Christian world; but should we not rather reproach ourselves? One can hardly blame unsalted meat for going bad. It cannot do anything else. The real question to ask is: where is the salt?<sup>18</sup>

Many around the world testify to the life-changing importance of *Issues* in uniquely providing both permission and a model to tackle difficult questions.<sup>19</sup> This development in his thinking, in turn, had a part in Stott’s

<sup>14</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Why I Am a Christian* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 128.

<sup>15</sup> Alistair Chapman, *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 74.

<sup>16</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (London: Marshalls, 1984).

<sup>17</sup> Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, 130.

<sup>18</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount: Christian Counter-Culture*, 2nd ed., with study guide (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 65.

<sup>19</sup> Several on the podcast created to commemorate the Stott Centenary (2021–22) cited this book in particular, including guests from Indonesia, Ghana, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, and the UK. The Stott Legacy, 2022, <https://thestottlegacy.podbean.com>.

establishment in 1982 of the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC). This provided him and others with a new platform for developing these ideas of holistic, or “integral,” mission in an institutional context to dissolve the post-Enlightenment sacred–secular divide.<sup>20</sup> He would gather promising leaders from across the world for weeks at a time to help them deepen their understanding of the Scriptures and develop a Christian mind sufficiently equipped to engage with contemporary concerns.<sup>21</sup>

The second example is his *Bible Speaks Today* commentary on Romans.<sup>22</sup> He found the work deeply challenging because long after he had graduated from the academy, Pauline scholarship had become dominated by the scholarship of Krister Stendhal, E. P. Sanders, Geza Vermes, and others, which had created the legitimate concern to understand Paul within the context of first-century Judaism. The problem was that this appeared to undermine traditional Evangelical understandings of justification and salvation. In correspondence with friends, he would say, “I’ve been struggling with [Sanders’s] thesis about Palestinian Judaism. But I’ve now begun to write. A huge task still lies before me.”<sup>23</sup> On returning from a trip to South Korea, he wrote,

I spent all the time I could on Romans. Since it is a storm centre of contemporary controversy, in which old traditions are facing new challenges, I have found my studies at times a painful struggle.<sup>24</sup>

Stott was modeling precisely what he advocated in his brief, but significant, *Your Mind Matters*.<sup>25</sup> The intellect was to play an integral part in human worship and therefore never to be dedicated to self-aggrandizement or preferment.

To Stott’s thinking, it was the necessary givenness of divine revelation that kept human pride in check.

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<sup>20</sup> This is one reason for using his name in the ministry of INFEMIT (International Fellowship for Mission as Transformation) known as the Stott-Bediako Forum.

<sup>21</sup> LICC in turn has inspired many like-minded organizations around the globe, such as these (all founded by Langham Scholars): Balkans Institute for Faith and Culture, in Skopje, North Macedonia; Institute for Christian Impact in Accra, Ghana; Centro de Capacitación Misionera in La Paz, Bolivia.

<sup>22</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: A Global Ministry*, 410.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>25</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006). Mark Noll would later write a book on this topic: Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).



That God needs to take the initiative to reveal himself shows that our minds are finite and fallen; that he chooses to reveal himself to babies shows that we must humble ourselves to receive his Word.<sup>26</sup>

He constantly returned to this principle, and the humility that it fostered served to subvert caricatures of Evangelical dogmatism and arrogance. Despite the inevitable cultural shifts between its original 1972 publication and the second edition in 2006, Mark Noll suggests in his preface that in the light of prevailing trends away from “responsible intellectual effort, the biblical message that ‘your mind matters’ is more relevant today than when it was first presented.”<sup>27</sup> Because of the dearth of good models in his generation, Stott stood out. As Alister Chapman put it, “Just as Billy Graham showed millions of Americans that one could be a conservative evangelical and civil, John Stott was living proof that one could be an evangelical and intelligent.”<sup>28</sup>

## **II. Ecclesiastical Paths: Anglican but Always Evangelical**

It was perhaps inevitable that Stott would serve the Church of England. Even without his teenage conversion, his British establishment upbringing would have immersed him in Anglicanism, not least because his secondary school, Rugby, was still steeped in the traditions laid down by its celebrated early Victorian headmaster, Thomas Arnold. Historian David Newsome famously encapsulated this legacy as “muscular Christianity” because it sought to instill a combined culture of manliness, self-discipline, gentlemanly conduct, and Anglican religious morals.<sup>29</sup> A century after Arnold, this was still very much the dominant culture across British private schools. So, having been taken along from infancy to All Souls, Langham Place, it is clear that Stott was “an Anglican before he was an evangelical.”<sup>30</sup>

However, long after his conversion, it was also clear how ill-suited the label of “muscular Christian” was for Stott, despite his upbringing. His was a lively and intentional discipleship rather than a passive osmosis of an elitist folk religion. Furthermore, he never allowed his statesmanship of genuine authority and even genius to diminish his personal gentleness and kindness

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<sup>26</sup> Stott, *Your Mind Matters*, 31.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Noll, preface to Stott, *Your Mind Matters*, 10.

<sup>28</sup> Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, 159.

<sup>29</sup> David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (London: Cassell, 1961), x.

<sup>30</sup> Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, 79.



or develop stubborn imperviousness to being challenged. Such virtues could hardly be said to be characteristic of the “muscular Christian.”

It was to reach precisely that rarefied and privileged world that Eric “Bash” Nash had set up his Varsity and Public Schools Christian camps in 1932 under the auspices of Scripture Union. His strategy was to win the boys who were being trained and thus likely to be England’s future leaders anyway so that they might also lead the church (by which he particularly meant the Church of England). So, once the sixteen-year-old Stott first heard Bash explain the gospel in February 1938 at Rugby’s small Christian Union and then professed faith soon afterwards, he was drawn into a carefully conceived process. However, even then, he was conspicuously gifted as a leader and administrator, so as soon as he had left secondary school, Bash laid several responsibilities for the camps on his shoulders. In fact, before Stott was even twenty, Bash prepared a remarkable document for his papers, declaring, “If anything should happen to me, I wish that John Stott shall assume full and absolute control. ... He knows my mind and will guide and appoint officers [i.e., camp leaders] as he sees fit.”<sup>31</sup> Stott remained ever grateful for Bash’s investment in him and the foundations laid at camp and wrote a warm tribute to him in his commentary on 2 Timothy.

I thank God for the man who led me to Christ and for the extraordinary devotion with which he nurtured me in the early years of my Christian life. He wrote to me every week for, I think, seven years. He also prayed for me every day. I believe he still does. I can only begin to guess what I owe, under God, to such a faithful friend and pastor.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, his intellectual curiosity and missional imagination were too dynamic for such an insular subculture, and he was soon looking further afield for ministry opportunities.

Stott was a *convinced* Anglican. He could never have remained in the denomination of his childhood simply by default. His justifications extended beyond the typical “Bash” camper argument that the Church of England represented “the best boat to fish from” for reaching the country. He was convinced that the denomination’s Reformed roots not only gave space for Evangelicals to remain within it but also mandated their presence, despite the meager numbers of clergy in postwar England. For there to be any hope of change, he knew that number would somehow need to grow.

<sup>31</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: The Making of a Leader*, 143.

<sup>32</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 29.

Nevertheless, he would have taken solace from the 1945 Church of England report *Toward the Conversion of England*, commissioned by Archbishop William Temple and dedicated to him after his death. The report was explicit that *all* Anglicans shared a responsibility for evangelism, thus ensuring that there were no longer grounds for dismissing such efforts as *un-Anglican*.<sup>33</sup> So, when this author started work on an evangelistic tourist guide and history of All Souls, Langham Place, it was striking that the only document Stott insisted be incorporated into the story was his lecture given to the London Diocese in 1952. In *Parochial Evangelism by the Laity*, he articulated his practice of training All Souls members to carry out door-to-door outreach in the parish.<sup>34</sup> In Stott's mind, this subversion of Anglican clericalism was central to understanding All Souls' distinctives.

To American friends who struggled to comprehend his perseverance in such a mixed denomination, he would often respond that his allegiance was grounded in "a commitment to history and a commitment to geography."<sup>35</sup> By this he meant consciously standing within the tradition of Reformed, confessional Christianity and ministering within the parish system that bears responsibility for every parishioner in England regardless of church attendance. He was a convinced Protestant, in theology if not in temperament, and so his explanation of ecclesial "catholicity" in his dialogue with Edwards barely diverts from the church's Reformed foundation in the Elizabethan Settlement, nor from the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888.<sup>36</sup> For example, in his early years as rector of All Souls, he preached through the Thirty-Nine Articles. Such Evangelical convictions inevitably provoked conflict with those of other theological persuasions, not least because he was determined to avoid extreme responses to such diversity, namely, "that of separation in pursuit of doctrinal purity or compromise through a passive resignation to differences."<sup>37</sup> He described the task as pursuing "truth and unity simultaneously, that is to pursue the kind of unity commended by Jesus Christ and his apostles, namely unity in truth."<sup>38</sup> This did not imply the equal weight of all

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<sup>33</sup> Mark Meynell, "John Stott (1921–2011)," in *Twentieth Century Anglican Theologians: From Evelyn Underhill to Esther Mombo*, ed. Stephen Burns, Bryan Cones, and James Tengatenga (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 122–23.

<sup>34</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Parochial Evangelism by the Laity* (London: Church Information Board, 1952).

<sup>35</sup> Heard more than once from Stott himself by the author.

<sup>36</sup> Edwards and Stott, *Essentials*, 38.

<sup>37</sup> Meynell, "John Stott," 125.

<sup>38</sup> Caroline Chartres, *Why I Am Still an Anglican: Essays and Conversations* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 13.

disagreements. Distinctions could be made under the principle of “comprehension,” for which he appealed to Alec Vidler’s summary:

The principle of comprehension is that a church ought to hold the fundamentals of the faith, and at the same time allow for differences of opinion and interpretation in secondary matters, especially rites and ceremonies.<sup>39</sup>

While being Anglican was clearly significant for Stott, it is crucial to recognize that it never took precedence over his Evangelical convictions. Drawing from the botanical world he so loved, he wrote,

How, for example, would you label me? Perhaps “*genus*: Christian, *species*: Evangelical, *subspecies*: Anglican.” But one would soon get stuck. For to classify organisms according to their structure demands a high degree of precision, whereas to classify human beings according to their beliefs would be a much more flexible and fluid task.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the best way to understand his position is in the light of the individual who best represented Stott’s ideal and inspiration: Charles Simeon of Cambridge (1759–1836). He would describe himself as a “Sim,” as Simeon’s acolytes styled themselves. Stott was attracted by “Simeon’s uncompromising commitment to Scripture [that] captured [his] imagination and has held it ever since.”<sup>41</sup> However, the parallels between the two went far deeper. Both came from privileged homes and schools: Simeon was educated at Eton College and then King’s College, Cambridge, Stott at Rugby and then Trinity College, Cambridge. Both exercised lifelong ministries attached to a single church: Simeon at Holy Trinity, Cambridge, Stott at All Souls. Both were gifted intellectually but also popular preachers. They were committed to an expository approach to biblical texts during periods when English Evangelicalism was depleted and in decline. Both published extensively: Simeon adapted his sermons into a commentary of the whole Bible, his *Horae Homileticae*; Stott would, of course, initiate, contribute to, and function as New Testament editor of IVP’s Bible Speaks Today series. Both remained lifelong bachelors but still generously shared their lives with countless generations of students and future leaders. Most significantly for our purposes here, both men were committed Anglicans. As Archbishop Donald Coggan would say of Simeon,

<sup>39</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, xiii.

<sup>41</sup> John R. W. Stott, “Charles Simeon: A Personal Appreciation,” in *Evangelical Preaching: An Anthology of Sermons by Charles Simeon*, ed. James M. Houston (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986), xxvii.

He loved the Church of England. He loved its liturgy and he was content to live and die a son of the Church of England, even though within that Church he suffered so much and saw so much that was weak and unworthy in its priests and people.<sup>42</sup>

Simeon endured considerable opposition in his early years at Holy Trinity, Cambridge, which included being pelted with eggs in the street and being locked out of the church building by irate church wardens. Stott never faced anything that difficult, but Coggan's words about Simeon could well serve to describe Stott as well. Paul Carr comments,

It is widely accepted that Simeon, by his loyalty to the Church of England, was instrumental in keeping evangelical Anglicans within the fold rather than following the Dissenters into Non-conformity.<sup>43</sup>

This is precisely true of Stott as well, especially after the notorious 1966 contretemps with the influential Welsh minister of Westminster Chapel, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. In October of that year, Stott was chairing a gathering of the Evangelical Alliance's National Assembly of Evangelicals in London, and Lloyd-Jones was presenting the main address. The two held each other in high regard, so much so that earlier that year, the nonconformist Lloyd-Jones invited the younger Anglican to take over from him at Westminster Chapel. Stott's response was, "While I am greatly honoured, I have no sense of calling to leave All Souls, or indeed the Church of England."<sup>44</sup> What Lloyd-Jones said in his address was not a total surprise, since he had indicated his intentions to the conference committee. In it, he criticized leaders who were "content to be an evangelical wing of a territorial church, hoping to infiltrate and show others they are wrong." Without providing details, Lloyd-Jones then made a vague appeal calling for "something new," "a fellowship or association of evangelical churches." This provoked Stott to take the highly unusual step of disagreeing from the chair about what had just been said.

I believe history is against what Dr Lloyd-Jones has said. ... Scripture is against him, the remnant was within the church not outside it. I hope no one will act precipitately. ... We are all concerned with the same ultimate issues and with the glory of God.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Cited in Paul A. Carr, "Are the Priorities and Concerns of Charles Simeon Relevant for Today?," *Churchman* 114.2 (2000): 160.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Roger Steer, *Inside Story: The Life of John Stott* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), 131.

<sup>45</sup> Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith, 1939–1981* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1990), 2:525.

This marked a turning point. It steeled the resolve of many Anglican Evangelicals unsettled by the furor caused by the publication of Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God* three years earlier, and Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey's "Common Declaration" with Pope Paul VI in Rome six months earlier. If it had not been obvious before 1966, it was now clear that Stott had become the Evangelicals' standard-bearer within the Church of England.

What is remarkable, however, is how this influence had grown without the ascent of ecclesiastical ladders. Ordained in 1945 to serve his curacy at All Souls, he unexpectedly found himself managing the parish's day-to-day business when Rector Harold Earnshaw-Smith's health began to deteriorate early in 1947. By March 1948, Earnshaw-Smith had died, prompting Stott to write, "We are an orphaned church."<sup>46</sup> While the church did not have the renown it would gain subsequently, All Souls was situated in a sought-after central London location and so would have been an attractive prospect for ambitious clergy. For Stott to succeed Earnshaw-Smith was by no means guaranteed, and even after he was appointed at only twenty-nine years old, there was some unease. For example, Earnshaw-Smith's daughter Elisabeth initially struggled that "this young upstart should take over from [her] father."<sup>47</sup> Any initial qualms were soon allayed, of course, and Stott would be associated with the church for the rest of his life, becoming Rector Emeritus after passing on its leadership to Michael Baughen in 1975. However, he never took on any formal roles within diocesan or provincial hierarchies, despite the expectations of friends. Chapman suggests that invitations to become a bishop would have been blocked by Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1961–1974; this is plausible since Ramsey's opposition to Evangelicalism had surfaced with his stirring of the so-called Fundamentalism Controversy.<sup>48</sup> By the time Ramsey had retired and been replaced by more sympathetic leadership, Stott's ministry and writing were already giving him opportunities around the world, such that being tied down to one English (or perhaps even Australian) diocese entailed "chang[ing] the whole direction" of his ministry.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: The Making of a Leader*, 242.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>48</sup> Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, 111, cf. 40–48. The Fundamentalism Controversy arose when Billy Graham was invited by the Cambridge Inter Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU) to be the main speaker at its triennial mission week, prompting letters to *The Times* newspaper and much public debate. Stott led the mission weeks before and after Graham (in 1952 and 1958) and was the week's chairman in 1955.

<sup>49</sup> Chapman, *Godly Ambition*, 111.

### III. *Strategic Paths: Structures to Serve Rather Than Serving the Structures*

To understand his influence, it is important to factor in another area of gifting, one that would have made him highly effective in the field his military surgeon father was so keen for him to enter, namely, the diplomatic corps. He had an unusual ability to conceive of structural improvements that might help steer an institution toward greater effectiveness or faithfulness. Not only that, but he was also able to bring what he imagined into being, having sufficient stature (even at a young age) to lead or shape them. For example, he realized that if Evangelicals were to persevere in Anglican ministry, they needed the sustenance and encouragement of fellow travelers with whom to discuss common questions or pray for divine support. So, taking his cue from an eighteenth-century fraternity frequented by the likes of former slave trader John Newton, the Clapham Sect leader John Venn, and not least Charles Simeon, he revived the Eclectic Society in 1955. In his first invitation letter, he described its primary goal as

fellowship, but we mean to take the opportunity to pray together, and spend a bit of time discussing some matter of common interest or concern. But the time will be free and informal, and not too organised.<sup>50</sup>

It would be a mark of Stott's wider influence that it invariably evolved from this spirit of generous friendship. Countless individuals around the world have testified to his keenness to override formalities in order to build genuine and mutual trust, although it perhaps took time for this habit to develop. After all, his lifelong secretary Frances Whitehead worked alongside him for almost two decades before being invited to address him as "John" rather than "Rector."<sup>51</sup> Stories abound in which "Uncle John," years after an initial meeting, would remember not only an individual's name (despite living on the other side of the world in very different church or social circumstances) but also their family members and ministry concerns. Without a doubt, he was gifted with a prodigious memory. Yet this was also evidence of a disciplined and persevering prayer life, for which he made good use of copious notes and prayer lists.

Intriguingly, just as the Eclectic Society of Venn and Simeon would be a catalyst for the 1799 founding of the Church Mission Society, an Anglican

<sup>50</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: The Making of a Leader*, 305.

<sup>51</sup> Julia E. M. Cameron, *John Stott's Right Hand: The Untold Story of Frances Whitehead*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Dictum, 2020), 94.

agency, so would Stott's group lead to other initiatives. For example, in the aftermath of Lloyd-Jones's appeal to leave, Stott and others organized a gathering of like-minded leaders on the campus of the University of Keele in 1967 for the National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC). It was clear that the friendships forged or deepened through the Eclectic Society would, in Stott's view, prove to be "the driving force behind the National Evangelical Anglican Congress."<sup>52</sup> Of course, in no sense could an event on the scale of NEAC be "free and informal, and not too organised." Where required, Stott's ability to craft complex, multidimensional conferences and organizations was evident to all, just as Bash had sensed in him while he was still a teenager. This is not to imply that Eclectics were the only source of NEAC's initial cohesion. For example, in 1960, Stott had also founded the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC), which continues to this day, as a more structural means of fostering unity and partnership. He chaired it for well over its first decade, and through him it became a means for disseminating a shared voice and sponsoring engagement with important issues of the day.

Stott was an inveterate establisher of organizations that grew out of his identification of gaps and needs in the church as he perceived them, with more examples than can be explored here. He was a strategic thinker but also a delegator willing to hand on his creations to others' safekeeping.<sup>53</sup> However, it is important to emphasize that in his mind, it was never a question of structures for the sake of themselves. The goal of serving the kingdom of God was always explicit, and while he openly acknowledged how much he struggled with pride and selfishness, his personal discipline was such that he was ruthless in testing his motives and private agendas. It is no accident that he articulated his admiration for Simeon by focusing on the latter's "unalloyed personal authenticity ... [and his faith as] the religion of the sinner at the foot of the cross."<sup>54</sup>

#### **IV. *Post-Colonial Paths: Serving Global Leaders, Not Empire Building***

It would be surprising if Stott's abilities thus far recounted were not put to use beyond the boundaries of both the United Kingdom and Anglicanism.

<sup>52</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: The Making of a Leader*, 308.

<sup>53</sup> Chris Wright discusses precisely this point in the twenty-fifth and concluding episode of *The Stott Legacy*, July 1, 2022, <https://thestottlegacy.podbean.com/e/chris-wright-and-taylor-ariakawe/>, as does Elaine Storkey in episode 19, "Langham Partnership," March 25, 2022, <https://thestottlegacy.podbean.com/e/dr-elaine-storkey/>.

<sup>54</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: A Global Ministry*, 429.



Indeed, Simeon himself had been a willing partner of Evangelicals outside the Church of England, as evidenced by his four preaching tours to Scotland at the invitation of senior Presbyterians,<sup>55</sup> and was a passionate advocate for global mission. This created in him a willingness to sponsor for the mission field those who were some of the most able of their time and his closest friends. This included such pioneers as the brilliant Henry Martyn (whose portrait Simeon treasured after Martyn's tragically early death) in Persia and Thomas Thomason in India.<sup>56</sup>

So, in 1961, a year after CEEC was formed, Stott created the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion (EFAC), another body that is active to this day. This exists to unite the various regional chapters that have grown up around the world, "each working to promote biblical faithfulness in their own context."<sup>57</sup> This statement reflects a key missiological concern that preoccupied Stott for much of his ministry from the 1960s onwards. The period was one of seismic global shifts, with the Cold War appearing to get hot during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the rapid decolonization of Africa and Asia. After India's partition at the creation of an independent India and Pakistan in 1947, the speed accelerated after Ghana gained its autonomy in 1957. United Kingdom Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's famous "Wind of Change" speech was given in the South African Parliament in 1960 and made it clear that the British government would not stand in the way of countries seeking to follow Ghana's suit. Stott was beginning to understand, long before many others, that the church could not cling to old patterns of behavior or institutional structures when political change was happening at such velocity. No longer could mission be a question of "from the west to the rest," with leadership and purse strings being controlled from either side of the North Atlantic.

This is one of the most surprising aspects of Stott's legacy because in so many ways he was a child of empire, educated to become a servant of empire, and one who might reasonably have been expected to share the attitudes of empire. And yet he grew ever more conscious, from this period onwards, that he had to change. His early international speaking invitations came initially from the former British Dominions (like Australia and Canada), where he would lead university campus mission weeks (much like those in Cambridge mentioned above). However, the destinations and goals of his trips gradually fanned out, resulting in a growing awareness of the lived

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<sup>55</sup> Arthur Bennett, "Charles Simeon: Prince of Evangelicals," *Churchman* 102.2 (1988): 124.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>57</sup> "History and Vision," EFAC, <https://efacglobal.com/history-and-vision/>.



realities of the global church beyond Britain and Anglicanism. He was convinced of the need to raise up good future leaders for the church around the world, just as were needed at home. This meant supplying them with books and other resources (a need met by his founding of the Evangelical Literature Trust, now Langham Literature) and also finding ways to fund the brightest to do doctoral studies in theology (met by what became known as Langham Scholars). Despite the inevitably small start to these projects, he was driven by the necessity of weening postcolonial churches off dependence on their colonial masters. This has since evolved into Langham Partnership, a global organization committed to serving the indigenization, contextualization, and leadership autonomy of the global church.

If there are two organizations that best represent Stott's commitment to global Evangelical ecumenism, they would be the Lausanne Movement, which was founded after the 1974 Lausanne Congress organized by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), with Stott as its primary theological influence, and the IFES. Both transcend denominational and national boundaries, and both greatly benefited from Stott's incisive direction. Striking, though, were the ways in which Stott forced the churches of the Northern Atlantic to sit up and listen to voices from the Global South at Lausanne. It seems that the BGEA would instinctively have been more comfortable with a range of speakers from North America and, to some extent, from Britain. Stott insisted that the intellectual and missional firebrands of the rest of the world have a place on the platform. This was directly responsible for René Padilla of Ecuador, Samuel Escobar of Peru, Bishop Festo Kivengere of Uganda, and Gottfried Osei-Mensah of Ghana and Kenya gaining global influence. This, in turn, forced often complacent Western churches to face up to the challenges of lives afflicted by dictatorship, acute poverty, and persecution, all of which rendered a ministry of "just preaching the simple gospel" all but irrelevant, and even impossible.<sup>58</sup>

IFES was not founded by Stott, nor was he ever a member of its staff. However, he was committed from his earliest days to its vision of university campus ministry and mission, initially in Britain and subsequently around the world. It was under its auspices that he led those mission weeks in Australia and Canada, for example, and it was through IFES that he first went to Latin America to work alongside Padilla and Escobar. But he would serve formally as its vice president and informally as its constant ally and

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<sup>58</sup> Julia Cameron, "The Legacy of John Stott through the Lausanne Movement," Lausanne Movement, <https://lausanne.org/about/blog/the-legacy-of-john-stott-through-the-lausanne-movement>.

advocate. It is easy to see why this was the case: it was committed to reaching future leaders for Christ, it was committed to providing clear biblical roots and training for evangelism and discipleship, and it was committed to contextual, indigenous leadership (so IFES is known for its distinctive commitment to student leadership for campus Christian Unions). All these are hallmarks of the majority, if not all, of the organizations and initiatives in which Stott was involved. They are certainly true of his most visible global legacy, Langham Partnership, and they explain its ongoing interconnectedness with both IFES and the Lausanne Movement.

These factors are core to why his legacy will long outlast him, perhaps long after even his name has become a distant memory. Those who gathered in Saint Paul's Cathedral were there because, to varying degrees no doubt, they understood that John Stott had been a man of unique gifts. Few others have displayed the combination of intellectual curiosity and rigor, with such personal discipline in life and study, on top of an ability to think strategically and creatively, not to mention the sparkling clarity of his preaching and writing, all while living a very simple lifestyle in a tiny London flat with the grace and humility derived from acute sin-consciousness. He was by no means perfect and would never have claimed to be. But as Professor John Wyatt has frequently said, "John Stott was quite simply the most 'converted' man I have ever met."<sup>59</sup> It is now, perhaps, no wonder that he had the impact he had.

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<sup>59</sup> The Stott Legacy, April 29, 2022, <https://thestottlegacy.podbean.com/e/prof-john-wyatt-1651231137/>.

# “The Very Heart of the Christian Gospel”: Comparing Packer’s and Stott’s Theologies of the Cross

JONATHAN N. CLELAND

## Abstract

Both J. I. Packer and John Stott wrote influential works on the cross. Packer’s article, “What Did the Cross Achieve?” was published in 1974, and Stott published his book *The Cross of Christ* in 1986. Stott quotes Packer’s reference to the cross as the global mark of Evangelicalism and being at “the very heart of the Christian gospel.” This article looks at both of these works to see the agreements shared in Packer’s and Stott’s theologies of the cross, as well as detailing the areas in which they seem to disagree. This exposition thus presents the overarching ideas both of these Anglicans believed to be held as central while also showing that the interpretation of these ideas can nevertheless vary.

## Keywords

*atonement, extent of the atonement, hypothetical universalism, Evangelicalism, Anglicanism, penal substitution*

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## Introduction

**J**. I. Packer and John Stott wrote influential works on the cross that were published a little over a decade apart. Packer's article "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution" was first presented as the Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture in 1973 and then published in the *Tyndale Bulletin* in 1974.<sup>1</sup> Packer's article has since been reprinted and has had a considerable impact.<sup>2</sup> In this article, Packer sets forth an articulation of the doctrine of penal substitution in his clear and systematic style.

In 1986, Stott published his highly influential book *The Cross of Christ*, which has likewise seen several printings.<sup>3</sup> On the first page of his preface, Stott quotes Packer's article in reference to the cross being the "distinguishing mark" of global Evangelicalism and being at "the very heart of the Christian gospel."<sup>4</sup> Packer even wrote an endorsement for Stott's work, calling it Stott's "masterpiece."<sup>5</sup>

With Stott and Packer both writing works that espoused what they considered to be the central belief of global Evangelicalism, it is worth expounding on what views in particular they shared as central to the gospel. This article thus aims to look at both of these works to see what these core

<sup>1</sup> J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 3–45. For a brief look at the background to this presentation, see Leland Ryken, *J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 137–39.

<sup>2</sup> J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," in J. I. Packer and Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 53–100. This is the version that will be cited in this article.

<sup>3</sup> A recent printing from 2021 was produced in honor of the one-hundredth anniversary of Stott's birth. This will be the edition used in this article. John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, Centennial Edition (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021). Concerning the influence of the book, Timothy Dudley-Smith writes, "*The Cross of Christ* circulated in many countries, well beyond the UK and North America, and attracted a weight of correspondence." He then goes on to speak of accounts of the book being used in Australia, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. See Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry: A Biography of the Later Years* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 344–45.

<sup>4</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 13; Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?," 53. The high esteem in which Stott held Packer is seen in the first page of Stott's chapter he wrote for Packer's Festschrift. Stott calls Packer an "evangelical theologian *par excellence*" and his contribution to the volume as "akin to a shrimp paying homage to a whale!" Stott then writes, "I thank God specially for Jim's extraordinary combination of gifts. He somehow manages, at one and the same time, to be faithful and innovative, godly and human, open and critical, profound and popular" (John R. W. Stott, "Theology: A Multidimensional Discipline," in *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honour of J. I. Packer*, ed. Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996], 3).

<sup>5</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 1.

agreements were and to detail the areas in which the authors seemed to disagree. This exposition will show the overarching ideas both of these Evangelical Anglican authors believed were key to the theology of the cross while also showing that the interpretation of these ideas can nevertheless vary and that such variation can coexist within the Evangelical world.

## **I. *The Holy Love of God***

At the heart of the atonement for both Packer and Stott is the holy love of God. Packer calls the love of God the “source” of the atonement.<sup>6</sup> Because of the sinfulness of humanity, humans are in opposition to God and are therefore deserving of God’s judgment.<sup>7</sup> Because God is holy, he requires a payment for sin, but out of God’s love, God’s Son Jesus Christ dies “as the supreme expression of his love to men.”<sup>8</sup> The theme of God’s holy love is evident in Packer, even if he does not place the concepts of holiness and love together as explicitly and frequently as Stott does. God’s holiness requires the payment for sin, yet out of love, God in his Son Jesus Christ pays this penalty in the place of sinners.

In contrast to Packer’s more indirect interaction with this theme, Stott speaks about the holy love of God consistently throughout his book. It is a major theme for him and serves as the foundation for an understanding of the atonement. For example, Stott writes, “The only way for God’s holy love to be satisfied is for his holiness to be directed in judgement upon his appointed substitute, in order that his love may be directed toward us in forgiveness.”<sup>9</sup> And again,

Thus God took his own loving initiative to appease his own righteous anger by bearing it his own self in his own Son when he took our place and died for us. There is no crudity here to evoke our ridicule, only the profundity of holy love to evoke our worship.<sup>10</sup>

Ultimately, then, the love of God stands at the heart of the atonement for both Stott and Packer. It is on account of God’s love that he satisfied his holiness so that sinners can be forgiven.

Notably, Tim Chester has pointed out in his new study on Stott that a more explicit focus on divine simplicity would have been beneficial to Stott’s

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<sup>6</sup> Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?,” 88.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>9</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 157–58.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 172–73.

argument, although Chester also admits that such discussions were not prevalent in twentieth-century Evangelical theology.<sup>11</sup> However, despite this criticism, both Stott and Packer acknowledge that God's love cannot be set against God's holiness. Both must be held together. And it is out of God's love that his holiness is met in the sacrifice of God's Son.

## II. *Penal Substitution*

Following the need for God's justice to be met and for forgiveness to be granted, both Packer and Stott place the concept of penal substitution at the heart of the gospel. Stott writes,

There is, in fact, a biblical revelation of "satisfaction through substitution," which is uniquely honoring to God and which should therefore lie at the very heart of the church's worship and witness.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Packer also holds to the primary importance of penal substitution, and his entire article is dedicated to explaining and clarifying it.<sup>13</sup>

Although Stott uses the word "satisfaction" in places, he also speaks specifically about the penal aspect of the atonement. Stott first quotes from Packer's article, giving his definition of penal substitution, before then making the claim that when the Old Testament uses the phrase "bear sin," it means "to endure its penal consequences, to undergo its penalty."<sup>14</sup> By seeing Christ in line with this Old Testament imagery, Stott is offering a view on satisfaction and punishment different from the one offered in Anselmian satisfaction theory. Anselm presents Christ as having offered a satisfaction for sin in place of punishment, whereas Stott follows the tradition that sees Christ's satisfaction as having paid for the punishment that is due because of sin. Packer also offers this view when he explicitly mentions the Reformers' move away from Anselm's concept of appeasing God's honor and instead shows how the Reformers focused on Christ's satisfaction as "the undergoing of vicarious punishment (*poena*) to meet the claims on us of God's holy law and wrath (i.e., his punitive justice)."<sup>15</sup> This penal concept is connected to the concept of propitiation, something that both

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<sup>11</sup> Tim Chester, *Stott on the Christian Life: Between Two Worlds* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 97.

<sup>12</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 113.

<sup>13</sup> See Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?," 53–54.

<sup>14</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 143.

<sup>15</sup> Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?," 54.

Stott and Packer emphasize as crucial. Based on the justice and holiness of God, Packer claims that God was required to be propitiated by himself through Christ, “whereby his no to us could become a yes.”<sup>16</sup> Stott also writes about this in connection to the holy love of God. God’s wrath is required to be propitiated, and it was propitiated by God through Jesus Christ, who, as God incarnate, “died for the propitiation of our sins.”<sup>17</sup>

Both Stott and Packer connect the suffering of God’s wrath to a Reformed interpretation of Christ’s descent into hell, an important event, as described in the tradition of the Apostles’ Creed. In speaking about the darkness Christ experienced on the cross, Stott mentions that, in a way, one could say that “our sins sent Christ to hell.” However, this is not the hell spoken of in the Apostles’ Creed, Stott claims, but rather concerns the “‘hell’ (*gehenna*, the place of punishment) to which our sins condemned him before his body died.”<sup>18</sup> Stott goes on to quote John Calvin directly, where he writes about the soul of Christ suffering as one condemned on account of sin.<sup>19</sup> Stott then comments that Calvin believed that the suffering Christ experienced is connected to his “‘descent into hell’ after his death.” Stott considers this to be odd, however, and clarifies that the important point is not the timeline of when Christ specifically experienced this forsakenness but that he was forsaken “for us.”<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Packer states about Calvin, “Thus Calvin explained Christ’s descent into hell: hell means Godforsakenness, and the descent took place during the hours on the cross.”<sup>21</sup> Consequently, both Stott and Packer write about the descent of Christ being connected to the forsakenness Christ experienced on the cross on account of him bearing the sins of others; however, Packer says this is the view of Calvin, that Christ experienced this on the cross, while Stott claims Calvin understood this suffering to come after his death. Despite this difference, Stott and Packer seem to be in agreement on their interpretation of the descent into hell—it is to be understood as the forsakenness that Christ experienced while on the cross—and their disagreement concerns Calvin’s interpretation. Packer, the historical theologian, seems to be the one who was right.<sup>22</sup> And so, with

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>17</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 172.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 83, n. 23.

<sup>21</sup> Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?,” 95, n. 44. For Calvin’s treatment of Christ’s descent, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 2.16.8–12 (1:512–20).

<sup>22</sup> Stott also claims that Calvin follows the same interpretation of the descent as Martin Luther (see Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 83, n. 23). However, the idea that Calvin and Luther held the same opinion on this topic is discounted in contemporary scholarship. For a survey of

this in mind, both Stott and Packer follow the interpretation of Calvin and in so doing highlight the extent of Christ's suffering on the cross—his descent into hell—that he endured for the sake of providing salvation.

With such a clear emphasis on Christ being a penal substitute who suffered the wrath of God as he died as a propitiation, both Stott and Packer mention the Reformed doctrine of double imputation. Stott writes of how Christ “bore the penalty of our sin instead of us” and how, in exchange, Christ gave his righteousness. He continues, “He took our curse so that we may receive his blessing; he became sin with our sin so that we may become righteous with his righteousness.” The penalty that Christ bore was the legal consequences for sin, and because he paid for the consequences, God's people no longer need to.<sup>23</sup> But more than just being freed from punishment, those found in Christ now stand as righteous. Packer also writes clearly about double imputation as “the mysterious solidarity in virtue of which Christ could be ‘made sin’ by the imputing to him of our answerability and could die for our sins in our place, and we could be ‘made righteous’ before God through faith by the virtue of his obedience.”<sup>24</sup>

Throughout their descriptions of penal substitution, Packer and Stott carefully expound this doctrine. Both Stott and Packer use the example of Socinus's work *De Jesu Christo Servatore* (1578) as a historical example of arguments that have been made against penal substitution,<sup>25</sup> and both authors clearly have in mind arguments from people like Socinus that have been used against penal substitution as they offer clear arguments in its defense. In one passage in particular, Stott goes so far as to state what some may see as a dismissal of penal substitution, writing that one must not “speak of God punishing Jesus.”<sup>26</sup> However, the argument Stott is making here is that the atonement has to be a work of God rather than of simply a human. It cannot be that Jesus as a human was an independent third party on whom God meted out his wrath. On the contrary, Jesus must be the Son of God. Thus, it is not as though God punishes an innocent third party; rather, it is that God in Christ substituted himself in the place of sinners. With this in mind, Stott argues,

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Luther's and Calvin's views of the descent into hell, see Catherine Ella Laufer, *Hell's Destruction: An Exploration of Christ's Descent to the Dead* (2013; repr. ed., London: Routledge, 2016), 80–89.

<sup>23</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 148.

<sup>24</sup> Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?,” 88.

<sup>25</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 141; Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?,” 54–56.

<sup>26</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 151.



For in giving his Son he was giving himself. This being so, it is the Judge himself who in holy love assumed the role of the innocent victim, for in and through the person of his Son he himself bore the penalty that he himself inflicted.<sup>27</sup>

This was something Jesus took on freely, as he followed his Father's will in accordance with Scripture.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, Packer places a high emphasis on the Trinitarian formulation of penal substitution. The Father and Son work together to provide atonement; thus, it is not as though the Father and the Son are to be placed against each other.<sup>29</sup> Instead, the Father and Son were one in their will to love sinful humans, and the Son willingly accepted death for the sake of those he loved.<sup>30</sup> In both Packer and Stott, then, one sees a classical articulation of penal substitution: God in Christ willingly paid the penalty for sin that was imputed to him, being a propitiation and suffering the descent into hell so that in return people can be forgiven of their sins and Christ's righteousness can be imputed to them.

In addition to penal substitution, both Packer and Stott acknowledge the prevalence of other themes present in a holistic exposition of the atonement (e.g., subjective elements and Christ's victory over Satan). However, these themes, in and of themselves, are not adequate; they are only of use when they are placed around the centrality of penal substitution. For substitution, according to Stott, is not one of several themes to pick and choose from; on the contrary, substitution is "the essence of each image and the heart of the atonement itself."<sup>31</sup>

### III. *The Extent of the Atonement*

At this point in the study, we turn from looking at where Stott and Packer agree to a key area of divergence. Up to this point, we have covered everything Packer claims is "the beliefs of all who would say that penal substitution is the key to understanding the cross." Now, we move to the area he claims is "a point of uncertainty and division."<sup>32</sup> This leads to Packer's explicit discussion on the extent of the atonement—a topic on which Stott remains mostly silent. Packer understands the concept of substitution as implying

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>29</sup> Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?," 93.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>31</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 199.

<sup>32</sup> Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?," 89.

that Christ is a substitute for each individual sinner that Christ died for.<sup>33</sup> The implication of Christ being a substitute for individuals is that Christ either died for all people, thus leading to universalism, or Christ died in the place of specific individuals, thus securing salvation only for a specific number of people, and therefore leading to the conclusion of a limited atonement.<sup>34</sup>

For Stott, however, the question of the extent of the atonement is not addressed so clearly. In his annotations of Stott's work, Ligon Duncan mentions Stott's silence on this issue, declaring the possibility of him following "in the train of J. C. Ryle as a 'four-point Calvinist' Anglican who has no interest in polemicizing against five-point Calvinists."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, David Allen also points out Stott's lack of specificity on the topic, yet he nevertheless indicates, based on Stott's exposition of Isaiah 53, that he seemed to be "a moderate Calvinist who rejected limited atonement."<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere, Allen states plainly that Stott "did not adhere to limited atonement."<sup>37</sup> Allen refers to Stott's comments on the biblical language of "many" used in verses such as Mark 14:24 and Isaiah 53:12 and how this language is to be understood inclusively rather than exclusively.<sup>38</sup> Although Allen points to this potential location in Stott's work, neither Duncan nor Allen offers a concentrated argument for Stott's denial of limited atonement, nor do they display how the view of universal atonement might work out in Stott's thought.

Lawrence Oladini's dissertation, which compares the atonement theologies of Stott and Ellen White, focuses much more on Stott's view of the extent of the atonement.<sup>39</sup> His conclusion is that Stott is potentially a four-point Calvinist; nevertheless, he claims that for Stott the logical outcome is that the extent of the atonement is still limited, as only those elected to salvation will be saved.<sup>40</sup> Oladini dismisses Stott's view—that is, that the atonement is unlimited yet restricted in application to the elect—as illogical.<sup>41</sup> However, Oladini does not discuss the viability and historicity of Stott's view within

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>34</sup> See *ibid.*, 89–93.

<sup>35</sup> Ligon Duncan, "Annotated Bibliography," in Packer and Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, 184.

<sup>36</sup> David L. Allen, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Academic, 2016), 399–400.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 629.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 399–400; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 146.

<sup>39</sup> For the sections on Stott's view of the extent of the atonement, see Lawrence O. Oladini, "A Comparative Study of the Concept of Atonement in the Writings of John R. W. Stott and Ellen G. White" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2011), 161–77, 351–59.

<sup>40</sup> See *ibid.*, 177.

<sup>41</sup> See *ibid.*, 177, 357–59.

the Anglican tradition, and it is evident that he is more interested in showing how Stott's view is inconsistent and less favorable to White's<sup>42</sup> than in showing how Stott's view may be viable.

Although Stott does not have a chapter or section on the extent of the atonement, it does seem possible to piece together his thoughts on the topic based on a variety of his claims. For one, Stott does not shy away from the idea that atonement was made for all people. In the opening section of the chapter on satisfaction, Stott quotes Thomas Cranmer's 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, which describes Christ's atonement as "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."<sup>43</sup> It seems evident that Cranmer, both here and elsewhere, presented Christ's atonement as universal,<sup>44</sup> and Stott quotes this doctrine approvingly without qualification.

In speaking about Christ's time in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was crucified, Stott mentions the cup that he was to drink. The drinking of this cup, according to Stott, symbolized "the spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world—in other words, of enduring the divine judgement that those sins deserved."<sup>45</sup> Later, Stott writes of the value of all humans being based on "his determination to suffer and die for them."<sup>46</sup> In these sections, along with the previous ones, Stott writes of Christ paying for the sins of the world and dying for all people without qualification.

In addition to such examples, the implications of Stott's view of substitution also seem to point to a universal atonement. Stott argues that "the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man."<sup>47</sup> The use of "man" here seems to be representative of the entire human race rather than that of individuals. While Packer specifies the substitution of Christ in the place of individuals, Stott alludes to God in Christ substituting himself in the place of humanity as a whole. Quoting 2 Corinthians 5:19, Stott writes, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"<sup>48</sup> and then presents Karl Barth's Christological position in his *Church Dogmatics*.<sup>49</sup> For Barth,

<sup>42</sup> For example, in *ibid.*, "Abstract," Oladini writes, "Overall, White's theology seems to be broader in its presentation of the scope of the atonement and seems to be more consistent with the scriptural evidence."

<sup>43</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 113.

<sup>44</sup> See Michael J. Lynch, "Richard Hooker and the Development of English Hypothetical Universalism," in *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy*, ed. W. Bradford Littlejohn and Scott N. Kindred-Barnes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 292, n. 97.

<sup>45</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 78.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> See *ibid.*, 159–60.

as for Stott, the fact that Jesus is fully God and fully human is crucial. Only as one who is fully human can Christ take the place of all humanity. Stott includes the following quote from Barth:

the eternal God himself, who has given himself in his Son to be man, and as man to take upon himself this human passion .... It is the Judge who in this passion takes the place of those who ought to be judged, who in this passion allows himself to be judged in their place.<sup>50</sup>

Stott seems to follow and affirm Barth's view of substitution in *Dogmatics*, which is likewise one in which Christ takes the place of all humanity. Some, such as Oliver Crisp, have argued that Barth's view of substitution logically leads to a view of universalism.<sup>51</sup> Yet, while Stott may hold to a view of atonement being accomplished in the place of all humanity, he clearly shows that he does not believe this to mean that the atonement is effectively applied to all. Rather, Stott teaches the need for a personal response in the application of the atonement. In detailing the process of salvation, he writes,

God finished the work of reconciliation at the cross, yet it is still necessary for sinners to repent and believe and so "be reconciled to God." Again, sinners need to "be reconciled to God," yet we must not forget that on God's side the work of reconciliation has already been done.<sup>52</sup>

This section points out a two-step process: God first provides atonement for all, and then sinful people apply the atonement by means of repentance and belief. Connecting this thought with the previous one concerning substitution, it seems as though Stott presents Jesus as substituting himself in the place of the human race, thus making a way for all humans to be reconciled with God. Although this work has been accomplished by God, it remains to be applied by individuals. This view is also seen in Stott's discussion of the Last Supper. There, Jesus broke the bread and blessed the wine, but the disciples had to eat and drink what they were given. Likewise, Jesus gave "his body and blood in death," yet it is up to individuals "to make the blessings of his death our own." For, Stott claims, "God does not impose his gifts on us willy-nilly; we have to receive them by faith."<sup>53</sup> He also mentions

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 160, citing Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 246.

<sup>51</sup> See Oliver D. Crisp, "On Barth's Denial of Universalism," *Themelios* 29.1 (2003): 18–29.

<sup>52</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 198.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 73.

the story of the Passover Lamb: not only was the lamb slain, but its flesh was to be eaten and the blood put on doorposts. Likewise, Christ the Passover Lamb has been slain, but his death needs to be personally applied.<sup>54</sup> For there to be a genuine call to all to apply the atonement, there must by implication have been an atonement made for all. However, this implies that people can thus reject Christ. Stott writes, “For in giving his Son to die for sinners, God made himself vulnerable to the possibility that they would snub him and turn away.”<sup>55</sup> Taken together, these sections can be seen to present a view of the atonement that extends to the entire human race—yet is rejected by some—but is effective only for those who receive it as they “repent and believe.”

Certainly, this formulation of Stott's, as presented here, would fit well into the framework of hypothetical universalism, a doctrine being shown to be deep in the history of the Anglican tradition. Stott's thought, in many ways, seems to be an echo of those like John Preston, who, according to Jonathan Moore, implied that “the death of Christ has done all it can, and now salvation hangs on the individual's response to the evangel.”<sup>56</sup> This is also the view of John Davenant. In his monograph on Davenant's hypothetical universalism, Michael Lynch shows the importance of faith and repentance for the application of the atonement. Lynch points out that Davenant “contends that only union with Christ by faith brings about the transfusion (as it were) of Christ's saving virtue.”<sup>57</sup> While Stott presents the need for repentance and belief, he also speaks of union with Christ in his section on double imputation. There, he mentions that it is “when we are united to Christ a mysterious exchange takes place,” the exchange being double imputation.<sup>58</sup> Elsewhere, he elaborates, “our sins were imputed to the sinless Christ in order that we sinners, by being united to him, might receive as a free gift a standing of righteousness before God.”<sup>59</sup> Put together, the order for Stott seems to imply that there is repentance and belief that leads to a union with Christ that involves double imputation. Based on the wider corpus of Stott's writings, we know this belief comes as a result of election,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>56</sup> Jonathan D. Moore, *English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 110.

<sup>57</sup> Michael J. Lynch, *John Davenant's Hypothetical Universalism: A Defense of Catholic and Reformed Orthodoxy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 126.

<sup>58</sup> Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 148.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 197.

not as a result of human initiative.<sup>60</sup> However, Stott shows that all people still have a duty to believe; even though people “cannot” believe without divine intervention, they nevertheless still have a choice, and therefore also “will not” believe, even though it is their responsibility to do so.<sup>61</sup> In sum, it may be formulated that there is a call and duty for all to repent and believe, especially considering that Christ has genuinely died for all; yet only those who have been elected to salvation will be saved, and the rest are left without excuse due to their own choices.

In contrast to Stott’s teaching, which is connected to such Anglicans as Preston and Davenant, Packer offers the teaching of limited atonement, which is likewise seen in the Anglican tradition in John Owen and Augustus Toplady, the latter of whom Packer quotes explicitly in his section on limited atonement.<sup>62</sup> For Packer, following what he terms the Puritans’ “application of redemption,” there can be no separation between Christ’s work accomplished and Christ’s work applied. He claims that the death of Christ necessarily leads to justification and glorification.<sup>63</sup> While for Stott, the atonement can be accomplished for all yet only applied to those who believe, for Packer, the atonement accomplished involves the securing of the salvation of the elect. Therefore, Christ’s work necessarily leads to all that is required for an individual’s salvation. In Packer’s framework, universal atonement would necessitate universal salvation.

This difference of view between Stott and Packer, then, likewise displays the difference of views held in the history of the Anglican Church. This shows that while both of these Anglican theologians held to substitution as being key, they nevertheless disagreed on the mechanics of how it is to be understood. Packer argues for a substitution of individuals that leads to limited atonement; Stott, it seems, presents a substitution for humanity

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<sup>60</sup> In his commentary on Ephesians, Stott writes, “Now everybody finds the doctrine of election difficult. ‘Didn’t I choose God?’ somebody asks indignantly; to which we must answer ‘Yes, indeed you did, and freely, but only because in eternity God had first chosen you’” (John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, rev. ed. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020], 19).

<sup>61</sup> Stott calls this “the ultimate antinomy between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.” See Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 97.

<sup>62</sup> See Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?,” 91. Packer is clearly and explicitly indebted to the Puritan tradition; Stott, on the other hand, approvingly draws on a more diverse array of the Reformed Protestant tradition, as is evidenced by his interaction with theologians like P. T. Forsyth, Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Jürgen Moltmann. For Packer’s indebtedness to John Owen’s *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, see J. I. Packer, “‘Saved by His Precious Blood’: An Introduction to John Owen’s *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*,” in Packer and Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, 111–44.

<sup>63</sup> Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?,” 93. Although Packer does not cite him, it is possible he has in mind here John Murray’s work; see John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955).

that leads to universal atonement but limited application. Despite this more nuanced disagreement, they both agree on the overarching focus of substitution: that God has substituted himself in the place of sinners, making a way for sinners to be reconciled with him, based not on the initiative of the sinners but on the work of God on their behalf.

## Conclusion

By comparing Packer and Stott on their articulation of the cross, one sees the areas that are put “at the very heart of the gospel.” The atonement is rooted in the holy love of God and is accomplished through penal substitution, whereby God in Christ takes the place of sinful humans to pay the penalty due them because of their sin and in return clothes them in his righteousness. This stands at the heart of what both Packer and Stott believe to be the essence of global Evangelicalism, and their sentiments can be seen clearly in later Evangelical articulations as well.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, at the same time, this article has also argued that Packer and Stott disagree on the mechanics of substitution and subsequently the extent of the atonement. While both remained firmly in the Anglican tradition that they were a part of, Packer followed in teaching limited atonement, and Stott in teaching hypothetical universalism. Yet this disagreement, although real, did not terminate their support for one another. Instead, Stott and Packer united over their agreement with the concept of penal substitution and allowed for differences concerning the specifics of how this doctrine could be worked out. This points to a diversity in the thinking about the atonement in the Evangelicalism of Stott and Packer. There was a need to be united on matters that lay “at the very heart of the gospel,” yet an openness was granted to the areas that branched from this center.

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<sup>64</sup> For example, in the introductory paragraph on the first page of his chapter on penal substitution, Thomas Schreiner writes, “The theory of penal substitution is the heart and soul of an evangelical view of the atonement.” He calls it the “anchor and foundation” of the other themes. He offers a summative definition of the doctrine as follows: “The Father, because of his love for human beings, sent his Son (who offered himself willingly and gladly) to satisfy God’s justice, so that Christ took the place of sinners. The punishment and penalty we deserved was laid on Jesus Christ instead of us, so that in the cross both God’s holiness and love are manifested” (Thomas R. Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006], 67).

In these various quotations, one sees a clear echo of many of the themes presented by Packer and Stott. These similarities show the areas of agreement of Evangelicals like Schreiner with Stott and Packer decades later.





## Early Modern Christianity, Economic Entrepreneurship, and Social Welfare

**KU LEUVEN**



# The Finality of Christ in Stott's Christology

PHILIP TACHIN

## Abstract

This article aims to stress how John Stott stood up to defend classical Christology in contemporary Christianity. The significance of his method was heightened by the complex context of global pluralism and inclusivism, which sought to compromise biblical and orthodox Christian claims to salvation. We limit ourselves to some key pluralists, John Hick, Paul Knitter, and Clark Pinnock, Stott responded to. The temptation to compromise classical Christology has increased since the twentieth century, and Stott's insistence on the finality of Christ is a great legacy that must be sustained. He shows inconsistency in his view of penal substitution and a departure from the orthodox view, but this essay critically accentuates the positive value of his Christology.

## Keywords

*Christology, finality, divinity, exclusive, pluralism, substitutionary atonement*

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## Introduction

**J**ohn Stott has left a great christological legacy: we can appreciate on the one hand his astute defense of the uniqueness of Christ by virtue of his divinity against the assaults of the pluralist theologians and on the other his weakness in drifting from orthodoxy on his view of penal substitution. His works form a theological

bridge between the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He was “one of the greatest Christian writers, speakers, thinkers, and leaders of the twentieth century.”<sup>1</sup> His vast scholarship has as its nucleus the divine essence of Christ, which is set against the polemics of pluralism. To put all his christological arguments together in a concise manner without leaving out some important points is not easy. I have tried to present his basic christological thoughts and how crucial they are to our time. Stott labored to defend the classical christological views that have made the Christian claim about salvation exclusive. He was not reformulating Christology in a new way but defending the classical view with the utmost vigor. In his theological corpus, keywords recur that are unique to his defense of the person and authority of Christ—“authentic,” “finality,” “incomparable,” and “uniqueness,” among others—and the goal of recovering the authentic, “historical biblical Christ” is paramount.<sup>2</sup>

What makes his work crucial is that he responded to a pluralism that sought to compromise the church’s christological claims for the sake of peace with competing religions. Pluralism was occasioned by the rise of secularization, “an increase in religious alternatives,” and the rise of the “postmodern imagination.”<sup>3</sup> While liberalism was striving hard to force a compromise of the exclusive claims of the gospel, Stott stood firm; he was “never seriously tempted to compromise for the sake of peace or to weaken when confronted with very charming and impressive liberals.”<sup>4</sup> His defense of traditional Christianity is a legacy that he has bequeathed to our generation, and we must sustain it as our calling to “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). Before appreciating Stott’s labors, we will briefly sketch the representative views of pluralism and inclusivism, three major proponents of which are John Hick, Paul Knitter, and Clark Pinnock.

## **I. The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Inclusivism**

Pluralism is the religious and philosophical view that recognizes the plurality of religions within multiple cultural backgrounds that shape beliefs and practices; its advocates insist that all religions are equal and none of them

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<sup>1</sup> Alistair McGrath, “Foreword to the 2006 Edition,” in John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>2</sup> John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 54.

<sup>3</sup> Stott, *Issues*, 71–74.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver Barclay, “The Young Defender of the Faith,” in *John Stott: A Portrait by His Friends*, ed. Chris Wright (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 33.

has qualifications that warrant exclusive claims. While the prevailing concern for Christian philosophers about pluralism is the relationship that should exist between Christianity and other world religions, a relationship that would force relativism on Christianity, Stott's concern is the sinful human condition, the solution that God provides, and how he provides it.

For Stott, Christianity has become an endangered species because religious pluralism surrounds it. Therefore, he poses an important question: "So what are the contemporary trends which threaten to swallow us up, and which we must resist?"<sup>5</sup> He answers that those trends are pluralism, materialism, ethical relativism, and narcissism.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, he lists the contending options as exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.<sup>7</sup> Inclusivism and pluralism both target the claims of Christ's "finality and uniqueness."<sup>8</sup> With this, the gospel stands or falls. Therefore, the defense of the person of Christ became central to all of Stott's works.<sup>9</sup>

### 1. *John Hick*

Hick states that the basic concern of pluralism is "the problem of the relation between Christianity and other religions" within the global context.<sup>10</sup> This relational matter is on top of the "theological agenda" expressed by exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism; Hick rejects the first two and stands on the third.<sup>11</sup> He argues that it is unrealistic for the concept of the salvation of humankind to be embedded in a minority religion like Christianity.<sup>12</sup> However, if Christianity does not have an offer that is exclusive, what is the essence of any dialogue or mission, since dialogue presents what the other party does not have? Nevertheless, Hick argues that there is a need for "a re-understanding of such central Christian ideas as Incarnation, Trinity and Atonement" because the existing formulation is fraught with "unacceptably imperialistic implications," to which the solution is a possible "Christian self-understanding" that is "compatible with religious pluralism."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> John Stott, *The Radical Disciple* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010), 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–29.

<sup>7</sup> John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), 297.

<sup>8</sup> Stott, *Radical Disciple*, 21.

<sup>9</sup> George Carey, foreword to John Stott, *The Incomparable Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>10</sup> John Hick, "Preface to the 1988 Reissue," in *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988), vii.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> John Hick, "The Philosophy of World Religions," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984): 229, doi.org/10.1017/S003693060001680X.

<sup>13</sup> Hick, "Preface," viii.

In a curious twist, Herbert McCabe has argued that pluralists have rejected the Christian doctrine “because it is found incompatible with the European way of life in the second half of the twentieth century.”<sup>14</sup> Based on this one-sided cultural view, the pluralist team has concluded that the Christian view of Christ’s incarnation is a “myth.” However, this conclusion begs the question as it makes one culture the basis for validating belief. Christian belief transcends human cultures, and the European culture of any century lacks the wherewithal to set new standards for Christian confessions. Was the faith of the saints before our contemporary time in vain?

Again, the question is whether it is appropriate and justifiable to consider the issue of incarnation purely from the contemporary humanistic cultural concerns or from the original biblical revelation. If the idea of God incarnate is offensive in contemporary times, so also was it in the Hebraic and Hellenistic cultural times, which explains why some Messianic Jews never accepted Christ and the Greeks also considered the death of the divine person on the cross foolishness (1 Cor 1:23). The ever-abiding offensive character of the gospel shows that it transcends all human cultures of all times.

Advocates of pluralism have sought a compromise of the Christian faith to accommodate adherents of other religions. Whether this compromise is offensive to the Christian God, who has given his own revelation to his people, does not bother them. One can appreciate the relational concerns of pluralism. However, the problem with its agenda is its insistence on denying what makes the Christian identity unique before any meaningful dialogue can happen.

Hick tries to justify his perspective that “one has to show how religious faith, so far from being an arbitrary projection of our desires, may be a proper response to the deeper ambiguities of human existence.”<sup>15</sup> The question is, if the traditional understanding of Scripture arose out of the “arbitrary” desires of the older saints, how do we know whether the agenda of pluralism is not guilty of similar “arbitrary” desires as it seeks to dismantle the crux of the Christian life?

Furthermore, his project is “to reformulate the doctrine of the incarnation” because the classical version is a “mythic expression of the experience of salvation through Christ ... set in opposition to the myths of other religions as if myths were literally true-or-false assertions.”<sup>16</sup> By qualifying the beliefs of religions as myths, which by definition are not realities that can

<sup>14</sup> Herbert McCabe, “The Myth of God Incarnate,” *New Blackfriars* 58.687 (1977): 350.

<sup>15</sup> John Hick, “Preface to the First Edition,” *God and the Universe of Faiths*, ix.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, x. He restates this in John Hick, “The Logic of God Incarnate,” *Religious Studies* 25 (1989): 409.

be absolutely believed, Hick is, in effect, destroying the entire concept of religion—and not just the Christianity he seeks to compromise.

Again, he discredits the relevance of the “incarnational language” for today as being “ancient” and out of tune with the contemporary spirit.<sup>17</sup> He also questions both the language of Scripture and its process of interpretation:

It was also probably virtually inevitable that in the course of time this poetry should have hardened into prose, a metaphorical son of God becoming the metaphysical God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. This was of a piece with the literal understanding of the Bible during the same period.<sup>18</sup>

This is an implicit refusal to accept the internal witness of Scripture concerning its inspirational source and testimony to Christ. However, Hick produces no evidence to show that scriptural language or its interpretation metamorphosed into “hard prose”; he simply stands on probability or speculative assertion, and his point fails the integrity test.

## 2. *Paul Knitter*

Knitter also argues for a reinterpretation of Christology that moves away from the classical position. In his third thesis, he states, “The uniqueness of Jesus’ salvific role can be reinterpreted in terms of truly but not only.”<sup>19</sup> This is a glaring example of the perspectival inconsistency that accrues when the established meanings of words and concepts are deliberately subjected to fluidity. The concepts of “uniqueness” and “but not only” cannot go together unless the word “uniqueness” loses its accepted meaning. The same irreconcilable understanding follows when he says, “Christians must announce Jesus to all people as God’s universal, decisive, and indispensable manifestation of saving truth and grace.”<sup>20</sup> This statement appears to be consistent with the traditional christological method, but he contradicts himself: “While Christians can imagine that God may have more to reveal to humankind than what has been made known in Jesus, they cannot imagine that such a revelation would contradict the central ingredients of the truth they have found in Jesus.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Hick, “Preface to the First Edition,” xi.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Paul F. Knitter, “Five Theses on the Uniqueness of Jesus,” in *The Uniqueness of Jesus: A Dialogue with Paul F. Knitter*, ed. Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 7.

<sup>20</sup> Knitter, “Five Theses,” 8; see also, K. P. Aleaz, “Paul F. Knitter’s Proposal for Relational Uniqueness of Jesus,” *Indian Journal of Theology* 40.1–2 (1998): 41.

<sup>21</sup> Knitter, “Five Theses,” 9–10, cited in Aleaz, “Knitter’s Proposal,” 41. Aleaz argues that this inconsistency arises as Knitter was trying to explain what he meant by the indispensability of Christ with respect to universal salvation in response to Hick’s critique.

K. P. Aleaz admits this inconsistency by concluding that Knitter is “simultaneously an exclusivist and a pluralist,” which is a logical impossibility.<sup>22</sup> In the fourth thesis, Knitter explains that the word “uniqueness” can be “understood and proclaimed” in terms of “human actions of love and justice,” which we can emulate.<sup>23</sup> For Knitter, Christ’s uniqueness should be restricted to his actions rather than his ontological being. But how can Christ’s actions be disjointed from his essential being? Do the fruits of a tree not derive their taste from the tree itself (Matt 7:17–18)?

It seems that to make sense of the prevailing global circumstances, relativism turns the emphasis from Christ’s uniqueness to social action. Was the apostolic message that emphasized the uniqueness and exclusivity of Christ devoid of the contextual problems we face in contemporary society? If not, what is the rationale for changing their confession to something else in our time?

### 3. Clark Pinnock

Pinnock also denies the exclusive claims of Christ in his engagement with Peter’s speech in Acts 4:12. As an inclusivist, he admits both the “finality of Jesus Christ and the boundless mercy of God for the whole human race.”<sup>24</sup> While he admits that the text contains the “incomparability of Jesus and the salvation he brings” and a “restrictivist element, a claim to uniqueness and finality,” he accuses others of overstressing Peter’s intended meaning.<sup>25</sup> In an attempt to deny the exclusivist implications of the text, he interprets Peter’s idea of salvation as being “more than vertical justification and more than deliverance from final judgment. Peter is telling people that physical healing is *part* of salvation.”<sup>26</sup> Salvation is a comprehensive category that includes healing but Pinnock does not want that comprehensiveness to include the exclusive authority of Christ to be the judge.

Pinnock’s inconsistency is quite obvious. He argues that Peter’s “concern is to be making a ringing affirmation of the incomparable saving power for

<sup>22</sup> Aleaz, “Knitter’s Proposal,” 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 42. Stanley Samartha similarly holds that the value of Christ is his exemplary ethical person rather than his ontic person and authority. Stanley J. Samartha, *One Christ—Many Religions: Toward a Revised Christology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 93, cited in Valerian Noronha, “Jesus in the Context of Religious Pluralism: A Study of the Christology of Stanley J. Samartha” (STD, Catholic University of America, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Clark Pinnock, “Acts 4:12: No Other Name under Heaven,” Edinburgh Christology Conference 2002, Paper II, Theology in Scotland, 19; Paul F. Knitter, *Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 47–48.

<sup>25</sup> Pinnock, “Acts 4:12,” 20.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. (emphasis added).

life today which is available to everyone who hears the good news and places his or her trust in Jesus.”<sup>27</sup> However, he accents the universality of salvation in Christ and fails to connect it with how Peter asserts the centrality of Christ in this project as the divinely appointed “Lord and Messiah” (Acts 2:36). Pinnock’s point is inclusivism, which makes salvation available in other religions.

His conclusion still reflects this contradiction:

I conclude that Acts 4:12 makes a *strong*, *definitive*, and *exclusive* claim about the messianic, holistic salvation which Jesus has brought into the world. It is a salvation which is *incomparable* and *without rival* and is available *only* through the name of Jesus. But the text does not say anything which would exclude from eternal salvation most of the people who have lived on the earth until now.<sup>28</sup>

What is the logic of the text making “a definitive, and exclusive claim” and not excluding anything from “eternal salvation”? Is the exclusion not implied for those who miss the salvation that is “available only” in Christ?

Pinnock defeats himself when he states that scriptural texts suffer what he terms “reader interest”: “No one is completely objective when they read texts which tackle issues that concern them greatly. They have an interest in the outcome of the interpretation.”<sup>29</sup> Since he is not exempt from this either, on what moral and intellectual grounds does he want the orthodox view of exclusive Christology to be abandoned for his own interests and that of the pluralism he advocates? How can a reader ever approach a text with no particular interest so that it can speak for itself within its narrower and wider contexts?

Though the pluralists understand this text in their own way, Stott sees Peter moving “from healing to salvation, and from the particular to the general. He sees one man’s physical cure as a picture of the salvation which is offered to all in Christ.”<sup>30</sup> Following this observation, the text portrays the uniqueness of Christ in unambiguous terms. Salvation is surely a comprehensive concept that encompasses both physical and spiritual needs, but it definitely looks to the future complete defeat of sin and its consequences for humanity, of which Peter gives hope within the authoritative redemptive framework of Christ. The insistence that Peter is silent about the situation of the heathen in the text fails to grasp the context of the entire Petrine Christology in Acts.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. (emphasis added).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>30</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006), 97.

Peter's broader contextual framework takes into consideration repentance from sin and belief in Christ as the only way to salvation: "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38). Note that Peter was responding to the people's question in the previous verse: "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). In other places, too, Peter tells the people the same thing: "Repent, then, and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away" (Acts 3:19) and "God exalted him to his right hand as Prince and Savior, to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel" (Acts 5:31). This is a clear allusion to God's redemptive work for the fallen human condition.

## II. *Stott: The Incomparable Christ*

The task of being a Christian apologist in the context of rising religious pluralism is herculean. Stott admitted that contemporary Western culture finds the Bible incompatible with itself and that he also felt the grip of the "tension between these two worlds." He confessed to resisting the extremes that have prevailed among Christian leaders and scholars, who either choose to ignore the realities that we face or "twist God's revelation in search of relevance." To be faithful, Christians are not to live above the word of God but to live under its authority and guidance as they engage with the issues of the world around them.<sup>31</sup> Should the concern for relations with other faiths necessarily compel us to concede the exclusive claims of Christ? Stott stood firmly on the ground that Christians should maintain their own unique identity but approach relational dialogue with a sense of humanity and humility.

Regarding the relational concerns, Stott refers to a statement of the World Council of Churches thus: "A Christian's dialogue with another implies neither a denial of the uniqueness of Christ, nor any loss of his own commitment to Christ, but rather that genuinely Christian approach to others must be human, personal, relevant and humble."<sup>32</sup> The point here is that it is implausible for pluralism to suggest that Christians should lose their basic identity while engaging in dialogue with other religions when those religions do not lose their own. Some religious scholars who also promote dialogue have agreed: "Both [Christianity and Islam] take their

<sup>31</sup> Stott, *Issues*, xii.

<sup>32</sup> Stott, citing the World Council of Churches assembly at Uppsala, report 2, paragraph 6, in John Stott and Christopher J. H. Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2015), 109.



Scriptures seriously.”<sup>33</sup> The basic thrust of this reality is that all believers of scripture-based religions take their religion’s scripture to be their principal authority. If this is the case, then scholars of pluralism mischievously want to rob Christianity of its source of power in favor of other religions. Also, the question of dialogue does not necessarily imply the absence of differences because “true dialogue does not seek to avoid or to evade differences.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the pluralists’ insistence that Christians give up on their exclusive claims to establish a relational dialogue is absurd: those exclusive claims make the difference between Christianity and other religions.

The defense of the divinity of Christ is a crucial characteristic of Stott’s writings, and it is what has shaped his Evangelical identity. He asserts, “It is my very loyalty to Christ which requires me to hold evangelical views.”<sup>35</sup> This statement is a direct challenge to the failure of some Evangelicals: “It is perhaps the incarnation which we evangelicals have tended to neglect most, in both its theological significance and its practical implications.”<sup>36</sup> On this christological matter, it is apparent that Stott stands in sharp contrast to N. T. Wright, also an Evangelical scholar. Wright admits that the questions concerning Jesus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have led him to develop a new agenda, that is, “to go deeper into the meaning than we have before and to come back to a restatement of the gospel that grounds the things we have believed about Jesus, about the cross, about the resurrection, about the incarnation, more deeply within their original setting.”<sup>37</sup>

Stott confronts Wright for his indecision and self-contradiction about the divine claims of Christ: Wright acknowledges that Christ performs the divine functions of Messiah and YHWH and yet denies his divine self-consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Wright argues that the truth of Jesus’s salvation is primarily woven around the history of the Jews and their climactic expectations, which is how the concept of the kingdom of God was understood in

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<sup>33</sup> Mohammed Abu-Nimer and David Augsburger, introduction to *Peace-Building by, between, and beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians*, ed. Mohammed Abu-Nimer and David Augsburger (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), xi.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> John Stott, *But I Say to You ... Christ the Controversialist* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 202.

<sup>36</sup> Stott, *Issues*, 54.

<sup>37</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>38</sup> John Stott, *The Incomparable Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 122, citing N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*, 90; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 2:653; see also N. T. Wright, “Jesus and the Identity of God,” originally published in *Ex Auditu* 14 (1998): 42–56, <https://ntwrightpage.com/2016/07/12/jesus-and-the-identity-of-god/>, 13.

first-century Jewish thought.<sup>39</sup> Wright asserts that history is part of God's creation, but his explanation undermines the transcendental element of the kingdom of God. Further, he states, "It is not difficult, I believe, to establish that Jesus of Nazareth believed himself to be Israel's Messiah, but this tells us nothing about whether he believed himself to be in any sense identified with Israel's God."<sup>40</sup> While he performed YHWH's duties, according to Wright, Jesus "never 'knew he was God' in the same sense that one knows one is tired or happy, male or female."<sup>41</sup>

This is an outright denial of Jesus's knowledge of his divine identity.<sup>42</sup> It contradicts any cogent thinking about how the self-conscious messianic identity and the activity of YHWH in Jesus would still fail to point to Jesus's self-conscious divine identity, which no other greater Jew, including Moses, claimed.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the comparison between the quality of Jesus's self-divine consciousness and the other aspects of human reality is problematic because of the qualitative difference that is involved in such comparison.

Stott ponders, "How could he [Christ] advance these claims to divine authority and action and not believe that he was God?"<sup>44</sup> To deny Jesus's self-recognition as God and argue that he did not point to himself but to God is highly dubious and theologically unsound.<sup>45</sup> Wright's position betrays or twists the meaning of the abundant scriptural testimonies to Jesus's divine self-consciousness. To this, Stott replies, "But there *is* evidence for the deity of Jesus—good, strong, historical, cumulative evidence; evidence to which an honest person can subscribe without committing intellectual suicide."<sup>46</sup> He argues further that the "biblical vision of God profoundly

<sup>39</sup> Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God," 13.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>42</sup> See also Austin Stevenson, "The Self-understanding of Jesus: A Metaphysical Reading of Historical Jesus Studies," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 72.3 (2019): 298, doi:10.1017/S0036930619000346.

<sup>43</sup> Various scholars have ably demonstrated that the Jewish messianic and "Son of Man" concepts referred to a divine being; see J. Gresham Machen, *The Person of Jesus: Radio Addresses on the Deity of the Savior* (Philadelphia: Westminster Seminary Press, 2017), 28–29, repr. from *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947); Shirley Lucass, *The Concept of the Messiah in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity*, LSTS 78 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), ch. 7; Iain M. Duguid, "Old Testament Hermeneutics," in *Seeing Christ in All of Scripture: Hermeneutics at Westminster Theological Seminary*, ed. Peter A. Lillback (Philadelphia: Westminster Seminary Press, 2016), 22; R. E. Clements, "The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43 (1989): 3–19.

<sup>44</sup> Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 122.

<sup>45</sup> See Samartha, *One Christ—Many Religions*, 93, cited in Noronha, "Jesus in the Context of Religious Pluralism," 2.

<sup>46</sup> John Stott, *Basic Christianity* (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 14.

affects our attitude to society, since God's concerns inevitably become his people's too."<sup>47</sup> If this is the case, and since God would not want a compromise of his revelation and glory, why would scholars of pluralism want Christians to give up their belief in the deity of Christ for the sake of pleasing others? Why should Christians, whose identity is in Christ and their lives raised and hidden in him (Col 3:3), dishonor him by denying who he is essentially?

Stott took all the claims very seriously and defended them. Indeed, since Christ was neither insane nor an impostor, he could not have made audacious and authoritative claims that properly belong exclusively to God if he indeed were not God.<sup>48</sup> But if Jesus was the Son of God in human flesh, then we must submit to his authority and teaching, in which case our opinions and views must be held in subjection to him.<sup>49</sup> It is a recognition of who Christ is and what he came to do that shapes the purpose and goal of Christian missions in the world.<sup>50</sup> Once we reject this allegiance, we have no business even calling ourselves Christians.<sup>51</sup>

Stott's starting point for articulating his views on the divinity of Christ is assent to the classical Christian consensus that Scripture, which has revealed Christ, is itself divine in character as the word of God. As the authoritative word, by virtue of its divine origin, its authority is above that of church traditions, and thus its statements about Christ are also final and worthy of all trust.<sup>52</sup>

However, we might ask, "How can we come to know the authentic Jesus for ourselves—this incomparable Christ who has no peers?"<sup>53</sup> Stott proposes that God has given us Scripture, to which we must keep returning if we are to know Christ more.<sup>54</sup> Now, Stott dwells on Scripture's own witness to Christian religion and not on what other religions say about their view of salvation and that the authenticity of Christianity does not depend on the

<sup>47</sup> Stott, *Issues*, 50.

<sup>48</sup> John Stott and Stephen Motyer, *Men with a Message: An Introduction to the New Testament and Its Writers* (Suffolk: Three's Company/Angus Hudson, 1996), 75; Stott, *But I Say to You*, 203–4; *Basic Christianity*, 31–47. Stott here echoes C. S. Lewis in his book *Basic Christianity*, which is a build-up on the argument made by C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Bles, 1952), 24–37; see Alister Chapman, *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 38.

<sup>49</sup> Stott, *But I Say to You*, 204.

<sup>50</sup> Stott and Wright, *Christian Mission*, 141; Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 16; *Contemporary Christian*, 356–74.

<sup>51</sup> Stott, *But I Say to You*, 206–7.

<sup>52</sup> Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 15, 250.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

assertion of others or human traditions.<sup>55</sup> If other religions lack a similar declaration, they cannot be used as yardsticks for assessing the biblical claim. Therefore, he employs the force of the expression of the authentic Christian stand on this matter, namely, “We must continue to affirm the uniqueness and finality of Jesus Christ.”<sup>56</sup>

But beyond the question of Scripture, why is Jesus unique? Stott argues, “Since in no other person has God become human, died, been raised from death and been exalted to heaven, there is no other savior, since no one else possesses his qualifications.”<sup>57</sup> Christ’s qualifications from birth to death and resurrection stand him out among his competitors.

From Romans 1:3–4, he explains that the resurrection confirms the uniqueness of Jesus rather than conferring it upon him: Paul contrasts Jesus’s two stages of ministry as “son of David” and “Son of God” and confirms his uniqueness.<sup>58</sup> God did to Christ what he has not done to any other religious founder or leader: he raised him from the dead and “set him at his right hand in the place of supreme honor, far above all conceivable rivals.”<sup>59</sup> This action places Christ over the entire cosmos as the Lord. Furthermore, if the “Christian good news is *the gospel of God*,” this is tied to no one else but Christ because he is the “substance of the gospel” and the “gospel of God is the gospel of his Son.”<sup>60</sup> The contrast between the son of David and the Son of God exposes “this unique person, seed of David and Son of God, weak and powerful, incarnate and exalted, ... *Jesus* (a human, historical figure), *Christ* (the Messiah of Old Testament Scripture), *our Lord*, who owns and rules our lives.”<sup>61</sup>

The most astounding scriptural warrant for Christ’s exclusive self-claim in the gospels is Matthew 11:27, where he says, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and *no one knows the Son except the Father*, and *no one knows the Father except the Son* and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (ESV, emphasis added). It is very clear that “the Son” is used here in the absolute sense.<sup>62</sup> Scholars have pointed out that Jesus’s deity

<sup>55</sup> Stott, *But I Say to You*, 66.

<sup>56</sup> Stott, *Radical Disciple*, 21.

<sup>57</sup> Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 34. He reiterates this idea in *The Message of Acts*, 97; *Radical Disciple*, 21–22; John Stott, *Balanced Christianity* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 13. See also Timothy Dudley-Smith, *Authentic Christianity: From the Writings of John Stott* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 47–49.

<sup>58</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Romans* (repr., Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012), 50–51.

<sup>59</sup> Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 66.

<sup>60</sup> Stott, *Message of Romans*, 47–48.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven*, ed. John Stott (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 140, n. 6. Other scholars confirm this interpretation; see, e.g.,

was recognized by many and varied observers: the people at his baptism and transfiguration (Mark 1:11; 9:7); the devil during his temptations (Matt 4:3, 6; Luke 4:3, 9); demons who trembled at his presence for fear of their destruction (Mark 3:11; 5:7; Matt 8:29; Luke 4:41; 8:28); the centurion at the crucifixion (Mark 13:32; Matt 24:36); and prophesying angels (Luke 1:32–33, 35).<sup>63</sup> Christ stressed that it takes God to know God and that this knowledge is absolute.<sup>64</sup> Christ made it explicit that our knowledge of God is not the same as his own knowledge of the Father. While his own knowledge of the Father is absolute and exhaustive by virtue of his essential being as God together with the Father, our knowledge of the Father is secondary and relative, coming through Christ to us at our creaturely level as he chooses to reveal the Father to us. The nature of Christ's knowledge of the Father is mutual and comprehensive; based on this reality Christ expresses in John 14:9, "He who has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, Show us the Father?" Though he came to inaugurate the kingdom of God, Christ called people *to himself* to follow him several times (Matt 11:28; 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 10:27; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 8:34). It should also be noted that scriptural "passages which predicate humanity of Christ assert its truth, but do not deny his divinity."<sup>65</sup>

One can argue that the centrality of Christ is the reason for the division of human civilization into BCE and CE since his birth, and he has impacted all great personalities after him. For this reason, it can be attested, "There is nobody like him; there never has been, and there never will be."<sup>66</sup> It is this all-surpassing reality that "Jesus Christ is too great and glorious a person to be captured by one author or depicted from one perspective."<sup>67</sup>

In the ocean of pluralist challenges that make some Evangelicals uncertain of what they believe, Stott did not flinch on the question of the deity of Christ and its functional implications: "We are not ashamed of Jesus Christ, who is the centre and core of Christianity."<sup>68</sup> Christ exhibited an "incomparable character" manifest in his "strength and gentleness, his uncompromising

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Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (repr., London: SCM, 2000), 255, and Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 288.

<sup>63</sup> Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 273, 277.

<sup>64</sup> Green, *Message of Matthew*, 141.

<sup>65</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 291, topic 3, q. 28, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 18.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>68</sup> John Stott, *Why I Am a Christian* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013), 35. See also *Basic Christianity*, 31.

righteousness and tender compassion, his care for children and his love for outcasts, his self-mastery and self-sacrifice,” which the whole world acclaims.<sup>69</sup> The denial of the deity of Christ leaves Christianity empty and meaningless and without any compelling reason for missions and the quest for human transformation: “If Jesus was not God in human flesh, Christianity is thoroughly discredited. We are left with just another religion with some beautiful ideas and noble ethics; its unique distinctiveness is gone.”<sup>70</sup> While Knitter tries to elevate the actions of Christ above his ontic person, Stott cogently correlates both realities, richly informing our intellectual and moral conduct in the most constructive way. Our faith must direct our actions, and our actions must match our faith. For the gospel to be whole, we must not only affirm Christ’s divinity but also put into action this faith and his agenda. The functional finality of Christology is the translation of our belief in Jesus as the Son of God who came to save us and establish the kingdom of God on earth and also to cause us to enact actions that will make a difference in human society.<sup>71</sup>

The contextual necessity for the advent of Christ was the human rebellion against God and the broken relationships within humanity that Christ came to restore.<sup>72</sup> Sin is the reason for the centrality of the cross, as he argues:

For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives that belong to God alone; God accepts penalties that belong to man alone.<sup>73</sup>

The fact of human sin is what is missing in non-Christian religions; hence, they miss the overarching importance of the divine action in Christ in response to this human condition. However, it follows that sin created the scenario in which the cross became necessary and that Christ chose the cross as the means to rescue us and disclose the love of God and overcome evil, thus making the cross central in the redemptive project.<sup>74</sup> The problem of human sin is of such magnitude that it could only be addressed by the most qualified person, who is none other than Christ, the God-man. It is our belief that his finality gives authentic impetus to the proclamation of

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<sup>69</sup> Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 14, 49.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>72</sup> Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 11; Stott and Wright, *Christian Mission*, 97.

<sup>73</sup> John Stott, *Cross of Christ* (repr., Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 159.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

the good news to the world.<sup>75</sup> The crux of the message is that “Christianity is a religion of salvation” because Christ came to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15).<sup>76</sup> For Stott, there is an authentic Christianity that is opposed to the diluted version of liberal pluralism.<sup>77</sup> That authentic Christianity is defined by the biblical portrait of Christ, who is the author of salvation.<sup>78</sup>

The centrality of Christ in the context of sin defines the centrality of the cross. It is central because of him who died and what his death accomplished for humanity. His manner of death, and the reason for his death, makes him stand out.<sup>79</sup> Knowing the full value of Christ’s sacrificial death, which the apostolic tradition amplifies, made Paul boast in nothing except the cross as God’s chosen means to accomplish the extraordinary redemption from sin and its present and future consequences.<sup>80</sup> By the achievement of redemption on the cross, Christ has obtained justification for us; this is the foundation of the Christian faith.<sup>81</sup> The cross has revealed something of God that has not been revealed in any other way, namely, the Father’s love and justice, which is expressed through the suffering of the Triune God.<sup>82</sup> The cross has shown that God can substitute himself for those who have offended him and require just punishment from him, and this transaction is an expression of undeserved love. By the cross, God has rescued us, revealed himself to us, and graciously overcome evil with his love.<sup>83</sup> Aligning with Jürgen Moltmann’s statements on God’s love in the cross, Stott notes, “No theology is genuinely Christian which does not arise from and focus on the cross.”<sup>84</sup> The unity of God was expressed in a dramatic way on the cross, where “the Son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of the Son. The grief of the Father here is just as important as the death of the Son. The Fatherlessness of the Son is matched by the Sonlessness of

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<sup>75</sup> Stott and Wright, *Christian Mission*, 108.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>77</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Authentic Christianity*, 159; John R. W. Stott, *Understanding Christ: An Enquiry into the Theology of Propositions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981). Stott amplifies this view more in his commentary: John Stott, *Lausanne Occasional Paper 3: The Lausanne Covenant; An Exposition and Commentary* (Lausanne: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1975), 14.

<sup>78</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Authentic Christianity*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 27.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 37, 40–41.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>82</sup> Stott, *Why I Am a Christian*, 57.

<sup>83</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 165.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 211; see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1974), 72.



the Father.”<sup>85</sup> The cross also reveals the unfathomable wisdom and power of God.<sup>86</sup>

Unashamed of the gospel like the apostle Paul (Rom 1:16), Stott saw the necessity of comparing the incomparable and drawing the conclusion, incorporating it in the title *The Incomparable Christ*: “There is nobody like him; there never has been, and there never will be.”<sup>87</sup> Christ has influenced ideologies and great world leaders after him rather than them being his rivals or equals because of who he is essentially, the divinity that has permeated the human world to reform it.<sup>88</sup>

### III. *Self-Substitutionary View of Atonement*

Stott argues for a Christology of divine self-substitution, a theory of the atonement in which the substitution was God for God, not God for man.<sup>89</sup> The gravity of sin against the majesty of God has set the framework for understanding the nature of the atonement, where the self-satisfaction of God as an “inward necessity” was key.<sup>90</sup> The substitution was a penalty for our sins in which God the Father and Jesus both voluntarily took the “initiative together to save sinners.”<sup>91</sup> Like Barth,<sup>92</sup> Stott is apparently conscious of the challenge of violence or child abuse in this interpretation of the atonement. Obviously, saving sinners cannot only be from their sin but also from its consequences, including eternal punishment, even as Stott accepts that the substitution was a penalty for our sins.

The question that John Calvin tries to answer is who could qualify as our mediator to pay the penalty for our sin, since our finitude disqualifies us in the context of the gravity of our sin and the requisite satisfaction of divine justice. And he says, “Our Mediator must be true God and true man.”<sup>93</sup> For

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<sup>85</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 212, citing Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 152, 243.

<sup>86</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 219–22.

<sup>87</sup> Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 18, 176.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Stott demonstrates how Christ has influenced many great leaders to live their own lives too; see Stott, *Incomparable Christ*, 133–73.

<sup>89</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 133.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 143, 151. Stott finds irreconcilable the concept of a loving God unleashing severe punishment on anyone, let alone an innocent person like Jesus (Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 151, 158–59).

<sup>92</sup> See Bruce L. McCormack, “The Ontological Presuppositions of Barth’s Doctrine of the Atonement,” in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 364.

<sup>93</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, LCC, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2.12.1, 1:464.



Calvin, despite God taking the sole responsibility to provide the solution, man must necessarily be involved because he committed the crime for which he has to pay. Yet God was also going to satisfy himself. So the solution must be in a God-man; the justification is thus established:

Since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us.<sup>94</sup>

Stott echoes Calvin but goes beyond him: “Neither Christ alone as man nor the Father alone as God could be our only substitute. Only God in Christ, God the Father’s one and only Son made man, could take our place.”<sup>95</sup> Though Stott strongly defends Christ’s divinity elsewhere, his language here rather implicates Christ’s divinity as if it is the involvement of God that raises his divinity to qualify for our substitute.

Stott seems inconsistent. This inconsistency is even more visible in his Trinitarian view, which he did not fully develop in his writings. In his earlier publication, *The Cross of Christ* (1986, reprinted last in 2006), his explanation of the substitutionary death of Christ got him into the Barthian modal trajectory, where he argues that “the righteous, loving *Father* humbled himself to *become* in and through his only Son flesh, sin and a curse for us, in order to redeem us without compromising his own character.”<sup>96</sup> The fact of the Father becoming the Son in the flesh (modalism) questions the integrity of the distinct personalities in the Godhead. This view stands in opposition to the orthodox position and is contra Calvin, who maintains that it was distinctively the “Son of God” as the second person in the Trinity who became “the Son of man”<sup>97</sup> and not the Father who became the Son, who eventually became man. And when Calvin further avers that “our most merciful *God*, when he willed that we be redeemed, *made himself* our Redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son [Rom.5:8],”<sup>98</sup> he is emphasizing the unity of the Triune God in the redemptive project.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 2.12.3, 1:466.

<sup>95</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 159.

<sup>96</sup> Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 158–59 (emphasis added). Apart from adopting the Barthian idea, he clearly references him. See Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 159, note 51, and Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol.4:2, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 94; *Church Dogmatics: Doctrine of the Word of God*, vol. 2. (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 359–60.

<sup>97</sup> Calvin, *Institutes* 2.12.1, 1:465.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

However, in a later publication, *The Contemporary Christian* (1992),<sup>99</sup> Stott apparently moves away from his earlier view, as he references the plurality of the persons in the Trinity: “And if the *three persons* of the Trinity are committed to their welfare, how can we not be also?”<sup>100</sup> And later, in *The Message of Romans* (1994), Stott explains how synonymous it is to refer to “being in the Spirit” with the “Spirit in us” and the “Spirit of God” with the “Spirit of Christ” but warns against applying the same to the Triune God:

This is not to confuse the *persons* of the Trinity by identifying the Father with the Son or the Son with the Spirit. It is rather to emphasize that, although they are eternally distinct in their *personal* mode of being, they also share the same divine essence and will. In consequence, they are inseparable. What the Father does he does through the Son, and what the Son does he does through the Spirit. Indeed, wherever each is, there are the others also.<sup>101</sup>

It is very clear in this text that Stott underscores the three persons as distinct, self-conscious modes of being.

## Conclusion

Stott was writing at a time when the consciousness of religious pluralism was growing, a time in which the gospel of Christ had gone to the ends of the earth, confronting other religions not as *an* alternative but as *the* alternative in its comprehensive mode as “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Unlike the period from the early church to the sixteenth century, when missiology was marginal, Stott defended the claims of Christ in the context of competitive religions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Stott presented his understanding of the authentic Christ not from philosophical, psychological, and anthropological grounds but from the internal witness of Scripture as the revelation from God. The foundations of his Christology are the claims and actions of Christ. The ontological person of Christ was essential to Stott because he saw the magnitude of the human problem, sin and its consequences, from which only God can save people. God’s judgment of sin is so great and dreadful that only God himself can deliver man from it. Therefore, God himself must act, and Christ must be God if he is to save. This understanding takes into consideration the whole biblical picture of the precosmic Christ, who was cocreator of the universe

<sup>99</sup> Stott, *Contemporary Christian*, 148, 284.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>101</sup> Stott, *Message of Romans*, 225 (emphasis added). Note that Barth opposed this usage. See also John Stott, *The Message of Matthew* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011), 323.

with the Father and the Holy Spirit and has come as the Redeemer. This core Christian gospel warrants a constructive missiological dialogue between Christianity and other religions. However, his view on penal substitution went beyond orthodoxy owing to his inconsistent Trinitarian position.



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# Reminiscences of Packer

VERN S. POYTHRESS

I have fond memories of J. I. Packer. I cannot convey the whole of who he was, but I can give some small illustrations from personal acquaintance.

In my younger years, Packer was a famous figure afar off, who was nevertheless influential in my theological formation. His books *Knowing God*, *“Fundamentalism” and the Word of God*, and *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* had a profound impact on me.<sup>1</sup> But I did not know the man behind the books until later. Like many others, I was shaped by the ideas and by the evident love for God and for Christ that animated the ideas.

In November 1982, I met Dr. Packer in person for the first time. The occasion was the second summit of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI). The first summit produced the famous “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” (1978).<sup>2</sup> The second had the goal of formulating an analogous statement on hermeneutics.<sup>3</sup> Packer was a member on the central committee that had the task of processing and refining the recommendations that came in to produce a finished statement.

The committee met into the late hours of the night. It started from a preliminary draft that included a number of articles with their affirmations and denials. Sometimes the wording was already excellent. But with some of the articles, every suggested wording felt flat.

When people saw that nothing was working, they began to look at Packer.

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<sup>1</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973); *“Fundamentalism” and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958); *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy,” Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, <https://www.alliancenet.org/the-chicago-statement-on-biblical-inerrancy>.

<sup>3</sup> “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics,” Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, <https://www.alliancenet.org/the-chicago-statement-on-biblical-hermeneutics>.

Time after time, he would come up with wording that was just right. I was in awe and grateful to God for such a gift to us. Packer was a man gifted both in theological understanding and in the craft of English expression. His unique mastery of both theology and English gave the committee what it needed. He was also self-effacing. What mattered to him was not what he himself did but what we produced together as the final wording.

Years later, I was privileged to be a member on the central committee responsible for the English Standard Version. The committee was entitled the Translation Oversight Committee (TOC), and Packer was one of the members. As in the case with the ICBI, Packer had an outsized influence. All of us on the committee had great respect for him, which grew as we saw the wisdom that he brought to the task of choosing just the right wording. Sometimes, it seemed to me, he swayed all the rest of the committee as he gave a decisive speech just before the time came to vote on a translation question.

I can still remember a particular episode that struck me. It involved an unfamiliar Greek word. The question was how best to render this Greek word in English. The members around the table were looking in detail at the standard Greek lexicons, carefully digesting their wording to discern the nuances. But Packer, without any lexicon in front of him, just started talking about the precise nuances of this Greek word. He just *knew*!

His knowledge was built on a “classical” education. He had read and digested a huge amount of ancient Greek literature. He knew intuitively how Greek worked, both lexically and grammatically. No one else on the committee had a background equal to his.

In one of the later meetings of the TOC, which took place in Cambridge, England, the committee members were invited to bring their families to Cambridge. My wife and my two boys, who were young teenagers, came. Packer, however, came alone.

Every morning we ate breakfast at the hotel restaurant. I invited Packer to have breakfast at our table. And he did. My wife and I were in awe of him. But our boys were too young to appreciate how famous and theologically influential he was. To them, he was just a friend at our table. So they had ordinary conversations with him, which he joined with delight. Our younger son in particular had a keen sense of humor, and he was soon cracking jokes with Packer. My wife and I were thinking to ourselves, “Don’t you know that this is the great Dr. Packer? How can you be so casual with your jokes?” Packer was delighted to interact with their boyish friendliness and not to have to deal all the time with people who were afraid to approach him.

Such are some of the memories that I have; such was my privilege. I met a man filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The Spirit shone through a quiet, humble, gracious, wise Englishman who delighted to serve the Lord and fellow human beings in the ordinary course of life as well as in the work of theology.<sup>5</sup>

His delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.  
He is like a tree  
planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither. (Ps 1:2–3 ESV)

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<sup>4</sup> J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *J. I. Packer: A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); Leland Ryken, *J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

Preach, teach, *and* lead  
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# A Singular Anglican Life: Memories of Stott

WILLIAM EDGAR

Uncle John, as we used to call him, was the dean of Evangelicals. He did more for networking Christians all around the globe than anyone else in our times. John Robert Walmsley Stott (April 27, 1921–July 27, 2011) became a Christian believer through England’s Varsity and Public School Camps. He became the rector of his family’s parish, All Souls Anglican Church, Langham Place, London. Despite pressure to separate, he defended staying within the Anglican Communion, which led to a sad rift with his friend Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, who advocated for splitting with the church and other institutions. Stott was a model churchman who believed there was a promising future for the Evangelical party within the Anglican communion.

Stott became a popular speaker in many circles. He was the regular devotional lecturer at InterVarsity’s Urbana conferences. He wrote over fifty books, most of them accessible to the lay reader. Among them is *Basic Christianity*, an international best-seller introducing readers to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. *The Cross of Christ* is arguably his most powerful presentation of the gospel. Along with Billy Graham he founded the Lausanne Movement in 1974, which produced the *Lausanne Covenant*, with its gentle corrective of Evangelical pietism. Through its subgroups Lausanne has had numerous subsequent extensions and is alive and well today. Stott traveled the world, ministering to church leaders around the globe. He also founded the Langham Trust, a foundation dedicated to promoting seminary training for majority-world students.

Several biographies exist.<sup>1</sup> I offer here some personal reflections on Uncle John and his deep influence on my life. My aim is to give readers a sense of his humanity and his outreach.

My first personal visit with John was in 1965. I had heard him speak in December 1964 at Urbana. I was a brand-new Christian, having had my life turned upside down the year before at L'Abri. One of my new Christian friends was Peter Moore, an Episcopal minister, the captivating founder of FOCUS, a unique ministry to independent school young people in North America. Stott had had a compelling influence on Peter. Peter urged me to go and meet him. I made my way to 12 Weymouth Place, where I was invited to lunch. Uncle John greeted me warmly at the door and ushered me into a large dining room. Some ten young men were seated around the table. His "boys" were trainees in the ministry. Conversation was rich. After lunch John took me to a secluded living room, where we talked for a couple of hours. It was then that I discovered his heart: his love for people. He once said to me, modestly, that he had a natural affection for all sorts and conditions. It was a gift from God. During our time, at his behest, I pummeled him with questions, which he calmly answered. He was full of grace. He put me on his mailing list so I could receive the biannual newsletter, composed until a few months before his death. These letters to thousands of readers were all signed and dedicated personally. Nearly all of them described a trip John had taken, and ... the exotic birds he had watched. John was an avid ornithologist, or a "birder," as the Brits called them.<sup>2</sup>

We kept in touch through correspondence and the occasional gatherings where we crossed paths. He always remembered me and our first meeting, which is saying something considering his hundreds of friends around the world. On one of these occasions, I once had the daunting task of preaching when he was in the congregation. Trembling, I spoke on Genesis 1:26, and he came up afterwards and thanked me for my "good Reformed theology." I don't think he was slain in the Spirit! At another meeting, our three-year-old daughter spilled water on his trousers. We were rather mortified, but he reassured us that he had just had his "second baptism."

John was the founder of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), which met at a church on Vere Street. The mission of the LICC

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<sup>1</sup> Particularly informative are Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry; A Biography of the Later Years* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001); and Christopher Wright, *Portraits of a Radical Disciple: Recollections of John Stott's Life and Ministry* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> John has written a captivating book on birds: John Stott, *The Birds Our Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001). All the photos are his. He never went far without his binoculars and a camera. Of the 9,000 species, he says he has seen 2,500.

was to encourage laypersons in their faith. Ed Clowney was a regular. One year I was invited there to speak on rock ‘n’ roll music. This required a number of planning meetings. Long discussions on the nature of art and the place of music were held. In attendance were my good friends Nigel Goodwin, Steve Turner, and Tim Dean. We went around and around, and John was looking less and less patient with these learned chatterboxes. The day came and I gave my lecture on rock. It was not life changing. John said I was “diffident” (a polite way of saying *boring?*). One redeeming factor: Tim took me out to a pub and proposed a volume on music for SPCK. *Taking Note of Music* was my first book-length publication.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps my most memorable meeting with John was in Africa. I was teaching in Bangui, Central African Republic (*Centrafrique*) at an Evangelical seminary there. By coincidence John spent a few days with us. Having grown up in France, I was privileged to translate his addresses into French. With a twinkle he whispered to me not to try and correct him—which I would never dream of—he had taken a first in French at Cambridge.

We lodged together in the guest house. I got to watch his routines, which included an early rise for devotions (“quiet time,” as it was called). One morning he suggested we go looking for birds. Joe Paluku, the dean, drove us to a remote place to look for some exotic feathered friends. Instead, we were greeted by a formidable sentry who was ostensibly protecting a local radar station. He called us spies and threatened to shoot us with his machine gun. Fortunately, Dean Paluku was a tribal chief and knew how to throw his weight around. After what seemed an interminable argument with this watchman, Joe came to us and said if we left right away, we would not get shot. All we saw that day was a stray egret.

John graced us at Westminster Seminary, where he gave a memorable lecture on ministry based on 2 Corinthians 3 and 4. To Barb’s and my embarrassment, the room was less than half full. We saw students studying in the library or simply walking around outside. To us, it was the opportunity of a lifetime; to them, it was one more chapel speaker.

John was a great advocate of contextualization. We had numerous conversations about music (ethnomusicology was my domain). He put me in touch with Wafeek Wahby, a Christian leader in Alexandria, Egypt. Wafeek and I became fast friends. He sent me a hymnbook in Arabic, an ethnomusicologist’s dream. (His brother Victor treated Francis Schaeffer in his declining years.)

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. William Edgar, *Taking Note of Music*, Third Way Books (London: SPCK, 1986).

Stott's views were not all predictable. At first, he was a pacifist, though he eventually espoused "just war" theory. Poignantly near the end, John told some of us that he had made a major mistake: choosing celibacy. This was not for want of aspirants. Frances Whitehead, his assistant for 60 years would have made a marvelous life's companion. Did he have a reason? The man who led John to the Lord through the British camps, Eric Nash, never married and rather implied it would be better for men in Christian service to stay single. Several well-known British Evangelicals came under his sway and accordingly remained celibate. He was a promotor of women's ministry (though not ordination to the highest office). He wrestled with "annihilation," the view that suggests unbelievers will not spend eternity in hell but will be destroyed. I am not persuaded, but I do understand the emotional issues. Stott himself is adamant to say he believes in the judgment and is "agnostic" about annihilation and the fate of the unevangelized.<sup>4</sup>

My love for Uncle John is nearly unbounded. While I respect his tenacious Evangelical orthodoxy and his zeal for missions, I most admire his genuine love for people: not a theory but an unmatched practice. I thank the Lord for sending this man into my life. May the church discover more leaders like him.

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<sup>4</sup> For an articulate assessment of all this by Stott himself, who is nothing if not nuanced, see John Stott, "Judgement and Hell [1988]," *Truth According to Scripture*, <https://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/death/judgement-hell.php#.Yn0vsWDMJfU>.

# Stott's Impact on Anglican Evangelicalism in Australia<sup>1</sup>

GLENN N. DAVIES

**J**ohn R. W. Stott was a well-known evangelist and apologist in the 1950s, undertaking various university missions in England while ministering at All Souls Langham Place, first as a curate (1945–1950) and then as rector from 1950. Stott's first visit to Australia was in 1958, the same year that *Basic Christianity* and *Your Confirmation* were published. These were extremely influential books in Australia, the first for Evangelicals of all denominations and the second for Anglican young people in particular as they prepared for their Confirmation. The latter was the standard text for a generation of confirmees.

The purpose of Stott's visit to Australia was to lead university missions in Melbourne and Sydney. One student present at Sydney University's mission recalls that on one occasion Stott had suffered a bout of laryngitis, disabling the projection of his voice to the gathered throng. Yet, as God's grace is perfected in human weakness, this affliction did not prevent the Spirit's work in drawing many students to Christ.

In 1965, Stott returned to Australia, this time not to lead a university mission but to give the Bible studies at Church Missionary Society (CMS) Summer Schools in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, as well as to address the Australian Inter-Varsity Fellowship (now known as AFES) in Coolangatta. Stott's preaching on 2 Corinthians seemed revolutionary as an example of expository preaching. John Chapman stated that this visit

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<sup>1</sup> Article first published in *Essentials*, a magazine of EFAC Australia, Glenn Davies, "John Stott's Impact on Anglican Evangelicalism in Australia," June 1, 2021, <https://www.efac.org.au/index.php/2021/winter-2021>. Used by permission.

was a remarkable wake-up call for Evangelicals, especially Anglicans, for empowering ministers to take the text of the Bible seriously and to expound the books of the Bible in a clear and orderly way.<sup>2</sup> This was in contrast to much preaching that was based on a single text, allowing the preacher to wander along various pathways, however well informed by the general teaching of the Bible, but not a clear exposition of the particular text at hand.<sup>3</sup> Stott was to return to CMS Summer Schools in 1971, in 1976, and again in 1986.

Jonathan Holt captures the importance of Stott's 1965 visit and its influence on not only Sydney Anglicans but most Australian Anglican Evangelicals with these words:

In conclusion, the emergence of expository preaching in Sydney Anglican Churches may be attributed to the presence of both a fuel and a spark. When Stott preached at the 1965 CMS Summer School on 2 Corinthians he inspired John Chapman, among others, to emulate his expository style. Preconditions that enabled the adoption of this expository style were a high view of preaching as proclamation of God's saving activity in Jesus, the development of a Biblical Theology framework for preaching, evangelical engagement in scholarly biblical studies, and a continuing propensity to look to England for leadership. The transformation in the style of preaching from a single-verse-as-text to the more systematic *lectio continua* has had a lasting impact in the Anglican parishes in Sydney and beyond them through the Katoomba Christian conventions.<sup>4</sup>

My first experience of hearing Stott preach was at the Katoomba CMS Summer School in 1971. I can still recall, fifty years later, his measured

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Orpwood wrote, "I heard only one of those Bible studies but I was so taken by the way he stuck to the text and stayed with it. He could show you the logic of the argument in the Scriptures. Prior to that I had tended to get an idea from a passage and to leap all over the Bible supporting the idea from other parts so that the people taught knew the 'idea' but not the passage from which it came or how that passage fitted into some overall argument from the Scriptures. It is to John Stott that I owe what ability I have to expound the Bible. He provided a model for expository preaching that I could copy and make my own. I needed time to practise." Michael Orpwood, *Chappo: For the Sake of the Gospel; John Chapman and the Department of Evangelism* (Russell Lea, NSW: Eaglesswift, 1995), 158. Orpwood wrongly identifies the CMS Summer School as being 1958, when it was 1965.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Peter Jensen's comments: "The Biblical preaching of my youth would start characteristically from a verse, sometimes taken out of context and used as a starting point for an extended Christian homily with exhortation." Cited by Jonathan Holt, "The Emergence of Expository Preaching in Sydney Anglican Churches," *St Mark's Review* 230 (December 2014): 75.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Holt, "The Emergence of Expository Preaching," 81. The spark to which Holt alludes was Stott; the fuel was an allusion to "preaching as proclamation of God's saving activity in Jesus, the development of a framework of Biblical Theology" fostered by the teaching of Donald Robinson (73).

explanation of the unfolding of the “a little while” and “again a little while” expressions in the Upper Room Discourse of John’s Gospel (John 16:16). As Edmund Clowney, president of Westminster Theological Seminary, would say: “Stott was the master of sermon construction.” With his refined English accent, he would unravel the complexity of a text with ease of organization and in a memorable manner that penetrated the heart and mind with the very words of God.<sup>5</sup> When I heard Stott again at the Urbana InterVarsity Conference in Illinois in 1976, a cartoon was printed in one of the daily bulletins, depicting a student with a Bible under his arm, looking up to the sky, with the caption “I hear God speaking to me in an English accent!”

In 1981, following the success for the first NEAC (National Evangelical Anglican Congress) ten years earlier, Stott was “the star attraction” at the second NEAC held in Melbourne,<sup>6</sup> when he delivered an address on Luke 4 entitled the Nazareth Manifesto. Once again, Stott’s masterful handling of the Lukan account of Jesus’s words in Nazareth made its impact on Anglican Evangelicals in Australia. While there was some criticism of this address in that it promoted social action as the complementary activity of gospel proclamation,<sup>7</sup> Stott saw himself in the Evangelical tradition of William Wilberforce and the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival that addressed concerns of social action without neglecting the importance of evangelism. This address, in many ways was the fruit of Stott’s significant contribution to the framing of the Lausanne Covenant at the 1974 Lausanne Congress, chaired by Bishop Jack Dain of Sydney.

Much could be said of Stott’s impact on Australia, not least of which being his establishment of the Bible Speaks Today series, which sought to emulate his style of expository preaching; his prodigious writing output that has taught, encouraged, and inspired many generations of Australian Evangelicals; and his many visits to Australia. However, the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion (EFAC) owes its very existence, its origin to Stott’s foresight in 1961, when he along with others established the

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<sup>5</sup> Compare Michael Cassidy’s comments after hearing Stott deliver the Payton Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1961: “I am sure it shaped the thinking about preaching of many of those Fuller Seminary students, as it did me. Many key concepts came into my life in theology at that time such as the critical importance of understanding the *kerygma* as a fixed deposit proclaimed by a herald (*keryx*) who was not at liberty to change the message and substitute it for his own private opinions on this, that and the next.” Letter from Michael Cassidy to Timothy Dudley-Smith, cited in the latter’s *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 117.

<sup>6</sup> Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914–2014* (Clayton, VIC: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 422.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 359–62.

EFAC, serving as its honorary secretary for some twenty years. Many Australians, such as Bishop Jack Dain and Bishop Donald Cameron, served on the international executive, as does Bishop Stephen Hale, who currently serves as its chair.

Our Evangelical heritage in Australia owes a great deal to Stott, and it is fitting that we thank God for this impact as we honor his legacy on the centenary of his birth.



# **“So Natural Is the Union of Religion with Justice”: Hooker’s Defense of Religious Establishment**

**W. BRADFORD LITTLEJOHN**

## **Abstract**

One of the greatest contributions of Anglican theology has been its consistent defense of the value of public religious establishment, and the classic defense remains that of Richard Hooker in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593–1600). In the opening chapters of Book V of the *Laws*, Hooker offers a compelling argument that religion is a crucial support to a well-ordered and virtuous polity while seeking to forestall the objection that this “instrumentalizes” religion to merely political ends. He also acknowledges the generic value of any kind of public religion while nonetheless contending that the wise ruler must choose that religion that is *true*, namely, Christianity. Hooker’s defense of religious establishment remains relevant in a Western world coming to terms with the contradictions of secular pluralism.

## **Keywords**

*Anglicanism, religious establishment, public religion, Richard Hooker, civic virtue, justice*

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## I. *Defining Establishment*

**A**lthough the Anglican Communion may be fast losing its distinctiveness amid the universal acids of individualism, globalism, and multiculturalism—not to mention sometimes ill-conceived ecumenical endeavors—its rich theological tradition still has many unique gifts to offer the modern church. Among these is its long defense of the value of public religious establishment, a notion that seems quaint to modern ears, if not downright noxious.

To be sure, Anglican churches are no longer likely to be established churches. The Episcopal Church of the United States was disestablished in the majority-Anglican states almost immediately after its formation in the wake of the Revolutionary War. The Anglican Church in Australia was disestablished in 1836, and in Canada, all provinces had ended their establishments by the time of Canadian independence in 1867. The Church of England still clings to its formal status as an established church, but perhaps for not much longer.<sup>1</sup>

And, of course, if Anglican churches need not be established churches, neither are established churches necessarily Anglican. In the wake of the Reformation, most Lutheran territorial churches enjoyed a similarly privileged relationship with the state, and this was even true more often than not of Calvinist churches—though these latter establishments tended to be more fraught, given the tendencies of Calvinist ecclesiology. Moreover, Roman Catholicism has been established by law in many countries, and still is in a few, although given its international character, the Catholic Church can never be a state church in the same sense as Protestant national churches can be.

Finally, it should be noted that there is no one-size-fits-all definition of state religious establishment. Established religions can run the gamut from strict uniformity to a modest privileging of one denomination. At one end of the spectrum, a particular church can be legally established to the exclusion of all others, such that any religious gathering by another sect is *ipso facto* illegal. At the other end of the spectrum, a society may practice complete religious toleration and simply favor its national church with special public acknowledgment, using its churches for state occasions and

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<sup>1</sup> For a good chronicle and analysis of these developments within the international Anglican Communion, see Bruce N. Kaye, *The Rise and Fall of the English Christendom: Theocracy, Christology, Order, and Power* (London: Routledge, 2018). For a more theological account, see Paul Avis, *Church, State, and Establishment* (London: SPCK, 2001).

granting its leadership formal representation in the government. The Church of England has, over its long history, moved incrementally from the maximalist pole of establishment to the minimalist pole. Historically, establishment has perhaps most often entailed state financial support, whether through general tax revenues or legally mandated tithes, but this is not necessary, nor is it currently the case in the Church of England.

These distinctions, in any case, are beyond the scope of this essay. For our purposes, it suffices to say that the tradition of religious establishment bears witness to two convictions: First, *the civil and natural ends of human society cannot be fully and properly achieved without explicit public acknowledgment and approval of the religious and supernatural ends of human life*. Second, because religions make particular and in some measure exclusive claims, *this public acknowledgment must take the form of a specific privileging of a specific visibly organized religious tradition*. As noted above, Anglicanism is hardly unique in making these claims; indeed, it might plausibly be argued that in this broad sense, some kind of religious or quasi-religious establishment is almost unavoidable, even when a society pretends to neutrality. However, we can certainly say that since its inception, the Anglican tradition has borne especially consistent witness to these claims and penned some of the most profound and eloquent defenses of them—from the earliest documents of the Church of England in the 1530s to T. S. Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society* in 1939<sup>2</sup> and beyond.

In what follows, I will focus attention on perhaps the most seminal and influential defense of religious establishment in the Anglican tradition, that of Richard Hooker in his magisterial *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593–1600).<sup>3</sup> Since from one perspective the entirety of the eight-book *Laws* is dedicated to this topic, I will limit my study for the most part to Hooker's most explicit discussion of the philosophical foundations of religious establishment, which occupies chapters 1 and 2 of Book V, published in 1597. While religious establishment is often thought of (and critiqued) in terms of the dependence of the church upon the state, in these chapters, Hooker frames it in the opposite direction, offering a powerful argument for establishment as the state's acknowledgment of its dependence upon the church. Hooker is

<sup>2</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, in *Christianity and Culture: The Centenary Edition, 1888–1988* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 1–77.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout, I will make use of the classic Folger Library edition but will modernize spelling and punctuation for easier reading, including the spelling of the title, which was originally published as *The Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*. Citations will be given parenthetically by book, chapter, and section (e.g., V.1.2), followed by a page citation to the Folger Library Edition (e.g., *FLE* 2:20).

alive to the concern that this relationship could instrumentalize the church, justifying a kind of Machiavellian co-optation of the church as a prop to the cynical ambitions of the powerful. However, he goes on to show why, in his view, any civil religion that cynically discounts the actual truth claims of the church it establishes is bound to be self-defeating. The result is a compelling argument for the intimate relation of religion and justice, man's natural and supernatural ends, that undergirded many of the Elizabethan state's policies toward the Church of England, and that could continue to justify much more modest forms of establishment today.

## II. *Objections to Religious Establishment*

Before delving into Hooker's exposition proper, let us first analyze more carefully one of the chief objections to religious establishment, an objection with which Hooker implicitly engages throughout this section. This is the charge that establishment leads inevitably to mere "civil religion," in which the mundane and often malign purposes of civil government are clothed in an aura of sanctity borrowed from the church, in which the church is instrumentalized for the promotion of mere political purposes.<sup>4</sup> Of course, such a civil religion need not require any formal establishment; indeed, it can flourish perhaps just as well in the absence of it, as the flag-waving of American Evangelicalism, the "Republican Party at prayer," readily demonstrates.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, there seems to be no denying the reality of this danger, as the long history of the Church of England shows. James I famously pronounced, "No bishop, no king," and from the English Civil War to World War II, examples have not been lacking of leading churchmen lining up to baptize the sometimes sinister policies of their civil authorities or lending an aura of respectability to long-standing structural injustices.

To parry this objection, the defender of establishment might try to steer the conversation away from the idea of religion as a prop to support the polity and insist that the only purpose of establishment is to put the resources of the state to work in supporting the work of the church; establishment is thus an act of self-abnegation in which the kingdom of man becomes lesser

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<sup>4</sup> Such critiques of early modern Protestant establishments are commonplace, but see, for example, W. T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> For a historical analysis, see D. G. Hart, *From Billy Graham to Sarah Palin: Evangelicals and the Betrayal of American Conservatism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). For a more recent (and more polemical) sociological analysis, see Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

that the kingdom of Christ shall become greater. And to some extent, any authentically Christian account of establishment must ultimately frame the relationship in this way: man's temporal ends must be subordinated to his eternal ends; the kingdoms of this earth must give way to the kingdom of Christ. However, it is striking that many Anglican defenders of establishment, Hooker among them, have not been afraid to grasp the nettle, openly affirming that during the time between Eden and the new Jerusalem, religion can and should be an instrument in service of the state's civil purposes.

After all, the charge of instrumentalization only hits home if an instrument is unsuited to the purpose for which it is being used, or if it can only be put to that purpose at the expense of some higher end. For instance, no one complains that a hammer is being "instrumentalized" to pound in a nail, but we would be horrified to see a precious heirloom employed for the purpose. In the social sphere, it would be no perversion of the good of friendship if I were to use the trust confided in me by two mutual friends to help mediate a quarrel between them. It would, however, be instrumentalizing the friendship if I sought to use my influence over one of them to get a coworker fired, clearing a path for my own promotion.

If we apply this analysis to religion and politics, it follows that the all-important questions are these: First, is a religion in fact well suited by its very nature to promote political order? Second, can it do so without at the same time detracting from its chief and highest purpose?

With respect to the first question, the dispute has raged throughout the two millennia of Christian political thought. Some, stressing passages such as Romans 13 and Christ's admonition to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt 22:21 *ESV*), have insisted that Christianity not only is compatible with political order but also provides one of its strongest supports, placing it on a firmer basis than any merely secular reasoning could. Others, from Anabaptists to papalists, have argued that Herod was right to quake in his boots at the news of a new king in Bethlehem, for the kingdom of Christ poses a constant and existential challenge to the kingdoms of men, subordinating all earthly allegiances to a higher loyalty.<sup>6</sup> Hooker, summing up in this respect the consensus of the magisterial Protestant Reformers, takes his stand with the first group, insisting that Christianity not only affirms the goodness of political order but also actively promotes that good through its own activities.

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<sup>6</sup> For a thorough and instructive anthology, see Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, eds., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

Still, as the second question highlights, it remains possible that Christianity could genuinely promote the goods of political order, but only at the cost of distracting or detracting from its central purpose: fitting men for the kingdom of God. Indeed, some have argued that the church is liable to flourish best in conditions of political oppression or disorder, since men and women cheated of a chance at earthly happiness are more likely to take refuge within the church's doors. Even if we do not take such an extreme line, it might seem that since religion's civil value is largely separable from its particular doctrinal claims, any civil use of religion will naturally tend to weaken and relativize the church's distinctive witness, encouraging churchmen to downplay divisive doctrines for the sake of civil peace. This was in many ways the consistent Puritan critique of the Church of England; although the Puritans did not oppose establishment as such, they wanted an establishment that clearly subordinated civil ends to religious ends, since the Church of England's crucial role as political stabilizer in a divided society encouraged lukewarmness and doctrinal minimalism.<sup>7</sup>

In his argument for the goods of establishment in Book V, chapters 1–2, then, Hooker has to reckon with both of these concerns, demonstrating that the Christian religion promotes just political order and that it does so precisely *as the Christian religion*, not by diluting its particular truth claims. Indeed, he goes further, arguing that those who do seek to instrumentalize religion, deploying it for its civil benefits without regard to its specifically religious claims, will necessarily defeat their own purposes. The civil use of religion, in short, only works if religion is taken seriously on its own terms, just as a friendship can only serve as an instrument toward other ends so long as its integrity *as a friendship* is maintained and honored; as soon as my friend realizes he is valued only for his benefits, I will lose both those benefits and the friendship.

### III. *Public Religion and Civic Virtue*

Perhaps Hooker's most memorable statement on the need for some kind of public establishment of religion comes toward the very end of his *magnum opus*, in Book VIII:

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<sup>7</sup> See Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, *Theology of Law and Authority in the English Reformation*, Emory University Studies in Law and Religion (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), ch. 8; and W. Bradford Littlejohn, *The Peril and Promise of Christian Liberty: Richard Hooker, the Puritans, and Protestant Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), ch. 3.

A gross error it is to think that regal power ought to serve for the good of the body and not of the soul, for men's temporal peace and not their eternal safety; as if God had ordained kings for no other end and purpose but only to fat up men like hogs and to see that they have their mash? (VIII.3.5; *FLE* 3:352)<sup>8</sup>

It is the characteristic error of both Romanism and Puritanism, he believes, to formally separate the church and the commonwealth in a way that implicitly secularizes the latter, implying that civil magistrates can somehow confine themselves to bodily goods.<sup>9</sup> This reflects a deficient anthropology, one that fails to recognize the deep union of body and soul, and the inability of the former to flourish if the latter is not ordered to its true end.

The reasoning here is broadly Aristotelian, as becomes clear if we look to the work of one of Hooker's chief theological influences, the Florentine Reformer turned Oxford professor, Peter Martyr Vermigli. Attacking the Roman claims for papal supremacy, which gave to kings only care for the body, not the soul, Vermigli declares,

So would they have princes to be only certain herd men to pamper the body. But the very philosophers do not so absurdly judge. For Aristotle in his *Politics* saith, that the office of a magistrate is, to provide that the people may live well and virtuously. And no greater virtue there is, than religion.<sup>10</sup>

Religion, Vermigli goes on to explain, is the architectonic virtue that orders and completes all others.<sup>11</sup> This certainly seems *prima facie* plausible, particularly from an Augustinian viewpoint in which all virtue depends on rightly ordered love, but Aristotle himself does not peg religion as the architectonic virtue, and so this claim is one that stands in need of some careful demonstration. It is this demonstration that Hooker seeks to provide in his discussion of public religion in Book V, chapters 1–2, which serves as a kind

<sup>8</sup> W. Speed Hill and P. G. Stanwood, eds., *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, vol. 3: *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity; Books VI, VII, VIII* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Littlejohn, *Peril and Promise*, chs. 5–6; also W. J. Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> Peter Martyr Vermigli, *The Common Places of the Most Famous and Renowned Divine Doctor Peter Martyr*, trans. and ed. Anthonie Marten (London: Henry Denham & Henry Middleton, 1583), 4:246–47 (IV.14.2). Spelling modernized. For a fuller discussion, see W. Bradford Littlejohn, "More Than a Swineherd: Hooker, Vermigli, and the Aristotelian Defense of the Royal Supremacy," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 15.1 (2014): 78–93.

<sup>11</sup> "In all arts (as saith Aristotle) there is a certain respect unto the principal art. For example, the art of riding commandeth the saddler's craft. Also, the art of navigation is above that Art which maketh oars and sails, wherefore seeing the office of a magistrate is the chief and principal science, he ought to rule all the parts of a common weal." Vermigli, *Common Places*, 4:247 (IV.14.2).

of theoretical foundation for his later argument for royal supremacy in Book VIII.

As often, Hooker's chapter title offers a crisp thesis statement for the argument of V.1: "True religion is the root of all true virtues and the stay of all well ordered common-wealths." The metaphor here, it should be noted, is subtly different from that of Vermigli. Rather than framing religion as the *telos* toward which all other virtues aim, and thus the art of cultivating religion as an architectonic art that must govern the pursuit of all other virtues, Hooker here describes religion as the root or foundation of other virtues and thus the anchor or support for a functional polity. But in fact, the two metaphors are complementary within Hooker's Aristotelian framework, since according to Aristotle's theory of four causes, the final cause is also in some sense the first cause, the "cause of causes." As the highest end to which other ends aim, the highest art that governs other arts, religion is also what sets all other arts in motion, and so it can be described as both root and capstone of other virtues.

Indeed, Hooker makes this complex metaphor explicit a short way into the chapter:

For if the course of politic affairs cannot in any good sort go forward without fit instruments, and that which fitteth them be their virtues, let polity acknowledge itself indebted to religion, godliness being the chiefest top and wellspring of all true virtues, even as God is of all good things. (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:17)<sup>12</sup>

This dual focus on religion as both beginning and end of a well-ordered commonwealth helps guard Hooker's defense of establishment from a crude instrumentalization, as it might be if religion merely served as a useful prop for fostering more important civic virtues. No, in Hooker's conception religion serves first to help engender and sustain civic virtues but then also transcends them, disclosing itself as their true end. That said, while Hooker sees "pure and unstained religion" as "the highest of all cares appertaining to public regiment" (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:16), he nonetheless believes that *any* religion (implicitly defined as an awareness of transcendent divine being[s] and the reality of divine judgment) can still play a critical role in anchoring the practice of civic virtue.

He makes his argument through a survey of three of the four cardinal virtues, beginning with the highest, justice:

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<sup>12</sup> W. Speed Hill, ed., *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, vol. 2: *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity; Book V* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977).



So natural is the union of religion with justice, that we may boldly deny there is either, where both are not. For how should they be unfeignedly just, whom religion doth not cause to be such ...? If they, which employ their labor and travail, about the public administration of justice, follow it only as a trade, with unquenchable and unconscionable thirst for gain, being not in heart persuaded that justice is God's own work, and themselves agents in this business, the sentence of right God's own verdict, and themselves his priests to deliver it; formalities of justice do but serve to smother right, and that, which was necessarily ordained for the common good, is through shameful abuse made the cause of common misery. (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:17)

Justice, in other words, cannot be reduced to the mere maintenance of public order. To conceive of justice is to conceive of an objective order of right, an order ultimately dependent upon a divine lawgiver (as Hooker has argued at length in his discussion of the "law of reason" in Book I of the *Laws*). Divorced of its transcendent dimension, the pursuit and enforcement of justice becomes merely another trade, another way of making a living. And although the consciences of good magistrates may instill them with a sense of duty, this sense of duty cannot be sustained in the absence of any religious sense. What, then, will prevent the irreligious magistrate or policeman from resorting to bribery and corruption, especially if these seem best suited to grease the wheels of "justice," as they so often do?

Similarly, argues Hooker, religious devotion is the author of prudence, the virtue of practical reason that knows how to achieve the greatest good within the constraints of circumstances. For the pious man, "desirous to please and resemble God," will be filled with "zeal to do good (as far as their place will permit) unto all." Accordingly, he will search out which "actions [are] most beneficial to others," and in so doing, will "gather from thence great experience, and through experience the more wisdom, because conscience and the fear of swerving from that which is right maketh them diligent observers of circumstances, the loose regard thereof is the nurse of vulgar folly" (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:17–18). Hooker thus turns on its head the common conception of the pious man as innocent, naïve, and thus inept in political affairs, easily deceived by those more worldly-wise. No, true piety should drive the righteous man on to an attentive study of the world and of human affairs so that godly kings will become the wisest of all rulers, like Solomon. Although he does not quote the verse, Hooker's reasoning here is well summed up in Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

Fortitude, the third of the cardinal virtues, also rests on religion, according to Hooker. "Evils great and unexpected (the true touchstone of constant minds) do often cause oftentimes even them to think upon divine power with fearfullest suspicions, which have been otherwise the most secure despisers thereof" (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:18). However much men may seek to silence

the voice of God and cheerily deny his existence, sudden calamity has a way of tearing open even the most hardened conscience. But the awareness of God that thus forces itself on the would-be atheist is no comfort, but an additional source of terror—the calamity cannot but be interpreted as an act of divine judgment. Hooker thus reasons that if the unbeliever is liable to be racked by terror in the face of misfortune, the believer will be most able to weather any sudden trial or suffering with courage and confidence: “How should we look for any constant resolution of mind in such cases saving only where unfeigned affection to Godward hath bred the most assured confidence to be assisted by his hand?” (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:18). Hooker goes on to cite the extraordinary courage of the ancient Jews in the face of torment and adversity as proof of the connection between faith and fortitude.

Having surveyed the first three of the cardinal virtues, we might expect Hooker to end with a treatment of temperance, but he opts not to, perhaps deeming the argument in this case so obvious and familiar as not to need belaboring. Given the power of bodily appetites, and the weakness of the reason in restraining them (something that Hooker discusses at length in Book I, chapter 7), it seems clear that both the fear of divine judgment and the love of God that desires to please him would exert a powerful force in arming the will to resist and govern the disorderly passions. In any case, in place of explicitly addressing the relationship between religion and temperance, Hooker closes this section by gently rebuking utopian ideas of a golden age of social harmony based on merely natural virtue:

They which commend so much the felicity of that innocent world, wherein it is said, that men of their own accord did embrace fidelity and honesty, not for fear of the magistrate ... but that which held the people in awe was the shame of ill doing, the love of equity and right itself a bar against all oppressions which greatness of power causeth, they which describe unto us any such estate of happiness amongst men, though they speak not of religion, do notwithstanding declare that, which is in truth her only working. (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:19)

Hooker does not claim that there could be *no* motivation to right action without religion, without the love of God and the fear of his judgment. Clearly, mere fear of men, good habits, and an instinctive sense of right and wrong can go a long way in enforcing the virtues—but these motives will also fall well short without piety. Even if “all other ornaments of mind might be had in their full perfection, nevertheless the mind that should possess them divorced from piety” would be like “that body is, which, adorned with sundry other admirable beauties, wanteth eye sight, the chiefest grace that nature hath in that kind to bestow” (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:18–19).

Indeed, religion is not merely a necessary cause of perfect virtue, but a sufficient cause: "For if religion did possess sincerely and sufficiently the hearts of all men, there would need no other restraint from evil" (V.1.2; *FLE* 2:19).

This last observation, however, pushes back to the forefront the question that Hooker has temporarily sidelined: Will any old religion do? Is mere sincerity enough? From the account he has given so far, it might look like it. As long as you sincerely believe that there is some kind of divinity, love its goodness, and fear its judgment, you will be motivated to seek authentic justice, spurred on to gain wisdom and prudence, and fortified against fear and uncertainty. Can we thus rest content with a mere least-common-denominator civil religion, or else, like the ancient Romans, promote each traditional cult, whatever it is, for the sake of public order?

#### **IV. Against Machiavellian Civil Religion**

After arguing that one of the natural effects of religion is to promote civic virtue, then, Hooker turns to address the objection that "it greatly skilleth [matters] not of what sort our religion be, in as much as heathens, Turks, infidels impute to religion a great part of the same effects which our selves ascribe thereunto" (V.1.3; *FLE* 2:19). From a Machiavellian standpoint, it might seem obvious that if religious piety in general helps produce the social and civic virtues that Hooker has surveyed, any religion capable of swaying the masses ought to do the trick. The wise ruler then could choose to promote whatever religion happened to be in the majority, trusting that not only would it fortify social cohesion, but it would also nourish a people committed to justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude. Indeed, some contemporary attempts to revive the argument for the importance of public religion, such as that of Israeli American political philosopher Yoram Hazony, seem to fall into this mode of argument. Although himself a devout Jew, Hazony somewhat startlingly closes his new book, *Conservatism: A Rediscovery*, by expressing his hope that American Christians will reinstate Protestant Christianity as the public religion of their own society.<sup>13</sup>

Hooker, while appreciating the plausibility of this reasoning, sets his face firmly against such relativism. The main reason why it fails, he argues, is that religion is not simply like other sources of social cohesion and virtue. Churches, like bowling leagues and bridge clubs, can help nourish a virtuous

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<sup>13</sup> Yoram Hazony, *Conservatism: A Rediscovery* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 2022), 221.

and interdependent citizenry, as sociologist Robert Putnam has famously noted in *Bowling Alone*.<sup>14</sup> However, the specific benefits of religion are dependent on *truth claims*. A dedicated bowler or bridge player may prefer their game to others, but they are unlikely to make binding universal truth claims about its superiority. Religions, however, are notoriously prone to conflict and controversy—not because religious people are singularly fractious, but because the stakes of their disagreements are so high. Hooker observes,

By the bitter strife, which riseth oftentimes from small differences in this behalf, and is by so much always greater, as the matter is of more importance, we see a general agreement in the secret opinion of men, that every man ought to embrace the religion which is true, and to shun, as hurtful, whatsoever dissenteth from it, but that most, which doth farthest dissent. (V.1.3; *FLE* 2:19–20)

While many Enlightenment philosophers and modern liberal theorists have hoped that they could harness all the civic benefits of religion while stripping religion of its predilection for sectarian conflict, thus making possible a peaceable pluralism, Hooker argues that this is a fool's errand. It is in the nature of religions *qua* religions to make exclusive claims, and if their adherents actually believe that their own claims about the deity and the duties he demands are true, they will necessarily believe that others are false.

At the very least, then, a wise ruler hoping to establish a virtue-forming public religion will have to make a choice, privileging and promoting one religion rather than another. To be sure, many modern nations have hoped that a mere general religiosity would do the trick, but they have tended to find that, as they have tried to downplay the differences between religions, authentic religious conviction and practice have diminished in proportion, just as Hooker would have predicted. Indeed, given his commitment to a Thomistic method, which discerns the divine hand in observable inclinations of human nature, Hooker concludes that our native tendency to dispute about religious doctrines is itself proof that God *wants* us to take doctrinal differences seriously: "... the generality of which persuasion argueth, that God hath imprinted it by nature, to the end it might be a spur to our industry, in searching and maintaining that [true] religion" (V.1.3; *FLE* 2:20). Thus Hooker insists not only that the statesman must reckon seriously with the fact that people *believe* religious claims to be mutually exclusive, but he must recognize that *they are in fact so*.

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<sup>14</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

It remains, then, simply to argue that, if public religion matters, and if there is in fact one true religion, that our public religion should in fact be that one true religion. This might indeed seem almost self-evident, but one could imagine a counterargument. It might be, for instance, that the civil and temporal benefits of religion are generic, just as liable to flow from Islam or Zoroastrianism as from Christianity, and that only when it comes to eternal consequences does one's religion make any difference. Hooker has little time for such a bifurcation of temporal and eternal, however. Given his underlying conviction that grace perfects nature and restores fallen nature to its proper functioning, it is almost axiomatic for him that the true worship of God will carry palpable this-worldly benefits. "Without all controversy," he asserts, "the purer and perfecter our religion is, the worthier effects it hath in them who steadfastly and sincerely embrace it" (V.1.4; *FLE* 2:21).

However, when it comes to temporal matters at least, this difference is not black and white, but manifests itself along a spectrum. A false religion may be of no value whatsoever in the life to come, but in this life, Hooker believes that it can and will still produce some of the benefits he has outlined above in his catalog of virtues. Hooker considers, for instance, the ancient Romans' superstitious practice of augury: although they may have been laughably wrong to think that the flight patterns of birds or the entrails of animals disclosed the divine purpose to them, they were still right to believe that there *was* a divine purpose, and to the extent that this gave them great courage and confidence in facing their foes, convinced that the signs were in their favor, it often helped them win victories. Indeed, Hooker's observation here served as the premise for a somewhat ridiculous, if endearing, modern film, *Angels in the Outfield* (1994), in which an abysmal baseball team turns their season around with the aid of blatant divine intervention. At the climax of the film, the angels report that they are not allowed to interfere in championship games, but the coach keeps this from the players, who, confidently believing they have the angels on their side, muster the grit to triumph. On a bit more serious note, Hooker notes that the almost universal practice of oath taking is another example of the generic benefits of religion. The pagans who took such oaths were wrong in believing that their false gods would take vengeance upon them for perjury, but right to believe that perjury would invite divine vengeance—albeit from the true God, whom they did not know. "The right conceit which they had, that to perjury vengeance is due, was not without good effect as touching the course of their lives" (V.1.3; *FLE* 2:21).

In view of this, Hooker has nothing but contempt for Machiavellians who, seeing that there is “a politic use of religion,” imagine “that religion itself is a mere politic device, forged purposely to serve for that use” (V.2.2; *FLE* 2:25).<sup>15</sup> This conviction, he says, leads them into absurdity since they try to “take all occasion of rare events, and from what cause soever the same do proceed, yet wrest them to the strengthening of their religion, and not make it nice for so good a purpose to use, if need be, plain forgeries” (V.2.3; *FLE* 2:26). Given that the atheism from which this approach stems is the “most extreme opposite unto true religion” (V.2; *FLE* 2:22), it stands to reason that it will fail utterly to produce those civil benefits that appear, in their fullest form, in the wake of Christianity. It is not hard to see, says Hooker, why it will fail, for “treachery, guile, and deceit are things which may for awhile, but do not use long to go unespied” (V.2.4; *FLE* 2:26); therefore, the statesman who resorts to them as a temporary expedient to prop up his false civil religion will soon find that his forgeries are uncovered, his religion exposed as a fraud, and his state accordingly deprived of all credibility.

Putting all this together, Hooker seeks to offer a balanced perspective that recognizes the universal social and civil benefits of public religion while still stressing that all religions are not created equal and that the truer our religion is and the more sincerely we hold it, the greater its blessings to the commonwealth:

Seeing therefore it doth thus appear that the safety of all estates dependeth upon religion; that religion unfeignedly loved perfecteth men's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth; that men's desire is in general to hold no religion but the true; and that whatsoever good effects do grow out of their religion who embrace instead of the true a false, the root thereof are certain sparks of the light of truth intermingled with the darkness of error ... we have reason to think that all true virtues are to honor true religion as their parent, and all well-ordered common-weals to love her as their chiefest stay. (V.1.5; *FLE* 2:22)

## Conclusion

Even if the modern reader grants the force of Hooker's arguments in favor of a public establishment of Christianity, many questions will remain unanswered. It may be true in principle that the sincerest pursuit of the truest form of Christianity will in the end redound most fully to a society's temporal flourishing, but in practice, the two will often seem to be in conflict. Indeed, the reign of Elizabeth I, whom Hooker extolled in his dedication to

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<sup>15</sup> Hooker clearly has Machiavelli himself in his sights here, since he acknowledges him explicitly in a rare marginal note, referencing the *Discourses on Livy*, Book I, chapters 11–14.

Book V, was a case study of such a conflict. Throughout her reign, the apparently clear political necessity of minimizing conflict with Roman Catholics at home and abroad led Elizabeth to take a cautious approach to the cause of the Reformation. By tolerating and indeed mandating what seemed to many quasi-popish ceremonies within the Church of England, and by refusing to actively intervene on behalf of persecuted Protestants abroad, Elizabeth's policy tacitly signaled that not true piety, but lukewarm religion, was "the chiefest stay" of a "well-ordered commonweal."<sup>16</sup>

More seriously, modern defenders of religious liberty may hone in on Hooker's emphasis on the importance of *sincerity* to argue against the wisdom of religious establishment. Hooker indeed acknowledges that sincerity matters even more than truth when it comes to religion's temporal benefits: "They that love the religion which they profess may have failed in choice, but yet they are sure to reap what benefit the same is able to afford, whereas the best and soundest professed by them that bear it not the like affection, yieldeth them ... no benefit" (V.1.4; *FLE* 2:21). In other words, those who make a merely formal profession of Christianity are no better off eternally, and are worse off temporally, than those who worship Allah in full sincerity. This striking admission would seem to lend credence to arguments, such as those of Andrew Walker in *Liberty for All*, that Christians should promote full religious liberty so that individuals will embrace Christianity or any other religion out of sincere conviction and choice rather than fear of coercion.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, Hooker's vision of establishment seems to focus more on the magistrate's role in positively promoting right religion rather than actively persecuting false religion. Indeed, it was an axiom—albeit a slippery one—of Elizabethan policy that no Catholics or dissenters were punished for their religious errors as such, but only for the threat they posed to civil order. Still, even if we set aside any form of religious coercion and envision a much more moderate and gentler religious establishment, such as that of the Church of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the concern about sincerity is still well-placed. Does not the state's recognition of and promotion of a particular church encourage people to attach themselves to that church merely for the social benefits and political opportunities afforded thereby rather than out of any genuine religious conviction? The pages

<sup>16</sup> For a survey of Elizabeth's cautious religious policy, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547–1603* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001); for Elizabeth's cautious foreign policy in the midst of pressures to intervene on behalf of beleaguered continental Protestants, see R. B. Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1558–1603* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> Andrew T. Walker, *Liberty for All: Defending Everyone's Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Age* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2021).



of early English novels are filled with characters for whom the church seems to have little function beyond that of social advancement.

Even assuming such objections were persuasively answered, unanswerable questions remain about how, if at all, Western societies might be brought to return to the kind of publicly established Christianity that Hooker champions. Some readers, accordingly, might wonder how there is any value in learning from a text so seemingly obsolete as Hooker's *Laws*. That, however, would be shortsighted. Regardless of the prudential objections and practical obstacles to church establishment today, Hooker's insights into the link between religion and virtue, piety and justice, remain as true now as they ever were. If Hooker is right that every religion instills its sincere practitioners with a heightened conscientiousness in the pursuit of justice, a more earnest search for wisdom about the common good, and a calm confidence in the face of danger, then it follows at the very least that dogmatic secularism is a bankrupt political philosophy, running on borrowed capital. If, moreover, Hooker is right that it is in the very nature of religion to make exclusive truth claims, and the truest religion will produce very different this-worldly effects than corrupt religions will, then it follows that Rawlsian liberalism will not do: tolerance of religious difference is not a natural virtue, and a pluralistic society should expect to witness intense moral and religious conflict, as indeed we are seeing in Western liberal democracies today.<sup>18</sup>

How should a Christian statesman today respond in light of these truths? For this, there are no easy answers, and the judicious Hooker, ever conscious of the mutability and complexity of human affairs, would be the first to say so. But wisdom for the present must begin, at least, in a respectful appropriation of the past. Too often Christians today have dismissed the very idea of religious establishment as an embarrassing relic, a testament to a time in which church leaders doubted the power of the gospel to sustain itself without the aid of princes, and in which cynical princes were only too happy to co-opt the church to their political interests. Writers like Hooker can at least remind us that there was, *and is*, a compelling and consistent logic to the ideal of religious establishment, built on the conviction that "that nature hath need of grace, whereunto I hope we are not opposite, by holding that grace hath use of nature" (III.8.6; *FLE* 1:223).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For a compelling argument on the contradictions bedeviling the Rawlsian vision of religious pluralism and the inescapability of confessional conflict, see John Perry, *The Pretenses of Loyalty: Locke, Liberal Theory, and American Political Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> W. Speed Hill and Georges Edelen, eds., *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, vol. 1: *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity; Pref., Books I to IV* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977).



# Ussher and Early Modern Anglicanism in Ireland

HARRISON PERKINS

## Abstract

This essay argues that the Church of Ireland in the early modern period was a Reformed expression of Anglicanism by investigating a few events in the life and ministry of James Ussher, the Archbishop of Armagh. First, it looks at Ussher's contributions to the Church of Ireland's burgeoning Reformed identity by recounting his debate with a well-known Jesuit theologian, which substantiated his vigorously Protestant outlook, and his involvement in composing the Irish Articles of 1615. Second, it looks at how he later attempted to defend Reformed theology in the Church of Ireland from Arminianizing impositions from the Church of England. Finally, it presents an upcoming release of Ussher's never-before-published lectures in theology, which provide a fresh perspective on his Reformed identity.

## Keywords

*James Ussher, Reformed Conformity, Irish Articles, Church of Ireland, Irish Protestantism*

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## Introduction

Ireland does not typically leap to mind as the first country connected to Anglicanism, even in reference to the modern global Anglican movement. Its history is far more often linked to Roman Catholicism, if not outright mysticism, than any form of Protestantism. That perception, however, did not arise because of an entirely static religious history since the Church of Ireland has at times had not only a truly Protestant ethos but even a rigorously confessional Reformed theology. In the early modern period, the Reformation made its way to varying degrees into countries across Europe, even beginning to reach into Ireland. The Irish Reformation, in the ways explored below, was nonetheless unique not only in its process but in some ways also in its results. This essay provides a snapshot into Irish Anglicanism, namely the religion of the Church of Ireland, primarily in the seventeenth century, by looking at the life and work of one of its most enduring figures, arguing that this expression of Anglicanism was one of its most pointedly Reformed instantiations.

James Ussher (1581–1656), Archbishop of Armagh in the early seventeenth century, arguably remains the foremost advocate of Reformed theology in Ireland’s history, particularly within the Church of Ireland. Ussher is usually associated today with his work on dating creation, being linked frequently to causes in young-earth creationism. His reputation in his own time, however, spanned numerous disciplines and earned him renown as a theologian, preacher, historian, and antiquarian. Even if he may have had peers, the claim that there was no *bigger* name than Ussher’s in the seventeenth century nowhere near approaches an overstatement. An introduction to early modern Anglicanism in Ireland, therefore, rightly grapples primarily with Ussher’s contributions.

This essay then explores a few examples of Ussher’s work for the sake of Reformed theology in Ireland. Especially for his time, Ussher lived a long life, entailing a lengthy career. His ministry can be divided between an early phase in Ireland, taking place circa 1600–1640, and then a later phase in England, 1640–1656. To maintain focus on a global Anglican theme and so not emphasize Ussher at the expense of what he helps us understand concerning Anglicanism *in Ireland*, our attention concentrates on that earlier phase, when Ussher conducted his ministry not only for the Church of Ireland but also geographically within Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a concise overview of the English phase of Ussher’s ministry, see Harrison Perkins, “Archbishop James Ussher (1581–1656): His Life and Work, the Scholarship about Him, and His Significance for Confessional Presbyterians,” *Confessional Presbyterian* 16 (2020): 7–10.



**JAMES USSHER**

1581-1656

Before investigating those examples, a short introduction to Ussher's life will help contextualize the rest of our considerations about his work.<sup>2</sup> He was born in Dublin on January 4, 1581, joining a prominent family that had long served the English government in Ireland. His early schooling included instruction from James Fuller and James Hamilton, Scottish Presbyterians ministering in Ireland. In 1594, he enrolled at Trinity College Dublin, the newly founded university that also featured Fuller and Hamilton as fellows. At Trinity College, he became a fellow in 1598, received a BA in 1599, an MA in 1600, a BD in 1607, and his DD in 1612. During this period, he also served as catechist for the university, preacher at Saint Katherine's in Dublin, chancellor of Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, and afternoon lecturer at Christ's Church, Dublin.<sup>3</sup> In 1621, Ussher transitioned from more academic emphases into full ecclesiastical service, being appointed Bishop of Meath.<sup>4</sup> As one of his final acts before he died in 1625, James VI and I of Scotland and England (1566–1625), promoted Ussher to Archbishop of Armagh, the highest see in the Church of Ireland. Although Ussher certainly engaged in other notable work in the years following 1625, this brief sketch of his life and achievements provides an adequate framework for understanding the biographical context in which he worked during the phase of his ministry that took place in Ireland until 1640. Clearly, Ussher was poised as an accomplished academic and churchman, being well positioned to make important contributions to the development of the Church of Ireland's identity specifically as a Reformed communion.

The final introductory matter is simply to note that "Anglicanism" is an anachronistic term when applied to the early modern period, especially to the Church of Ireland. Historians are much fonder of referring to "the established churches of England and Ireland" because that designation does justice to the nature of their still solidifying identities, which were not yet cemented as such in their dependent relationship.<sup>5</sup> This point's relevance manifests most strikingly in the abiding claim that Anglicanism is a distinct form of religion "characterized as a distinctive path between Roman

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<sup>2</sup> The three most useful biographical studies about Ussher are Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History, and Politics in Early-Modern Ireland and England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); R. Buick Knox, *James Ussher: Archbishop of Armagh* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), 7–79; Crawford Gribben, *The Irish Puritans: James Ussher and the Reformation of the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Ford, *James Ussher*, 32–56.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 42–43.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Milton, "Reformation, Identity, and 'Anglicanism,' c. 1520–1662," in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, vol. 1: *Reformation and Identity, c. 1520–1662*, ed. Anthony Milton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–27.

Catholicism and Protestantism, avoiding the excesses of both.”<sup>6</sup> Apart from how that assessment may hold up from the perspective of our contemporary long look back at the Church of England’s history, a more narrow historical focus on the established church in Ireland during the seventeenth century shows how that claim certainly does not resonate with early modern Anglicanism in Ireland, which was avidly Protestant, with strong Reformed commitments, and at times vigorously anti-Catholic. In this respect, the study of Anglicanism is often very Anglocentric in the technical sense of measuring all factors by their relation to England. If Anglicanism is to be considered a properly global movement, however, due credit must be given to how not all its expressions fit the moderate mold of the middle way. The application of Anglicanism to the Church of Ireland in the seventeenth century is thus used here in the qualified but colloquial sense of referring to the established church which *has at some time* had direct and solidified communal and ecclesial-political ties to the Church of England, so following its governance.<sup>7</sup>

### I. *Reformed Efforts in the Church of Ireland*

Ireland’s religious history has always been and remains tumultuous.<sup>8</sup> This discord perhaps especially applies to Protestantism’s role in the country culturally and politically probably more so even than theologically, properly speaking. Those problems were fully active during the seventeenth century when Ussher labored to make his theological contributions to the Church of Ireland. Nonetheless, Ussher made several contributions early in his career that highlight his efforts to establish a fully Protestant and Reformed communion.

The backdrop to Ussher’s work is the wider context of the Irish Reformation, studies on which have essentially agreed that it failed. Although scholars debate about *when* it failed, specifically when its failure became inevitable, failure is nonetheless an agreed assessment.<sup>9</sup> Ian Hazlett

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>7</sup> The Church of Ireland no longer has those ties since the Irish Church Act of 1869 disestablished her.

<sup>8</sup> Crawford Gribben, *The Rise and Fall of Christian Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Concerning these debates about the Irish Reformation, see Brendan Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland Under Henry VIII* (1974; repr., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Nicholas Canny, “Why the Reformation Failed in Ireland: Une question mal posée,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30.4 (October 1979): 423–50; Karl S. Bottigheimer, “The Failure of the Reformation in Ireland: Une question bien posée,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36.2 (April 1985): 196–207; Nicholas Canny, “Protestants, Planters and

masterfully captured the Irish Reformation's failure alongside its long-standing implications for the country's internal relations between Protestant and Roman Catholic communities:

The incongruity of the Irish situation was that although the Reformation is conventionally perceived in terms of failure, an aborted event or a non-event, or a surviving runt kept alive by a life-support machine sponsored by the British "state," it has nonetheless made a practically irreversible, if debatable, impact on the country.<sup>10</sup>

The incongruity was of course that, whereas the Reformation in most European countries grew from the ground up with the Protestant populace appealing to the magistrate, the Irish Reformation hovered as a movement of the established church, with the establishment attempting to use official means to inculcate its doctrine among a majority Roman Catholic population who consistently associated Reformation teaching with the imposition of English rule.<sup>11</sup> Ussher found himself as one of the chief players on the Protestant side of this cultural and religious contest.

A key event in Ussher's life that set him on his trajectory toward that role was his debate in 1600 with Henry Fitzsimon (1566–1643). Fitzsimon was a Jesuit missionary—actually Ussher's cousin—who had taught philosophy at the Jesuit college in Douai but had returned to his native Ireland to further the Counter-Reformation cause there. He was well-known and highly respected as an apologist for Roman Catholicism and, during his time back in Ireland, sought opportunities to debate Protestants, though going some time with no takers.<sup>12</sup> When Fitzsimon found himself imprisoned in Dublin Castle, Ussher, although only nineteen years old, unordained, and still a student not yet with even an MA, took up the challenge to debate him, agreeing to a series of topics from the primary work in Jesuit apologetics by

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Apartheid in Early Modern Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies* 25.98 (1986): 105–15; Samantha A. Meigs, *The Reformations in Ireland: Tradition and Confessionalism, 1400–1690* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); Brendan Bradshaw, "The English Reformation and Identity Formation in Wales and Ireland," in *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 43–111; Nicholas Canny, Karl S. Bottigheimer, and Steven G. Ellis, "The Debate about the Irish Reformation: Some Reflections on Twentieth-Century Historiography," in *The Church of Ireland and Its Past: History, Interpretation and Identity*, ed. Mark Empey, Alan Ford, and Miriam Moffitt (Dublin: Four Courts, 2017), 237–65.

<sup>10</sup> W. Ian P. Hazlett, *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland: An Introduction* (Trowbridge, UK: T&T Clark International, 2003), 85.

<sup>11</sup> Ford, *James Ussher*, 22–30.

<sup>12</sup> Oliver P. Rafferty, "Henry Fitzsimon, the Irish Jesuits and Catholic Identity in the Early Modern Period," in *Irish Catholic Identities*, ed. Oliver P. Rafferty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 110–21.



Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621).<sup>13</sup> Their first debate dealt with the topic of whether the pope is the antichrist.<sup>14</sup> Although Fitzsimon soon withdrew from the debates, thinking himself above being set against such a young adversary, the event reveals Ussher as a burgeoning theologian who was avidly Protestant and even anti-Romanist within the Church of Ireland.<sup>15</sup>

The debate with Fitzsimon likely set Ussher on the trajectory, at least intellectually speaking, for his eventual role as the Professor of Theological Controversies at Trinity College. Today, this role would be akin to teaching systematic theology, but in seventeenth-century Ireland, it meant focusing on one particular task: refuting Robert Bellarmine, the Jesuit theologian who was Rome's foremost apologist against Protestantism. Arguably, Ussher's debates with Fitzsimon truly culminated in 1624 when he published his *Answer... to a Jesuit in Ireland*, a pointedly theological work aimed at refuting Roman Catholic positions on eleven topics where Protestants disputed them, which Ussher argued from biblical, theological, and historical grounds.<sup>16</sup> Even later in life, Ussher was still devoted to dismantling the specifically Jesuit version of Roman doctrine, lecturing in Oxford in 1643–44: "Reade no Jesuites at all, for they are nothing but ostentacion and never understood the Scriptures."<sup>17</sup> Ussher's encounter with Fitzsimon was then formative in establishing his lifelong concern to polemicize against Rome to further the Protestant cause.

Another event that shows how the Church of Ireland in the seventeenth century was avowedly Reformed, Ussher again playing a central role, is the production of the Irish Articles of 1615. The early modern period, at least into the eighteenth century, was the era of confessionalization.<sup>18</sup> The Church of England ratified its Thirty-Nine Articles in 1563, but the Church of Ireland lacked a confessional statement. Despite the link between the two established churches, rather than adopting England's confession as its own, the Church of Ireland resolved to compose its own, which would be a more resolutely and thoroughly Reformed statement of faith.

Without suggesting that the Thirty-Nine Articles were not Reformed, or even imprecisely so, the Irish Articles were formulated to exclude ambiguity

<sup>13</sup> Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei*, 3 vols. (Ingolstadt, 1586–90).

<sup>14</sup> Oxford Bodleian Library MS Barlow 13, fol. 80r–83r.

<sup>15</sup> Ford, *James Ussher*, 11–14.

<sup>16</sup> James Ussher, *An Answer to a Challenge Made by a Jesuite in Ireland* (Dublin, 1624).

<sup>17</sup> Queens College, Oxford MS 217, fol. 42v; these lectures are introduced and transcribed in full in Harrison Perkins, "Archbishop Ussher's Reading List," *Confessional Presbyterian* 16 (2020): 21–32, quote on 32.

<sup>18</sup> Concerning that decline of confessionalism, see J. V. Fesko, *The Need for Creeds Today: Confessional Faith in a Faithless Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 43–75.

that had allowed less-than-Reformed theologians in the Church of England still to find themselves within the English confession. Several theological controversies occurred in England surrounding the doctrine of predestination, with some English theologians taking views that did not cohere with the wider Reformed consensus about God's sovereignty in salvation.<sup>19</sup> Challenges to predestinarianism eventually resulted in the Lambeth Articles of 1595, which uncompromisingly stated God's election and reprobation.<sup>20</sup> Although the Lambeth Articles never received confessionally recognized status in England, the Irish Articles furthered their "Calvinist consensus" by including statements from the Thirty-Nine Articles with each of the Lambeth Articles as well as affirmations of other Reformed doctrines that had developed since those previous documents were composed.<sup>21</sup> The Irish Articles then furthered a specifically Reformed trajectory within the established church in Ireland.

The Church of Ireland did formally produce the Irish Articles. The Irish convocation comprised two houses, one for bishops and one for lower clergy, which met 1613–15 to mirror Parliament, deciding to produce their own statement of faith.<sup>22</sup> Whatever role Ussher played in composing the Irish Articles, a topic addressed in this essay's final subsection, the Church of Ireland adopted them as its confession ratified by the whole convocation.<sup>23</sup> The accepted confession was published in 1615.<sup>24</sup>

The Irish Articles' contribution as a specifically Reformed confession shows itself in several of its distinct contributions to the confessional tradition. Although all its articles on God's decree are predestinarian, two stand out as staunchly double predestinarian, taking a stand that excluded the views that had caused controversy in England by dissenting from the Reformed consensus and that in some ways preempted the Remonstrant

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<sup>19</sup> Jay T. Collier, *Debating Perseverance: The Augustinian Heritage in Post-Reformation England*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 20–58. These issues continued in the Church of England after 1615 as well; Stephen Hampton, *Grace and Conformity: The Reformed Conformist Tradition and the Early Stuart Church of England*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 28–67.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Marshall, "Settlement Patterns: The Church of England, 1553–1603," in *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. Milton, 1:56–61.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Milton, "Unsettled Reformations, 1603–1662," in *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. Milton, 1:65–68.

<sup>22</sup> Ford, *James Ussher*, 86.

<sup>23</sup> William Prynne, *The Church of Englands Old Antithesis to New Arminianisme* (London, 1629), 13, 119.

<sup>24</sup> *Articles of Religion Agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the rest of the Cleargie of Ireland, in the Convocation Holden at Dublin in the yeare of our Lord God 1615* (Dublin: John Franckton, 1615).



positions addressed at the Synod of Dort. The Church of Ireland plainly confessed double predestinarianism in article 12: “By the same eternall counsell God hath predestinated some vnto life, and reprobated some vnto death of both which there is a certaine number, knowen only to God, which can neither be increased nor diminished.”<sup>25</sup> Further, in article 14, they affirmed God’s full freedom and sovereignty in this predestining work, excluding any human cause from it:

The cause mouing God to predestinate vnto life, is not the foreseeing of faith, or perseverance, or good workes, or of anything which is in the person predestinated, but only the good pleasure of God himself. For all things being ordained for the manifestation of his glory, and his glory being to appeare both in the workes of his Mercy and of his Iustice it seemed good to his heauenly wisdom to choose out a certaine number towards whome he would extend his vnderdeserued mercy, leauing the rest to be spectacles of his justice.<sup>26</sup>

This statement seems proleptic of the Canons of Dort 1.7, which also ascribes election to God’s good pleasure, excluding foreseen faith and attributes perseverance to God’s work rather than as a cause of election.<sup>27</sup>

The Irish Articles’ Reformed pedigree does not end with its predestinarianism but extends to its furthering of developing Reformed doctrines. For example, Reformed theologians had been increasingly incorporating the doctrine of God’s covenant with Adam, which was based on the law as the condition for inheriting everlasting life, into their theological systems but had not yet incorporated it formally into any Protestant confession.<sup>28</sup> Zacharius Ursinus (1534–1583) demonstrates this point, although the Heidelberg Catechism did not *explicitly* contain this doctrine that would eventually be most commonly known as the covenant of works, by decisively linking the law at creation to a covenant based upon it:

The law contains the natural covenant, which God began with men in creation, that is, it is known by men by nature and requires from us perfect obedience toward God, and promises everlasting life to those who keep it but threatens everlasting death to those who do not keep it.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Articles*, sig. B1v.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), 3:562.

<sup>28</sup> J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Works: The Origins, Development, and Reception of the Doctrine*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 11–72; Harrison Perkins, “Reconsidering the Development of the Covenant of Works: A Study in Doctrinal Trajectory,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 53.2 (2018): 289–317.

<sup>29</sup> Zacharius Ursinus, *Catechesis, Summa Theologiae*, in *Opera Theologica* (Heidelberg, 1612), 1:14 (*Lex continet foedus naturale, in creatione a Deo cum hominibus initum, hoc est, natura hominibus*

In this respect, Irish Article 21 first brought this doctrine of God's covenant with Adam into the confessional tradition:

Man being at the beginning created according to the image of God (which consisted especially in the Wisdom of his minde, & the true Holynesse of his free will) had the covenant of lawe ingrained in his heart: whereby God did promise vnto him euerlasting life, vpon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience vnto his Commaundement, according to that measure of strength wherewith hee was endued in his creation, and threatened death vnto him if he did not performe the same.<sup>30</sup>

The Irish Articles were then firmly embedded in the developing tradition of specifically Reformed theology.

The Irish Articles also contain several points of specifically Reformed piety, which was not even overtly and universally shared in the Church of England. Article 53 affirms that the second commandment forbids any making of images of the Godhead: "All manner of expressing God the Father, the Sonne, and the Holy Ghost, in an outward forme, is vtterly vnlawfull. As also all other images deuised or made by man to the vse of Religion."<sup>31</sup> Article 56 is overtly Sabbatarian:

The first day of the weeke, which is the *Lords day*, is wholly to be dedicated unto seruice of God: and therefore we are bound therein to rest from our common and dayly buisinesse; and to bestowe that leasure upon holy exercises, both publike and priuate.<sup>32</sup>

Article 80, following Ussher's earlier debate with Fitzsimon, affirmed that the pope is the antichrist:

The Bishop of Rome is so farre from being the Supream head of the universall Church of Christ, that his workes and doctrine doe plainly discover him to be *that man of sinne*, foretold in the holy Scriptures, *whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and abolish with the brightnesse of his coming*.<sup>33</sup>

In traditional, developing, and ethical ways, the Irish Articles was then a statedly Reformed confession.

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*nota est, & requirit a nobis perfectam obedientiam erga Deum, & praestantibus eam, promittit vitam aeternam, non praestantibus minatur aeternas poenas).*

<sup>30</sup> *Articles*, sig. B2v.

<sup>31</sup> *Articles*, sig. C4r.

<sup>32</sup> *Articles*, sig. C4v.

<sup>33</sup> *Articles*, sig. D4r (italics original).

The Irish Articles' significance for understanding Anglican identity deserves emphasis. This confession, far from being a highly parochial document for an Irish context, was well respected and nearly obtained confessional status in the Church of England in 1629, when Charles I closed Parliament before it could ratify the Articles.<sup>34</sup> Scholars have long documented the Westminster Assembly's use of the Irish Articles in shaping their confession of faith.<sup>35</sup> At least in the seventeenth century then, *Irish* "Anglicanism" leaned heavily Reformed, earning appreciation from many of their English counterparts as well. That reputation suggests that the *via media* view of Anglicanism has not accounted for the staunchly Reformed and anti-Catholic tone of the established church in Ireland during Ussher's tenure.

Ussher's role in composing the Irish Articles has not been much debated historically, although Alan Ford has sought to challenge to some degree his role in this regard. In earlier work, Ford stridently dismissed Ussher as the Articles' author, but recently, he has presented him as a major but not exclusive contributor.<sup>36</sup> Ford's downplaying of Ussher's role in the Articles, however, likely relates to an effort to minimize Ussher's specifically Reformed identity, since Ford seems to assume that Anglicanism cannot truly include thoroughly Reformed doctrine. Criticizing my work on Ussher's covenant theology, Ford wrote, "Perkins has a tendency, first, to claim too much originality for Ussher's views, and, second, to seek to recruit him as a fully paid-up member of the Presbyterian church."<sup>37</sup> The critique is odd on the first point since I argued that Ussher's was not original but ecumenical—hence "catholicity" in my book's title—writing, "There was, therefore, at least in the roots of the idea, an underlying catholicity to Ussher's construction of

<sup>34</sup> John McCafferty, "Ireland and Scotland, 1534–1663," in *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. Milton, 1:251; Ford, *James Ussher*, 140.

<sup>35</sup> Richard A. Muller, "'Inspired by God—Pure in All Ages': The Doctrine of Scripture in the Westminster Confession," in Richard A. Muller and Roland S. Ward, *Scripture and Worship: Biblical Interpretation and the Directory for Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 40–42; J. V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insight* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 60; Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884), 372–85; Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 62–83; Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959; repr., Edmonton, AB: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), 59; Harrison Perkins, "The Westminster Assembly's Probable Appropriation of James Ussher," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 37.1 (Spring 2019): 51–57.

<sup>36</sup> Alan Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590–1641* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), 156–78; Ford, *James Ussher*, 85–103.

<sup>37</sup> Alan Ford, review of *Catholicity and the Covenant of Works: James Ussher and the Reformed Tradition*, by Harrison Perkins, *Irish Historical Studies* 45.167 (May 2021): 132.

the covenant of works, which is a major point that is highlighted throughout this study and is one of its fundamental claims.”<sup>38</sup> Ford’s critique’s second aspect is also odd, since I spent a great deal of time, following Stephen Hampton’s scholarship, arguing that Ussher demonstrates the need for an expanded use of the Reformed Conformist category within research into the Anglican tradition, highlighting Ussher’s commitment to the established church’s practices to which Presbyterians strongly objected.<sup>39</sup> Ford’s critique then seems to rest not so much on observations that I too closely linked Ussher with Presbyterianism as on an assumption that major theologians in the established church tradition could not be as stridently Reformed as the evidence shows Ussher was.<sup>40</sup> Ussher’s role in composing the Irish Articles underscores not only his own Reformed commitments but the Reformed credentials of one part of the Anglican communion in the early modern period.

## II. *Controversial Laudianism and Canon Law*

Whereas early in the seventeenth century, the Church of Ireland faced obstacles from within its own nation concerning Roman Catholicism’s threat to the Protestant establishment, which is addressed at least in part by Ussher’s debate against Fitzsimon and the production of a clearly Reformed confession of faith, as the century progressed, it faced the external challenge of the Church of England hierarchy attempting to impose at least a dilution of Reformed theology if not an Arminianizing trend. This problem was clearest in Ussher’s confrontation with Laudianism.

Charles I’s reign contained more than its fair share of dispute and warfare. In contrast to his father, James I, he managed to alienate the religious and political establishments, imposing his position more than navigating the issues.<sup>41</sup> His approach to rule, whatever way historians interpret the religious and political causes, certainly prompted the English civil war. Within Charles’s reign, his appointment of William Laud (1573–1645) as the Archbishop of Canterbury stands out as a prominent event in his contributions to religious controversies.

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<sup>38</sup> Harrison Perkins, *Catholicity and the Covenant of Works: James Ussher and the Reformed Tradition*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 6.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Perkins, *Catholicity and the Covenant of Works*, 6–10.

<sup>40</sup> Ford’s review is uncalibrated on a few points, such as spending more space analyzing social media than my actual book and in claiming that Richard Snoddy is correct and I am not when Snoddy and I are in agreement.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

Laud's regime as archbishop, beginning in 1633, was seen as a victory for militant Arminianism and the efforts to suppress predestinarianism in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Laud and Charles set a strident agenda for promoting royal supremacy, including targeting predestinarian preaching, which they worried interfered with that agenda. The increasing pattern within established religion was to prioritize the church's sacramental ministry *at the expense of its preaching ministry*, setting a pressurized context of conflict within the establishment where those of Reformed conviction, especially concerning the preached word, were marginalized as they felt the rising emphasis on ceremonialism displaced their theology of salvation by grace alone.<sup>42</sup> Although ever a moderate, Ussher certainly made his contribution to this controversy.

Ussher's role in protecting Reformed developments has a dimension that is both theological and ecclesiastical. Theologically, Ussher worked to protect and foster the predestinarian cause within the established church mainly through his publications, especially his treatment of the ninth-century monk Gottschalk in his *Gottschalk and the Predestination Controversy*.<sup>43</sup> In this book, as well as a few other works, he argued that predestination is part of Christianity's ecumenical heritage so should not be suppressed as if it were a controversial topic, a clear implication from the times it was wrongly suppressed in the past. As I have already presented Ussher's theological contribution elsewhere, this essay focuses now on ecclesiastical developments in the Church of Ireland that show maneuvers to protect its Reformed commitments.<sup>44</sup>

Ussher's ecclesiastical efforts to maintain Reformed doctrine during the Laudian period focused on the development of Irish canon law. In the early seventeenth century, the Church of Ireland had kept a lax practice of enforcing uniformity among the clergy, primarily to maintain ministers who could help promote the Protestant cause among a predominantly Roman Catholic population. Whereas the adoption of new canon law in England in 1604 resulted in the debates concerning conformity and non-conformity that, as Gerald Bray argued, "continued to be the motivating force behind most of the controversies that disturbed the English Church

<sup>42</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of Arminianism, c. 1590–1640*, Oxford Historical Monographs (1987; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 181–245; David R. Como, "Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud's London," *The Historical Journal* 46.2 (2003): 263–94; Peter Lake, "'Puritans' and 'Anglicans' in the History of the Post-Reformation English Church," in *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. Milton, 1:352–79.

<sup>43</sup> James Ussher, *Gotteschalci et Predestinatianae Controversiae* (Dublin, 1631).

<sup>44</sup> Perkins, *Catholicity and the Covenant of Works*, 126–65.

for the next century and a half,” Ireland neither had canon law nor felt entirely under the jurisdiction of England’s.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the nature of England’s authority in Ireland was hotly contested: historians still debate whether Ireland was an independent kingdom under the English monarch’s reign or more akin to a colony connected to the realm of England. Much of this tension remained indifferent for Ussher’s purposes in the early 1600s but became increasingly problematic for him during Laud’s tenure as archbishop. In 1634, Thomas Wentworth (1593–1641) arrived in Ireland as the first Earl of Strafford, and John Bramhall (1594–1663) as the Bishop of Derry, both being sent to help further Ireland’s political and ecclesiastical uniformity with England. Although he thought Ussher was amiable to his policies and efforts, Wentworth increasingly sidelined Ussher’s authority, alienating him in the process. This misstep became obvious and relevant when Laud and Wentworth attempted to replace the Irish Articles with England’s Thirty-Nine Articles and install England’s canon law as authoritative for the Church of Ireland at the 1634 convocation. Ford has well recounted the intricacies of the background to the Church of Ireland’s production of her own canon law, highlighting the tensions between Ussher and Laud about the Church of Ireland’s independence from the Church of England.<sup>46</sup>

The theological issues are clearer from the content of Ireland’s canon law. Even its opening statement notes the Church of Ireland’s agency in the matter, noting the canons are for the “manifestation of *our* agreement with the Church of England,” occurring as “We do receive and approve” the Thirty-Nine Articles.<sup>47</sup> Ireland’s practice was certainly Anglican, prescribing keeping Sunday as the Lord’s Day as well as any other holy day determined by the church’s orders, which directly followed English canon law.<sup>48</sup> All the same, Ireland omitted several canons from English law that condemned those who impugned the Thirty-Nine Articles, English ceremonies, and other English forms, as well as England’s mandates about litanies and services in the colleges.<sup>49</sup> The leeway for criticism of England’s practices, the unstated freedom not to be bound to them, is marked.

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<sup>45</sup> Gerald Bray, “Canon Law and the Church of England,” in *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. Milton, 1:169.

<sup>46</sup> Ford, *James Ussher*, 175–207.

<sup>47</sup> [Church of Ireland], *Constitutions, and Canons Ecclesiastical* (Dublin, 1635), canon I (emphasis added).

<sup>48</sup> [Ireland], *Canons Ecclesiastical*, canon VI; [Church of England], *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* (London, 1604), canon XIII.

<sup>49</sup> [England], *Canons Ecclesiastical*, canons IV–VIII, XV–XVII; Bray, “Canon Law and the Church of England,” 181–82.

The tendency to follow England's canons but omit or even supplement them according to Ireland's, at least Ussher's, interest to subvert Laudian emphases in favor of traditionally Reformed concerns is a consistent feature of Ireland's seventeenth-century canon law. Ireland added the requirements, not included in English law, that ministers spend time every Sunday catechizing and instructing in faith doctrines.<sup>50</sup> Ussher was likely closely connected to the development of these canons. He promoted and performed the practice personally, as he instructed Oxford divinity students in his 1643–44 lectures: "Preach the body of Divinity (the 52 heads) over once a yeare, or as soon as you can."<sup>51</sup> His and the Church of Ireland's care for doctrinal instruction was a distinct mark of their theological emphases and their concern to further their more thoroughly Reformed confessional outlook.

On many matters of infrastructure and ministerial examination, Ireland followed if not simply repeated England's canons. Nonetheless, they omitted the canon requiring ministers to subscribe to three articles affirming the king's supremacy in temporal and ecclesiastical affairs, that the Book of Common Prayer contains nothing contrary to God's word, and that England's Thirty-Nine Articles are agreeable to God's word.<sup>52</sup> The second article was particularly notable since Ussher always argued for royal supremacy and had included the Thirty-Nine Articles—supplemented with more specific statements of Reformed doctrines—in the Irish Articles.<sup>53</sup> Although Ussher used the Book of Common Prayer, omission of this article allowed other ministers in Ireland not to state their full allegiance to it. Perhaps most notably, Ireland omitted England's lengthy canon defending the use of the sign of the cross at baptism, which had always been a debated issue for Reformed-minded clergy, including Ussher.<sup>54</sup>

The development of canon law in Ireland highlights its Anglican and Reformed identity, suggesting those traits were never in principled conflict. The establishment of ecclesiastical canons in Ireland in many ways followed England's but supplemented or departed from them on issues where some clergy felt Reformed commitments or Ireland's ecclesiastical independence

<sup>50</sup> [Ireland], *Canons Ecclesiastical*, canons XI–XII.

<sup>51</sup> Queen's College, Oxford MS 217, fol. 41v; Perkins, "Ussher's Reading List," 25.

<sup>52</sup> [England], *Canons Ecclesiastical*, canon XXXVI.

<sup>53</sup> Bray, "Canon Law and the Church of England," 177–78; on Ussher's royalism, see Ian W. S. Campbell, "Calvinist Absolutism: Archbishop James Ussher and Royal Power," *Journal of British Studies* 53 (July 2014): 588–610.

<sup>54</sup> [England], *Canons Ecclesiastical*, canon XXX; e.g., *The Correspondence of James Ussher, 1600–56*, ed. Elizabethanne Boran (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2015), 1:250 (letter to John Selden dated April 16, 1622).



was undermined. As with the Irish Articles, which largely followed the Thirty-Nine Articles but with a markedly more Reformed voice on doctrinal controversies and developments, Ireland's canon law too maintained a statement of Anglican values and institutional standards while also making room for theology and practice less welcomed and increasingly excluded under Laud's oversight. In the seventeenth century, the Church of Ireland was then intentionally, not accidentally, committed to doctrine and conformity, making it institutionally very Anglican and Reformed.

### III. *New Insights on Ussher's Reformed Contributions*

We have focused on Ussher's ministry in Ireland, in which he worked to further Reformed theology within his own established Church of Ireland. Given the limitation of this article, we have summarized the issues, hinting at primary sources rather than exploring them in depth. One of the more provocative aspects is certainly our confidence in Ussher's relationship to the Irish Articles. This section, however, highlights a forthcoming volume that substantiates Ussher's thoroughly Reformed commitments, drawing connections to every period of his career.

Scholars who research Ussher have known for some time that any serious study about him must engage with his manuscript sources. He left mountains of personal papers that are now housed in Trinity College Dublin, the Bodleian Library, and Cambridge University Library. The forthcoming volume, *On the Nature and Kingdom of God*, contains a new critical edition with translation from the Latin of three documents, two of which have never before been published.<sup>55</sup>

This edition of Ussher's manuscripts features his most theologically oriented papers. It includes from early in his career the handwritten draft of his well-known catechetical work, *The Principles of the Christian Religion*. Although it was originally published in 1645 without his permission, Ussher revised this work in 1653, leaving us with one of his final theological statements.<sup>56</sup> This edition collates all the printed editions, notes how they differ

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<sup>55</sup> Harrison Perkins, ed., *On the Nature and Kingdom of God: James Ussher's Theological Manuscripts* (Philadelphia: Westminster Seminary Press, forthcoming).

<sup>56</sup> James Ussher, *The Principles of Christian Religion: Sumarily Set downe according to the word of God: Together with A Brief Epitomie of the Bodie of Divinity* (London, 1645); *The Principles of the Christian Religion: Summarily sett downe according to the Word of God: Together with a Briefe Epitomie of the Body of Divinitie* (London, 1647); *The Principles of the Christian Religion: Summarily sett downe according to the Word of God: Together, with a Briefe Epitomie of the Body of Divinity* (London, 1650); *The Principles of Christian Religion with a Brief Method the Doctrine thereof. Now Fully Corrected and much enlarged by the Author* (London, 1653).



from the original draft, and comments on any substantive changes in Ussher's views. This volume includes another document dating from early in his career, namely the rough draft of the Irish Articles in Ussher's handwriting, which—especially combined with this document's extensive dependence upon Ussher's other works—proves the traditional position that he was the confession's primary author. Whereas my book is the first and only study to cite this document, the upcoming publication provides its first translation with an extensive introduction and a commentary defending its origins and documenting its demonstrable connections both to Ussher's confirmed works and the published Irish Articles. Finally, this volume also includes the first translation of Ussher's theological lectures, which he delivered in Oxford during 1643–1644. These lectures reflect nearly identical content to his other theological writings from early in his career, demonstrating his lasting commitments to the same Reformed theology contained in his Irish Articles.

## Conclusion

This essay argues that Ussher's career in the Church of Ireland marks a period in which Irish Anglicanism was committedly Reformed. Global Anglicanism may have long had a nebulous and changing theological and ecclesiastical face. Still, Ussher's efforts in Ireland show that Reformed theology is *at least* one part of Anglicanism's heritage. The upcoming release of newly found and translated manuscript sources not only confirms his Reformed commitments for Ireland but also shows how he disseminated them in the university context in England, suggesting that English clergymen were also open to a thoroughly Reformed version of divinity. The implications for global Anglicanism today are beyond this essay's scope but nonetheless important as we consider Anglicanism's roots, its original theological commitments, and the turns it has taken over the centuries. Today, as Anglicanism is split among progressives, Anglo-Catholics, and often antidoctrinal, exegesis-only Low Church Evangelicals, arguably one of its steadier guides should be Ussher.



# Post-Restoration Reformed Anglicans

LEE GATISS

## Abstract

The ejection of many of the Puritans from the Church of England in 1662 was not the end of the story for Puritanism, for Reformed theology, or for the gospel in the established church. This article looks at a common tendentious reading of church history and by examining the lives and teachings of three significant Anglicans in the later Stuart period—Edward Reynolds, William Gurnall, and Thomas Horton—shows that it results in a skewed perception of the evidence, leading to an underappreciation of the ministries of such people and a false understanding of the ecclesiastical challenges of those times.

## Keywords

*Restoration, Reformed theology, Calvinism, Arminianism, Anglicanism, predestination, perseverance, original sin, atonement*

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**W**hen Charles II came to the throne and restored the British monarchy in 1660, it ushered in a period of dramatic religious change. Some historians speak of the post-Restoration eclipse or the “overthrow of Calvinism.”<sup>1</sup> J. I. Packer says that after the Restoration,

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 13–36.

“Calvinism had the status only of an oddity maintained by nonconformists.”<sup>2</sup> It is true that the great ejection of 1662 was a tragedy,<sup>3</sup> yet scholars are increasingly coming to see the idea that it was the death of Reformed divinity in the national church as a misrepresentation. As Stephen Hampton has convincingly demonstrated, after the great ejection in 1662 the Reformed may not have been in the majority, but they remained nonetheless an extremely significant group within the Church of England.<sup>4</sup> That church had, after all, decided to continue holding to the clearly Protestant and Reformed statement of faith in the Thirty-Nine Articles.<sup>5</sup> Conscious of standing within a much wider European Reformed tradition, those who held to Reformed distinctives under and after Charles II were also keen to demonstrate that they were the heirs of a respectable homegrown branch of that movement. They kept the flame of Reformed theology burning even before the Evangelical Revivals of the eighteenth century gave that theological tradition a significant boost.

Many post-Restoration Reformed Anglicans epitomized what Hampton calls “Reformed divinity, but with Restoration curlicues.”<sup>6</sup> That is, some of them were content to hold to Reformed theology without rejecting all the ornamental twists associated with aspects of the neo-Laudian agenda. They sometimes had a devotion to episcopacy as if it were absolutely necessary for the church (of its *esse* not merely its *bene esse*); they wanted to actively suppress nonconformity, and they were rather fond of High Church stage props like robes, candles, elaborate church architecture, and furnishings.<sup>7</sup> This makes some of the Reformed Anglicanism of this period a peculiar and eccentric phenomenon at times within the wider intellectual movement but still recognizably Reformed in terms of its soteriology and other major doctrinal commitments. However, not every Reformed Anglican was like this; some of them were also thoroughgoing Evangelicals before that name became associated with the revivals of the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> James I. Packer, “Arminianisms,” in *Honouring the People of God: Collected Shorter Works of J. I. Packer* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 4:289.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Gatiss, *The Tragedy of 1662: The Ejection and Persecution of the Puritans* (London: Latimer Trust, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 269.

<sup>5</sup> On how even nonconformists like Owen were happy to stand by the doctrine of the Articles, see Lee Gatiss, “Owen and the Church of England,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of John Owen*, ed. John W. Tweeddale and Crawford Gribben (Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 2022), 170–96.

<sup>6</sup> Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> See Nicholas Tyacke, “Arminianism and the Theology of the Restoration Church,” in *Aspects of English Protestantism, c. 1530–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 334, and Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 24.

Too often when writing about the Evangelical Revival, historians have ignored the vibrancy of the conforming Reformed tradition as it continued to exist in the latter half of the seventeenth century. J. C. Ryle (1816–1900), for instance, informed his readers that before the Evangelical Revival, everything in the Church of England was natural theology and cold moral essays in the pulpit, and sermons were “utterly devoid of anything likely to awaken, convert, or save souls,” with nothing of the weighty Reformation doctrines for which our martyred Reformers had gone to the stake.<sup>8</sup> George Balleine (1873–1966), in his enduringly influential yet tendentious history of the Evangelical party in the church, calls this “the Glacial Epoch in our Church History ... only the cautious and the colourless remained ... [with] a dreary, drab-coloured faith, devoid of power or beauty.”<sup>9</sup> But is this characterization of the late Stuart and early Georgian church really fair? Is it correct to say, as David Bebbington does, that “the doctrine of justification by faith had well-nigh disappeared” and that there is scant evidence of a link between the Reformed tradition of the seventeenth century and the Evangelicals of the eighteenth?<sup>10</sup>

Hampton’s revisionist account of this period has led to a reassessment. He identifies at least twelve bishops, six deans, and several senior divinity professors with decidedly Reformed credentials in this period, not to mention several of the greatest scientific minds, one of the most celebrated preachers, two eminent patristic scholars, and some influential ecclesiastical courtiers.<sup>11</sup> More recently, Jake Griesel claims that even Hampton has significantly *underestimated* “the strength and numbers of conforming Reformed divines between the Restoration and the evangelical revivals (1660–c. 1730).”<sup>12</sup> Regarding the Reformed accounts of election and justification at this time, no less a Calvinist than John Owen (1616–1683) could claim in 1674 that it was “maintained by the most learned of the dignified clergy at this day.”<sup>13</sup> Owen thought that most leading Anglicans

<sup>8</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* (1885; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), 14.

<sup>9</sup> George R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911), 10–11. On how Balleine’s own personal theological priorities shaped his *History* and his divergent trajectory away from his Evangelical roots; see Andrew Atherstone, “George Reginald Balleine: Historian of Anglican Evangelicalism,” *Journal of Anglican Studies* 20.1 (October 2013): 1–30.

<sup>10</sup> David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 36.

<sup>11</sup> Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Jake Griesel, “John Edwards of Cambridge (1637–1716): A Reassessment of His Position within the Later Stuart Church of England” (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 2019), iii.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Goold, ed., *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1851), 2:304.

were sound on justification by faith alone, and he used this fact to defend himself and others from those who attacked dissenters from the Act of Uniformity (1662). The people Owen was speaking about, and those like them in the national church, worked hard to fortify a Reformed reading of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer, especially on justification, the Trinity, and predestination; and in Convocation (their national gathering) they fiercely resisted the latitudinarian liberalism of bishops like Gilbert Burnet, who sought to legitimize Arminianism with studiously ambiguous readings of the Articles.<sup>14</sup>

After the ejection of most of the Puritans from the Church of England in 1662, various theological problems arose within the dissenting community. They themselves were divided into various competing groups. A stress on “the Bible alone” to the exclusion and denigration of systematic and historical theology led to a great many Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist churches being fatally infected with Socinianism or Unitarianism in the century after the great ejection. As Michael Watts says in his classic study of the Dissenters in this period, “their neo-Arminianism predisposed them to look more favourably than their Calvinist brethren on liberal trends in theology.”<sup>15</sup> This tendency was due in no small part to greatly weakened ministerial subscription to articles of faith, which was sometimes resolutely nonexistent. Many dissenting nonconformist ministers and churches considered confessions of faith, even basic ones committing them to orthodox Trinitarianism, to be anathema. They were too closely associated with those persecuting Anglicans who imposed their Articles and Prayer Book on the established church and did not fit their *nuda Scriptura* hermeneutic.<sup>16</sup>

A drift toward Arianism or Socinianism was also evident within the Church of England in this period to some extent. However, because subscription to the standards or formularies of the faith was legally compulsory for clergy, the Church of England tended to resist Unitarianism more easily. Trinitarian faith was front and center in Article 1 of the Thirty-Nine Articles, for example, was preached in the *Homilies* or official sermons of the Church, and was baked into every service in the Book of Common Prayer. As Catherine LaCugna has rightly affirmed, “The liturgy far more than theology kept alive in Christian consciousness the trinitarian structure of Christian faith.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 28–31.

<sup>15</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 376.

<sup>16</sup> *Nuda Scriptura* or *solo Scriptura*, as opposed to the magisterial Reformers’ view of *sola Scriptura*, embraces a radical individualism that rejects the use of creeds, confessions, and tradition, preferring private judgment derived from personal Bible study alone.

<sup>17</sup> Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 210. Herbert John

The Church of England may have excluded many Puritans and been taken over by a more Arminianizing sort of crowd who held some of the levers of power. But it was not completely lost, and certainly at the official level it retained its Reformed soteriology as well as Trinitarianism. As Philip Dixon says, “The sheer rhythm of the Liturgy familiarized churchgoers with belief in the Trinity,”<sup>18</sup> and the same must surely be said of the constant repetition of, to take another example, Reformed ideas in the Collects (or brief weekly prayers) too,<sup>19</sup> not to mention the doctrine inculcated by the Prayer Book’s Communion service.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, many within the bounds of the national church retained a great sympathy for the Reformed theology of its Reformation confession and liturgy, which would later prove to be a force for the church’s renewal and revival. But that is what it was—a revival—not the imposition of an outside influence on the Church but the reinvigoration of a tradition that was very much alive.

To illustrate this thesis, we will look in this article at three exemplars of post-Restoration Reformed Anglicanism. We will meet Edward Reynolds, a Westminster Divine who was elevated to the episcopacy in the Restoration Church. We will encounter William Gurnall, a Puritan parish minister who was not ejected in 1662. And we will look at the career of Thomas Horton, a leading Puritan divine ejected in 1662 who later conformed and led the largest Reformed Anglican Church in the City of London. Finally, we will briefly touch on the polemical work of John Edwards, a man with an impeccable Puritan heritage, who joined the Restoration Church of England and tenaciously defended and promoted its Reformed credentials, providing leading Evangelicals of later generations, such as George Whitefield and Augustus Toplady, with the intellectual and theological arguments they needed to sustain their membership in the established church as thoroughgoing Calvinists. My hope is that by refamiliarizing ourselves with the ministries of such people, we will improve our understanding of the church in this period and increase our appreciation for those who publicly held the Reformed constitutional line during a difficult period when they were in many ways out of favor.

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MacLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 334.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 215–16.

<sup>19</sup> James A. Devereux, “Reformed Doctrine in the Collects of the First Book of Common Prayer,” *Harvard Theological Review* 58.1 (1965): 49–68.

<sup>20</sup> Lee Gatiss, *Light after Darkness: How the Protestant Reformers Regained, Retold, and Relied on the Gospel of Grace* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2019), 97–131.

## I. *The Reconciling Bishop: Reynolds*

Edward Reynolds (1599–1676) was born in Southampton, on the south coast of England, and educated at Merton College, Oxford, where he was noted for his skill in Greek. In 1622 he was appointed preacher at Lincoln's Inn before becoming a minister in Northamptonshire. His moderation was noted, particularly in *A Sermon Touching the Peace and Edification of the Church*, in which he made a distinction between fundamental doctrines and things indifferent, urging that in cases of heresy, idolatry, and tyranny we must of course contend for the faith (Jude 3), but that in other matters people should “be willing to silence and smother our private judgements, to relinquish our particular liberties and interests, to question and mistrust ... our singular conceits and fancies, than to be in any such thing stiffe and peremptory against the quiet of Gods Church.”<sup>21</sup>

He noted the many factions within Roman Catholicism and urged Protestants to “let such a Spirit of Peace and Meeknesse shew it self in our Lives, Doctrines, and Writings ... that they may never have advantage with the same breath to speak both truly and reproachfully against us.”<sup>22</sup> Humility was vital for maintaining the unity of the Spirit, and “Peace may in this case be preserved by moderating the fervour of our zeal against those that are otherwise minded.”<sup>23</sup> He concluded,

Lastly, so long as there is sound agreement in *Fundamentall Truths*, and in the *Simplicity of the Gospell*, wee ought rather to deny our wits, and to *silence our disputes* in matters meerly *Notionall* and *Curious*, which have no necessary influence into Faith and Godly living, than by spending our precious houres in such impertinent Contentions; for gain of a small Truth to shipwrack a great deal of Love; and while wee perplex the mindes of men with Abstruse and Thornie *Questions*, wee take off their thoughts from more necessary and spirituall employments.<sup>24</sup>

Reynolds was, moreover, a man of such firm Reformed convictions that he was invited to preach before the House of Commons in 1642 and to become a member of the Westminster Assembly in 1643. He signed the *Solemn League and Covenant*, a treaty for the preservation of the Reformed religion, in 1644. He had a hand in the composition of the Westminster Standards. In 1648, he was made Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and Vice Chancellor

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<sup>21</sup> Edward Reynolds, *A Sermon Touching the Peace and Edification of the Church* (London, 1638), 7–8, 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 24; cf. Article 34 of the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563).





**EDWARD REYNOLDS**

1599-1676

of the University until a change in precarious political circumstances saw him replaced by the rising star of Independency, Owen. During the 1650s, he preached again to Parliament several times. After the death of Oliver Cromwell, he increasingly preached for peace, moderation, and an accommodation with Charles Stuart and the Episcopalians gathering around him. As the Restoration drew near, he was made a royal chaplain and pushed for a moderate settlement that would be acceptable to both Presbyterians and Episcopalians. In autumn 1660, the king made him Bishop of Norwich as part of an overture to “reconcilers” such as him in the hope of restoring peace to the church.<sup>25</sup> Some questioned whether his acceptance of this position was down to his covetous and political wife, Mary,<sup>26</sup> but Ian Atherton is surely right to assert that

Reynolds’ decision ... was in keeping with his character, his moves towards reconciliation in 1659–60, his advocacy of reduced episcopacy in the Worcester House declaration, and his long-standing call for unity within the church and conformity to its discipline and worship.<sup>27</sup>

As a bishop, Reynolds attempted to put into practice the reduced, Reformed model of episcopacy that had been outlined by Archbishop Ussher<sup>28</sup> and that he himself had advocated, even ordaining some dissenters to enable them to minister within the Church of England. He made an enduring contribution to the renewed edition of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662, which included his “Prayer of General Thanksgiving.”<sup>29</sup> Reynolds was a prolific author, so we can note in his many books what his major doctrinal commitments were. We cannot demonstrate Reynolds’s Reformed convictions on every subject, but we will sample some of his work on some key issues. For example, the continuance of the doctrine of justification *sola fide* in this period has been questioned by some, as we have seen. According to Reynolds, we are declared righteous by God because of the imputation of

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Baxter was invited to become Bishop of Hereford and Edmund Calamy to be Bishop of Lichfield as part of the same attempt, though both turned down the offers. There were rumors that Owen was also offered a bishopric in the 1660s.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London, 1691), 3:1085.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Atherton, “Reynolds, Edward (1599–1676),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter, *ODNB*], ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46:530.

<sup>28</sup> See Wallace Benn, “Ussher on Bishops: A Reforming Ecclesiology” in *Preachers, Pastors, and Ambassadors: Puritan Wisdom for Today’s Church*, ed. Lee Gatiss (London: Latimer Trust, 2011), 97–122.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Neil and J. M. Willoughby, *The Tutorial Prayer Book* (London: Harrison Trust, 1913), 147.

the active and passive righteousness of Christ to us by faith, which unites us to Christ only by grace and favor.<sup>30</sup>

Nay though wee could fulfill the whole Law perfectly, yet from the guilt of sinnes formerly contracted wee could no other way bee justified, than by laying hold by faith on the satisfaction and sufferings of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

When it came to understanding more about those “sufferings of Christ,” he advocated and defended the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement.<sup>32</sup>

The need for justification arises because of humanity’s sin, on which subject Reynolds held to the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. He wrote, “All men, and every part of man [is] shut up under the guilt and power of this sinne . . . so is there sinne in every faculty of man.”<sup>33</sup> He writes that “First, in a wicked man, who is totally in the state of sinne, there is a Totall and absolute impossibility and impotency to doe any thing that is good.”<sup>34</sup> Reynolds also affirms the sinfulness of concupiscence along with the Thirty-Nine Articles (Article 9), which state that “concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.” This must be affirmed, he says, against what he calls “our new Pelagians.” These people

expressely contrary to the doctrine of *S. Paul*, and the Articles of the Church of England, with the Harmony of other Reformed Churches, deny the sinfulness of originall concupiscence, or that it *alwayes* lusteth against the spirit.<sup>35</sup>

What he terms “a broode of sinfull men” holds this opinion, noting in the margin works by Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Durand, Thomas Aquinas, and Robert Bellarmine. He is concerned throughout to counter those who, even in his own day, are “reviling the doctrine of the Reformed Divines” on this doctrine.<sup>36</sup>

He particularly laid into the Remonstrant theologian Simon Episcopius (1583–1643), who had led the Arminian party at the Synod of Dort

<sup>30</sup> Edward Reynolds, *An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalme* (London, 1632), 675.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 439–40.

<sup>33</sup> Edward Reynolds, *Three Treatises of the Vanity of the Creature: The Sinfulness of Sinne; The Life of Christ* (London, 1631), 136.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 236–37.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 156. Original sin remains in those who are regenerate, he affirms, against his opponents and in harmony with Article 9 (p. 160).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–99.

(1618–1619). Reynolds writes of Episcopius and his “wicked wordes” about the ability of natural man:

Absurd is the Doctrine of the Socinians, & some others, That unregenerate men by a meere naturall perception, without any divine superinfus’d light (they are the words of Episcopius, and they are wicked wordes) may understand the whole Law, even all things requisite unto faith & godlines.<sup>37</sup>

Aquinas had taught that original sin was not *purely* a privation (a taking away) but *also* a certain corrupt habit in us.<sup>38</sup> But Jacobus Arminius disagreed, saying that the “absence of original righteousness, only, is original sin itself.”<sup>39</sup> According to the *Confessio Remonstrantium* (1621), which Episcopius drafted, it is “proper or actual sins” that “obscure our mind concerning spiritual matters,” “blind us,” and “finally deprave our will more and more by the habit of sinning.” It is not original sin that does this.<sup>40</sup> On the Reformed side, the Canons of Dort therefore asserted that humankind suffered privation in the fall, which itself also produced in us both “horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment” and impure affections.<sup>41</sup> They say, “All men are conceived in sin. They are born children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil [*propensi ad malum*], dead in sin, and servants of sin.”<sup>42</sup> A generation later, Reynolds was firmly on the side of the Reformed here, writing of

*universall corruption* which hath in it *Two great evils*. First, A generall defect of all righteousness and holinesse in which wee were at first created; and secondly, an inherent *Deordination*, pravitie, evill disposition, disease, propension to all mischief, Antipathy, and aversation from all good.<sup>43</sup>

Reynolds, then, was clearly a Calvinist conformist, keen to be seen as in harmony with other Reformed divines.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 118, citing Episcopius, Arminius on Romans 7, and the Remonstrant declaration of faith.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, 82. Cf. James Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius*, trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (London, 1825; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), 2:492.

<sup>39</sup> Arminius, *Works*, 2:79. “Arminius, in his doctrine of original sin, stresses deprivation more than depravation.” Keith D. Stanglin and Thomas H. McCall, *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 149. Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 339.

<sup>40</sup> Mark Ellis, *The Arminian Confession of 1621* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2005), 65 (§7.5).

<sup>41</sup> Canons of Dort 3/4.1. The text of the Canons is taken from W. Robert Godfrey, *Saving the Reformation: The Pastoral Theology of the Canons of Dort* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2019).

<sup>42</sup> Canons of Dort 3/4.3.

<sup>43</sup> Reynolds, *Three Treatises*, 135.

## II. *The Compassionate Continuer: Gurnall*

William Gurnall (1616–1679) was born the same year as Owen and was educated in Cambridge at that bastion of puritanism, Emmanuel College, for seven years. He became rector of Lavenham in Suffolk from at least 1644 until he died in 1679, through a period when Presbyterians were in the ascendancy, then the Congregationalists, and then the restoration of the Church of England. He was a well-known Puritan throughout all of this in a part of the country that was steadfastly committed to Reformation theology and practice. Some of the brightest and best Puritan ministers lived within 20 miles of him, including Owen and several members of the Westminster Assembly.

In 1656, Gurnall preached a sermon “at Stowe-Market in Suffolk ... before the Election of Parliament-men for the same County.” We can observe something of his underlying political and religious commitments from this sermon. “No sins lie heavier on Gods stomach, and make him more heart-sick,” he said, “then theirs who stand in high and publick place of Rule and Government.”<sup>44</sup> He spoke against Anabaptists who despise magistracy and order, and confessed that at present “’tis a blustering time ... England is now in travel [travail], and calls you to her labour; take heed that the ghost of your ruined Nation doth not haunt you to your graves, for denying your help,” despite “some unhappy disappointments in former Assemblies.”<sup>45</sup> It did not matter, he claimed, “what kinde of Government a people live under, as what kinde of Governors,” so whether England was a republic or a monarchy, it required godly members of Parliament.<sup>46</sup> Since most in attendance had undertaken in the *Solemn League and Covenant* (1643) to reform both church and state,

consider the solemn Obligation that lies upon us, by a National Covenant, (famous through the Christian world, and we infamous for the breach of it,) to promote, and procure with our utmost endeavours the Reformation of the Land. God hath, I beleeve, most of your hands to shew for this, and darest thou who hast bound thy selfe in such a Covenant, give thy voice for an unworthy man to sit in Parliament ...?<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> William Gurnall, *The Magistrates Portraiture Drawn from the Word* (London, 1656), 4; cf. “Consider the greatest hopes our enemies have is to ruine us by our own Councils: The time hath been, the plot was to blow up our Parliaments, now they labour to blow us up by our Parliaments; to make our Parliaments, I mean, blow us up by their destructive Councils, and a Nation cannot die of a worse death, then to be ruined by their Saviours” (p. 28).

<sup>45</sup> Gurnall, *Magistrates*, 12–13.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Gurnall stood against “Popery” and sects such as the Anabaptists, Seekers, and Quakers because “these errors are forerunners of *Popery*.”<sup>48</sup> But at such a turbulent time, what England needed was “men of Healing spirits,” so that

If you can find any that have more compassion towards this divided Nation then others, especially whose bowels work more tenderly over Gods people in the Land, and their unbrotherly contentions, who are for expedients, how to compromise those differences, those are the men fit for such a time as this.<sup>49</sup>

Ministers and magistrates must work together to find a way forward: “Indeed they are the two legges on which a Church and State stand. He that would saw off the one, cannot mean well to the other; an *Anti-ministerial* spirit, is an *Anti-magistratical* spirit; the Pulpit guards the throne.”<sup>50</sup>

This helps make sense of the fact that in 1662, Gurnall decided not to leave the Church of England or be ejected from it. He was ordained presbyter by Bishop Edward Reynolds two days before the great ejection in August 1662, an act that would have required him to renounce the *Solemn League and Covenant* and declare his allegiance to King Charles. For this he was lambasted by some, including the author of a scurrilous tract with a scathing title: *Covenant-renouncers, desperate-apostates*: “Neither is Mr. Gurnal alone in these horrible defilements, hateful to the Soul of God & his Saints,” it claimed, “but he is compassed about with a *Cloud of Witnesses*, (even in the County where himself liveth, as well as elsewhere) men of the same order of *Antichristian Priesthood*, and Brethren in the said iniquity with himself.”<sup>51</sup> As J. C. Ryle wrote in his brief nineteenth-century biography of Gurnall,

Whatever opinions we may hold about Gurnall’s conformity, we must all allow that the course he took was not likely to make him a favourite with either of the two great religious parties into which England at that time was divided. ... He was a Puritan in doctrine, and yet he steadfastly adhered to the Church of England. He was a minister of the Church of England, and yet a thorough Puritan both in preaching and practice. In fact, he was just the man to be disliked and slighted by both sides.<sup>52</sup>

Ryle says he even checked Gurnall’s handwriting on the subscription document to assure himself that Gurnall really did sign it.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps because

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>51</sup> *Covenant-Renouncers, Desperate-Apostates* ([London], 1665), 6.

<sup>52</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Lee Gatiss (London: Lost Coin, 2015), 112.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 143.

both of them shared a Puritan background, Gurnall felt he could trust Bishop Reynolds (and vice versa) and was happy to be episcopally ordained by him and stay in his diocese. Perhaps Reynolds even asked him to stay so that his diocese was not emptied of good Reformed and Evangelical clergy after 1662 and even allowed him a degree of latitude in applying the new requirements of conformity, turning a blind eye to Gurnall's Puritan scruples about certain things in the liturgy. All this cannot have been easy because even Gurnall's father-in-law, another Puritan, seceded and left the Church of England. It must have been a relationally painful time.

Gurnall died in 1679, leaving at least eight children. Three of them married clergymen, and another was himself ordained, so Gurnall's legacy lived on in the Church of England for many decades. His funeral sermon was preached by the Bible commentator William Burkitt (1650–1703) from the nearby church of Dedham in Essex, which had a strong Puritan tradition. Gurnall is best remembered, however, for his magnum opus, *The Christian in Compleat Armour* (1655–1662), which is an extended look over three volumes at Ephesians 6:10–20. One volume was dedicated to Lady Mary Vere, Baroness of Tilbury, a prominent Anglican patroness of the Puritans, who was “strongly associated with the international Calvinist cause”<sup>54</sup> and whose funeral sermon Gurnall would himself preach in 1672.<sup>55</sup> That Gurnall was asked to preach on that occasion is a clear indication of his stature within the Reformed constituency. It is clear from the sermon that Gurnall associated most with the Reformed tradition, praising Archbishop Ussher and John Dod, for example.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, he was very clear that “the testimony on which the Saints Faith relies, is the infallible Word of God” and stated that we “rejoyce only in Christ Jesus, as the sole entire object of our trust.”<sup>57</sup>

*The Christian in Compleat Armour* is a work not of polemical but of practical divinity, of “spiritual consolation and exhortation,” as J. M. Blatchly puts it.<sup>58</sup> Yet we can still observe something of Gurnall's doctrinal commitments within it to confirm his Reformed connections and credentials. For example,

<sup>54</sup> Jacqueline Eales, “Mary, Lady Vere (1581–1671),” *ODNB* 56:310.

<sup>55</sup> William Gurnall, *The Christians Labour and Reward* (London, 1672). A poem by Anthony Withers printed at the end of the sermon claimed that Lady Vere was herself the epitome of Gurnall's *Christian in Complete Armour*: “Gurnall display thy magazine, Here thy whole Armour may be seen.”

<sup>56</sup> Gurnall, *Christians Labour*, 114, 135–36; see David Field, “‘Decalogue’ Dod and His Seventeenth Century Bestseller,” in *Preachers, Pastors, and Ambassadors: Puritan Wisdom for Today's Church*, ed. Lee Gatiss (London: Latimer Trust, 2011), 149–204.

<sup>57</sup> Gurnall, *Christians Labour*, 60, 16.

<sup>58</sup> J. M. Blatchly, “Gurnall, William (bap. 1616, d. 1679),” *ODNB* 24:271.



on the doctrine of sin, which we have previously examined with regard to Reynolds, Gurnall too held to a Reformed account. “The state of unregeneracy is a state of impotency,” he affirmed. “The Spirit findes sinners in as helpless a condition, as unable to repent, or believe on Christ for salvation, as they were of themselves to purchase it.”<sup>59</sup>

A person in a Christlesse, gracelesse state is naked and unarm'd, and so unfit to fight Christs battels against sin and Satan .... A soule out of Christ is naked and destitute of all armour to defend him against sin and Satan .... The Christlesse state is a state of impotency.”<sup>60</sup>

He even speaks of “forlorne soules bound with the chaines of their lusts, and the irresistible decree of God for their damnation.”<sup>61</sup> This view he contrasted with the Arminian account:

The faithful servants of Christ tell sinners from the Word, that man in his natural state is corrupt and rotten, that nothing of the old frame will serve, and there must needs be all new; but in comes an Arminian and blows up the sinners pride, and tells him he is not so weak or wicked as the other represents him, if thou wilt thou mayest repent and beleeve, or at least by exerting thy natural abilities, oblige God to superadde what thou hast not. This is the Workman that will please proud man best.<sup>62</sup>

He had a Reformed view of election and the *ordo salutis*, and a particular burden to relate this to the doctrine of the saints’ perseverance or preservation.

God having brought his counsel thus far towards its issue, surely will raise all the power he hath, rather then be disappointed of his glory, within a few steps of home; I mean, his whole design in the believers salvation. ... God loves his Saints as the purchase of his Sons blood; they cost him dear, and that which is so hardly got, shall not be easily lost. He that was willing to expend his Sons blood to gain them, will not deny his power to keep them.<sup>63</sup>

Indeed, “God can never forsake the Christian,” he wrote, “O what admirable security hath the great God given his children in this particular!”<sup>64</sup> This doctrine had become something of a hot topic at the time. The Arminian minister John Goodwin (1594–1665) published a book on it, which was ably

<sup>59</sup> William Gurnall, *The Christian in Compleat Armour*, 3rd ed. (London, 1658), 21.

<sup>60</sup> Gurnall, *Armour*, 52, 55; cf. *Christians Labour*, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Gurnall, *Armour*, 215.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–30; cf. the discussion of election on page 127.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.



answered by Owen in *The Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance Explained and Confirmed* only the year before Gurnall published the first edition of *The Christian in Compleat Armour* (1655). And Gurnall was not slow to take sides with the Reformed. "Let us see whether Satan be able to pluck the Christian away, and step betwixt him and home," he said with some warmth,

Away then with that doctrine, which saith, one may be a Saint today, and none tomorrow; now a *Peter*, anon a *Judas*; O what unsavoury stuffe is this! a principle it is that at once crosseth the main design of God in the Gospel-Covenant, reflects sadly on the honour of Christ, and wounds the Saints comfort to the heart.<sup>65</sup>

On what grounds did he oppose what he saw as the opposing Arminian scheme? First, he said,

It is derogatory to Gods design in the Gospel-Covenant, which we finde plainly to be this, that his children might be put into a state sure and safe from miscarrying at last, which by the first Covenant man was not.

Second, if the saints may finally fall, then

it reflects sadly on Christs honour, both as he is intrusted with the Saints salvation, and also as he is interested in it ... Now how well do they consult with Christs honour, that say his sheepe may die in a ditch of final apostasy notwithstanding all this? ... The life of his own glory is bound up in the eternal life of his Saints.

He reasons passionately that "Christ and his members make one Christ: now is it possible a piece of Christ can be found at last-burning in hell? can Christ be a cripple Christ? can this member drop off and that?" This emotive language expressed a theological impossibility for Gurnall.

Third,

He did not dash the generous wine of Gods Word with the water of mans conceits. No, he gave them pure Gospel. Truly, this principle of Saints falling from grace gives a sad dash to the sweet wine of the Promises; the soul-reviving comfort that sparkles in them, ariseth from the sure conveyance with which they are in Christ made over to believers to have and to hold for ever .... This, this indeed is wine that makes glad the heart of a Saint; though he may be whipt in the house when he sins, yet he shall not be turned out of doores.

So, to weak believers Gurnall pleads,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 377.

Be of good cheer, poor soule ... Your eternal safety is provided for. ... When you heare Christ is turn'd out of heaven, or himself to be willing to sell his inheritance there, then, poore Christian, feare thy coming thither and not till then.

Saints must guard against “a carelesse security, and presumptuous boldnesse,” but they must not doubt God’s promises.<sup>66</sup>

Gurnall criticizes those who bend and change to keep their preferments, saying “the Christian must stand fixt to his principles, and not change his habit, but freely shew what Country-man he is by his holy constancy in the truth.”<sup>67</sup> He did not maintain his pastorate in “this apostatizing age”<sup>68</sup> by jettisoning the convictions about Reformed truths that he had held throughout his preaching and writing career. There was no contortion of his basic principles, though, as he confessed, “These have been trying times as ever came to *England*. It has required more care and courage to keep sincerity then formerly.”<sup>69</sup> After 1662, Gurnall was far from the only one to find the most expeditious and compassionate course, in the midst of the great contentions of the time, to be one that worked *with* the new political establishment rather than against it—however uncomfortable that might make him personally.

### III. *The Re-Joining Professor: Horton*

Like Gurnall, Dr. Thomas Horton (1605–1673) was educated at the staunchly Puritan Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was appointed by the civil war parliament to ordain ministers in London and worked for the establishment of Presbyterian church government. In 1647, he was made president of Queens’ College, Cambridge, and in 1651 was chosen as vice chancellor of the University at the same time as Owen was taking on that role in Oxford. When Charles II returned to the throne, Horton had to step down as president of Queens’ College because his predecessor was still alive, and under the terms of a 1660 act, good royalists were allowed to have their old jobs back. Reynolds’s son also fell afoul of this act, being ejected from his Oxford fellowship, but he was immediately able to take up another post in Worcester Cathedral.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 377–80.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 363.

<sup>70</sup> Ian Atherton, “Reynolds, Edward (1630–1698),” *ODNB* 46:531.

Arthur Barham, the staunchly Presbyterian minister of Saint Helen's Bishopsgate, did not conform in 1662. Samuel Lee and Peter Sterry, both sometime lecturers at Saint Helen's, were also forced to give up preaching.<sup>71</sup> However, after a few years' interregnum, in June 1666, Horton came back into the ministry and was appointed rector of Saint Helen's. A few months later, the great fire of London swept through the city and destroyed most of the churches, including Saint Paul's Cathedral. But Saint Helen's was miraculously unscathed. Horton was described by one of his former students as

a pious and learned man, a hard student [i.e., he studied hard], a sound divine, a good textuary; very well skilled in the original languages, very well accomplished for the work of a Minister, and very conscientious in the discharge of it.<sup>72</sup>

According to another observer, "Dr Horton ... hath a very great congregation of half-conformists, in whom he hath much interest. He is a man of very good learning, and a constant, laborious preacher [i.e., he labored hard on his sermons]."<sup>73</sup> Richard Kidder, who sometimes officiated at Saint Helen's after Horton died, reported that he

found many of his communicants "kneeled not at the sacrament, but were otherwise very devout and regular." The practice had been indulged by their previous minister, Dr Horton. The communions were "very great ... and great sums of money given to the poor at those times," and considering "the mischief of dismissing such a number of Communicants and sending them to the Non-Conformists," Kidder decided to continue to give the sacrament to those who refused to kneel, and risk being suspended for it.<sup>74</sup>

This was a large, wealthy church with a history of half-conformity.<sup>75</sup>

Horton was a senior Reformed figure with a history of training young preachers for the ministry in Cambridge and a reputation for sound teaching. Can we establish his Reformed credentials from his sermons so as to add to the number of clearly Reformed ministers working in the post-Restoration church? Yes, we can. Let us examine his sermons on Romans 8, published

<sup>71</sup> Gatiss, *Tragedy of 1662*, 9, 30, 32.

<sup>72</sup> John Wallis, "To the Reader," in Thomas Horton, *One Hundred Select Sermons* (London, 1679).

<sup>73</sup> See John Edmund Cox, ed., *The Annals of St. Helen's Bishopsgate London* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), 316.

<sup>74</sup> T. Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 68, quoting Kidder's *Life*, edited by A. E. Robinson (1924), 19.

<sup>75</sup> It may still be described thus today (I was associate minister there, 2004–2009).

posthumously in 1674. Horton was very clearly opposed to the Arminian doctrine of predestination on the basis of foreseen faith. So on Romans 8:30 he preached against this “doctrine of Pelagians” that is “opposite to this present *Truth and Text* which we have here before us, where it is not said, *That whom he called, he did predestinate; But whom he predestinated, them he called.*”<sup>76</sup> A little later, speaking on the same verse, he adds:

Predestination is limited and confined to a certain number of persons. Therefore we read in Scripture of *two* sorts of Vessels which are prepared; of *Wrath, and of Mercy*. And this serves to meet with *the contrary Opinion* of some persons; who teach, that upon such and such conditions, of *Faith, and Perseverance, &c.* God does elect and make *choice of all*, when as God yet knows that such and such person will never come up to those conditions, as having purposed in Himself not to *bestow such conditions as these upon them* .... Secondly, we have here also the *Doctrine of final Perseverance*; That God’s Children they cannot *fall from Grace*, or be excluded from the *kingdome of Heaven*. This Point is very clear in this Scripture.<sup>77</sup>

Horton’s account of the atonement and justification is equally clear. “Christ has satisfied *the justice of the Father* for all his elect people by dying for them.” Moreover, he has

*imputed his righteousness* to us, and freed us from condemnation; so likewise not only the *Active Obedience* of Christ’s life, but the *integrity of our Nature in Christ’s Person* being imputed to us who by Faith are set unto him, covers our disobedience and the relicts of Corruption yet remaining in the best of us. And so being justified, we cannot therefore be condemned.<sup>78</sup>

Christ paid the debt we owed by enduring the penalty and doing what the law required us to do. Christ’s suffering

was of the whole Anger and Wrath of God, exprest in all particulars. There was no punishment for kind, which we should have suffer’d, but the same was personally suffer’d by Christ both in Body and Soul.

He speaks of “the Eternity of our punishment” that Christ has answered—the punishment that was not only the injustice of Pilate or the malice of the Jews but God’s own heavy wrath and indignation.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, he holds to the Reformed doctrine of irresistible grace:

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<sup>76</sup> Thomas Horton, *Forty Six Sermons upon the Whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans* (London, 1674), 503.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 507.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 54; cf. 527.

It is not in our own power to hinder our own Conversion neither, where God is minded and purposed to *effect* it. ... *Those who are predestinated, they are called*; that is, they are efficaciously, and infallibly, and against all opposition: The *Grace of Conversion* it is such as cannot be *resisted*.<sup>80</sup>

On Romans 8:1, Horton taught that Christ “hath offered and laid down a sufficient ransome and price for the *redemption of all*: but *in* Christ; so those only who are elect and true believers, have actual and efficacious redemption, because those alone are *in* him.”<sup>81</sup> On Romans 8:32, Horton wonders who the “all” are for whom Christ died. To say it means all people, “would make it *too large*.” It is sufficient for all, but

as to particular application, and special intention, so it respects only *all Believers*, and so all the Scripture still expresses it to us; He made his Soul an offering for his *Seed*, He shed his Blood for his *Church*, He laid down his life for his *Sheep*, He saved his *people* from their Sins.

The verse must be understood in context:

This *us* it plainly refers to such persons as he had mentioned *before*, whom he had *fore-known*, and *predestinated*, and *called*, and *justified*, and was *for*; which is not all men at *large* and *in general*, but only a set number of persons *in particular*.<sup>82</sup>

Christ died for the apostle, for the Romans, for eminent saints, and for weaker Christians.<sup>83</sup> This is a Reformed doctrine of particular redemption. His Reformed doctrine undergirded Horton’s call to ministers to preach the gospel promiscuously to all.<sup>84</sup>

## Conclusion

Forty-five years after the great ejection, John Edwards of Cambridge (1637–1716), who has been styled “a kind of J. I. Packer in his day,”<sup>85</sup> wrote,

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 501.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 502. It may be a testimony to Horton, or to the tradition of theology passed down by him at Saint Helen’s, that when John Wesley preached a theology quite at variance from this in his own sermon on Romans 8:32 at Saint Helen’s some years later, he was told quite firmly, “Sir, you must preach here no more.” See Lee Gatiss, *Cornerstones of Salvation: Foundations and Debates in the Reformed Tradition* (Welwyn Garden City: EP Books, 2017), 202–29.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth Stewart, “The Points of Calvinism: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 26.2 (Autumn 2008): 196.

That which we now call Calvinism, is to be found in the writings of the ancient fathers of the Church, and is the very doctrine which the first reformers of our own Church professed, and maintained, and which is contained in our Articles, Homilies and liturgy, and which our Archbishops and Bishops, and the whole body of our English clergy have generally asserted and vindicated.<sup>86</sup>

Edwards, the son of a leading London Puritan, thus testified to the enduring vitality of the conforming Reformed tradition within the Church of England, many decades after the Restoration. He was far from a lone voice in this regard, even at the turn of the eighteenth century. As he testified, “I am not left alone, I do not, like *Athanasius*, encounter the whole World, no nor the whole Clergy.”<sup>87</sup> In turn, his work would be picked up and cherished by the *next* generation of Calvinists within Anglicanism, including the great Evangelical Revival preacher George Whitefield (1714–1770). Edwards’s work was on Whitefield’s list of the most important volumes of divinity, alongside other classic Reformed works by Matthew Henry, Thomas Boston, John Pearson, Owen, and John Bunyan.<sup>88</sup> Edwards was one of the most influential shapers of English Calvinism, according to Dewey Wallace,<sup>89</sup> though few have ever heard of him or those like Reynolds, Gurnall, and Horton on whose shoulders he stood.<sup>90</sup>

The picture that some have (even some Evangelicals), that after 1662 the Church of England was a wasteland for the gospel and for Reformed theology, is very much at odds with the evidence in this article. The “good people” did not all leave. The baton was handed on, with some difficulty perhaps, but nevertheless successfully, after the restoration of the monarchy. This helps us better understand the Church of England in that period—it was not entirely devoid of a gospel witness—and gives us a clearer picture of what the eighteenth-century revivals were: a revivification of a tradition that had been marginalized but not euthanized after the Cromwellian chaos. Traditions can be passed down and preserved, even in the absence of “big name” celebrity endorsements, dramatic revivals, and access to the great and the good at the center of power—lessons we would do well to remember in our own turbulent days.

<sup>86</sup> John Edwards, *Veritas Redux: Evangelical Truths Restored* (London, 1707), xix.

<sup>87</sup> John Edwards, *The Preacher: The Second Part* (London, 1706), xii.

<sup>88</sup> *Works of the Reverend. George Whitefield* (London, 1771), 3:497–98, 4:306–7, and 1:575, where he recommends Edwards to Wesley. For Edwards’s influence, cf. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), 1:405.

<sup>89</sup> Dewey Wallace, *The Shapers of English Calvinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 205–42.

<sup>90</sup> On the Reformed Anglican tradition up to and including the Evangelical Revival, see Lee Gatiss, *The True Profession of the Gospel: Augustus Toplady and Reclaiming Our Reformed Foundations* (London: Latimer Trust, 2010), 8–51.

# Simeon and the Restoration of Israel

GERALD BRAY

## Abstract

Charles Simeon, one of the leading founders of modern Anglican Evangelicalism, was a staunch advocate of missions to the Jews, whom he regarded as God's chosen people. Basing himself entirely on the witness of the prophets and apostles, he believed that the church held the gospel message in trust against the day when those for whom it was originally intended would hear it and turn to Christ. The church had a responsibility to proclaim the message of salvation to the Jewish people but was failing in its duty. In his sermons on the subject, Simeon called Christians back to faithful witness among Jews and did much to further the cause of Jewish evangelism in the Church of England and beyond.

## Keywords

*Jews, Israel, conversion, restoration, prophecy, fulfillment, miracle, mission*

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## Introduction

**F**ew students of Anglicanism would doubt the central importance of Charles Simeon (1759–1836) for the strength and character of the modern Evangelical movement within the Anglican Communion and beyond. His influence, whether direct or mediated through a variety of successors and imitators, continues

to be felt, even if his major work, the *Horae Homileticae*, is less widely read or appreciated today than it once was.<sup>1</sup>

It is in these sermons and sermon outlines that Simeon's teachings are most readily accessible. Among the many subjects that he discussed is the place of the Jewish people in the plan of God for the salvation of humankind. The number of sermons dedicated to this theme is small—only about 40 out of 2,536, or 1.5% of the total—but the message they convey is both comprehensive and consistent. He could not have foreseen what would happen to the Jewish people in the twentieth century, nor could he have known about the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, but it is astonishing how much of what he predicted on the basis of the Scriptures has either come to pass or remains relevant to a Christian approach to Jews today.

### **1. Simeon, Israel, and the Church**

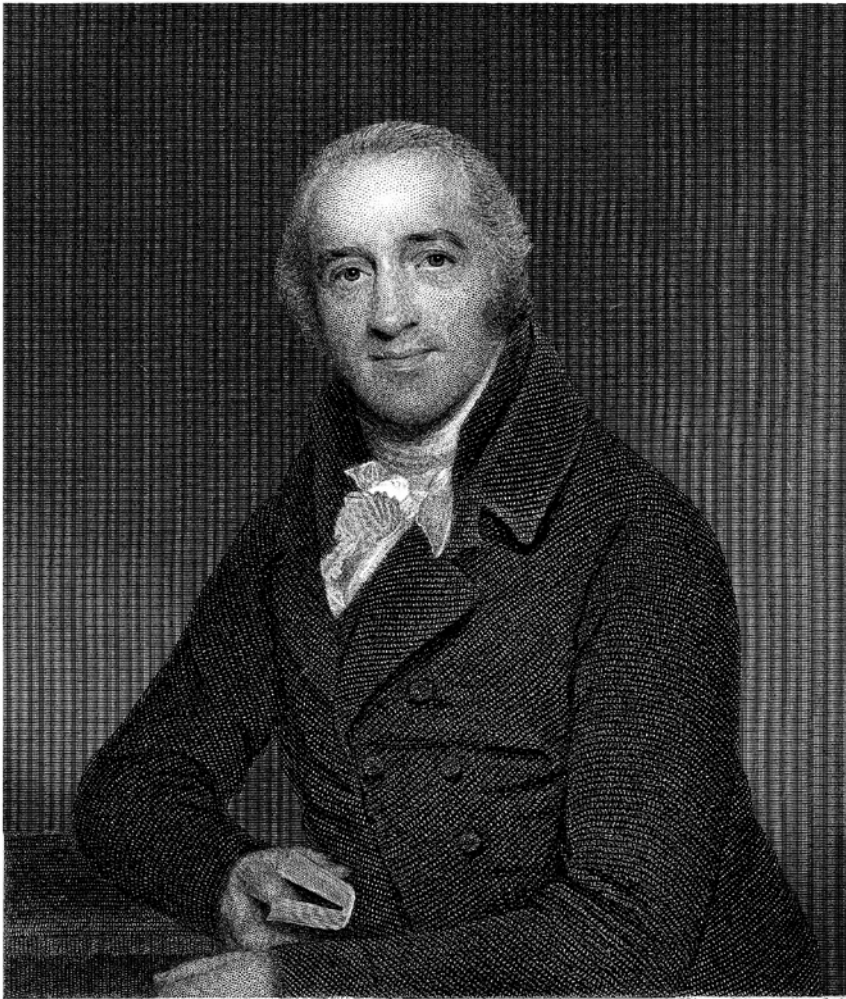
In line with most Christian interpreters of his time, Simeon believed that the Christian church is the new Israel, the direct and legitimate successor of the Old Testament nation. He therefore read the stories of the patriarchs and kings recorded in the historical books of the Old Testament as models of how God continues to deal with Christians today. He generally eschewed allegory and regarded what is recorded about Israel as a statement of plain historical fact, but he did not hesitate to apply the experiences of the ancient Israelites to the lives of Christian believers now. His approach was broadly typological, or to use his word, "typical."<sup>2</sup> We are united with them at the level of spiritual principles, and their successes and failures have been preserved as encouragements and warnings to us. In these sermons, Simeon said little or nothing about the application of the Old Testament texts to Jews today because in his view, Christians are living in a new dispensation in which the Jews will receive the blessing of God only as they turn to embrace the Messiah.

However, although Simeon did not gloss over the parlous state of modern Jewry, neither did he condemn the Jews for their unbelief or express opinions about them that would now be regarded as anti-Semitic. On the contrary, Simeon saw the centuries-old fate of the Jews suffering discrimination and persecution as deeply tragic, both for them and for the church. His deepest desire, like that expressed by Paul in Romans, was to see the chosen people

<sup>1</sup> Charles Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, 8th ed., 21 vols. (London: Henry G. Bohm, 1847).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 90 on Exodus 17:11," in *Horae Homileticae* 1:433. Simeon says, "The whole history of the Israelites. From their deliverance out of Egypt to their establishment in the land of Canaan, was altogether of a typical nature."





Sir William Beechey, pinxt.

William Findex, sculpt.

**CHARLES SIMEON**  
1759-1836

restored to the inheritance that is rightly theirs. He even went so far as to claim that the gospel has been entrusted to the church as a deposit to be held in trust against the day when the Jews will be converted and reclaim what belongs to them.<sup>3</sup> At the consummation of all things, it will not be Israel that is dissolved into the church but the other way around—all *Israel*, Jews and Christians alike, will be saved and share their common identity as children of Abraham and inheritors of the covenant promises originally made to him and subsequently fulfilled in Christ.

When asked why God should have chosen the Jews as opposed to any other nation, Simeon's answer was that it was a decree of God's sovereign will, which he manifested in the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and later extended to the Gentiles. At no time, either in the distant past or in the present, does any human being have the right to boast of being a child of God or claim that distinction on their own merits:

It was altogether of God's sovereign will and pleasure that he chose Abraham out of an idolatrous world, to make him the head and father of an elect seed. ... It was also purely of his own sovereign will and pleasure that God chose the Gentiles to inherit the blessings which the Jewish people had forfeited and lost. It is impossible to view this matter in any other light.<sup>4</sup>

Simeon knew, and urged the message on his hearers, that every point in this history appears to us as an inscrutable mystery. We do not know why God did not abandon his ancient people entirely after they rejected him. We cannot say why there has been such a long delay in fulfilling the promises originally made to the patriarchs. We cannot predict when the restoration of the Jews will occur or when Christ will come again. But we can know that in all these things we are brought face-to-face with "the sovereignty, the uncontrollable sovereignty, of the Most High, who imparts to everyone so much only as he himself sees fit, and *that* too in the time and manner which seems best to his unerring wisdom."<sup>5</sup>

One point that Simeon made is that for all their failures, the Jewish people have survived in a way that their persecutors through the ages have not. As he put it,

The various nations that, in successive ages, have oppressed them, the Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Grecian, Roman, have all sunk beneath the yoke which their respective conquerors have laid upon them, and have been mingled with their

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1901 on Romans 11:30–31," in *Horae Homileticae* 15:451–56.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1898 on Romans 11:22–24," in *Horae Homileticae* 15:433.

<sup>5</sup> Simeon, "Outline no. 1901 on Romans 11:30–31," in *Horae Homileticae* 15:453.

invaders in one common mass. Not so the Jews: they, though more cruelly oppressed than any, have still been kept distinct from the people amongst whom they have dwelt.<sup>6</sup>

The ways of divine providence may be obscure in many details, but the overall pattern is clear. Enough had happened in the past to give him confidence for the future, and that future would be shared equally between the Jews and the Gentiles who had been won to the faith of Abraham as revealed and completed in the work of Christ.

## **II. *Israel's Estrangement from God***

Simeon was well aware that the Jews of his day had fallen a long way from the glory days of David and Solomon, and even from what they still were in New Testament times. In his England, Jews had no civil rights and were still thought of as foreigners. Simeon compared their plight to that of the ancient Israelites in the time of Ezra:

Though the temple worship was restored, it was carried out by the Jews without any zeal for God's honour, or any of that spirituality of mind which is the very essence of all acceptable worship. ... So at this time the Jewish people are at a very low ebb, both in respect of morals and religion. They are indeed, by the providence of God, placed in a situation in which no other people upon earth stand: for they alone, of all the people upon the face of the globe, are incapable of serving their God according to the directions of their own Law, and the dictates of their own conscience.<sup>7</sup>

Rightly or wrongly, that is how Simeon saw the position of Jews in his day, but as questionable as his analysis might be, he did not stop at that. Somewhat unfortunately, he went on to describe what he perceived Jewish worship to be like:

But, at the same time, they show no sense of privation on this account, nor any desire to honour God in the services which they do render: for there is universally among them, in all their synagogues, a degree of irreverence, which we should scarcely expect to find amongst heathens in the worship of their idols.<sup>8</sup>

What Simeon knew about Jews would have come from Christian sources, which were almost all inadequate and prejudiced to some degree, as the above quotation indicates. But if Simeon's assessment of Jewish worship was

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 898 on Isaiah 27:6," in *Horae Homileticae* 8:4.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 436 on Ezra 7:23," in *Horae Homileticae* 4:251.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

almost certainly secondhand and ill-informed, the overall picture of their condition that he painted was clear enough. Jews were strangers and pilgrims on earth, with no home they could call their own and subject to varying degrees of discrimination, even in the United States, which was the only country that gave them full civil rights in the early nineteenth century.

Simeon was in no doubt that this unenviable fate was the direct result of the Jewish rejection of Christ, but he resisted any temptation to attribute it to the standard medieval belief that the Jews had “killed Christ” and had therefore gotten what they deserved. He also refused to see their rejection of Jesus as no more than a reaction to the preaching of Paul and the early Christians. On the contrary, he believed it was something that had been foretold by Moses himself. As Simeon saw it, the great lawgiver of Israel had predicted that a prophet would come who would be the mediator, lawgiver, ruler, and deliverer of Israel. But Israel would not listen to him, and for that reason God would cast them out and punish them for their unbelief.<sup>9</sup> In his words,

The treatment they should meet with was most circumstantially foretold: the hardships they should undergo, the oppression they should endure, the contempt in which they should be held, the conviction which they themselves, in common with all mankind, should feel, that their sufferings were inflicted by God himself on account of their iniquities; all, I say, was foretold, and all is come to pass.<sup>10</sup>

The worst thing the Jews ever did was crucify their Messiah, something that Simeon believed had provoked God more than any of their other crimes against him.<sup>11</sup> In saying this, he merely repeated the standard accusation that Christians had always made against Jews, but unlike many of his predecessors, he did not indulge in righteous indignation at the infidelity of God’s chosen people. On the contrary, he understood what had befallen them as part of God’s twofold plan—to bring them to repentance and to bring salvation to the rest of humanity. The first part of this plan had already been worked out in the Old Testament and was attested by the prophets. As Jeremiah said, “He sent them into Babylon for their good.”<sup>12</sup> After the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, God “cut off the Jews from all

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 206 on Deuteronomy 13:1–3,” in *Horae Homileticae* 2:358–59.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 224 on Deuteronomy 30:4–6,” in *Horae Homileticae* 2:438.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 233 on Deuteronomy 32:21,” in *Horae Homileticae* 2:489.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 24:5. Simeon’s comment was, “Afflictive as that dispensation was, it was the most profitable to them of all the mercies and judgments that they ever experienced; for by means of it they were cured of their idolatrous propensities; and never have yielded to them any more, even to the present hour.”

possibility of observing the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, in order that they may be constrained to seek for mercy through the Messiah whom they have crucified.”<sup>13</sup> By then, of course, the second part of God’s plan was in operation and has continued to the present time. As he put it,

The Jews were once the only people upon earth who possessed the blessings of salvation. But God, in righteous indignation, cast off them; and, in a way of sovereign grace and mercy, took us from a wild olive tree, and grafted us in upon the stock from which they had been broken, and from which they had been broken *on purpose that we might be grafted in*.<sup>14</sup>

This, however, was far from being the whole story. When describing the dispersion of Jewry, Simeon has this to say:

The Jews are scattered throughout the world, unconscious of any particular good which they are destined to perform: but God designs to use them as his instruments, and by them to communicate the blessings of salvation to the whole world.<sup>15</sup>

He continues almost immediately with the following observation:

For this office they are fitted, having their own Scriptures in their hands, and understanding the language of the different countries where they sojourn: so that nothing is wanting but to have the veil removed from their hearts, and they are ready at this moment, each in his place, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer.<sup>16</sup>

Given this destiny, there is only one possible conclusion:

Wherever we see a Jew, we should regard him as an object *from whom we are to derive good, and to whom we are to do good*. There is no creature under heaven from the sight of whom we may derive greater good than from the sight of a Jew. We have before said, that, whether intentionally or not, he proclaims to all, in the most convincing way, both the nature and the perfections of God.<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, the message of salvation comes *exclusively* from the Jews. Even the closely related Samaritans cannot claim salvation apart from the Jews, as Jesus told the woman at the well.<sup>18</sup> In Simeon’s words,

<sup>13</sup> Simeon, “Outline no. 233 on Deuteronomy 32:21,” in *Horae Homileticae* 2:494.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 214 on Deuteronomy 23:3–4,” in *Horae Homileticae* 2:391. The italics are in the original text and a reference to Romans 11:19–20.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1211 on Micah 5:7,” in *Horae Homileticae* 10:313.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 10:314.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1617 on John 4:22,” in *Horae Homileticae* 13:283.

We ought never to forget how greatly we are indebted to the Jews: since, whether in its primary structure or its subsequent conveyance, our salvation is altogether of them; of them originally, of them instrumentally, of them exclusively: so that not a soul amongst us shall ever go forth from this devoted land to the mountains of eternal bliss, but as instructed, instigated, and assisted by a Jew.<sup>19</sup>

### **III. *The Duty of Christians toward the Jews***

Simeon's analysis of the divine plan would not have surprised his Christian contemporaries, most of whom believed that they had supplanted the ancient people of God and felt little sympathy for the Jews who had been cast away. It is at this point that Simeon's radically different approach to the Jews began to make itself felt. Should we as Christians rejoice in the fact that we now enjoy the inheritance originally given to ancient Israel and leave the physical descendants of Abraham to suffer the consequences of their rebellion against God? Not at all! Christians who complacently accepted this situation and saw no need to do anything to help Jews were guilty of the grossest hypocrisy and had to be called to account for their unpardonable indifference:

All that thou hast of spiritual good was once the exclusive heritage of the Jew: and thou art possessing what has been taken from him; yea, thou art revelling in abundance, whilst he is perishing in utter want: and all the obligation which, by thine own confession, would attach to me in the case I have stated, is entailed on thee: and thou, in refusing to fulfil it, art sinning against God, and against thine own soul.<sup>20</sup>

The Jews were suffering because of the sins of their ancestors, but they were not personally responsible for their spiritual blindness. The real guilt fell on Christians, who understood what had happened and had a duty to reach out to their Jewish neighbors but had not done so. Simeon did not hesitate to point out that if Christians were enjoying the blessings once reserved for the Jews, it was because those blessings had been entrusted to them as a deposit that was ultimately destined for the benefit of Jews in later times. Quoting Romans 11:30–31, he argued that it was through the mercy of Christians that Jews would also obtain mercy, and the blame for the failure of this to come to pass lay squarely at the door of the former: “God has made thee a trustee for the Jew; and thou hast not only betrayed thy trust, but left him to perish, when thou hadst in possession all that his soul

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 13:291.

<sup>20</sup> Simeon, “Outline no. 214 on Deuteronomy 23:3–4,” *Horae Homileticae* 2:392.



needs.”<sup>21</sup> The condemnation of the church of Simeon’s time for neglecting its duty could not have been starker.

For Simeon, the Christian’s duty toward Jews began with the simple historical fact that without them, there would never have been Christianity at all. Everything that is good and holy in our own faith comes ultimately from them, and our debt to that inheritance extends to their modern-day descendants. He was quite explicit about this:

To whom are we indebted for all the instruction which we have received respecting the way of peace and salvation? We owe it all to Jews. We know nothing of God and of his Christ, but as it has been revealed to us by Jewish Prophets and Apostles .... Such infinite obligations as we owe to that people should surely be required in acts of love towards their descendants.<sup>22</sup>

This is a theme that Simeon returns to again and again, but nowhere more extensively than in his sermon on Romans 15:26–27, where he goes over the history of Israel point by point and details the ways in which Christians are indebted to the Jews. Whether we are talking about the patriarchs, the prophets, or even the apostles of Christ, the spiritual enlightenment and knowledge that we have of God is entirely dependent on the witness of faithful Jews who risked everything and endured all kinds of persecution and hardship in order to bring the precious message of salvation to us.<sup>23</sup>

To Simeon, the propensity of Christians to ignore this history was nothing but base ingratitude, a point he drove home with one accusation after another against the church of his time. Particularly interesting here is his emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus, which he pushed to what most Christians today would probably regard as an extreme. As he saw it, Jesus was a Jew who died to redeem souls from death and hell; he is a Jew who now intercedes for us at the right hand of God; he is a Jew who is the “fountain of all spiritual good to our souls.”<sup>24</sup> Christians have always emphasized the full humanity of Christ in his incarnation, but very few have gone to the lengths that Simeon did in identifying that humanity with Jewishness. Yet Simeon had no hesitation in doing so or in drawing from that identification the conclusion that Christian indifference to Jews is “highly criminal.”<sup>25</sup> The fact that God was punishing them for their rebellion against him was,

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 392–93.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 2:391.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1924 on Romans 15:26–27,” in *Horae Homileticae* 15:561–77.

<sup>24</sup> Simeon, “Outline no. 224 on Deuteronomy 30:4–6,” in *Horae Homileticae* 2:440.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1066 on Jeremiah 30:17,” in *Horae Homileticae* 9:191.

for Simeon, no excuse for Christians to turn a blind eye to their fate. On the contrary, their tragic circumstances ought to act as a spur for Christians to reach out to Jews in love and do everything in their power to alleviate their sufferings.

Simeon was not indifferent to the civil status of the Jews in England, and he was ashamed that when Parliament had tried to relieve them, the outcry was so great—from Christian believers as well as from the religiously indifferent—that it was forced to backtrack on the legislation, which (as he remarked) “did nothing more than concede to them the common rights of humanity, the rights possessed by the meanest beggars in the land.”<sup>26</sup> He knew that there was little he could do to change the civil status of Jews, but to him, their spiritual condition was more important, and in that realm the church was free to act.<sup>27</sup> Jewish emancipation would come when Christians overcame their indifference to the spiritual welfare of God’s ancient people. There had been some attempts to address this problem, including the founding of a society for the conversion of the Jews, but the results had been patchy.<sup>28</sup> In Simeon’s opinion, the sins of his fellow Christians were nowhere more apparent than in their reactions to these serious attempts at evangelism among the Jewish people:

Instead of rejoicing, that now, at last, a society has arisen to seek their welfare, we regard their attempts as visionary; and are disposed rather to deride their efforts, than to afford them our active and zealous aid. Instead of praying fervently to God for this people in secret, and then going forth to exert ourselves for the conversion of their souls, we give them not so much as a place in our thoughts.<sup>29</sup>

The sinfulness of this indifference was all the more striking in that we Christians were once in a more deplorable state than Jews had ever been. For however mistaken or rebellious Jews might be, they had always worshiped the one true God. In sharp contrast, Gentiles of every kind had been bowing down to “stocks and stones.”<sup>30</sup> To call on Jews to turn to Christ was

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1066 on Jeremiah 30:17,” in *Horae Homileticae* 9:194. Simeon was referring to the Jewish Naturalisation Act of 1753, which was repealed a year later. The cause of Jewish emancipation did not begin again in earnest until the very last years of Simeon’s life and did not succeed until more than twenty years after his death.

<sup>27</sup> Simeon was alive to the danger that Jews might mistake the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament as promising them an earthly empire, something that was not God’s purpose concerning them. See Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1746 on Acts 3:26,” in *Horae Homileticae* 14:285.

<sup>28</sup> The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, founded in 1809.

<sup>29</sup> Simeon, “Outline no. 1066 on Jeremiah 30:17,” in *Horae Homileticae* 9:195.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:199.



not to call them away from such idolatry to the worship of the true God but rather to urge them to worship the God they already knew—in the right way. He was very clear about this:

We do not call our Jewish brethren *from* Jehovah, but *to* him .... Instead of calling them *from* the law, we call them *to* it .... We go further, and say, that no human being can be saved, who has not a perfect obedience to that law as his justifying righteousness.<sup>31</sup>

Having established that fundamental point, Simeon then went on to explain why the Christian gospel was necessary. Nobody can keep the law in all its particulars, as the apostle Paul had pointed out. Beyond that, however, there was the fact that the destruction of traditional Israelite society had made even an attempt to observe the ceremonial law of Moses impossible. The only way out of this dilemma was to recognize that the prophecies of the Old Testament had been fulfilled in Christ at a time when that was still possible and that faith in him had superseded the dispensations of the old covenant without altering their underlying meaning. In Simeon's words,

We call you only from shadows to the substance. We call you to Christ as uniting in himself all that the ceremonial law was intended to shadow forth. He is the true tabernacle, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.<sup>32</sup>

To put it a different way, Christian missions to Gentile nations called them to turn from their false worship of false gods, but when addressing Jews, the plea was that they should turn from a mistaken worship of the true God to the way that had been opened up in Christ. Jews were not being asked to abandon any of the truths of their religion; rather, they were being urged to see its true nature. "In no place under heaven, but in Zion, is holiness found."<sup>33</sup> That holiness, Simeon pointed out, was "a real conformity of heart and life to the revealed will of God." The message had been entrusted to Christians, but its focus was unmistakable—only in Zion, with the restoration of God's ancient people, would its power and potential be fully and finally realized. It was the sacred duty of Christians to do all in their power to bring that about, and the way open to them was the preaching of the gospel of Christ to the Jews from whom it had originally come and to whom it ultimately belonged.

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<sup>31</sup> Simeon, "Outline no. 206 on Deuteronomy 13:1–3," in *Horae Homileticae* 2:353.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:355.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1197 on Obadiah 1:17," in *Horae Homileticae* 10:248.

#### IV. *The Conversion of the Jews*

Simeon believed that before the restoration of Israel would occur, there would be a progressive work of conversion among the Jewish people to Christianity. Christians had no excuse to wait for God to act at the end of time—it was their duty to reach out to their elder brothers in the faith of Abraham and share the good news of Christ with them. He was aware that many Christians thought that such an effort was hopeless—that the Jews are now so blinded and hardened against the gospel that it is pointless to attempt their conversion. To that he replied,

whose fault is it that they are so blinded and hardened? Is it not ours? If Christians had universally displayed in their life and conversation the superior excellence of their religion, is there not reason to think, that the Jews might by this time have been led to view it in a more favourable light?<sup>34</sup>

Today, even more than two hundred years ago, Simeon's reproach to his fellow Christians strikes a painful but undeniable chord. The experience of the Holocaust in the mid-twentieth century, which was but the ghastly culmination of centuries of discrimination against the Jewish people, is a blot on the conscience of the church that cannot be ignored and that constitutes a barrier to evangelism among them that is all the more formidable for being based on experience. If Christians are known by their love, then Jewish people have seen precious little of it, and Simeon's rebukes are as powerful now as they were when they were first uttered.

That said, evangelism among the Jews has never been rooted in the behavior of Christians, but in the message they are called to bring, and that is readily available in the New Testament. Making it available to Jews, Simeon believed, was one of the primary tasks of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. It must be admitted that there is a certain lack of realism in Simeon's approach to this subject, but the intention is clear enough. In his words, "The translating of the New Testament into pure Biblical Hebrew, and circulating that throughout all the world, is a work which we in particular ... shall do well to encourage."<sup>35</sup> That the work of converting the Jews would be slow and difficult, Simeon did not doubt. Preaching on the subject in 1821, he acknowledged that the results obtained by the London Society, which he had helped to found twelve years

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<sup>34</sup> Simeon, "Outline no. 1924 on Romans 15:26–27," in *Horae Homileticae* 15:573.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:576.

earlier, had been less impressive than many at that time had hoped. But that did not dampen his enthusiasm:

We have sent forth a few missionaries amongst them ... and they have, in many instances, been most kindly received by the Jews; who, instead of rejecting the offer of the Hebrew Testament ... have most gladly and thankfully received it; and indeed, have expressed the most ardent desire to obtain it. They have shown a great willingness, also, to be instructed in the knowledge of Christianity; and, to a very great extent, have they shaken off the yoke of Rabbinical tyranny and Talmudical superstition: so that, when we shall be able to send forth amongst them a larger number of well-instructed missionaries, there is every reason to hope that the light of Divine Truth will arise upon them.<sup>36</sup>

What are we to make of this? It is quite possible that some Jews, at least, were polite to the Christian missionaries and thanked them for their gift of the Hebrew New Testament, but that is not the same thing as demonstrating a willingness to be instructed in Christianity. That a few were converted is certainly true, but as Simeon himself remarked elsewhere in the same sermon, the results were disappointing. The upheavals of the Napoleonic wars had led to a spread of Enlightenment ideas that affected Jews as much as others, and no doubt some were indeed casting off their inherited rabbinic traditions, but the same thing was happening in “Christian” circles and would hardly be considered a sign that divine truth was spreading. Some Jewish families were adopting Christianity in its liberal bourgeois form in order to assimilate into broader European society—the family of Karl Marx (born in 1818) among them. But again, that can hardly be counted as a widespread or deep reception of the gospel. Perhaps the fairest judgment is that for those like Simeon, who wanted to see them, encouraging signs of a movement toward Christianity among the Jews could be detected here and there, but they had little long-term significance. Simeon was right not to be unduly discouraged after only twelve years of missionary labor, but it is hard not to believe that he was being unduly optimistic in his predictions for the immediate future. He never gave up hope for the eventual conversion of the entire Jewish people, but realistically, he read the Old Testament prophecies as telling us that “the first converts will be only a small remnant, a gleaning after the gathering has been made.” Quoting Isaiah 10:22, he said that only a remnant of the people would return, though he added that with respect to the complete ingathering that would ultimately follow, they would be the firstfruits of the harvest, and the drop before the shower.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1262 on Zechariah 14:7,” in *Horae Homileticae* 10:544–45.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 899 on Isaiah 27:12–13,” in *Horae Homileticae* 8:13.

Perhaps his most mature reflection on the subject is what we find in his sermon on Psalm 102:13–15, where he states,

We cannot, it is true, boast of thousands converted at once: nor were the efforts of John, and of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, very successful ... but the seed sown by him grew up on the day of Pentecost and brought forth fruit an hundredfold: in like manner we have only fruit sufficient at present to encourage our continued exertions; but we hope that Pentecostal fruits will yet be found, and that too at no distant period.<sup>38</sup>

What we now witness in individual cases will then be proclaimed on a massive scale to the wonderment of the world and the eternal glory of God. Conversion would come slowly, but Simeon did not believe that the church should sit idly by and wait for a miracle to occur. To justify this approach, he preached a series of sermons on Ezekiel 37, the famous vision of the valley of the dry bones. In the first of these, he recognized the dire spiritual condition of the Jews of his time and pointed out that they had been prejudiced by their own leaders against the claims of Christ. At the first mention of Jesus, the average Jew would instinctively recoil in horror, and the rabbinic establishment could be relied upon to stoke the flames of prejudice against the man whom they claimed was an imposter. Christian evangelists should have no illusions about this—dry bones would not naturally hear the word of the Lord because there was no life in them.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, Ezekiel had been commanded to speak to the dry bones and prophesy their future restoration to life, and it was on that basis that Simeon advocated evangelism to the Jews of his time. The latter part of his sermon was given over to developing a strategy for accomplishing the task that was thus assigned to the church of his day. The first and in many ways most important element of this task was the need for constant and fervent prayer. In his words,

Were the Christian world more earnest in prayer to God for the restoration and salvation of his people, I feel no doubt but that God would arise and have mercy upon Zion, and that a great work would speedily be wrought among them.<sup>40</sup>

The second thing was the need to form missionary societies dedicated to the evangelization of the Jews, something that he himself had been involved in.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 670 on Psalm 102:13–15,” in *Horae Homileticae* 6:200–201.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Simeon, “Outline no. 1120 on Ezekiel 37:1–6,” in *Horae Homileticae* 9:448–63.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:463.

And lastly, the aim of converting Jews to Christianity must not be the achievement of some nominal conformity of outward forms, but a genuine movement of the heart and mind to a living faith in Christ. The important thing for him was not that the dry bones should be arranged into a presentable skeleton but that they should live by acquiring the flesh and blood that a living organism would naturally have.<sup>41</sup> That this would be a gradual development, Simeon believed, was indicated in the text that he was expounding, though it must be admitted that the means he advocated to attain it are not mentioned in Ezekiel's prophecy.

## V. *The Future Restoration of Israel*

Closely linked to the conversion of the Jews in Simeon's mind was the future restoration of Israel as a civil polity in the promised land. He admitted that there were many wise and learned Christian theologians who did not believe that, but although that made him more cautious than he might otherwise have been, it did not deter him. In his words,

There are even amongst wise and good men some who doubt whether the Jews shall *literally* be restored to their own land; and therefore I would speak with diffidence respecting it: but I confess that in my opinion the declarations of God respecting it are so strong and numerous, that I should scarcely know what to believe on the authority of Scripture, if I did not believe that.<sup>42</sup>

Interestingly, Simeon believed that this restoration would include all twelve tribes of the ancient Israelite state, reaching back to the time when they were united under David and Solomon. Given that the ten "lost" tribes of the northern kingdom had apparently disappeared, it is hard to know how they would be reunited with the remnants of Judah and Benjamin, who made up the Jewish nation of Simeon's day, and Simeon had no clue as to how that might occur. Nevertheless, it appeared to be what Ezekiel prophesied, and Simeon had no doubt that it would happen, however difficult it might be for our minds to conceive.<sup>43</sup>

Simeon envisaged the miraculous character of Israel's restoration as an integral part of the millennial reign of Christ. The subject of the millennium

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 9:463–64.

<sup>42</sup> Simeon, "Outline no. 899 on Isaiah 27:12–13," in *Horae Homileticae* 8:11. The same thought is repeated, in almost identical words, in Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1069 on Jeremiah 31:7–9," in *Horae Homileticae* 9:215.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1122 on Ezekiel 37:15–22," in *Horae Homileticae* 9:468–75.

was enjoying a revival in Simeon's day, with an increasing emphasis on the literal fulfillment of prophecy. Simeon did not go into the subtleties of what we would call premillennialism, but of the reality of the millennial reign he had no doubt. Moreover, he believed that it was set out in some detail by the prophet Micah, who (along with Isaiah, whose vision he shared) was one of the chief sources of messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. As Simeon expounded it, the millennium

shall be the time for the universal reign of Christ: at which time the Jews are destined to act a most conspicuous part upon the theatre of the world: being, on the one hand, God's instruments for the conversion of the Gentile world; and, on the other hand, his agents for the destruction of all who shall oppose his will.<sup>44</sup>

Simeon was also inspired in his millenarian expectations by the prophecies of Zechariah, though he admitted that they were particularly difficult to interpret correctly. Unlike Isaiah or Micah, Zechariah was living at a time when the Jews were returning from Babylon and rebuilding their temple in Jerusalem. The restoration of Israel had an immediacy for him that could not be overlooked, and much of what he had to say could be applied to the circumstances of his own time. However, Simeon was clear that Zechariah's vision went far beyond what his contemporaries were achieving. For a start, like Ezekiel before him, Zechariah saw the restoration of Israel as embracing all twelve tribes when it was clear that what he was witnessing was the return of Judah and Benjamin only. Also, the Jews who returned to Jerusalem were not particularly pious, and the prophecy that they would be a blessing to the world was not fulfilled. On the contrary, claimed Simeon, the Jews in the time of Jesus were universally reviled, and apart from the work of Christ and his apostles, whom they rejected, were a blessing to nobody.<sup>45</sup> To Simeon, that could only mean that the fulfillment of the prophecy still lay in the future, and he therefore interpreted it in line with his millenarian expectations.

Confirmation for that view came above all from Romans 11, where the eschatological dimension of Jewish restoration could not be mistaken or denied. The alienation of the Jews would continue until the fullness of the Gentiles had been gathered in, at which point their conversion to Christ would come swiftly and suddenly. With the whole world watching them, they would experience the truth and importance of the gospel and become

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<sup>44</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1217 on Micah 7:18–20," in *Horae Homileticae* 10:341.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1249 on Zechariah 8:3–8," in *Horae Homileticae* 10:482.

preachers of it, as they had been in the days of the apostles. Then, and only then, would the final restoration of Israel become a reality.<sup>46</sup>

For modern readers of Simeon, the thing that strikes us the most is his unwavering faith in the restoration of the Jews to their ancient promised land. In his day, that land had been under Islamic domination for over a thousand years, apart from the brief episode of the Crusades, and there was no sign that things would ever change in that respect. Simeon could not have known that international politics would lead to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, that a small group of Zionist Jews would emigrate to Palestine and form the nucleus of a future state, and that the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe would create a climate in which sympathy for the victims would overshadow the claims of the inhabitants of the land and allow for the mass immigration that produced the State of Israel in 1948. For many Christians at the time, that event was a clear fulfillment of prophecy, and it is still a prominent theme in many Evangelical Christian circles. Would Simeon, one of the leading exponents of Evangelicalism in his time, have concurred with that analysis?

We cannot go back two hundred years and ask him about that, but his words of caution on the prophecies of Zechariah perhaps give us a clue as to what he would say today. The establishment of the modern State of Israel is undoubtedly as improbable a historical event as the return of the exiles from Babylon was, and Simeon would have concurred in the assessment that it is a modern-day miracle. Like the returning exiles from Babylon, modern Jews have built a state in Palestine that is generally recognized as Jewish. At the same time, it is a far cry from the eschatological vision of the Old Testament prophets. Israelis are not particularly pious, their state is secular, and the religious elements among them are legalistic and obscurantist. Their neighbors are not attracted to them—on the contrary, they do all in their power to get rid of them. Modern Israel survives because it is supported by powerful interests outside the country. If those interests weaken or turn their attention elsewhere, the country may well be doomed.

Comparisons with the past do not so much point to the ancient kingdom of David and Solomon as to the Crusader states, which were seen as an alien intrusion and which lasted barely two hundred years before they were eventually extinguished. Will modern Israel go the same way? Will those who see it as the fulfillment of prophecy be forced to admit that they were mistaken and that the state we see today is nothing but a false caricature of what the Bible predicts? These are questions to which there is no answer,

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<sup>46</sup> Charles Simeon, "Outline no. 1895 on Romans 11:11–12," in *Horae Homileticae* 15:416.

but Simeon's spiritual vision of the future would certainly allow him to consider that possibility and advocate caution. That Israel's destiny awaits its fulfillment he would have no doubt, but that the present State of Israel incarnates that destiny would be less certain. He might perhaps accept that Israel may yet turn back to God and fulfill the promise of the ancient prophecies now that it has returned to its homeland—we cannot say. For Simeon, the ultimate plan of God was clear but ultimately inscrutable—the times and seasons of its fulfillment remained beyond the ability of mere human minds to understand.



# Anglicanism in Africa: History, Identity, and Mission

EMMANUEL A. S. EGBUNU

## Abstract

A *historical perspective* is a vital part of insight into Anglicanism in Africa. This article assesses the role of missionaries when colonialists and missionaries were often perceived as collaborators. Further, the African nations' struggle for independence impacted issues of *identity* and enculturation, so it offers a review of the place of African cultural and religious practices in this new faith, including the place of the uneducated in a seemingly elite religion and how addressing this necessitated liturgical renewal and other adaptations. Finally, it will look at the Anglican *mission* in African societies in relation to leadership, injustice, poverty, disease, secularization, and a restive youth population and highlight African Anglicans' response to Western revisionist tendencies and redefinitions of gender and family.

## Keywords

*Anglicanism, bishop, colonialism, historical perspective, identity, Kikuyu Conference, East African Revival, missionary*

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**A**nglicanism in Africa is a broad subject that must necessarily include the major dimensions that make it intelligible. While some have approached it from regional or contemporary perspectives, this article provides a survey of the key aspects of Anglicanism in Africa along three fronts: the history, the identity question, and the mission. In so doing, it will compress vast periods of time to remain within a reasonable size.

Africa's encounter with Christianity has been categorized into four broad periods: Christian Antiquity in the northern half of Africa (CE 62–1500), Christianity in the Ancient African Kingdoms (1400–1800), the foundation of modern Christianity (1792–1918), and twentieth-century Christianity.<sup>1</sup> The advent of Protestant and missionary societies in Africa was significant, and John Baur has observed, “The most important new ingredient that helped foster modern Christianity in Africa is Protestantism. For half a century (1792–1842), Protestant missionaries were practically alone in the field, and until that great nineteenth century ended with World War I, Protestant missionaries were far more numerous than Catholic ones.”<sup>2</sup>

Besides North Africa, which stands out as the front-liner in the encounter with Christianity, it can be rightly asserted that in many parts of Africa, Anglicanism was among the first forms of Christianity introduced. It is helpful to understand Anglicanism in Africa from several perspectives: the missionary encounter, the colonial complications, and the response stage, during which issues of identity and mission became apparent and inescapable.

## **I. Historical Perspectives**

The spread of the Anglican Church from a national to a worldwide denomination was a consequence of various factors besides missionary zeal. In the case of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, it was a result of persecution, while political assertiveness and the struggle for independence explains the emergence of the Church in the American colonies and African provinces.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded in 1799 as a result of the Evangelical revival, which was characterized by an unflinching commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as the word of God. Equally important was the earlier founding of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) by Dr. Thomas Bray in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in 1701.

<sup>1</sup> John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 7–12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

As needs arose in the British colonies for gospel impact and social transformation, these societies swung into action, bringing about the birth of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). Their ministry soon extended to West Africa through the Rev. T. Thompson, who went to the Gold Coast (Ghana), with the lasting legacy of his ministry being the education and ordination of Philip Quaque as “the first of any non-European race since the Reformation to receive Anglican orders.”<sup>3</sup> Anglicanism in Africa is therefore the story of the fruit of mission by these societies. Along with other mission churches like the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), which was an offshoot of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM),<sup>4</sup> the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM), the Methodist and Presbyterian missions, and a few others, the Anglican Church had a distinctly foreign identity.

### 1. *The West Coast*

The search for a suitable place for the resettlement efforts following the abolition of the slave trade found Freetown, Sierra Leone, a favorable location in West Africa. Despite the unexpected difficulties with the unwilling and hostile local chiefs, who were determined to continue with the lucrative slave trade, the intervention of the British government gave Sierra Leone a new status as a crown colony in 1804, and with that status a naval base was set up for the Royal Navy to enforce the new law against the slave trade. Gradually, the reputation of tropical Africa as the dreaded “white man’s grave” gave way to the same region becoming “the black man’s life.”<sup>5</sup> A groundbreaking initiative by the CMS was the establishment in 1827 of the Fourah Bay College, where several catechists and teachers were trained to become the workforce for the evangelization of the West African coast. From this early effort, the former slave boy, Adjai Crowther, set free by the British naval patrol on the West Coast, *was found* suitable for training and eventual presentation for ordination by the Bishop of London on June 11, 1843. On December 2 of that year, “the black man who had been crowned a minister” (as the Sierra Leoneans described him) preached in Sierra Leone to a packed and enthusiastic audience, also administering the Lord’s Supper to a large number of communicants.<sup>6</sup> He was among the earliest

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>4</sup> ECWA used to be known as the Evangelical Church in West Africa, an attempt at indigenization by the Sudan Interior Mission.

<sup>5</sup> Eugene Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 1:156.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1:457–58.

CMS missionaries to introduce Christianity to Nigeria through the Yoruba mission, working alongside Henry Townsend, a British missionary.

As the English-speaking colonies geared up for political independence, it was important that the churches be not left behind. Ecclesiastical provinces were created in Africa to allow for some form of structure, spiritual affinity, and cohesion. In 1951, the Province of West Africa was inaugurated (comprising the dioceses of Accra, Lagos, On the Niger, Sierra Leone, and Gambia/Guinea), followed in 1955 by the Ecclesiastical Province of Central Africa.

Ghana, then called the Gold Coast, had as its first missionary the Rev. Nathaniel Temple Hamlin, who had been a CMS missionary in Nigeria. According to John Pobee, “The Anglican tradition in Ghana grew out of the SPG mission endeavors in Africa in the eighteenth century but more energetically in the twentieth century.” This, he believes, has given the Anglican Church in Ghana such a strong flavor of high churchmanship that Ghana is said to represent “one of the vestiges of raw Anglo-Catholicism in the world.”<sup>7</sup>

## ***2. East Africa: The Kikuyu Conference and the East African Revival***

The Anglican Church was introduced in East Africa by the Rev. Dr. Johann Ludwig Krapf in 1844, who persevered despite the loss of his wife and children in the process. Yet he remained unflinching, with the result that he lived to see great results of his mission in Africa. Even though the British Protectorate of Uganda (1894–1962) had as many as eight hundred thousand baptized Christians in eight dioceses within the same general period, political difficulties prevented the three territories of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika from becoming one province.

As the church grew in East Africa, there were problems with order. An arrangement had been made to share areas of concentration or spheres of interest within which to confine missionary efforts by the societies to avoid duplication of efforts in view of the lean resources of the missions. As social change necessitated movement to urban centers, there was a need for migrating converts to find welcoming congregations, even if they were different from what they were used to in their home areas. Growth sometimes comes with unforeseen challenges, and this situation was no exception. The CMS, which was the first to establish effective mission stations in neutral centers such as Mombasa, Nairobi, and Kisumu, ran into other pastoral

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<sup>7</sup> John S. Pobee, *The Anglican Story in Ghana: From Mission Beginnings to Province of Ghana* (Accra: Amanda, 2009), 28–29.

problems that called for cooperation between different missions. The search for a solution brought unintended complications, as catechists dismissed by one mission for misbehavior would be engaged by another a few miles away, often at a higher salary than what they had lost. Christians under discipline from one denomination would transfer their allegiance to another. Adherents of the American “gospel” missions would ask to be received by Anglicans or Presbyterians, who offered superior facilities for education.<sup>8</sup>

That situation needed to be addressed urgently. The most important attempt to do so was the move toward a federation of Protestant missions that would welcome these African Christians who migrated from rural areas in search of better living conditions and job opportunities opened up by the establishment of the railway. J. J. Willis, a CMS missionary who later became Bishop of Uganda, proposed a way forward to emphasize the gospel and liturgical affinity of the mission churches rather than allowing room for strife:

No unnecessary differences should be allowed to become habitual among African Christians; ... on the contrary, the edification of these Churches should proceed “upon converging lines,” through the recognition by all missions of a single standard for Church membership, a single code of discipline, a common attitude towards certain native customs, a common form of simple worship which could be used with sufficient frequency for it to become familiar to all African Christians, and similar courses of training for African ministers based upon a common recognition of the Scripture and the Creeds.<sup>9</sup>

Rather unfortunately, the intentions that welcomed the proposal for a federation of churches and service of Holy Communion in a Presbyterian church at which Bishop William G. Peel of Mombassa and Bishop John J. Willis of Uganda (as Anglicans) presided and non-Anglican received communion were misconstrued. Frank Weston, the neighboring Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar, imputed heresy charges to this effort, and this generated much heat that stalled this otherwise noble venture. Further progress was limited to broad issues devoid of doctrinal and ecclesiastical controversies, necessitating the establishment of “a body in which different missionary organizations would cooperate in certain activities ... a body that would allow common representation to government and united activity in providing educational and health services.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Archdeacon M. G. Capon, “History of Christian Cooperation in Kenya,” quoted in Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, 1970), 225.

<sup>9</sup> Oliver, *Missionary Factor*, 225.

<sup>10</sup> Colin Reed, “Denominationalism or Protestantism? Mission Strategy and Church in the Kikuyu Conference of 1913,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 37.4 (October 2013): 207–12.

The most outstanding feature of Christianity in East Africa is what became known as the East African Revival in Kigali, Rwanda, and Burundi. Missionaries in the CMS Rwanda Mission, such as Dr. Joe Church, who served as a medical missionary for forty years, were critical of this growth. “As a lay medical missionary of the Church Missionary Society, Joe Church had a strong loyalty to the mission which sponsored him and to the ‘Native Anglican Church,’ the Church of Uganda,”<sup>11</sup> even though there were tensions between the mission and the church. A witness of the revival describes its flavor:

My own first and strongest impressions of the revival came to me through working with an English colleague, one Jean Ely, who arrived hotfoot from Uganda to join me when I became Principal of the then new CMS Training College, Crowther Hall, at Selly Oak in Birmingham. She turned out to be a startlingly challenging colleague. From the outset, she applied what I discovered later was the revival practice of asking if she could be “in the light” with me, which invariably meant confronting me directly with one or more of my many failings. I would apologise and thus win through to complete reinstatement. At moments of confrontation, Jean led us into frequent moments of prayer. Friends of hers, Africans or Europeans influenced by the revival, who came to visit the college, adopted the same approach .... I found the process, of a kind of continuous confession and absolution, humbling, and yet at times, quite edifying .... They opened up to me a depth of relationship with God and with the other person in the presence of God, which moved me.<sup>12</sup>

The prominent Anglican leaders at this time were Archbishop Erica Sabot, Archbishop Janani Luwum, Bishop Misaeri Karma, and Bishop Festo Kivengere, among others. As the heat of President Idi Amin’s tyranny increased and it seemed clear that Archbishop Luwum’s life was in danger, the suggestion was made that the CMS could arrange his evacuation to the UK. His response shows the strength of conviction in these Christian leaders at the time: “Eight and twenty years ago the Lord did a work in my heart, and he has been doing that same work every day since. I would be untrue to Him if I left my people now”<sup>13</sup> (quite reminiscent of Polycarp’s “eighty and six years have I served him ...” [Mart. Pol. 9.3]).

### 3. South Africa

The Anglican Church in South Africa has had a complex history, given the multiplicity of prior missionary efforts by the Dutch Reformed Church,

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<sup>11</sup> Kevin Ward, “Revival, Mission and Church in Kigali, Rwanda and Burundi: A Complex Relationship,” in *The East African Revival: History and Legacies*, ed. Kevin Ward and Emma Wild-Wood (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 12.

<sup>12</sup> Simon Barrington-Ward, “The Revival Through CMS Eyes: Potential and Limitations,” in *East African Revival*, ed. Ward and Wild-Wood, 77.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

the Lutherans, the Moravians, the London Missionary Society, and the Wesleyan Methodists. The first Bishop of Cape Town was Robert Gray, and by 1876 the constitution of the Province of South Africa was adopted. The Anglican Church's first mission to the Africans was in 1854 among the Xhosa tribe, and by 1872, when Bishop Grey died, there were six Anglican dioceses served by 127 pastors.<sup>14</sup> As the work expanded beyond Cape Town, Grahamstown was chosen as the headquarters of South Africa's second diocese. The greatest hindrance to the work in this region was the social upheavals such as intertribal wars and racial prejudice. There has been an appreciable Anglican presence in these six countries: South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique.

## **II. *Identity: Faith and Culture in Contest***

### **1. *The Colonial Context***

While the English colonists and merchants supplemented the efforts of the missionaries wherever they went, the stranglehold of parliamentary consent for every little decision of the Anglican Church—even in distant climes—was becoming increasingly absurd. An experience that illustrates this impression came up at a Lausanne Theology and Education group meeting held at Willowbank, Bermuda, in 1978, where the theme was “Theology and Culture.” John Stott, the acclaimed twentieth-century evangelical leader in the Anglican Communion, recalls how at one point, some of the theologians from the developing world accused him of English imperialism for trying to impose what they called “Westminster parliamentary procedure” on Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans “whose cultural ways of discussion and reaching consensus are more leisurely and more emotional.”<sup>15</sup>

Anglicanism as a major aspect of Christianity in Africa is a story of religious and cultural encounters that soon metamorphosed into an inevitable contest of identity. Missionary Christianity was seen as a foreign religion in a foreign cultural garb that was a threat to the local context. As the implications of the encounter opened up unforeseen dimensions, issues of identity and contextualization (or enculturation) took center stage. This was sometimes expressed in the form of nationalistic movements for independence or the emergence of African independent churches that predated the advent of Pentecostalism on Africa's religious scene.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa* (Bukuru, Plateau State, Nigeria: African Christian Textbooks, 1997), 165.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 225.

The intricacies of trying to transplant a national church such as the Church of England on foreign soil continued to loom large. Henry Venn, during his tenure as CMS secretary (1841–1877), sought to address this challenge by articulating into the missionary agenda what became popularized as the “three-selves” principle. In it he saw the missionary preaching of the gospel to the natives as only the beginning and the foreign missionary presence as the “scaffolding,” while he envisaged a time when the native church would have become mature enough to become self-propagating, self-financing, and self-governing; then the presence of the foreign missionary would become unnecessary, and he could move on to other regions. This he called the “euthanasia of the mission.”<sup>16</sup> Of course, it was an ideal that met with unforeseen hurdles that threatened the very survival of the mission in places like the Niger Mission in West Africa. So, even though the first bishoprics overseas were all “created under acts of Parliament and by letters patent from the Crown,”<sup>17</sup> it became increasingly clear that the Church of England could not exist in exactly the same way on foreign soil.

Essentially, Anglicanism thrives on its identity as an organization that blends the traditional and the Reformed traditions—the *via media*. It has been the middle way between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, making room for a diversity of Christian expressions that can hold together both extreme and flexible views. In seeking to maintain unity within considerable diversity, the traditional elasticity of Anglicanism has come under strain in recent years. The nature of compromise is being scrutinized by other parts of the Anglican Communion.

Of course, it arrived in English garb and was seen as both an evangelistic and civilizing mission. It had to justify its appearance either as a transplanting of the Anglican tradition of the Christian faith or as a supplanting of the African religious and cultural milieu—or both, depending on the particular situation. That the missionary heralds of Anglicanism were compatriots of the colonial imperialists exposed them to the charge of contradictory motives. The usually voluntary outlook of religion became confused with the mandatory face of imperialism.

For much of its existence, the most visible challenge of the Anglican Church in Africa—as, indeed, much of Christianity in modern Africa—is that of identity. The issues of identity have seen the Anglican Church in Africa

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<sup>16</sup> Wilbert Shenk, *Henry Venn: Missionary Statesman* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 119.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Neil, ed., *Twentieth Century Christianity: A Survey of Modern Religious Trends by Leading Churchmen* (London: Collins, 1961), 120.



pass through a kind of metamorphosis. It has struggled to be disentangled and weaned from the apron strings of the Church of England (viewed by some as a colonial church) to be a church in which God was reaching out to the unique challenges of the indigenous setting in the larger context of human depravity. Pobee writes, “The Anglican Church in Ghana need not express things in ways identical to the style of the Church of England.”<sup>18</sup>

While the church in Africa can rejoice in its appropriation of Isaiah’s prophecy that “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone” (Isa 9:2 ESV), it has had to continually redefine just what “deep darkness” in the African religious experience must be discarded and query the authenticity and superiority of the new values that are to take their place. Even in the seminaries from which the leadership has come, the challenge of theological identity and relevance has been an ever-present enigma that is now being consciously addressed:

It has come as a rude shock to many African church leaders that the Western curriculum of our seminaries needs to be revised to address the burning issues in our experience. What would Christ do if he were in our setting? For quite a long time that curriculum was patterned after Western priorities without discernment or question. So we turned out ministers who did not know where the people were itching!<sup>19</sup>

Some specific aspects are worth highlighting here.

## **2. Baptism and Music**

The Anglican Church’s practice of infant baptism finds affinity with African communal life, wherein young and old are included in religious expressions. Yet a point of conflict in the early years was the practice (by some missionaries) of discarding meaningful African names, which were considered pagan, for “Christian” names that sometimes were simply English names that had no meaning to the converts. So there were many converts bearing not only Bible (Jewish or Greek) names but also names like George, Franklin, Anne, Annabel, Robert, Jones, Macaulay, Dandeson, Davies, Francis, Justina, and Faustina. It is therefore common to find that most African Anglicans have middle names that enable them to retain their identity along with their surnames. Indeed, a good number of them use their middle names more than their foreign baptismal names. The protest of the famous Kenyan

<sup>18</sup> Pobee, *Anglican Story*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Emmanuel Egbunu, “To Teach, Baptise, and Nurture New Believers (i),” in *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, ed. Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008), 25–36.

novelist who started out as James Ngugi—and formally changed his name to Ngugi wa Thiongo in 1977—is a case in point.

Similarly, the language and instruments of worship that expressed the depths of the native consciousness went through times of conflict. The preconversion language of worship for local deities in the local shrines had to be directed to the worship of the Christian God, and the instruments previously employed in native worship were now banned in the churches as being occult. Ngugi again speaks about this in relation to his resolve to strengthen his commitment to Kenyan culture by writing in Gikuyu or Swahili rather than English, which was a foreign language:

Language is a carrier of a people's culture; culture is a carrier of a people's values; values are the basis of a people's self-definition—the basis of their consciousness. And when you destroy a people's language, you are destroying that very important aspect of their heritage ... you are in fact destroying that which helps them to define themselves ... that which embodies their collective memory as a people.<sup>20</sup>

Worship in native styles remains most natural for African Anglicans. The liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer and the well-composed literary expressions of the European hymns and the musical rhythms required an appreciable level of intellectual ability and a radical adjustment to these new forms. The Anglican Church came with classical anthems and church organs, and wedding attire like suits and wedding gowns, which made it a church for the elite and estranged the uneducated and rural converts. What passed for solemnity in the hymns composed in the West generally did not reach the same soul-stirring depths as when the same theological truths were put into indigenous composition and vibrantly performed with a jubilant spirit accompanied by typical African rhythms and dance. The grandeur of organ music remains mostly the expression of elite city congregations.

Confirmation services required a high level of literacy to grasp the teachings of the catechism. Often, converts memorized responses such as the decalogue, the creeds (especially the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds), or the Lord's Prayer in English or in the dominant language of that region (that could be as strange as English to some of the adherents). As some missionaries became sensitive to these needs, they spent time learning the languages and translating the Bible and worship resources into indigenous languages.

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<sup>20</sup> Hansel Hdumbe Eyoh, "Language as Carrier of People's Culture: An Interview with Ngugi wa Thiongo," *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 14.3 (1985): 156–60.

The affinity between certain Old Testament practices and African culture, such as polygamy and taboos or abominations, have played a role in the African Anglican response to issues of polygamy, concubinage, adultery, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions. At different times, the Lambeth Conference<sup>21</sup> has avoided dealing with these issues and instead left them to the pastoral discretion of the leaders in the context. On polygamy, for instance, as I have noted elsewhere,

A particularly radical, difficult and controversial demand of missionary Christianity was the idea of monogamy. ... [Polygamy] was a pillar of African religious, socio-economic worldview upon which so much was hinged. With many wives, a man had many children. It was indeed an indication of a man's stature in society in a manner akin to the Old Testament picture that the man who had his quiver full of children was like a happy and unashamed warrior who stood shoulder-high to face his enemies in the gate (Psalm 127:4–5) .... When missionary Christianity signaled monogamy as the biblical standard for their converts, those who fell short of the standard were barred from accessing the benefits of the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. While not all the converts could measure up to this standard, those who were engaged as native agents were required to comply.<sup>22</sup>

By the third Lambeth Conference held in 1888, the issue of polygamy among African Anglicans had received considerable attention as one requiring pastoral direction. At that conference, it was resolved:

That it is the opinion of this Conference that persons living in polygamy be not admitted to baptism, but may be accepted as candidates and kept under Christian instruction until such time as they shall be in a position to accept the law of Christ. That the wives of polygamists may, in the opinion of this Conference, be admitted in some cases to baptism, but that it must be left to the local authorities of the Church to decide under what circumstances they may be baptized.<sup>23</sup>

Subsequent conferences (1958, Resolution 120; 1988, Resolution 26; 2008, Resolution 114) revisited the matter with considerable consistency of resolve, prohibiting polygamists from leadership positions, especially Holy Orders, and advising that the limitations placed on women should be remedied by the Church by advancing their status in every way possible, especially in the

<sup>21</sup> The Lambeth Conference is the gathering of Anglican bishops from around the world approximately once in ten years (since 1867) to discuss matters of common concern. It is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury and recommends, but does not enforce, its resolutions.

<sup>22</sup> Emmanuel A. S. Egbunu, *Pathfinders for Christianity in Northern Nigeria, 1862–1940: Early CMS Activities in the Niger-Benue Confluence* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021), 123.

<sup>23</sup> “Lambeth Conference Resolutions Archive,” Anglican Communion, 1888, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127722/1888.pdf>.

sphere of education. In many ways Anglicanism in Africa remains the face of lingering colonialism and Western culture. The vestments of the clergy—and those of the judiciary and academic institutions—are vestiges of the colonial encounter with which the Anglican Church remains identified.

### **III. *Mission: The Task before the Anglican Church in Africa***

The missionary endeavor must give birth to a church and a theology that is relevant in its response to the burning issues in society. Andrew Walls has observed,

Theology springs out of mission; its true origins lie not in the study or the library, but from the need to make Christian decisions—decisions about what to do, and about what to think. Theology is the attempt to think in a Christian way, to make Christian intellectual choices. Its subject matter, therefore, its agenda, is culturally conditioned, arising out of the actual life situations of active Christians.<sup>24</sup>

Paternalism has assumed a larger dimension than necessary in view of increasing perspectives on enculturation. It is the posture adopted by some of the mission-sending provinces that the African converts must remain subservient to the missionaries and the church structures must always be dictated, vetted, or approved by the parent body, whether it is the Church of England or their accredited representatives. The idea of the “euthanasia of the mission,” which was not carried through during the missionary era, has persisted in other forms, sometimes inadvertently.

This is a two-sided issue. While the missionaries saw themselves as the trailblazers who set up the best standards in worship, ecclesiastical traditions (including vestments and attire for special occasions like weddings), Christian living, education, health care delivery, and agriculture, the indigenous Anglicans have felt sentenced to a lifetime of tutelage wherein their initiatives, however brilliant, can only be authenticated by the standards already established, without any room for innovation, independence, or enculturation. The best Christian books—including textbooks and commentaries—must only be those authored in the West; the best musical instruments must be only those imported from the West (e.g., pipe organs, guitars, other string and wind instruments, indeed even percussion instruments, as well as church bells). The implications of these are obvious and have been expressed in various ways. Seminaries and theological institutions have for

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew Walls, “Afterword: Christian Missions in a Five-hundred-year Context,” in *Mission in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Walls and Ross, 203.

a long time leaned on opinions held by the West, even on issues that are more naturally within the African worldview, including issues that border on occultic, diabolical, or negative spiritual manifestations such as witchcraft and the supernatural. This is not to suggest, of course, the absence of these in the societies of the West. But they were not factored into the curriculum or the missionary evangelistic package. This mindset produced clergy who were ill-equipped to deal with whatever did not fit into the Western worldview and syncretists who, in seeking relevant approaches in secret, did not know where to place acceptable boundaries. That has not changed very much in some parts of Africa.

This intellectualization and Westernization of the faith by the Anglican Church tended to exclude the greater mass of converts who were not educated. Consequently, the emergence of the African Instituted Churches held greater appeal for this group of people, for whom the faith had to be incarnate within their cultural milieu. They needed the reassurance that one could be African and Christian, even if not Anglican. This yawning gap in relevance constrained the Anglican churches in Africa to put them forward for wider discussions at the Lambeth Conference and to admit more indigenous aspects to authentic Anglicanism. The goal has been a blending of the respectability of the Anglican Church and the supposed primitiveness of indigenous practices. Of course, the constant caution is to review the dimensions of enculturation that started to take shape in the 1960s. The Church has since sought indigenous leadership and liturgical renewal and relevance without sliding into apostasy or syncretism.

### ***1. African Youth and Anglicanism***

Among the greatest challenges for Anglicanism is the need to adequately carry the youth along. Foreign influences from the increasingly secular West and urbanization have introduced many social changes that have become attractive to the youth population, prompting them to want to break away from the vestiges of colonialism that older denominations like the Anglican Church represent. The appeal of the digital age has been exploited by the Pentecostal congregations and in some places has resulted in the exodus of youth from the Anglican Church. A new middle class is emerging that needs to come to terms with the digital generation, and in this regard the Anglican churches are not front-liners. The Anglican Church in Africa is struggling to avoid becoming the church of the past and the older generation by making necessary adjustments to their structure. This has given expression to such groups as the Anglican Youth Fellowship and the Anglican Children's Ministry in the Church of Nigeria.

## **2. *The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion***

The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC), which had John Stott as a founding father, also spread to Africa. Provinces that had been founded through the efforts of the CMS—an Evangelical missionary society—and had been low Anglicans saw EFAC as a welcome Evangelical renewal that linked then with likeminded Anglicans around the world. Of course, its expression varied in different provinces (such as Nigeria, where it took a distinctly charismatic outlook). Even in the strange divisions of the South African situation, it showed positive potential when “in South Africa, the twin Evangelical Fellowships of the Church of England in South Africa and of the Church of the Province were both members of EFAC, suggesting a possible bridge towards some better future understanding.”<sup>25</sup> The lasting impact is in the EFAC bursary scheme, which became the model for the Langham Scholarship of later years, which provided for the training of Christian leaders and Evangelical scholars from the developing world. Other partnership initiatives, such as Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA), fostered ministry partnerships that enhanced a greater sense of oneness beyond region or race.

## **3. *The Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa***

The Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA) was established in 1979 in Chilema, Malawi, by the Anglican Primates of Africa with the aim of addressing the peculiar issues affecting the Church across the region. With a membership of fifteen Anglican provinces in twenty-six African countries, it had been the uniting platform for Anglican provinces until the controversies relating with the revisionist agenda of some provinces in the West brought a split that remains mostly unresolved. In its place the Global Anglican Future Conference has grown in prominence as the uniting body, though it is not limited to African Anglicans.

## **4. *The Global Anglican Future Conference***

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) came up formally in 2008 as a fellowship of Anglicans who felt they could not go along with the departures from biblical Christianity, especially in the core area of biblical orthodoxy, and the revisionist agenda by some provinces in the West in areas such as human sexuality, marriage, and family life. The key verse of this movement has been “contending for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The first conference was held in Jerusalem in 2008 at about the

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<sup>25</sup> Dudley-Smith, *Stott: A Global Ministry*, 152.

same time that the Lambeth Conference was to be held in England. Two more conferences have been held in Nairobi (2014) and again in Jerusalem (2018), with a greater resolve to walk apart from the compromised Anglican Communion. Among the leading provinces are the African Anglican provinces. The situation has caused much division and has remained unchanged.

Increasingly, the questions are being raised whether the relationship of the African Anglican—and indeed the African Christian—with the Christian God is a new discovery or a rediscovery of the unknown God that is latent in traditional religion. Is the African God one to be discarded or to be rediscovered? The thin line between this hidden God and the God revealed through the Christian faith must give way to a merger that welcomes the incarnate God into the African worldview.

Perhaps the unavoidable challenge facing the Anglican Church is the issue of the relevance of the Church to important social issues. Two major conferences have addressed these concerns, and the records articulate the issues succinctly. The first was in October 2004, when the first ever African Anglican Bishops Conference (AABC) was held in Lagos, Nigeria, bringing together over two hundred Anglican bishops with their wives. The theme was quite telling: “Africa Comes of Age: An Anglican Self-Evaluation.” The chairman of CAPA at the time, the Most Rev. Peter Akinola, told the World Press Conference just before the conference commenced,

After 160 years of existence, the Anglican church in Africa cannot claim to be an infant or an adolescent. It definitely has come of age and, of necessity, must be proactive in relating to the challenges that surrounded and start marshalling resources to deal with them. The church must develop collaborative efforts in dealing with various problems facing Africa and must be largely self-motivated and self-reliant in order to engender sustained progress. ... For the Anglican Church in Africa, it has been an eventful journey from the dawn of missionary encounter and subsequent blend of values as we sought to discern what should be smothered by that encounter and what should be allowed to survive. It has indeed been a discovery of Christian values and a rediscovery of our own place in God’s continual outreach to man.<sup>26</sup>

He went on to identify some of these challenges as poverty in the midst of plenty; diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria; the need for self-reliance under God; partnership and sharing of resources in Africa; holistic gospel proclamation; Anglican identity and spirituality; theological education; enculturation; the relationship between church and state; matters of justice and peace, such as war, ethnic cleansing, youth, and women in Africa; and

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<sup>26</sup> *Africa Comes of Age: An Anglican Self-Evaluation; The Official Report of the 1st African Anglican Bishops’ Conference* (Lagos, Nigeria: CSS Bookshops, 2004), 3, 9.



finally, the leadership crisis in church and state. As delegates from all over Africa and their friends from Southeast Asia and some mission organizations from the West (notably the CMS) launched into the week, these were the issues placed before them as the focus of the historic conference.

Six years later, in August 2010, the African Anglican Bishops came together again, this time at Entebbe, Uganda, to further discuss the mission of the Anglican Church in Africa. The theme shows a continuing emphasis carried over from the Lagos conference: “Securing Our Future: Unlocking Our Potentials” (Heb 12:1–2). By this time, the Most Rev. Ian Ernest, Archbishop of the Indian Ocean, had become the CAPA chairman. He articulated the focus of the conference in these words: “We will reflect in depth on the issues that hinder our witness to the world and to the continent.” The hosting prelate, the Most Rev. Henry Luke Orombi, went further with these reflections on the issues that had become quite major in the expression of Christianity by African Anglicans after about a century of Christian encounter:

A century later we still see huge gaps in the development of Africa. We as custodians of the faith handed down by our forefathers are tasked with the responsibility of identifying where we went wrong and what we can do to make the world a better place for the people of Africa.<sup>27</sup>

Again, views from the other parts of the world, notably from the sitting Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, affirmed the legitimacy of the issues both for the African Anglican Bishops as leaders and for the rest of the world:

The clarity of Christian and especially Anglican witness against corruption in political leadership in so many contexts in this continent has been a great beacon for many elsewhere, and our prayer is that it will continue with the same force and integrity, always underpinned by this personal integrity in Christian leadership .... It has been said that this is going to be the African century of the Christian Church in terms of energy and growth and vision. ... And if the churches of Africa are going to be for this time a city set on a hill, how very important it will be for the health and growth of all God’s churches throughout the world that this witness continues at its best and highest.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> David W. Virtue, “All African Bishops Conference Meets in Entebbe, Uganda,” Virtue Online, August 27, 2010, <https://virtueonline.org/all-african-bishops-conference-meets-entebbe-uganda>.

<sup>28</sup> Rowan Williams, “Archbishop Rowan Williams Address to the All Africa Bishop Conference II,” Entebbe, Uganda, August 24, 2010, Church of Uganda, <https://churchofuganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/ARCHBISHOP-ROWAN-WILLIAMS-ADDRESS-TO-THE-ALL-AFRICA-BISHOPS-CONFERENCE-II.pdf>.



The Anglican Church in Africa must articulate its mission in a continent that needs to mobilize its potential for the good of its citizens. At the moment the biggest issues include discipleship, whereby the catechizing classes for baptism and confirmation can be related to the implications for godly living in church and society.

## Conclusion

The import of all these is that theology must spring out of mission, wherein people must learn to make decisions that are influenced by a fresh understanding of the incarnate God in their situation who changes their lives and perspectives. Imported theology has much that is good but also many pitfalls. Again, Walls observes,

This means that the normal run of Western theology is not big enough for Africa, or for much of the rest of the non-Western world. It offers no guidance for some of the most crucial situations, because it has no questions related to those situations. The reason is that Western theology—whether of more liberal or more conservative tendency is irrelevant—is heavily acculturated. It is substantially an Enlightenment product, designed for an Enlightenment view of the universe.<sup>29</sup>

The issues crying for attention among African Anglicans are many: The place of women and their status in the Christian faith is one timeless concern. Mothers' Union, founded by Mary Sumner in 1876 in England as a support group for family life and mothers in the Anglican world, has found much appeal in many provinces in Africa. This is its stated aim and purpose:

To demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms. In order to carry out this aim, Mothers' Union's objectives are: To uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and promote its wider understanding.<sup>30</sup>

In the Church of Nigeria, Mothers' Union is only open to women who are baptized, confirmed, and wedded in the church, and the wife of the bishop serves as president. Eligible women are required to go through special classes to be enrolled by the bishop. To accommodate those who have been married in other ways acceptable to the church, such as faithful traditional marriage, a counterpart organization, the Women's Guild, has also been introduced. Fidelity in marriage is a critical issue.

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<sup>29</sup> Walls, "Afterword," 203.

<sup>30</sup> Mothers' Union, 2021, cf. "Mothers' Union," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mothers%27\\_Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mothers%27_Union).



# Defending the Faith in a Global Communion: A Tale of Tragedy and Hope

MARK D. THOMPSON

## Abstract

The struggle to defend the faith in the global Anglican Communion is not merely a recent phenomenon. There has never been a “golden age” when the Reformed faith of the Elizabethan Settlement was unchallenged. The emergence of a global fellowship of national churches has highlighted the difficulties of discipline across national borders. Tragically, there has been repeated failure on the part of the Communion’s leadership to guard the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but there is hope in the courage and biblical faithfulness of a new generation of leaders from the Global South.

## Keywords

*Anglicanism, Lambeth Conference, discipline, jurisdiction, bishops, Global South, GAFCON, John Colenso, Canterbury*

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## I. *From National Church to a Church with Global Interests*

**T**he English Reformers of the sixteenth century would not have understood the concept of global Anglicanism. The Protestant Church of England was a national church established with a particular link to the government of the realm. After all, the King or Queen of England was the Supreme Head of the Church of

England (to which title was added the phrase “as far as the word of God allows”). Conversely, several of the bishops, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, were “lords spiritual,” with seats in the House of Lords (one of the houses of the English Parliament) and so themselves members of the government. Just as significant, deep in the DNA of the English Reformation Settlement was an aversion to international ecclesiastical structures. The pope in Rome could have no jurisdiction in the English commonwealth, according to the Act of Supremacy (1534). Furthermore, the Articles of Religion (1552/1571) explicitly recognized that there was no need for the practices in one place to be identical to those in another (Article 34). The English church was the *English* church, sharing fellowship with like-minded Christians in other lands (witness Thomas Cranmer’s attempts in the early 1550s to hold a pan-European Reformed conference, partly in response to the Council of Trent) but not institutionally linked or constrained by the practice in other lands. So, to speak of a global Anglican Communion would be not only strange but deeply suspicious in the minds of Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, Matthew Parker, John Whitgift, and John Jewel.

Nevertheless, if the idea of transplanting the English church into foreign soil was inconceivable when the framework and character of English Protestantism were first devised, it emerged very soon afterward. The establishment of English colonies in other lands took place just decades later. The first permanent English colony in the Americas, Jamestown, Virginia, was established in 1607. By royal charter, the first English settlement in Canada was established at Cupers Cove, Newfoundland, in 1610, and the East India Company opened its first trading post (“factory”) in Surat in 1614. The first British settlement in Africa took place in 1661 on James Island in the Gambia River. A new wave of colonial activity began a little over a century later. The First Fleet, consisting of British soldiers and convicts, landed in Sydney Cove in 1788. The Dutch ceded the Cape Colony (South Africa) to Britain in 1814, and a mission station was set up in New Zealand in the same year. In 1841, following the Treaty of Nanjing, Hong Kong became a British colony.

Unsurprisingly, in each of these cases, the English settlers brought with them their own religious convictions and sought to practice their faith in the new setting in which they found themselves. Some sought distance from the Church of England, while others saw themselves as remaining its loyal members. For this latter group, the personal and institutional ties to the Church of England were strong. As their settlements grew into colonies, they built churches and began to put in place structures that mirrored English church life. Chaplains, clergy, and missionaries traveled to the colonies

from England, bringing with them the varied and at times conflicted character of the church at home. In 1632, Archbishop William Laud sent a proposal to the Privy Council “for the purpose of extending conformity to the national church to the English subjects beyond the sea,” and within a year, the Privy Council had pronounced that “in all things concerning their church government they should be under the jurisdiction of the Lord Bishop of London.”<sup>1</sup> In 1788, the Evangelical wing of the Church of England, with people like John Newton and William Wilberforce leading the charge, ensured that the chaplain sent with the First Fleet to New South Wales was an Evangelical, Richard Johnson. Just over sixty years later, in early 1851, alarm was expressed at a meeting in Adelaide, a young colony in the south of Australia, over an “attempt to introduce Tractarianism into this province.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the geographical distance, the theological and ecclesiastical tensions within the sending church emerged relatively quickly in its colonial outposts.

A major turning point in the history of these foreign English churches came with the appointment of colonial bishops. Without such bishops, ministry had to be authorized, and ordinations could only take place in England. The first requests for a remedy to that situation had been mooted in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and a concrete proposal was put before the British government by Archbishop Thomas Secker in 1763. It was rejected. Nine years later, the Virginia House of Burgesses considered the matter for themselves. George Washington wrote to the Rev. Jonathan Boucher in May 1772, “The expediency of an American episcopate was long, & warmly debated, and at length rejected.”<sup>3</sup> Severing the cord might have unforeseen and unwanted consequences, and it was not only the authorities in England who were concerned about that. However, the American Revolution changed everything. No longer was it appropriate, let alone possible, to accept leadership in the American churches that was authorized or accountable to the authorities in England.<sup>4</sup> In March 1783, a meeting of

<sup>1</sup> “London, Bishop of,” in *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, <https://www.episcopal-church.org/glossary/london-bishop-of/>.

<sup>2</sup> “Great Anti-Tractarian Meeting of the Laity of the Church of England,” in *The Launceston Examiner*, February 22, 1851, 128, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/36259676>.

<sup>3</sup> George Washington to Jonathan Boucher, May 4, 1772, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-09-02-0027>.

<sup>4</sup> A corollary of this is the changed status of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion within the American Episcopal Churches. Subscription to the Articles would not be required, and the Articles would only be recognized as part of the historical heritage of the Episcopal Church. This contrasted with an ordination requirement of subscription (often described as *ex animo* subscription) to the Articles elsewhere in Anglican churches. See the somewhat extraordinary entry on the Articles in the *Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, which insists that “the status and authority of the Articles has often been a subject of debate among Anglicans.” “Thirty-Nine

clergy in Connecticut elected Samuel Seabury as their bishop, though without a bishop to consecrate him, he had to travel to Britain. Unable to take the oath of allegiance to the king, he was consecrated by nonjuring Scottish bishops in Aberdeen.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually, bishops would be appointed in each of the colonies. In 1787, Charles Inglis was named the first bishop of the newly created Diocese of Nova Scotia. In 1814, Thomas Middleton became the first bishop of Calcutta, a diocese that, for a while, included all of Australia and parts of southern Africa. That particular situation changed when William Broughton was installed as Bishop of Australia in 1836, and five years later George Selwyn was consecrated as bishop for the new missionary diocese of New Zealand. In 1847, Robert Gray was consecrated as the first Bishop of Cape Town, and in 1853, on Gray's recommendation, John Colenso was consecrated Bishop of Natal. In 1849, George Smith was appointed the first Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria (Hong Kong). In 1864, Samuel Crowther became the first Bishop of Western Equatorial Africa, and in 1886, James Hannington was appointed to a parallel role in Eastern Equatorial Africa. Though most of these and the other early colonial bishops were English, Seabury was American (albeit for the first forty-seven years of his life, the American colonies were British), Inglis was Irish, and Crowther was Nigerian (though educated in London and Oxford).

Throughout this period—in fact, throughout its life right up to the present—the church that sent out chaplains, missionaries, and eventually missionary bishops to these far-flung places lived with theological controversy. Indeed, there was no “golden age” in which Reformed theology was without challenge in the Church of England, though that is undoubtedly the theology expressed in its foundational documents. The challenge would be intense at times, involving exclusion, imprisonment, and worse, and yet throughout the centuries following the Reformation, we can find numerous examples of the grace of God and the courageous determination of his people to bear witness to the truth. The Puritans were opposed by the Laudians, the Calvinists by the Arminians, the confessional Anglicans by the Socinian rationalists, the Evangelicals by the Latitudinarians, and the

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Articles, or Articles of Religion,” *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, The Episcopal Church, 2021, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/thirty-nine-articles-or-articles-of-religion/>.

<sup>5</sup> Nonjurors were, first, those who refused to take the oath of allegiance to William III and Mary II following the deposition of James II in 1688, and, second, those in the Scottish Episcopal Church who refused to swear allegiance to George I (the Hanoverian heir of Queen Anne who ascended the throne in 1714) and who remained nonjurors until the death of Charles Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) in 1788.

Evangelicals by the Tractarians.<sup>6</sup> A careful reading of the history makes very clear, once again, that there has always been a need to defend the faith within the Church of England. The Reformed theology of the Articles, the Ordinal, and the Book of Common Prayer was never without challenge, and there were many times when it seemed that its opponents held the upper hand.<sup>7</sup>

The same would be true in the churches that sprang up under the auspices of the Church of England all the way around the world. Some of the early chaplains were sympathetic to the concerns of the Puritans, and some were from the High Church group. Archbishop Laud sought to impose conformity in the early seventeenth century precisely because there were different views of church and competing theological perspectives circulating in the American colonies from the beginning. The later struggle between rationalism and the liberal theology that grew out of it on the one hand and orthodox Anglicanism, including the Evangelical revival associated with John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Charles Simeon on the other, played itself out, most obviously in America and in Australia.<sup>8</sup> So too the opposition of Evangelicalism and Tractarianism.<sup>9</sup> Yet three of these elements (orthodox Anglicanism, liberal theology, and High Churchmanship) came together in the struggle in South Africa, which was a major catalyst for the first international gathering of Anglican bishops, the Lambeth Conference of 1867.

## II. *The Colenso Affair*

As we have seen, Robert Gray was consecrated as Bishop of Cape Town in 1847.<sup>10</sup> Gray was a High Churchman who held traditional views on the veracity and authority of Scripture, on the need for faith, and the reality of divine judgment. Quickly recognizing the scale of the task and the demands of ministry in the vast area he served, Gray lobbied the British government to subdivide his diocese, and in 1853 a bishop was appointed for a new diocese in Graham's Town and another for a new diocese of Natal. Gray's original royal letters patent, under which he acted as a bishop, were then

<sup>6</sup> John Dowden, *Outlines of the History of the Theological Literature of the Church of England from the Reformation to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (London: SPCK, 1897).

<sup>7</sup> Robert C. Doyle, "No Golden Age," *The Briefing* 22 (April 1989): 1–6.

<sup>8</sup> Diana H. Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Tom Frame, *Anglicans in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007), 47–71.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan A. Draper, ed., *The Eye of the Storm: Bishop John William Colenso and the Crisis of Biblical Inspiration*, JSOTSup 386 (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

replaced with new letters patent that referred to him as “the Metropolitan Bishop.”<sup>11</sup> The second of the new appointments (to Natal) was John William Colenso, at first glance a High Churchman like Gray but, as soon would become clear, with very different theological commitments.

Colenso had, years before, been introduced to the theology of Frederick D. Maurice, and he would later dedicate a volume of sermons to him.<sup>12</sup> Maurice’s influence showed itself in the way Colenso came to embrace a type of universalism that rejected the doctrine of hell and argued that a subjective response to Christ’s objective saving work (conversion, faith, repentance, and obedience) is unnecessary, since righteousness is a gift God “gives to all, the evil and the good, the just and the unjust alike, that we may be regarded as children before Him.”<sup>13</sup> He had also taken on board the critical biblical scholarship that had begun to be introduced in Britain from the Continent. This led him to raise questions about the historicity and truthfulness of parts of the Old Testament, particularly the early chapters of Genesis.<sup>14</sup>

In response to his writing on these subjects, in February 1863 the Upper House of Convocation (in England) voted to “inhibit” Colenso and urged him to examine his conscience and resign.<sup>15</sup> Three months later, on May 12, nine articles of accusation supporting a charge against Colenso of false teaching were laid before Bishop Gray by Dean Henry A. Douglas of Cape Town, Archdeacon Nathaniel J. Merriman of Graham’s Town, and Archdeacon Hopkins Badnall of George Town. Gray summoned Colenso

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<sup>11</sup> Peter Hinchcliff, “Colonial Church Establishment in the Aftermath of the Colenso Controversy,” in *Religious Change in Europe, 1650–1914: Essays for John McManners*, ed. Nigel Aston (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 347.

<sup>12</sup> John W. Colenso, *Village Sermons* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1854). Jonathan A. Draper, “Colenso’s Commentary on Romans: An Exegetical Assessment,” in *The Eye of the Storm*, ed. Draper, 306.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Colenso, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans: Newly Translated and Explained from a Missionary Point of View* (New York: Appleton, 1863), 51; Draper, “Colenso’s Commentary on Romans,” 109, 118.

<sup>14</sup> John W. Colenso, *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (London: Longmans, Green, 1862); *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. Essays and Reviews*, a collection of essays which included Charles Goodwin’s critique of “the Mosaic cosmogeny,” had been published just three years before. Charles W. Goodwin, “On the Mosaic Cosmogeny,” in *Essays and Reviews*, ed. H. B. Wilson (London: Parker & Son, 1860), 207–53.

<sup>15</sup> “Inhibit” means “to restrain or prevent” and refers to the suspension of a clergyman from performing any religious act or spiritual duty in a specific jurisdiction. Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814–1883* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983), 131. The Colenso dispute became a *cause célèbre* over the next few months in the Anglican world. See *Public Opinion* III.79 (Saturday, March 28, 1863), in *Public Opinion: A Comprehensive Summary of the Press Throughout the World on All Important Current Topics*, vol. 3: *January–June 1863* (London: Cole, 1863), 337–39.



to appear before a metropolitan court on a charge of heresy six days later, but Colenso refused to attend and instead appealed to the Crown against Gray's right to hold such a trial (the Crown passed the matter on to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).<sup>16</sup> Colenso was tried in absentia in Cape Town during November and December 1863. He was found guilty of false teaching, and in April 1864 Gray declared the see vacant. The Privy Council heard Colenso's appeal later that year and concluded that Gray's letters patent as Metropolitan of Southern Africa did not confer on him "any jurisdiction, or coercive legal authority" over other bishops. As a result, his attempt to try Colenso for heresy must fail.<sup>17</sup> Undeterred by this judgment, Gray then excommunicated Colenso on January 5, 1866, and set about appointing a more orthodox bishop for Natal.<sup>18</sup> In the end the Colenso affair resulted in rival ecclesiastical jurisdictions in South Africa.

The Colenso affair focused attention on another question: How might theological and ecclesiastical issues be resolved in a global fellowship that does not have an international superstructure and has in fact studiously avoided all thought of one? In reality there was a great deal of legal uncertainty surrounding the authority and jurisdiction of the English church in territory beyond the British Isles. Significantly, concerning the judgment delivered in the trial, Colenso had petitioned the Crown, not the Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning the authority vested in bishops by their letters patent. The point would be made quite emphatically in 1874, when the British Parliament passed the Colonial Clergy Act, which allowed the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, when they consecrated bishops "for the purpose of exercising episcopal functions elsewhere than in England," to dispense with "the oath of due obedience to the Archbishop."<sup>19</sup> The corollary of this was that English archbishops had no authority to discipline an errant bishop in another province.

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<sup>16</sup> For a record of the trial see *Trial of the Bishop of Natal for Erroneous Teaching before the Metropolitan Bishop of Cape Town, and the Bishops of Graham's Town and the Orange Free State as Assessors* (Cape Town: Cape Argus, 1863); for an account of the intricacies that is unapologetically supportive of Colenso, see Jonathan A. Draper, "The Trial of Bishop John William Colenso," in *The Eye of the Storm*, ed. Draper, 306–25; see also Hinchcliff, "Colonial Church," 348.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Todd, *Observations on the Judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Case of Bishop Colenso v The Bishop of Capetown* (London: Rivingtons, 1865), 44.

<sup>18</sup> Guy, *Heretic*, 156.

<sup>19</sup> "Colonial Clergy Act 1874, section 12," [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/vict/37-38/77/section/12/enacted), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/vict/37-38/77/section/12/enacted>.

### III. *Lambeth Conferences*

This extraordinary series of events became the catalyst for the first Lambeth Conference, which was called in response to requests from the bishops in Canada to debate the issues and resolve the legal question of international jurisdiction. Yet from the very start there was a determination in England that any gathering of all the Anglican bishops from around the world should have a very limited remit. When Archbishop Charles Longley brought the proposal to the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury in February 1867, he insisted,

It should be distinctly understood that at this meeting no declaration of faith shall be made, and no decision come to, which shall affect generally the interests of the Church, but that we shall meet together for brotherly counsel and encouragement.

“I should refuse to convene any assembly,” he continued, “which pretended to enact any canons, or affected to make any decisions binding on the Church.”<sup>20</sup> Undertakings were given that the Colenso case would not be discussed at the conference, the invitations were quickly issued, and eventually 76 out of 144 Anglican bishops attended, 24 of whom were “colonial bishops.”<sup>21</sup> Colenso was not invited.

Nevertheless, the first Lambeth Conference was undoubtedly dominated by the Colenso affair. It was the specific subject of a prolonged debate on the third day of the conference, September 26, when a resolution of condemnation, proposed by the Presiding Bishop of the American Church (!), was ruled out of order by the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>22</sup> In the end, what would become a recurring Anglican strategy for dealing with dissent was adopted by Resolution 6: appoint a committee and ask for a report (to be submitted to the Archbishop and then distributed for comment).<sup>23</sup> Guidance was given for “obtaining a new bishop” in Natal, should that be necessary, in Resolution 7. Resolution 8 insisted that the closest union of “the Churches of our colonial empire and the missionary Churches beyond them” and “the Mother-Church” requires “that they receive and maintain without

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<sup>20</sup> Chronicle of Convocation, February 15, 1867, 807, cited in Randall T. Davidson, *The Lambeth Conferences of 1867, 1878, 1888* (London: SPCK, 1896), 10–11.

<sup>21</sup> Davidson, *Lambeth Conferences*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> “Resolution 6,” Lambeth Conference, 1867, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1867/resolution-6.aspx>.

alteration the standards of faith and doctrine as now in use in that Church.”<sup>24</sup> The Archbishop was true to his word. There would be no attempt to exercise discipline. Resolutions were to be expressions of the mind of the Conference but were not to be treated as decisions binding upon anyone. When Report No. VIII, which referenced the Colseno deposition, was submitted to those bishops who remained in England on December 10, it was simply received and printed.<sup>25</sup>

The jurisdiction of the Lambeth Conference and the nature of its decisions were live issues in 1867 and have remained so to this day. The discussions exposed significant weaknesses when it came to church discipline. Whatever mechanisms may be put in place in each province, there is no mechanism for a more global exercise of discipline. The only power the Archbishop of Canterbury has beyond his own province is persuasive and what resides in his right to issue invitations to the Lambeth Conference.

Five years after the first Lambeth Conference, the Canadian bishops once again petitioned the Archbishop of Canterbury to convene a conference of all the world’s Anglican bishops. This second conference (1878) would receive and discuss the reports of the various committees set up by the first conference. The recommendations of these reports were to be incorporated into an encyclical letter, but there would be no resolutions. Recommendation 8 spoke of the discipline of clergy and the setting up of provincial tribunals of appeal. It also insisted, “Your Committee are not prepared to recommend that there should be any one central tribunal of appeal from such provincial tribunals.”<sup>26</sup> Recommendation 9 spoke of “the very grave question of the trial of a bishop,” suggesting how this might be organized and how a proper process of appeal might be conducted by five metropolitan bishops and the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>27</sup> The suggestion went nowhere. Recommendations were merely recommendations and could not be enforced.

The pattern continued. Fourteen Lambeth Conferences have been convened, including the first in 1867.<sup>28</sup> The nineteenth-century conferences were largely dominated by the question of how the various provinces might

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<sup>24</sup> “Resolution 8,” Lambeth Conference, 1867, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1867/resolution-8.aspx>.

<sup>25</sup> Davidson, *Lambeth Conferences*, 19.

<sup>26</sup> “Recommendation 8,” Lambeth Conference, 1878, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127719/1878.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> “Recommendation 9,” Lambeth Conference, 1878, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1878/recommendation-9-union-among-the-churches-of-the-anglican-communion-encyclical-letter-27-11.aspx>.

<sup>28</sup> Lambeth Conferences were held in 1867, 1878, 1888, 1897, 1908, 1920, 1930, 1948, 1958, 1968, 1978, 1988, 1998, 2008, and 2022.

relate to each other and especially the Church of England. They had been, after all, convened by successive Archbishops of Canterbury and held in England. So issues such as synodical authority, the best modes of unity, relationships with other Christian communions (out of which discussion came the so-called Lambeth Quadrilateral), the value and regularity of Lambeth Conferences, provincial organization, and the setting up of a central “consultative body” dominated those early agendas.<sup>29</sup>

The resolutions coming out of the Conferences held in the first half of the twentieth century were quite conservative and resistant to both the chill winds of skepticism and secularism blowing in the wider community and the doctrinal and ethical revisionism promoted by some in leadership in the churches. One study suggests that in America, “by 1900, there were very few people left in the Protestant Episcopal Church to carry on the Evangelical Episcopal vision,” so it is hardly surprising that later in the century, the North American provinces would find themselves out of step with those provinces in which Evangelical or traditional Anglo-Catholic convictions remained strong. Even at the 1908 conference, there was an awareness that orthodox biblical doctrine was being challenged:

The Conference, in view of tendencies widely shown in the writings of the present day, hereby places on record its conviction that the historical facts stated in the Creeds are an essential part of the faith of the Church.<sup>30</sup>

Negotiating the diversity within the churches of the Communion became increasingly difficult. Resolution 2 of 1930 spoke of an “urgent need in the face of many erroneous conceptions for a fresh presentation of the Christian doctrine of God.”<sup>31</sup> Yet, while recommending that “the marriage of one

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<sup>29</sup> Resolution 11 of 1888 reads, “That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God’s blessing made towards home reunion: (a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as ‘containing all things necessary to salvation’, and as being the rule and standard of faith; (b) The Apostles’ Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith; (c) The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him; (d) The historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church.” <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1888/resolution-11.aspx>.

<sup>30</sup> “Resolution 2,” Lambeth Conference, 1908, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1908/resolution-2.aspx>.

<sup>31</sup> “Resolution 2: The Christian Doctrine of God,” Lambeth Conference, 1930, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/127734/1930.pdf>.

whose former partner is still living should not be celebrated according to the rites of the Church,” this recommendation was introduced with the concessive clause “while passing no judgment on the practice of regional or national Churches within our Communion.”<sup>32</sup>

A greater political and social conscience became evident in the conferences after the Second World War. The 1948 Conference insisted, “We believe that Christians generally are called to take their part in the life of the world, and through the power of God’s grace to transform it.”<sup>33</sup> In line with this, that conference produced forty-three resolutions titled “The Church in the Modern World,” which included statements about the church and war, human rights, the Christian attitude toward the state, education (including a call for universities to retain the study of theology, Resolution 49), and the Christian way of life. However, even in 1948 fault lines were beginning to appear: A proposal was put before the conference, at the request of the General Synod of the Church in China, seeking a twenty-year experiment with the ordination of women to the priesthood under certain circumstances in light of the “emergency” ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi in Shaoquing during the war (1944). Resolution 113 made clear that “such an experiment would be against the tradition and order and would gravely affect the internal and external relations of the Anglican Communion.”<sup>34</sup> Presiding over the conference that made that resolution was the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, who for many years had made known both privately and publicly that he supported the ordination of women.<sup>35</sup>

The ordination of women was raised again at the 1968 Conference, where the ordination of women to the diaconate was endorsed (Resolution 32), but arguments for ordination to the priesthood were considered inconclusive (Resolution 34). Encouragement was given to national churches to give careful study of the question and to report back to the Anglican Consultative

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<sup>32</sup> “Resolution 11: The Life and Witness of the Christian Community, Marriage,” Lambeth Conference, 1930, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1930/resolution-11-the-life-and-witness-of-the-christian-community-marriage.aspx>.

<sup>33</sup> “Resolution 40,” Lambeth Conference, 1948, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1948/resolution-40-the-church-and-the-modern-world-the-christian-way-of-life.aspx>.

<sup>34</sup> “Resolution 113: Proposed Chinese Canon,” Lambeth Conference, 1948, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1948/resolution-113-proposed-chinese-canon.aspx>.

<sup>35</sup> “If we could find any shadow of theological ground for the non-ordination of women I should be immensely comforted, but such arguments as I have heard on that line seem quite desperately futile.” William Temple, Letter to G. L. Prestige, July 19, 1944, quoted in David M. Paton, *R. O.: The Life and Times of Bishop Ronald Hall of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao and the Hong Kong Diocesan Association, 1925), 132.

Council (Resolution 35). The ground was shifting on this issue, and it would be revisited in 1978, when each member church was encouraged to ordain women as deacons (Resolution 20), the ordination of women to the presbyterate by some provinces was acknowledged, and the right of each member church to make its own decision on the matter was recognized (Resolution 21). On the matter of women bishops, the conference recommended consultation and “overwhelming support in any member church” before proceeding. By 1988, all that could be done was to urge each province to “respect the decision of other provinces in the ordination or consecration of women to the episcopate” (Resolution 1).<sup>36</sup> This has largely been the case, although deep disagreement remains in certain provinces, and the mutual recognition of orders (which enables those ordained in one place to exercise ordained functions in another place) has been disrupted.

The 1968 Lambeth Conference made another move that, while not as visible as the ordination of women, was arguably much more significant. Accepting a report of the Archbishops’ Commission on Christian Doctrine, the Conference sought to further its recommendation:

The Conference ...

(a) suggests that each Church of our Communion consider whether the Articles need be bound up with its Prayer Book;

suggests to the Churches of the Communion that assent to the Thirty-nine Articles be no longer required of ordinands;

suggests that, when subscription is required to the Articles or other elements in the Anglican tradition, it should be required, and given, only in the context of a statement which gives the full range of our inheritance of faith and sets the Articles in their historical context.<sup>37</sup>

This move away from subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles and the encouragement to contextualize the Articles where subscription was retained are highly significant. Without actually pronouncing on any of the doctrine affirmed in the Articles, this resolution opened wider the window to doubt and theological innovation. Since the late nineteenth century there had been a steady stream of bishops in the Church of England who in one way or another had challenged doctrines contained in the Thirty-Nine Articles.

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<sup>36</sup> Women were first ordained to the presbyterate in Hong Kong in 1971, the USA in 1974, Canada in 1976, New Zealand in 1977, Kenya and Uganda in 1983, Australia in 1992, and England in 1994. Women were consecrated as bishops in the USA in 1989, Canada in 1984, Australia in 2008, England in 2014, and Kenya in 2021.

<sup>37</sup> “Resolution 43: The Ministry, The Thirty-Nine Articles,” Lambeth Conference, 1968, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1968/resolution-43-the-ministry-the-thirty-nine-articles.aspx>.

Charles Gore, successively Bishop of Worcester (1902–1905), Birmingham (1905–11), and Oxford (1911–32), had in 1889 edited and contributed to *Lux Mundi*, a collection of essays by Anglo-Catholic theologians that embraced critical biblical scholarship and a form of kenoticism in their attempts “to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems.”<sup>38</sup> Herbert Hensley Henson, Bishop of Hereford (1918–20), then Durham (1920–39), and famous for dismissing the Evangelicals who opposed the revision of the Prayer Book in 1928 as “the Protestant underworld” and “an army of illiterates generalised by octogenarians,” defended the right of clergy to express doubts about the virgin birth and the resurrection.<sup>39</sup> John Rawlinson, Bishop of Derby (1936–59), argued on the basis of academic freedom for greater openness to critical biblical scholarship and more flexible views on church order.<sup>40</sup> He was also willing to endorse a certain “wise agnosticism” when it came to the physical resurrection of Jesus.<sup>41</sup> In the years immediately prior to the 1968 Conference, John A. T. Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich (1959–69) and then Dean of Chapel at Trinity College, Cambridge (1969–83), had published his *Jesus and His Coming* (1957), in which he doubted the second coming of Christ. He then published *Honest to God* (1963), in which he sought to recast Christian orthodoxy in modern terms and called on Christians to abandon the notion of God “above” or “out there” and to see that “assertions about God are in the last analysis assertions about Love.”<sup>42</sup> The trend would continue into the late twentieth century and today. In 1984, the newly appointed Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, publicly voiced his doubts about the virgin birth and the physical bodily resurrection of Jesus.<sup>43</sup>

However, the most notorious case of departure by an Anglican bishop from the doctrine enshrined in the formularies was that of John Shelby

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<sup>38</sup> Charles Gore, Preface to *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, ed. Charles Gore (London: John Murray, 1889), vii.

<sup>39</sup> Herbert Hensley Henson, “Prayer-Book Revision,” *The Times*, March 30, 1927, 11; John S. Peart-Binns, *Herbert Hensley Henson: A Biography* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2013), 68, 151. Opposition to the revision of the Prayer Book centered on its reintroduction of sacerdotal practices (e.g., the wearing of eucharistic vestments and the reservation of the sacrament) that had been deliberately excluded at the time of the Reformation. This move to revise the Prayer Book was defeated in the House of Commons.

<sup>40</sup> Graham Wilcox, “John Rawlinson and Anglican Liberal Catholicism in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Anglican Studies* 18.2 (2020): 201–14.

<sup>41</sup> A. E. John Rawlinson, *Dogma, Fact and Experience* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 111.

<sup>42</sup> John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (repr., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018), 126, 105.

<sup>43</sup> David Jenkins on “Credo,” London Weekend Television, April 29, 1984; “Poles Apart,” BBC Radio 4, October 28, 1984.



Spong, Bishop of Newark (1979–2000). He managed to outrage traditional Anglo-Catholics, Evangelicals, and even other liberals. A series of controversial pronouncements suggested that the Genesis account of origins is “pre-Darwinian mythology and post-Darwinian nonsense,” the apostle Paul was a homosexual, and the virgin birth, the miracles, and the physical resurrection of Jesus are no longer believable. In 1998, he announced that “theism, as a way of defining God, is dead.”<sup>44</sup> Spong’s writing was provocative, at points vitriolic, and almost always on the far edge of liberal theology. Yet he did more than write. On December 16, 1989, he ordained an openly gay priest (Robert Williams), which led the Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops to censure him (by a very close vote of 80–76). That same year he published *Living in Sin: A Bishop Rethinks Human Sexuality* and continued with regular television interviews and international speaking tours.<sup>45</sup>

#### IV. Lambeth 1998

Spong was popular because his controversial views on sexuality in particular aligned with wider cultural movements in the United States and elsewhere. In the last three decades of the twentieth century, questions around human sexuality became more insistent in parts of the Anglican Communion in line with a larger profile pursued by gay activists in the wider community.<sup>46</sup> In 1973, the Archbishop of York, Donald Coggan, acknowledged that many Anglican clergymen were homosexuals and called for them to be treated “with great sympathy and understanding.”<sup>47</sup> The first openly gay person (Ellen Barrett) was ordained as a priest in New York in 1977. The next year, Resolution 10 of the 1978 Lambeth Conference included a clause on homosexuality:

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<sup>44</sup> John Shelby Spong, *Here I Stand: My Struggle for a Christianity of Integrity, Love and Equality* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2000), 453; *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 26–27, 117, 215; *Jesus for the Non-Religious: Recovering the Divine at the Heart of the Human* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2007), 76–85; *Resurrection: Myth or Reality? A Bishop’s Search for the Origins of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994).

<sup>45</sup> John S. Spong, *Living in Sin: A Bishop Rethinks Human Sexuality* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1990).

<sup>46</sup> An agenda for such activism, one that seems astonishingly prophetic in retrospect, was provided in Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

<sup>47</sup> “A Quiet Man Succeeds to Canterbury’s Ancient Seat,” *People*, December 2, 1974, quoting a BBC Radio broadcast.



While we reaffirm heterosexuality as the scriptural norm, we recognise the need for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research.<sup>48</sup>

Ten years later, Resolution 64 of Lambeth 1988 repeated the call for such study.<sup>49</sup> Various reports were indeed produced in the next decade, including the English House of Bishops' *Issues in Human Sexuality*, which concluded, with regard to candidates for ordination, that "ordinarily it should be left to the candidates' own consciences to act responsibly in this matter."<sup>50</sup> In August 1994, Bishop Spong and seventy other bishops presented a statement to the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA) House of Bishops that included the declaration that "homosexuality and heterosexuality are morally neutral."<sup>51</sup> Later that week the General Convention amended its canons to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation (Resolution 1994-D007), opening the way for the official endorsement of the ordination of practicing gay men and women. It was evident to all that this subject would be a major item on the agenda for the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

Meanwhile, other pressures were also building, though there was less confidence that these would be addressed at the Lambeth Conference, given a general reluctance to discuss doctrinal deviation on the part of individual bishops in the Communion. In 1995, the then Bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, defended his cathedral's invitation to a practicing Muslim to preach the university sermon on the BBC's "Thought for the Day." He quoted Jesus's words "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matt 5:9) and then went on to deduce that since this Muslim was working for peace in his own country, he not only came under the blessing of Jesus but shared the title Son of God with him. When challenged about the uniqueness of Jesus on the basis of John 14:6, he responded, "To suggest that Jesus actually said those words is to deny 150 years of scholarship in the

<sup>48</sup> "Resolution 10: Human Relationships and Sexuality," Lambeth Conference, 1978, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1978/resolution-10-human-relationships-and-sexuality.aspx>.

<sup>49</sup> "Resolution 64: Human Rights for Those of Homosexual Orientation," Lambeth Conference, 1988, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1988/resolution-64-human-rights-for-those-of-homosexual-orientation.aspx>.

<sup>50</sup> Church of England House of Bishops, *Issues in Human Sexuality* 5.22, Church House Publishing, December 1991, <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/issues%20in%20human%20sexuality.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> "An Affirmation in Koinonia," Appendix C, 1994, The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, 2017, [https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/publications/1994\\_GC\\_Journal.pdf](https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/publications/1994_GC_Journal.pdf).

Gospel of John.”<sup>52</sup> Two years later (September 1997), Michael Ingham, Bishop of New Westminster in Canada, was interviewed by the *Ottawa Citizen*. In that interview he insisted, “It’s time for Christians to drop the idea that Christ is the one sure way to salvation.”<sup>53</sup>

What was becoming clearer to orthodox Anglicans around the world was that a general and unchecked movement toward doctrinal and moral revisionism was not confined to issues of human sexuality, though those issues were the presenting edge of that movement. A failure to be disciplined by Scripture in their pronouncements and in their practice had led to denials of fundamental Christian doctrine (e.g., the doctrines of God, the divinity of Christ, substitutionary and propitiatory atonement, the bodily resurrection, the call to faith and repentance, and the reality of judgment) by those who, at their ordination and consecration, had promised to uphold, guard, and proclaim those same doctrines. What was happening in the area of human sexuality was part of a larger pattern that demanded a more whole-sale call to repentance and recommitment to the authority of Scripture and the theology expressed in the Reformation formularies. Yet questions surrounding homosexuality also required direct address because this was the point at which the gospel of the forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ was most directly under attack. This is what was recognized by the Global South in 2005:

The unscriptural innovations of North American and some western provinces on issues of human sexuality undermine the basic message of redemption and the power of the Cross to transform lives. These departures are a symptom of a deeper problem, which is the diminution of the authority of Holy Scripture.<sup>54</sup>

In quiet parallel to this tragedy, one of the most dramatic changes in the history of Anglicanism took place in the decades straddling the turn of the

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<sup>52</sup> Richard Harries to Mark Thompson, personal correspondence of June 4, 1995.

<sup>53</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, September 26, 1997. Ingham developed his ideas in Michael Ingham, *Mansions of the Spirit: The Gospel in a Multifaith World* (Toronto: Anglican Book Center, 1997).

<sup>54</sup> “The Third Anglican South to South Encounter,” Anglican Communion News Service, October 5, 2005, <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2005/10/the-third-anglican-global-south-to-south-encounter.aspx>. The sentiment was repeated by Joseph Galgalo in 2019: “Broadly speaking, the Global South’s contention with the present-day Anglican establishment can be summarized as follows. The South sees the West as guilty of betraying the foundations of Anglican faith. It accuses the West of becoming increasingly liberal and in the process relegating to the periphery all traditionally accepted markers of Christianity including the authority of Scripture, without which Christianity stands radically redefined.” Joseph Galgalo, “The Kikuyu Conference and Global South Anglicanism: For What Does the Anglican Communion Stand?,” in *Costly Communion: Ecumenical Initiative and Sacramental Strife in the Anglican Communion*, ed. Mark D. Chapman and Jeremy Bonner (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 291.

millennium. The center of gravity in terms of positive missional energy and regular church attendance shifted dramatically from the United Kingdom and North America to the provinces in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>55</sup> By 2008 around 75%–80% of attending Anglicans lived south of the Equator. A decade earlier, representatives of those churches had begun to meet, to encourage each other in mission, and to sound their alarm at what was happening in the churches that had first sent missionaries to evangelize them. The first Anglican Encounter in the South took place in February 1994 in Limuru outside of Nairobi, Kenya, and a second was held in February 1997 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The second Encounter produced the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality, endorsed unanimously by the eighty bishops attending and including these as its fifth and sixth clauses:

5. The Scripture bears witness to God's will regarding human sexuality, which is to be expressed only within the life-long union of a man and a woman in (holy) matrimony.

6. The Holy Scriptures are clear in teaching that all sexual promiscuity is sin. We are convinced that this includes homosexual practices, between men or women, as well as heterosexual relationships outside marriage.<sup>56</sup>

This reassertion of the authority of Scripture and its application in the area of human sexuality did not go unchallenged. Just over a year later, and less than two months before the Lambeth Conference was scheduled to meet, the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada voted to authorize same-sex unions. On this occasion the diocesan bishop withheld his consent, but a strong signal was being sent: "This is where we are heading."

The thirteenth Lambeth Conference met at the University of Kent in July 1998. It passed resolutions on issues as diverse as human rights, nuclear weapons, the theological foundations of mission, religious freedom, urbanization, and discipleship. However, all attention was focused on Resolution I.10 on human sexuality. The resolution affirmed the teaching of Scripture on marriage but called for pastoral care and listening to those with a "homosexual orientation," assuring them that "all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of

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<sup>55</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 2.

<sup>56</sup> The text of the Kuala Lumpur statement is available at <https://acl.asn.au/old/news/KL-Statement.html>.

Christ.” Then, critically, it stated (thanks to an amendment proposed by Archbishop Donald Mtetemela of Tanzania) that the Church,

d. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, [this Conference] calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;

e. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions.

The resolution concluded with an acknowledgement of the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement.<sup>57</sup> The voting on the Resolution surprised many: 526 for, 70 against, and 40 abstentions. Against the expectations of some, the vast majority of the conference voted to uphold the Bible’s teaching on marriage and to oppose same-sex blessings and the ordination of those “in same sex unions.” Yet it was only an expression of the mind of the Conference. The Resolution had no binding authority, and despite the rather naïve expectations of some, it neither settled the matter nor proved to be a turning point in moving the Communion as a whole toward a more orthodox position on this subject (let alone the more fundamental issue of biblical authority).

## V. *The Reaction to Lambeth 1998*

A violent reaction to the resolution began almost immediately. Philip Jenkins writes, “Western reactions to the [Lambeth] sexuality statement can best be described as incomprehension mingled with sputtering rage.”<sup>58</sup> In September, 182 bishops (including the future Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams) published “A Pastoral Statement to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans from Some Member Bishops of the Lambeth Conference,” which, among other things, pledged they would “continue to reflect, pray, and work for your full inclusion in the life of the Church.”<sup>59</sup> Some of them held press conferences in which they decried the resolution and spoke of the

<sup>57</sup> “Section I.10: Human Sexuality,” Lambeth Conference, 1998, <https://www.anglican-communication.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1998/section-i-called-to-full-humanity/section-i10-human-sexuality.aspx>.

<sup>58</sup> Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 203.

<sup>59</sup> “A Pastoral Statement to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans from Some Member-Bishops of the Lambeth Conference,” Whosoever, September 1, 1998, <https://whosoever.org/a-pastoral-statement-to-lesbian-and-gay-anglicans-from-some-member-bishops-of-the-lambeth-conference/>.

homophobia represented by the Conference; others wrote open letters to the gay and lesbian members of their churches. In February 1999, the Bishop of Kingston, Peter Selby, spoke of the Conference as having the atmosphere of a Nuremberg rally.<sup>60</sup> Feelings ran high. The meeting of the ECUSA General Convention in 2000 reported that “the issues of human sexuality are not yet resolved.”<sup>61</sup>

Lambeth 1998 had also passed a resolution (Resolution III.6) that called upon the Primates of the Anglican Communion to consider “intervention in cases of exceptional emergency which are incapable of internal resolution within provinces.”<sup>62</sup> In light of that resolution, a group of conservative Episcopalian leaders, distressed by the direction in which the Episcopal Church seemed to be heading pre- and post-Lambeth, presented a request for alternative episcopal oversight to a group of primates meeting in Kampala in November 1999. It was an extraordinary move arising from extraordinary circumstances. These Anglicans no longer had confidence that they would receive appropriate pastoral care and leadership from the bishops of the Episcopal Church. Nine of the primates wrote to those who participated in this meeting, promising to “take all the measures consistent with our obedience to Christ, submission to the authority of Scripture and according to our ordination vows.”<sup>63</sup> On January 29, 2000, Archbishop Moses Tay of South East Asia and Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, two of the nine signatories, led in the consecration of Charles Murphy and John Rodgers as missionary bishops to serve disaffected Anglicans in America. It was now clear that the churches representing the vast majority of Anglicans worldwide were not prepared to follow the revisionist agenda still being promoted by many in the West. As expected, there was outrage from the Presiding Bishop of the ECUSA, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and even the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, Dr. Peter Moore, of Trinity School for Ministry in Pennsylvania, wrote that

<sup>60</sup> Reported, among other places, in Pat Ashworth, “7500: Waterloo for One Liberal Step Too Far,” *Church Times*, December 6, 2006, <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2006/8-december/news/uk/7500waterloo-for-one-liberal-step-too-far>.

<sup>61</sup> “Resolution 2000-D039,” ECUSA General Convention, 2000, [https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts\\_resolution.pl?resolution=2000-D039](https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2000-D039).

<sup>62</sup> “Section III.6: Instruments of the Anglican Communion,” Lambeth Conference, 1998, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1998/section-iii-called-to-be-faithful-in-a-plural-world/section-iii6-instruments-of-the-anglican-communion.aspx>.

<sup>63</sup> “A Letter to the Participants and Invited Observers Attending the Group of Primates Meeting Held in Kampala from 16th to 18th November 1999,” Anglican Church League, Sydney, <https://acl.asn.au/old/news/KampalaStatement.html>.

“these two bishops are being sent from younger missionary churches to re-evangelise a listless and doctrinally uncertain church in the West.”<sup>64</sup>

The next scheduled meeting of all the Primates of the Anglican Communion was held in Oporto, Portugal, in March 2000. It noted that

clear and public repudiation of those sections of the [Lambeth] Resolution related to the public blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of declared non-celibate homosexuals, and the declared intention of some dioceses to proceed with such actions, have come to threaten the unity of the communion in a profound way.

However, the primates also

noted with deep concern the recent consecrations in Singapore intended to provide extended episcopal oversight for Anglicans in the USA. ... Such action taken without appropriate consultation poses serious questions for the life of the Communion.<sup>65</sup>

A series of Primates’ Meetings followed, beginning with those in Kanuga, North Carolina, in March 2001 and Canterbury in April 2002. Each issued calls for caution and warned of the danger of unilateral action on either side of the dispute. The Anglican Communion was facing a crisis that extended beyond the issues of human sexuality to the nature of the Communion itself and its willingness and capacity to exercise doctrinal and ecclesiastical discipline.

## **VI. *A Line Crossed: 2002/3 and Its Aftermath***

In 2002, the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada authorized its bishop to produce a service for the blessing of same-sex unions. Noted Anglican theologian Dr. J. I. Packer was one of several members of the synod who walked out when the vote was passed. He explained why he felt compelled to do so in *Christianity Today*: “This decision, taken in its context, falsifies the gospel of Christ, abandons the authority of Scripture, jeopardizes the salvation of fellow human beings, and betrays the church in its God-appointed

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<sup>64</sup> “ACO: Report on Singapore Consecrations,” Anglican Communion News Service, February 24, 2000, <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2000/02/aco-report-on-singapore-consecrations.aspx>. Six years later these bishops would be joined by Martyn Minns, consecrated within the Church of Nigeria for ministry to orthodox Anglicans in America. “Election of Bishops,” The Church of Nigeria: Anglican Communion, 2006, [https://web.archive.org/web/20070430045246/http://www.anglican-nig.org/bshpelects\\_jun2006.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20070430045246/http://www.anglican-nig.org/bshpelects_jun2006.htm).

<sup>65</sup> “Primates Meeting Communique,” Primates Meeting Oporto, Portugal, March 2000, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/288306/primates-meeting-communique-2000.pdf>.

role as the bastion and bulwark of divine truth.”<sup>66</sup> At this point the Diocese of New Westminster was acting in advance of the Canadian province, which would not endorse same-sex blessings until 2016. When the Anglican Consultative Council met in Hong Kong in October 2002, it would call on dioceses and individual bishops “not to undertake unliteral actions or adopt policies which would strain our communion with one another without reference to their provincial authorities” (Resolution 34).<sup>67</sup>

On June 7, 2003, a man in an open same-sex relationship was elected Bishop of New Hampshire. In August the 74th General Convention of the ECUSA confirmed the election. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, immediately convened an emergency meeting of the world’s Anglican primates at Lambeth. That meeting spelled out the consequences of going ahead with these intentions:

If his consecration proceeds, we recognise that we have reached a crucial and critical point in the life of the Anglican Communion and we have had to conclude that the future of the Communion itself will be put into jeopardy. In this case, the ministry of this one bishop will not be recognised by most of the Anglican world, and many provinces are likely to consider themselves out of Communion with the Episcopal Church (USA). This will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division on this and further issues as provinces have to decide in consequence whether they can remain in communion with provinces that choose not to break communion with the Episcopal Church (USA).<sup>68</sup>

Gene Robinson was consecrated on November 2, 2003, before more than 4,000 people at the ice rink at the University of New Hampshire.<sup>69</sup>

The determination to proceed in the face of widespread, repeated, and insistent calls not to do so was shocking to many. How could fellowship be maintained in the face of such defiance and betrayal? Following the Lambeth meeting of the primates a commission was set up to investigate the way forward. A year later it produced *The Windsor Report*, which examined what it saw as dangerous behavior by those on both sides of the crisis.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> James I. Packer, “Why I Walked: Sometimes Loving a Denomination Requires You to Fight,” *Christianity Today* 47 (January 21, 2003): 47.

<sup>67</sup> “ACC12 Affirms Archbishop of Canterbury’s Resolution,” Anglican Communion News Service, October 1, 2002, <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2002/10/acc12-affirms-archbishop-of-canterburys-resolution.aspx>.

<sup>68</sup> “A Statement by the Primates of the Anglican Communion Meeting in Lambeth Palace,” Anglican Communion News Service, October 16, 2003, <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2003/10/a-statement-by-the-primates-of-the-anglican-communion-meeting-in-lambeth-palace.aspx>.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Bates, “Gay Consecration Splits Church,” *The Guardian*, November 3, 2003, <https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2003/nov/03/gayrights.religion>.

<sup>70</sup> The Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report*, The Anglican Communion Office, London, UK, 2004, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68225/windsor2004full.pdf>.



It treated both the unilateral actions of ECUSA and the Canadian Church contrary to the resolutions of the “instruments of unity” on the one hand and the interventionist provision of episcopal oversight for those who could not agree with such action on the other as threats to the Anglican Communion that needed to be addressed.<sup>71</sup> There was no acknowledgment that the two actions—the consecration of an openly noncelibate homosexual man as a bishop and the crossing of ecclesiastical boundaries to provide episcopal care for those who opposed the consecration—were of an entirely different moral character. This, as much as anything else, doomed the report to a lukewarm reception at best. Its proposal, that the churches of the Communion enter into a voluntary covenant with each other, would purportedly create a legal accountability to one another, but in reality it gave extraordinary power and authority to the “instruments of unity”—which, while they appeared to be four separate instruments, very easily resolved into one: that is, the Archbishop of Canterbury convenes the Lambeth Conference, presides over the Primates’ Meeting, and has enormous influence within the Anglican Consultative Council; he would also, the report suggested, “decide all questions of interpretation of this Covenant.” *The Windsor Report* focused on the institutional questions, not the theological ones, but by proposing an international structure of accountability it ran up against the long history of avoiding just such structures.<sup>72</sup>

In this context questions arose about whether those who brought about this crisis (those who had approved rites for same-sex blessings and those who participated in the consecration of Robinson) should continue to participate in the various boards, bodies, and conferences of the Communion. When the primates met in Dromantine, Ireland, in February 2005, they requested that “the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada voluntarily withdraw their members from the Anglican Consultative Council for the period leading up to the next Lambeth Conference.”<sup>73</sup> There was no such voluntary withdrawal. The Third Anglican South to South Encounter took place in Egypt in October 2005. It insisted that

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<sup>71</sup> The Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission’s *Virginia Report* from 1997 had identified four “instruments of unity” in the Anglican Communion: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates’ Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. *The Virginia Report*, The Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council, 1997, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/150889/report-1.pdf>.

<sup>72</sup> There were many written responses to *The Windsor Report*, including Peter G. Bolt, Mark D. Thompson, and Robert Tong, eds., *The Faith Once for All Delivered: An Australian Evangelical Response to the Windsor Report* (Sydney: Australian Church Record, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> “The Anglican Communion Primates’ Meeting, February 2005 Communique,” Anglican Communion, February 2005, [https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68387/communique-\\_english.pdf](https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68387/communique-_english.pdf).



“unscriptural and unilateral decisions, especially on moral issues, tear the fabric of our Communion and require appropriate discipline at every level to maintain our unity.”<sup>74</sup> No discipline was forthcoming. When the primates met again in Dar es Salaam in February 2007, they set a deadline of September 2007 for the ECUSA House of Bishops to make “an unequivocal common covenant that the bishops will not authorise any Rite of Blessing for same sex unions ... and ... confirm that a candidate for episcopal orders living in a same-sex union shall not receive the necessary consent.”<sup>75</sup> No such covenant was made.

As tension mounted, the fourteenth Lambeth Conference drew closer. Several bishops made it clear that they would have difficulty accepting the Archbishop of Canterbury’s invitation if such an invitation was also extended to Robinson and those who consecrated him or by the Bishop of New Westminster and others who had defied the Communion by proceeding with their revisionist agenda. However, when the invitations were issued in May 2007, while Robinson was not invited, those who participated in his consecration were. Furthermore, no invitation was extended to Martyn Minns, the missionary bishop consecrated by the Nigerians in 2006.

In this context, a group of primates (from Nigeria, West Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda) met in Nairobi to discuss how they might respond. Other key leaders met with them, including the Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen. They determined to convene a much larger meeting

... to plan for a future in which Anglican Christians world-wide will increasingly be pressured to depart from the biblical norms of behaviour and belief ... to draw together to strengthen each other over the issue of biblical authority and interpretation and gospel mission.<sup>76</sup>

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) met in Jerusalem in June 2008, and many of the bishops who attended it refused to attend the Lambeth Conference several weeks later. Its key achievements were the Jerusalem Declaration—a statement of faith that put the current struggle in a gospel and missional context—and the announcement of a new Anglican province, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). In keeping

<sup>74</sup> “The Third Anglican Global South to South Encounter,” Anglican Communion News Service, October 31, 2005 (Clause 33), <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2005/10/the-third-anglican-global-south-to-south-encounter>.

<sup>75</sup> “The Communique of the Primates’ Meeting in Dar es Salaam, 19th February 2007,” Anglican Communion, February 2007, [https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68393/communique2007\\_english.pdf](https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/68393/communique2007_english.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> “Global Anglican Future Conference—Archbishop Peter Jensen,” *Anglican Church League*, December 27, 2007, <https://acl.asn.au/2007/12/>.

with the conviction that the fundamental issue in the contemporary disputes is the authority of Scripture, the second clause of the Jerusalem Declaration reads,

2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.<sup>77</sup>

## Conclusion

Between 2008 and 2022 those pursuing the revisionist agenda continued without restraint, encouraged by changes in the civil law in many places. The number of provinces supporting same-sex blessings and the ordination of noncelibate gay men and women increased. The Lambeth Conference in 2008 made no fresh decisions on the topic. During the next Lambeth Conference, delayed until 2022, in a letter sent to the bishops attending, Archbishop Justin Welby made this somewhat ambiguous statement: "I write therefore to affirm that the validity of the resolution passed at the Lambeth Conference 1998, 1.10, is not in doubt and the whole resolution is still in existence." Those who received the letter debated what he actually meant. In a speech delivered to the Conference he apparently attempted to straddle the fence: "For many churches to change traditional teaching challenges their very existence .... For these [other] churches not to change traditional teaching challenges their very existence."<sup>78</sup> However, he had insisted earlier, "I will not punish churches that conduct gay marriages."<sup>79</sup> In October 2022, it was announced that the newly appointed Dean of Canterbury, David Monteith, "shares his life in a Civil Partnership with David Hamilton."<sup>80</sup>

On the other hand, those who saw this agenda as simply the latest instances of a long-standing departure from the authority of Scripture continued to meet and set a gospel agenda for the renewal of the Communion. The Global South met in Singapore in 2010, Cairo in 2016, Cairo in 2019, and

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<sup>77</sup> "Jerusalem Declaration," GAFCON, 2018, <https://www.gafcon.org/jerusalem-2018/key-documents/jerusalem-declaration>.

<sup>78</sup> "Lambeth Conference Anglican Church Global South Bishops," *Christianity Today*, August 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/august/lambeth-conference-anglican-church-global-south-bishops.html>.

<sup>79</sup> "No Penalty for Churches Rebelling over Gay Marriage," *Times*, August 3, 2022, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/no-penalty-for-churches-rebelling-over-gay-marriage-g0mll8rc9>.

<sup>80</sup> "New Dean of Canterbury Announced," Association of English Cathedrals, October 11, 2022, <https://www.englishcathedrals.co.uk/latest-news/new-dean-of-canterbury-announced/>.

online in 2021. GAFCON reconvened in Nairobi in 2013 and Jerusalem in 2018, and it is planned for Kigali, Rwanda, in 2023. New parallel provinces and dioceses, acknowledged and supported by GAFCON, have emerged: the Church of Confessing Anglicans Aotearoa New Zealand, the Anglican Network in Europe (described as a protoprovince), and the Diocese of the Southern Cross (Australia).

When, in the sixteenth century, the English Reformers produced the Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, and two books of homilies, they did so in the sure knowledge that the faith they sought to pass on to a new generation by these means would always be under attack. That was, after all, what Jesus and the apostles had promised, and their words had proven true throughout the history of the church to that time. They knew it would continue to be the case in England. Reformed theology had no “golden age” in the Church of England. Things would not change when episcopal churches were established in British colonies across the globe. The focal point of the challenge might be different at different points in time, but as has been said many times, the underlying question remains whether the churches of the Anglican communion are willing to live in joyful and faithful obedience to the word of God. The tragedy of this tale is that in the West many of those who have been set apart as guardians of the faith have proved unable or unwilling to do so, almost always while pretending this is not the case. The hope lies in the work of God in the leaders from the South, who have been willing to make a stand, and bear the cost, because they recognize that we all will have to give an account of the stewardship that has been entrusted to us.



## INTERVIEW

# Interview with Peter Jensen

PETER A. LILLBACK

(July 12, 2022)

**PETER A. LILLBACK:** *Let's pray together, Peter.*

*Father in heaven, we thank you that we are able to look to you as the source of every blessing. We thank you for your redeeming work for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for your anointing your people with your Spirit and with your gift of the word that dwells in your people richly. Bring in us the living Christ and his hope. We thank you that the opportunity has been granted us from different parts of the world to communicate and to share. We would ask that this interview bless your people and be for the advance of your kingdom around the world. Thank you for Reverend Jensen, for his fruitful ministry, for his leadership, and the joy of his as he has even shared his seventy-ninth birthday; thank you for the longevity and strength you have given to him. We pray now that you will bless our fellowship, continue to use him mightily for your kingdom, and we ask it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**PETER JENSEN:** Amen.

**PAL:** *As an introductory question, would you tell us how you came to faith in Christ and how your vocational ministry developed?*

**PJ:** I will indeed and am thrilled to do so. Testimony is always a wonderful thing, in my opinion. I grew up as a church-going child; my parents did not really go. They thought they were believers, but they did not go much—but they sent us. In my fifteenth year, Billy Graham came to Sydney, had a huge impact—the last crowd was about 150,000 people at the crusade. I was

taken on April 20, 1959, and Billy preached, if I remember correctly, on Noah and the Ark. He said, “The Lord shut the door of the ark; those who are on the outside are on the outside and those who are on the inside are inside.” When he gave the invitation, I left my seat and went forward. I then went back every night, much to the concern of my parents. On one evening, Mr. Graham said, “We need ministers in the churches.” It was that which sowed the seed for me going into ministry. When I left school at the age of seventeen, I enrolled at law school, failed the first year, and enrolled again, and failed the first year again. Then, I taught school for two or three years. I am afraid my failure in law was really just a sheer lack of interest. I needed to get to college in order to get into ministry, so I did. My parents were so glad I did something!

**PAL:** *Where did you do your theological studies?*

**PJ:** I studied in my hometown of Sydney at Moore Theological College in the diocese of Sydney.

**PAL:** *And at what age did you get ordained?*

**PJ:** The year of my ordination was 1969, and I had married Christine the year before, namely 1968. We went to the same church as children, but we connected in our twenties.

**PAL:** *Did you ever have the opportunity to meet Billy Graham later, since he had such a wonderful influence on your life?*

**PJ:** He came back to Sydney twice, once in 1968—and no, I did not meet him then—and in 1979. I would have met him because I would have been involved in Crusade planning at that stage, but I was in Oxford studying for my doctorate. In 2006, in a letter, I wrote and explained the impact he had in Sydney and understand the letter was well received.<sup>1</sup>

**PAL:** *That is wonderful.*

**PJ:** We owe him a huge debt. I will not say he led a revival, but he certainly had such an impact on our churches that it goes on even to this day.

**PAL:** *Well, that is amazing. That story can be duplicated in many ways. Theologians and pastors today find their roots going back to Graham’s evangelism ministry. So praise God. Well, more specifically, the Lord has called you to be in important*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tess Delbridge, interview with Peter Jensen, “Billy Graham Changed My Life,” *Eternity*, February 22, 2018, <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/peter-jensen-billy-graham-changed-my-life/>.



**PETER JENSEN**

*positions of leadership in the Anglican Church in Australia, but then globally. I would like to ask some questions. The first is this: What have been some of the special contributions of the Sydney Anglican movement to the Christian witness in Australia and beyond?*

**PJ:** The Anglican Church in Australia is made up of twenty-three different dioceses, spread throughout Australia. Naturally, the metropolitan cities are the biggest, but Sydney is about two or three times as big in terms of churchgoers as any of the others. This goes back to our history where evangelical witness has been there since the absolute beginning of the colony. You can trace that witness back to 1788. It went up and down a little bit. There were moments when it could have leapt into Anglo-Catholicism

or into liberalism. However, the Lord in his mercy spared us. A reason for the strength of the diocese of Sydney—well, there is never a single reason—is Moore College and the leadership’s understanding of how important Moore College is. We do not have to persuade them. The diocese, the bishops, and the lay people understand the importance of Moore College and that if things go wrong there, then things will go wrong in the parishes. And so there has been a very strong commitment, at least since the Second World War, to the training at Moore College and making it as good as possible. Someone has said that there are four reasons why different dioceses do well: the first is theological training; second is strong parishes that emerged from theological training; third is the parachurch organizations like mission movements or conventions; and fourth is having a good bishop. When you have all four together, then the diocese is strong, and we have consistently had all four together. Let me say, having a good bishop is the least important of the four.

**PAL:** *All church traditions grasp the function of a bishop. So what is the significant role of a bishop in the Anglican tradition? Could you please give a brief summation of why he would make a difference for the health of a parish?*

**PJ:** Yes, it depends on the bishop and on which branch of Anglicanism we are talking about. We belong to the Evangelical branch of Anglicanism. Australia was first set up as a convict colony, and in 1788, a whole group of convicts and soldiers was sent, and it included one chaplain sent. The two men who had most to do with the choice of that chaplain were John Newton and William Wilberforce. They ensured that the right person was there, and they said to him, “We want you to set up this whole thing as a missionary base for the South Pacific.” They were men of genius and vision. I thank God for their place at the beginning of this long tradition. In the Anglican tradition, the parish churches are the most important things, the congregations with the parishes. A parish is really a geographical area, and the church is responsible for that area and the pastoral ministry in that region. The bishop in our situation is elected by the Sydney Synod, which is made up of the clergy and laity of the diocese. The bishop has a number of roles, but the most important one is that he ordains clergy, which means that he has a particular responsibility for the quality and the choice of clergy. That is an immensely important facet of his ministry. You can make a mess of it—no doubt I did—but you have to be very careful as to who you ordain and in that way be a blessing to the churches. Now the bishop has other responsibilities: He must be a preacher, an evangelist, and stand for the truth of the gospel. He must provide leadership in that way, but in our tradition, the



bishop is simply a presbyter who has a special job. Whereas in other parts of the Anglican church, the bishop is sort of a step up from the presbytery, we tend to think he is a presbyter with a special job.

**PAL:** *That is excellent. What you have just shared is helpful because it puts things in a wonderful context, which brings me to my other question: What is the status of the biblically motivated Anglican ministry on the global stage today? How is the Evangelical branch of Anglicanism reaching around the globe and showing its presence?*

**PJ:** One of the great things that God did was to take the British Empire—which no doubt was built on capitalism, greed, and lust for power—and use it as part of his strategy for world evangelism. As a result, particularly from the eighteenth century onwards, where the British Empire went, there the gospel went in one form or another. Now, because of the great Evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, people began to think of mission and create missionary societies; then, missionaries started to go in big numbers. The Anglicans sent out missionaries as well. Some of them were high church Anglicans, leaning more toward Catholicism, particularly the Anglo-Catholics; and they sent missionaries to quite a number of places around the world, which to this very day are Anglo-Catholic. However, the majority of those who went out as missionaries, whether within the structures or independently, were Evangelical. The result is that in about 150 countries around the world there are Anglicans. And some of the biggest churches in the bigger African nations are Anglican churches. There are 20 million Anglicans in Nigeria, for example. Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania have large numbers. They are not the only denominations, but these are significant numbers. The truth of the matter is that the English and the Americans and the Australians are beginning to realize that in the context of world Anglicanism the most typical Anglican today is a Nigerian woman.<sup>2</sup> It is a result of the great work that was done by our ancestors in taking the gospel at considerable cost all around the world.

**PAL:** *What continuity or discontinuity do you see between the Anglican tradition and the Reformed theology that is distinctive to Westminster Theological Seminary?*

**PJ:** As I have thought about this, let me remind the readers that there are all sorts of Anglicans in the world, so we need to bear that in mind. Some of

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<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., Jeff Walton, “As Bishops Meet, Anglican Future Is Already Written,” *Anglican Ink*, August 2, 2022, <https://anglican.ink/2022/08/02/as-bishops-meet-anglican-future-is-already-written/>.

them would not like to go back to the Reformation as being particularly significant for them. Some go back to the seventeenth century instead of the sixteenth century—and particularly American Anglicans have a tendency to relate more to the seventeenth than the sixteenth century—though of course the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were connected. So let me speak for myself and our diocese and the sort of Evangelicals represented by John Stott, Jim Packer, and Philip Hughes, who was a distinguished member of your faculty at some point. Although people sometimes call me a Calvinist, I am not a Calvinist, though I greatly admire John Calvin; but I do not put myself into the Calvinistic camp. I do not know that I differ from him on anything, but I see myself as belonging to the Reformed Anglican tradition. We were impacted through Thomas Cranmer and the others in the Anglican tradition in the Church of England. This tradition was influenced by Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer, Ulrich Zwingli, as well as Calvin. So it is not as though we are saying we are different, but we are in that Reformed Anglican tradition characterized by the Thirty-Nine Articles rather than the Westminster Confession. I do not see myself in the Puritan tradition, though I greatly admire and respect the Puritans. But no, it is not us; we are more linked to the sixteenth century than the seventeenth-century Puritans. We are not Anglo-Catholics, of course. That movement began in the Anglican Church in the 1840s, and we are definitely not that. We are not liberals; to come to the twentieth century, we are not charismatics. We are not Arminian; I think the charismatics tend to the Arminian side. So if you want to locate us, I would say that we owe our debt to the patristic period because, as you know, the Reformers were great scholars of the patristic period. So we belong to the patristic and the Reformation periods, particularly the sixteenth century, where the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles took shape, and the Evangelical movement of the eighteenth century shaped us too. In short, I would describe myself as an Evangelical in the Reformed tradition.

**PAL:** *As Westminster appreciates patristics and the Reformation, that brings a great deal of commonality, although we have some distinctions that flow from our confessional legacy.*

**PJ:** Before I go on, could I say a word or two about the impact of Westminster on the diocese of Sydney? I think it fits in with your previous question, because I want to say that Westminster has had a significant impact theologically and spiritually. Our college, Moore College, was started in 1856, so we are a bit older than Westminster. There are differences of course: We are Anglicans, not Presbyterians; we are Australians, not Americans. But

three quite distinguished graduates of Westminster are Australians and had an impact in our diocese: Glenn Davies, who was the Archbishop of Sydney; John McIntosh, who was at Westminster Seminary in the early 1960s and had a distinguished teaching career; and Noel Weeks. So those three men, having studied at Westminster, came back to Australia and had a significant influence among us. In terms of your faculty, I mentioned Hughes, of course, and I could go on and on. But here are some of the people who have personally impacted me. J. Gresham Machen: apart from his Greek textbook, which we had to learn and I did not like, his great book on *Christianity and Liberalism* is hugely significant still.<sup>3</sup> John Murray's little book *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* has meant so much to me.<sup>4</sup> It has formed part of who I am. I have to say that I have heard stories about Murray lecturing and praising the Lord in the midst of his lectures and things like that, although I never heard him or saw him. I can also mention Richard Gaffin and Ned Stonehouse. Bruce Waltke, who was on your faculty and came to give the Moore College Lectures—I have never forgotten some of his jokes. E. J. Young had a big influence on us. Was Geerhardus Vos ever a member of the faculty of Westminster?

**PAL:** *He never came to be with us, but he was very close to our founding faculty. He retired at Princeton Seminary but had really an impact on Westminster, and Westminster has revitalized his ministry and writings.*

**PJ:** Vos's writings on biblical theology<sup>5</sup> and others on your faculty who have written on biblical theology have had a huge and deep impact on us. And then through us many others have been influenced by biblical theology. I was once at a conference in Africa, and the archbishop of a large African country came up with a great smile on his face. He said, "Oh, I owe so much to Moore College and its correspondence course on biblical theology." He added, "It changed my life." Well, half an hour later, an Asian theological college principal came up to me and said, "I owe so much to Moore College; it changed my life." I took all the credit for this then, but let it go in part at least to Westminster.

In addition, I was impacted by your journal [the *Westminster Theological Journal*]. I remember reading it as a student and recognizing how academic theology is so vital because you guys took academic theology as a greatly significant contribution, and your journal, which was academic theology

<sup>3</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923).

<sup>4</sup> John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).

high level, taught me some things. That is my part of my tribute to you, if I may say so, and the way in which you have helped shape me and, I presume, some of the diocese of Sydney, not just Davies.

**PAL:** *Praise the Lord for that. I can say that those sorts of influences that have emanated from Westminster have certainly shaped me as a young student and that it is an honor to do my best to keep the legacy alive and growing.*

**PJ:** It is indeed so easy to lapse, as we know from the story of Princeton Seminary and many other places. So thank you for that.

**PAL:** *Contemporary Christians are looking at the world, and there is a sense in which we want to partner with other believers, and ecumenical witness is important. However, on all sides we are facing ideological challenges and redefinition of past moral standards. In this light, how do we partner together? Would you give us some guidance, as you have been a leader in ecumenical activities in the Anglican world, trying to bring the church together and maintain historic biblical principles?*

**PJ:** A couple of things: First, one of the things that we have always said—and it may come from John Stott, but I do not remember the source of this—is, “We are Evangelicals first and Anglican second.”<sup>6</sup> One of the features of our tradition in Sydney has been, since the 1960s, a form of congregationalism, if you like. Yes, we are a denomination; yes, we have bishops; but the emphasis on the local congregation has been one of the marked features of our life together, and we are able to do this because we are first of all Evangelical and only secondly Anglicans. Now I am proud to be an Anglican; I am glad to be an Anglican; and I was happy to be an Anglican bishop, not a covert Presbyterian. Though I went to a school called Scots College, I was never converted to Presbyterianism. I am happy to be Anglican—do not get me wrong. Nevertheless, if you think Anglican first, Evangelical second, you have got the order wrong because it is the gospel first.

Second, the next thing is our evangelistic work with students in the university. We learned that we work well with students and others from denominations such as the Baptists, the Congregationalists, and the

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<sup>6</sup> This approach coheres with J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett’s distinctions between “Christian consensus,” “evangelical essentials,” “denominational distinctives,” and “congregational commitments”; see J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 149–55; see also, John Bowen, “What Is an Anglican Evangelical?,” *The Wycliffe College, The Institute of Evangelism*, November 12, 2002, <https://institute.wycliffecollege.ca/2003/11/what-is-an-anglican-evangelical/>, and page 41 above.

Methodists, who were Evangelical and made the same choice to be Evangelical first, Methodist second. We were able to combine and work well together, even with differences. One of the great divides back then was between Arminianism and Calvinism or Reformed theology, and I was on the Reformed side, but we could work together. Yes, there were significant differences, and we must never say these differences do not matter, but they did not matter enough for us to not be able to preach the gospel together [cf. Phil 1:18]. That was the key: was it the same gospel we were proclaiming? I would say yes. As a young person, I found myself working in camps and ministries and missions with people from different denominations and was glad to do so.

**PAL:** *What is the status of GAFCON [the Global Anglican Future Conference]? Would you define what that is and its impact on global Anglicanism?*

**PJ:** That brings me to the third point. One of the points Machen makes in *Christianity and Liberalism*—and you may correct me here from your better knowledge of his position—is that you can say that Roman Catholicism is Christian, but you cannot say that liberalism is Christian. Roman Catholicism still believes in the Trinity, in the deity and manhood of Christ; there are sufficient roots there that a person can be saved, even in those circles, but liberalism is a different religion.<sup>7</sup> GAFCON was first a conference in 2008, but it is now a movement, and it arose from the determination of the American Anglicans—called technically the Episcopal Church—to ordain and then consecrate practicing homosexuals.<sup>8</sup> We regarded this as being a step too far—in fact, a leap too far—in disobedience to the Scriptures. It is a matter of salvation, and we therefore cut off our fellowship with them, asking them to repent and turn again and to receive our fellowship back, which they never have. At the same time, there were many other Anglicans around the world—not all Evangelicals by any means, Anglo-Catholics and others—who held the same beliefs, the same biblical beliefs, we did. In this matter, I was perfectly happy to work with them to stand for the truth of God’s word. So I found myself cooperating and working with and praying with lots of people with whom I had had big fights previously. Thus, we had to work out the charismatic ideas in the 1970s. We had to work out the Anglo-Catholic ideas in the previous period. We differ from these people, but not sufficiently as to make it impossible for us to work together at a certain level

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 8, 16.

<sup>8</sup> For more on GAFCON, see the articles of Emmanuel Egbunu and Mark Thompson in this issue.

to say no to the liberalism that destroys the gospel, which I believe its current embrace of the sexual revolution does.

**PAL:** *As we conclude, are there any thoughts you would like to share with those that are seeking ministry in the future?*

**PJ:** Well, that is an invitation to a preacher! Dear brother, as you know, I was the principal of Moore College for sixteen years and then the Archbishop of Sydney. I have described to you the importance of the episcopal role as having to do with ordination. Theological education is crucial as well. I would say the following.

The first question I would ask and would want to know the answer to is, Are you already in ministry? There is no point at all in attempting to enter into ministry if you are not already ministering and ministering the word at the appropriate level. What are you doing to exhibit that ministry? If you are not, then minister in some other way, but do not come here. So we would send people away from the College for a number of reasons, and that would be one of them. So the first question I have for any young person thinking of ministry is, Are you already in ministry? Are you doing it because that is what the Lord is giving you and motivating you to do?

Then, the next thing I would ask is, Where do you intend to go to receive your formation and training? And the key question there, in my opinion, is, Who is teaching? That is to say, if you are examining which seminary to go to, I would say, Who teaches in that seminary? Who are they? What are their aims and purposes? Go and find out. I might also add that I personally think that face-to-face is better. Going to a seminary is creating a fellowship of people with whom you are going to minister in years to come, and that is immensely important. My friend Dr. Graham Cole said to me once that the education in a seminary is “one part lectures, one part library, one part coffee,” and I think that is true. We learn from each other. I know sometimes it is impossible to learn other than on Zoom and over the Internet, but fellowship, to my mind, is immensely important. So look at what their standards are and what their theological commitment is, but most importantly look at who teaches there.

Finally, the other thing I would ask of a person thinking of this is, Are you prepared to take up the cross and follow Jesus [cf. Mark 8:34]? Because ministry, like marriage in that respect, is not to be entered into lightly and unadvisedly. Are you prepared to say no to the sins of ministry? The sins of ministry are a lust for power, a lust for sex, and a lust for money. They are the things that bring ministers undone. Are you prepared to take up the cross and say no to those instincts and humbly serve the people of God

[cf. 1 Pet 5:2–3]? Are you prepared to take up the cross and go against the increasing worldliness of this world and its secular ideologies and, therefore, be unpopular and indeed to be hated, scorned, ridiculed? And then, Are you prepared to take up the cross and deny the fragility of many modern people in this generation and be hard on yourself, be tough, and follow the Lord—yes, even into “the valley of the shadow of death” [cf. Ps 23:4] because you belong to him?

**PAL:** *Now that is challenging. I think we are going to use a transcription of those as standard admissions questions. Particularly the third point: we are recognizing that ministry is not a vocation in the sense of “I like to do this for a career”; it is a divine vocation, and that means bearing the cross as a very powerful component of it, so thank you. Any final thoughts you would want to share?*

**PJ:** I might add that when I say that I am not a Calvinist, I hope you can look behind me and see what is in pride of place on the bookcase.

**PAL:** *I think I see is Ford Lewis Battles’s edition of John Calvin’s Institutes [1559] right there too over your left shoulder.*

**PJ:** You realize that every student of Moore College has to read the whole of the *Institutes*. In other words, we are kind of Calvinists, of course.

**PAL:** *Well, I think that historically we are more than Calvin’s students, but Calvin has left an impact clearly, and if anyone has read the Institutes, Calvin is in their brain one way or the other, whether they like it or not.*

**PJ:** There is a marvelous moment in the *Institutes* where he says, you come to face and look and there you see God looking towards you, the Father looking towards you, from a distance, but he is smiling at you. It is just so moving that he would say such a thing (cf. Calvin, *Institutes* 1.1.2).

**PAL:** *Would you kindly give us a concluding prayer?*

**PJ:** I would be honored to do so.

Dear God and loving heavenly Father. We thank you that across the miles, Peter and I can have this fellowship in Christ. We thank you that we are united despite our different experiences in life and our different backgrounds in many ways; yet, nonetheless, we are one in him, and we thank you for the immense privilege that you have given us, unworthy as we are, to offer leadership in theological education. And I do pray, heavenly Father, for Peter in this particular moment of his life experience and walk, that you will continue to bless him, continue to open up opportunities of service. May he flourish, and may he continue to be a blessing to many people as he goes on serving you. And we pray,

heavenly Father, that you would bless Westminster and Moore College as well; we pray for both these institutions; we pray, heavenly Father, for great wisdom as we enter this new phase of online learning; and we pray that you would give us wisdom about how best to do this, how best to retain the face-to-face and the personal, relational learning, which is so important. We pray, heavenly Father, that you would keep us faithful. We remember, our gracious God, how many organizations and colleges and schools and denominations have drifted away. And we pray, our gracious God, that you would kindly keep us faithful so that we may bless the generations yet to come. So we commit ourselves into your gracious hands with thanksgiving once more for our fellowship in this way, and I pray these things in Jesus's name. Amen.

**PAL:** *Amen. Well, a very heartfelt thank you for the time, for staying up into your late evening on the other side of the globe and the continent of Australia.*



# Book Reviews

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Gerald Bray. *Anglicanism: A Reformed Catholic Tradition*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021.

“What is Anglicanism?” I asked a bishop of the Church of England recently. His answer was “A hodgepodge” (whatever that is!). A curious mix maybe? A strange animal? A set of practices that can flex to accommodate many different styles and perspectives? In the minds of its critics and friends, the very breadth of Anglicanism creates a permissive environment within which to explore. A broad church functions best by being intentionally fuzzy, but this is not a tightly knit community with disciplined discipleship; rather, it is a polity that will not be overly prescriptive. The result is a very messy Anglican style. Formerly a Catholic church in the creedal sense of being “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic,” Anglicans will usually adopt a small “C” as its catholicity is not defined as being in communion with Rome.

The adherents of Anglicanism might stress different things, as could observers, whether friendly or skeptically hostile to its ambiguity. Some will experience Anglicanism as a set of often inspiring buildings. Some will stress the set prayers and liturgy that provides vectors of collective worship. Others will emphasize the approach to church government that helps to contain and manage situations that could otherwise get out of control but that can also be maddeningly slow and very far from nimble when needed. To its critics, what is distinctive is its curious history, especially surrounding its political birth. Churches that are more defined and disciplined will thrive better.

For Gerald Bray, the Anglican Church is a Protestant church with distinctive characteristics. And what provides that distinctiveness is a combination of these factors, but especially doctrine. That will not be the first thing many will think of when celebrated instances come to mind of bishops

who deny the literal resurrection of Jesus or vicars who refuse to preach on the virgin birth. Bray seems quite insistent that the set of standards in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Anglicanism, which he then proceeds to expound, provide guidelines for faith that are thoroughly biblical. He does not deny that they are also set in particular historical contexts that have to be understood and worked with. Trajectories of doctrinal development might well be possible: there may well be more light that can break forth from God's Word. But the Thirty-Nine Articles do provide a resource and doctrinal foundation within which that development might take place.

Bray is a reliable guide to the exposition of Anglicanism as a major grouping in contemporary Christianity that is both Reformed and catholic. Advocates of a Reformed position will find much to celebrate and agree with here, maybe as a reminder of how the Church of England went its own way five hundred years ago and the commitments that justified the break with Rome under Henry VIII.

It was not immediately apparent to this reviewer who the target audience is. Missing in Bray's admirably concise guide is a scholarly style replete with references. If it is for a general (though serious) reader, all well and good. For a more serious reader, Bray would need to develop his otherwise perfectly "safe" comments to show that the species of church that is Anglican or Episcopalian is compatible with confessions of faith, such as Heidelberg, that stood tall in subsequent centuries.

Bray does not begin to engage with the very real and often deeply perplexing debates that have arisen in a secular age and how the Reformed Articles might have something to say to them. That is understandable within a short summary that this book clearly is, but it is also frustrating. "Yes, but ..." one might want to exclaim. Has Anglicanism anything to say to the troubles of our times, with its baffling theories of the self, endemic violence, and environmental degradation?

The real question with Bray's admirable summary is not whether it is a workmanlike summary of the Thirty-Nine Articles and their relevance for today but whether anyone is listening. Most would not, one suspects, think of doctrinal clarity in the same sentence as Anglicanism. In contradistinction from, say, Bishop John Charles Ryle, the celebrated Victorian theologian Frederick D. Maurice was attracted by the broad, inclusive nature of Anglicanism. King's College London was not going to set out to uphold the Reformed basis of the Church of England. The Thirty-Nine Articles represented a historical document, certainly not a regulatory framework. Anglican thinkers since have not felt themselves constrained. The doctrinal and Evangelical element, in addition to the sacramental and episcopal

aspects, was clearly vital to the founders of the Church of England. They were on the same page as many of the continental Reformers.

Upholding the standards of contemporary Anglicanism is not so much about adherence to a basis of faith as faithfulness to a practice, a way of being church, of which doctrine is but one factor. There are, in Christian history, various collections of sources for authority when it comes to faith and reliable knowledge. In, for example, the Lambeth Quadrilateral, four points that are important as markers of Anglican identity are acceptance of Holy Scripture as the rule of faith, the Apostles' and the Nicene creeds, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the historic episcopate as representing that faith and providing a source of contact. It is not clear what role the doctrinal standards of the Thirty-Nine Articles have in depicting the shape of the contemporary church, which is given to what used to be termed "latitudinarian indifference to truth." Nevertheless, the reality that most Anglicans would probably not understand the Thirty-Nine Articles as a basis of faith does not detract from their continuing relevance as setting forth an expression of biblical Christianity. Bray is to be commended in putting a summary in our hands. The original theology of Anglicanism will continue to have an afterlife.

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James I. Packer. *The Heritage of Anglican Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.

This book began as a course on Anglican history and theology that Dr. James I. Packer taught over a number of years at Regent College in Vancouver. The lectures given in 1996 and those given in 2010 were transcribed, and an editor, Thomas Womack, merged the two sets of lectures into one volume. An external reader then read and commented on the manuscript. Next, Donald Lewis of Regent College edited the complete volume. Packer then read it over and made some comments and changes. Finally, the whole volume was read to Packer by his wife Kit (to whom the book is dedicated), and further edits and changes were made.

It is important to know this history for two reasons. First, Packer's previous books did not go through such a complex editorial process, with contributions from a number of scholars and editors, and that does make a difference. Second, this book is not in the style of Packer's earlier books, the language being more spoken English than written English, as one

might expect from a transcribed lecture series. Donald Lewis describes it as listening to a “‘fireside chat’ with a wise and thoughtful theologian” (12). All of that having been said, the content is excellent and well worth reading.

In an introductory chapter, Packer lays out the “Anglican mainstream” (17–45). He defines the three main strands within Anglicanism—Evangelical, Anglo-Catholic, and liberal—and then says something about the structure of Anglicanism, including the place of the monarch (24–28). In the rest of the chapter, he seeks to describe Anglicanism in seven words: biblical, liturgical, evangelical, pastoral, episcopal, national, and ecumenical.

In the rest of the book, Packer approaches his subject historically. He begins by surveying the English Reformation and the Puritan reaction to that Reformation (chs. 2 and 3). His wide knowledge of this period is evident, especially his characterization of Puritan spirituality and devotion. This is an area of study in which he is well published, and he is able to draw on those resources.

When he moves on to discuss Richard Hooker, perhaps surprisingly, he affirms a commonly held view that Hooker “is the greatest theologian the Church of England has ever produced” (112). Even when he describes Hooker’s debate with the Puritans, his defense of the Elizabethan settlement and his great treatise *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Packer’s admiration for the man shines through. Packer then discusses the Caroline Divines, those Anglicans who were active during the reigns of James I, Charles I, and Charles II. He describes them as “establishmentarians to a man” (156).

In the following chapters Packer deals with the liberal and Anglo-Catholic strands within Anglicanism (chs. 6 and 8), beginning with a stern warning to Evangelicals not to imagine that they have all the truth and thus can safely ignore these other strands. Nor does he accept that Evangelical theology on its own, without the influences from liberal and Anglo-Catholic theology, can be said to be true Anglicanism. No, he makes it clear that all three strands need each other and indeed that Anglican theology is the force it remains worldwide precisely because of the engagement and interaction between the three strands.

Packer then tackles revival theology (ch. 7), looking at the key figures in the eighteenth-century revival movements, particularly George Whitefield and John Wesley, although he argues that the climax of revival theology came with the ministry of Charles Simeon of Cambridge. In the following chapters, Packer turns to the Oxford Movement and Anglo-Catholicism, to the “Broad Church” theology of the nineteenth century, and to Anglican modernism. In all of these excursions into the history of Anglicanism he

maintains his own theological position while showing enormous respect for others, not least those with whom he profoundly disagrees. This is a model that many Evangelicals today would do well to imitate.

The last two chapters cover early twentieth-century Anglican theology and Packer's concluding thoughts on Anglican theology (chs. 11 and 12). A certain pessimism creeps into these pages as he surveys the somewhat downhill trajectory of Anglicanism and its departure from many of its core principles, which he sees as enshrined in the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer.

As well as being an *apologia* for Anglicanism, this is a veritable tour through most of the main theological movements since the Reformation. It would be an excellent book to give to a young seminarian or aspiring theologian since they would become well informed and would learn the tools required to assess various traditions and trajectories of modern thought.

One suggestion to anyone wishing to make a study of Anglicanism: You would do well to read this book alongside Gerald Bray's book, *Anglicanism: A Reformed Catholic Tradition* (2021). Packer's great strength is his study of the key figures in Anglicanism and their theological contribution. Bray, on the other hand, focuses on a careful study of documents, notably the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. Together, these books constitute a first-class introduction to Anglicanism from two Evangelical theologians of the first rank.

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Michael P. Jensen. *Reformation Anglican Worship: Experiencing Grace, Expressing Gratitude*. The Reformation Anglicanism Essential Library. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.

Michael Jensen's new book on worship in the Anglican tradition, which argues for the validity and virtue of Reformation Anglicanism's particular expressions, is one of the most refreshing contributions on this issue to have appeared in some time. Investigations into the topics of Anglicanism, its history, and its authentic theological legacy rarely treat them with much objectivity, producing studies that frequently fail to reckon fully with the tensions within that tradition. Rather, the usual outcome is a partisan presentation of Whig history about why competing trajectories within the Anglican communion are invalid and should be discarded. Jensen, however, has engaged readily with the complexities of Anglican historiography,

noting well the other positions and where they fit into the tradition but also forcefully arguing his own corner.

The Reformation Anglicanism Essential Library is a developing collection of books focused on how the Anglican communion has historic roots connected to the Protestant Reformation. Although its institutional origins under Henry VIII are at best mixed, its initial theologians, especially Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), aligned themselves fairly thoroughly with the Reformed tradition, quickly adopting its positions on salvation, the sacraments, and the need for worship to be in the vernacular. Anglicanism has had plenty of jolting moments in its history that prevent it from finding a settled location within one theological camp, including Mary I's reversal of Protestant reforms, the contested relations between the Reformed and Laudian theologies, the Interregnum and Restoration, and of course the nineteenth century's Oxford Movement. Nonetheless, its early confessional, liturgical, and constitutional documents have a high degree of affinity with Reformed divinity, giving it some serious links to that heritage. This series seeks to extrapolate those links into a statement about how Reformed-minded Anglicans might position themselves within their theological tradition today. Jensen's contribution to this series focuses on the issue of corporate worship, which is arguably the most contentious point for the Anglican tradition. The Thirty-Nine Articles stand fairly clearly as a Protestant confession but remain mostly ignored in enforced practice. The Book of Common Prayer, however, typically features centrally in most conceptions of Anglican identity. Because of its pivotal status, many have debated its meaning and its clarity on the issues that divide the Anglo-Catholic and Reformation camps within the Anglican communion. This disputed legacy makes its composition, original theological context, and early reception critically important for understanding its theological position in the Anglican legacy. The way it is, or is not, implemented in worship today all the more intensifies these issues.

Jensen does not skirt around these issues but dives headlong into alternative conceptions of the Anglican heritage. More clearly and bluntly than any other recent author, he outlines debates about particular issues in the Book of Common Prayer and other features of Anglican worship. These instances of direct engagement shed helpful light not only on how various camps within the Anglican communion have received and implemented its traditional documents but also on the longer story of the interpretation of the Anglican tradition itself.

This book mounts a serious argument in favor of interpreting Anglican history as having its first theological formation in connection to the Protestant

Reformation, which then shaped its worship. Considering the specific topics of reading and preaching Scripture, the sacraments, prayers, and music, Jensen invariably returns to Cranmer's writings to show how he developed Anglican principles for all these matters of worship and aligned them directly with Protestant ideas of the specifically Reformed variety. Cranmer's own explanations of the doctrinal concerns behind the development of the Book of Common Prayer, the preaching that should be done, the theology of the sacraments, and even the governing principles of worship all direct attention to his efforts to overturn Roman Catholic doctrine, further the Reformation in England, and make the church's corporate worship clear for all believers so that it might bless and help them more effectively.

The most complicated issue treated in this book is, of course, music. The space of a single chapter can fully do justice to neither the long history of English church music as initially adopted or modified in parts of the Anglican communion nor to the complexities of its affinities and differences in relation to the continental Reformed churches. Cranmer's milder reaction to traditional ceremonies that are not explicitly biblical in nature, furthered significantly by Richard Hooker (1554–1600) during the period of the Elizabethan Settlement, partly explains these difficulties and complexities. Nonetheless, Jensen still clearly argues for foundational principles that music should focus on helping God's people worship rather than itself becoming the focus. His closing gambits against the more charismatically inclined Anglicans, who have begun to make use of so-called praise bands, are nothing short of brilliant, arguing that anything kindred to professional musical performance makes the congregation more spectators than participants and so is functionally a return to Roman Catholic or Anglo-Catholic versions of worship, even if wrapped in low-church trappings.

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John R. W. Stott, *Christ the Cornerstone: Collected Essays of John Stott*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019.

For those of us who like me are discouraged by the divisions and contentious spirit within Evangelicalism, this book will come as a welcome reminder of a time, not so long ago, when controversy and peacemaking were tantamount. John Stott, whom *Time* magazine named as one of the one hundred most influential people in 2005, was an extraordinary writer, as well as a

public speaker and a Christian diplomat. Most of us were marked by his *Basic Christianity* (1958) or his *The Cross of Christ* (1986). But we should also remember the remarkable series of columns he wrote in *Christianity Today* (1977–1981). They and a few more are collected in this anthology.

Several virtues will strike the reader. The sheer breadth of subjects covered is dazzling. There are essays on the Bible, on missions, on discipleship, on Christianity in the majority world, on Anglicanism, and on all kinds of social issues. Stott takes us on a journey. He was a world traveler, encouraging all those he met, whether in Africa or Latin America or the Canadian North. But this journey is also metaphorical, for these essays take us through all kinds of territory, exploring different doctrines, issues, and events. Because they are taken from a journal column, the essays are understandably short, though thorough and always deep. Most of the positions Stott takes on various issues are widely shared by fellow Evangelicals. His emphasis on balancing biblical exegesis with strong social concern brought a needed corrective to the pietism of his times, one which is still needed today. Surprisingly, one often hears today from some who declare themselves against social justice—they would not appreciate Stott!

Space forbids reviewing every one of the forty-nine essays. I encourage the purchase and study of this collection. Let me select a few of them that will stand as samples. A good number are on the status of Scripture, discipleship, and missions, three subjects Stott cared about passionately throughout his life.

One example, chosen nearly at random, is, “Scripture, the Light and Heat for Evangelism.” Without recourse to academic jargon, it masterfully presents the orthodox case for the authority of Scripture. This is done through the mandate to spread the gospel. God’s command to evangelize is based on God’s character. There is but one message, though it is applied to different contexts. Jesus Christ died for sinners and can be embraced by anyone who repents and has faith. The chapter is full of insights. One of them is the reason for unbelief: Often, people do not object to particular objections to particular teachings but “they perceive [the gospel] to be alien” (43). The devil seeks to keep us from believing, but “one little word shall fell him,” the word of the gospel (45). Instead of wrangling over meaningless controversies, we should get down to the business of preaching (47).

Some of these essays are purely positive, standalones. I was particularly edified by certain chapters on the state of Christianity in the majority world. The chapter on Brazil summarizes the obstacles and opportunities for evangelism masterfully in only a few pages (#30). The chapter on Norway is poignant since Stott’s ancestors are Norwegian.



Others are quite polemical. Stott is never vehement or unkind. But certain subjects trigger a raw nerve in him. One of these is James Barr's attack on fundamentalism (#35, "Are Evangelicals *Fundamentalists*?"). After citing positively Barr's renowned *Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961), he reviews the book *Fundamentalism* (1981). Barr asserts he conducted extensive research before lodging his attack (213). "This is a false claim," Stott retorts, adding, "He is unfair—even rude—to Norman Anderson and Michael Green, almost ignores F. F. Bruce and Howard Marshall, and does not begin to do justice to the reasoned argumentation of J. I Packer ... or J. W. Wenham." Stott takes issue with Barr's claim that he is not trying to change minds but to understand "our intellectual structure." Stott calls Barr's indictment "strange": out of one side of his mouth the author says he is not interested in changing anyone's mind, yet out of the other side he is so devastatingly critical it is hard to imagine he sincerely does not want to change anyone's mind. Why would he not want to? Even here, in his typically generous manner, Stott admits there are places where Evangelicals could be clearer, for example, their ambiguous attitude toward biblical criticism. But Stott catches Barr saying they do not pay enough attention and yet they do listen. Which is it?

Certain common themes can be found throughout these essays. A concern for missions and evangelism is prevalent. The defense of Scripture is another. Stott constantly refers to the Lausanne Covenant, of which he was a major architect. He balances gospel preaching with social concern. Other themes are less frequent. There is a chapter on animal rights and another on industry and another on abortion (particularly pertinent in the light of recent issues in the United States). One is of the class-ridden nature of British society.

We should not fault a book he did not write. There is almost no discussion of Tiananmen Square in 1989, of women (a subject he nevertheless felt strongly about), nor of the ecclesiastical split initiated by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. For these the reader is directed to the numerous biographies of this dean of Evangelicals.

These essays are a feast. I hope more will be published.

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James I. Packer. *Pointing to the Pasturelands: Reflections on Evangelicalism, Doctrine, and Culture*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021.

One of the most well-known Evangelicals of his generation was James Innell Packer. Or even of several generations, for he lived a long life and remained active till he was very old. He died in 2020 at the age of almost 94 years.

This book republishes columns and articles that Packer wrote for *Evangelical Today*. The period from which the writings stem spans more than thirty years. Packer's first contribution to *Evangelical Today* was in 1985, and the last included in this book is from 2008. The editors ordered Packer's writings for *Evangelical Today* into three groups. First, there are his columns. There are twenty-seven of them: short pieces, just a few pages long. Each column touches on a specific issue, often ending in a pun or a beautiful sentence and leaving you smiling for a moment and with the pleasure of enjoying Packer's linguistic competence. Here is an example from chapter 19, "A Fan Mail to Calvin," starting thus: "Dear John, this is a fan letter, naked and unashamed, one that I have long wanted to write, even though for obvious reasons I cannot mail it to you."

Next, there are nineteen articles. Every article fills nine or ten pages, and thus this forms the book's longest section. In some of these articles, Packer explains important or controversial decisions he made in his life. Chapter 41, for example, is an article explaining why he signed the statement "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." Chapter 45, "Why I Walked," gives his argument why he, being a synod member, walked out of the synod of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster when it authorized the bishop to produce a service for blessing same-sex unions. Other articles reflect on vital themes in Packer's theological life. Chapter 42, "Thank God for Our Bibles," deals with his lifelong effort to give the Bible its central place in the Christian religion. In chapter 43, Packer reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of C. S. Lewis's person and writings.

The third section, called "Good Questions," contains eleven topics. Here, Packer answers questions that readers of *Evangelical Today* asked him. He explains why the dead cannot be converted (ch. 47), he reflects on whether it was God who died on the cross (ch. 48), and he defends the view that all sins are not equal (ch. 56). This section demonstrates what made Packer so unique. His answers are short, vivid, often convincing, and admirably simple. It is not difficult to remember them and to make them your own answers if you (as a pastor, a teacher, a parent) come across these same questions yourselves.

One might wonder what the editors' goal was in publishing this book.

Did they want to give the reader just more of Packer? Do they expect all readers who once met Packer in his books to read everything he ever wrote? Or is the book meant as an introduction to Packer for those who have not yet read any other of his books? Is it an accessible compilation that aims to win the reader to this Anglican writer's style, elegance, and clarity? One online review was very critical of this publication—not because of its content but because of its purported goal. However, I do not share such a critique.

This book makes clear why Packer became such an influential Evangelical. What made the average reader so appreciate him? In addition to his warm and lucid way of writing, his mastering of the theological field that made him renowned among scholars, and his deep commitment to Reformed theology, which he helped to revive; there was also his ability to value persons and to analyze positions in the theological and cultural landscape. Packer possessed the astonishing ability not only to see the headlines and the details but also especially to distinguish them.

A marvelous example is found in the book in Packer's description of C. S. Lewis:

His brand of Christianity was conservative Anglicanism with "catholic" (non-Roman!) leanings; hence his nonpenal view of the Atonement, his nonmention of justification, his belief in purgatory, his praying for the dead, and his regular confession to his priest. His conversion was a return to a boyhood faith lost two decades before. ... A standard-issue evangelical? Hardly. But he was a Christian thinker and communicator without peer on three themes: the reasonableness and humanity of Christian faith; the moral demands of discipleship; and heaven as home, the place of all value and all contentment. (28–29)

The ability to give such short and very precise characterizations is rare. Packer thus made it clear that his appreciation for persons and opinions was always well informed and that at the same time, he was glad about what he saw as good and worthy. And in those cases in which he was critical, the reader can be sure that the criticism was adequate.

Reading this book, I realized how important Packer's Anglicanism was for such a stance. Packer would definitely not have had the influence and the importance he actually had on global Christianity if he had been a Congregationalist, a Presbyterian, or a Baptist. Packer needed to appreciate the central Christian themes where they were still present so he could be and remain an Anglican. To be and to remain Reformed, Packer needed to stress the specific themes of the doctrine of Scripture and the doctrine of grace. Balancing between both poles made him the Packer he was. I think that the relevance of this book lies here: not only to entertain readers or give

them spiritual food but also to encourage them to strive for the balance that was so characteristic of Packer.

It is interesting to realize how often Packer writes about himself. Many columns and articles are not adequately understandable if you do not know who the writer was. However, never are his writings self-centered. It is precisely with this personal touch that the reader recognizes that Christian theology is not an objective set of statements, not an academic subject, not a handicraft for money, and not a proof of orthodoxy, but a way of life that is both universal and personal. With a variation to the last sentence in Packer's column on Lewis, we might say, "Thank you, Mr. Packer, for being you. I wouldn't have missed you for the world."

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Iain H. Murray. *J. C. Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2016.

These words flowed from the pen of John Charles Ryle (1816–1900) in his book *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* (1885; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978):

The celebrated lawyer, [William] Blackstone, had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III, to go from church to church and hear every clergyman of note in London. He says that he did not hear a single sermon that had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mohamet, or of Christ! (15)

Ryle's opening chapter lays out the historical context of his own ministry by giving his insight into the condition of the Anglican Church into which he was born, in which he would serve, and in which he would pass into glory. "Sermons everywhere were little better than miserable moral essays utterly devoid of anything likely to awaken, convert, or save souls" (14). This gives one the spiritual temperature of the day. For as we learned in our homiletics classes, when there is a mist in the pulpit, there is a fog in the congregation. Church leadership provided little better direction, for as Ryle says,

the majority of the [Anglican] bishops, to say the truth, were more men of the world. They were unfit for their positions. ... Let me also add, that when the occupants of the Episcopal bench were troubled by the rapid spread of [George] Whitefield's

influence, it was gravely suggested in high quarters that the best way to stop his influence was to make him a bishop. (16–17)

Into that ecclesiastical and moral context Ryle was born in 1816. Iain Murray lays out the arc of Ryle's life in support of the thesis he expresses in the title, *J. C. Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone*. Describing his early years, Murray quotes Ryle: "I had a very strong opinion of my own, and never cared a bit for being in a minority, and was ready to fight anybody however big if necessary" (6). Along his educational path was the famed Eton College, where twenty British prime ministers and two Northern Ireland prime ministers received an education and where, Murray tells us, fagging—the younger students were to act as servants to senior students during the day—was employed. It was unpleasant for the new boys, but, as Ryle recalled, "It obliges them [the new boys] to submit to the will of others, and teaches the great lesson which we all have to learn in life, that we cannot always have our own way" (9). He went on to say, "I gradually fell into place, and I have no doubt it was an excellent thing for my character and taught me to bear, and to forbear, and put up with much, and mortify my self will, and accommodate myself to the various characters and temperaments of others" (9).

So in the providence of God, Ryle was being shaped from a young age to make a stand. Later he would be persuaded by the truth for which he would stand. Murray notes some disagreement about the time and circumstances of Ryle's conversion. One retrospective account speaks of an anonymous clergyman simply reading Scripture, Ephesians 2:8–9. But Ryle himself describes his conversion more in terms of a slow awakening. He says, "It was not a sudden immediate change, but very gradual. I cannot trace it to any one person, or any one event or thing" (21). But Murray leaves no doubt that the conversion, however it came about, was sure and transformative.

Ryle's postconversion persona, while distinguished by a passion for personal holiness, would continue to be marked with a bent toward independent thinking. He would write, "Who doesn't know that Spiritual religion never brings a man the world's praise? If a man will become a decided evangelical Christian, he must make up his mind to lose the world's favours; he must be content to be thought by many a perfect fool" (67).

Murray would describe Ryle at age 27 as a man of settled convictions. While serving at Winchester, he would write, "The story of my life has been such, that I really cared nothing for anyone's opinion, and resolved not to consider one jot who was offended and who was not offended by anything I did" (71).

Ryle's readiness to stand alone was also reflected in his reluctance to commit allegiance to any organization but rather to orthodoxy, which he interpreted as the Scriptures, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Prayer Book. During his day, Ryle saw the rise of several movements that he regarded as conflicting with his view of orthodoxy. The Tractarians grew out of the Oxford intelligentsia and distributed tracts (pamphlet literature) supporting the idea that the true church is identified in terms of unbroken succession from the first century, the elevation of "tradition," which Murray says was commonly understood as derived from the church fathers to supply what was not found in Scripture. Ryle believed this struck at the heart of both Anglicanism and Protestantism.

Evangelicalism was also a movement within the Anglican Church. It has been since the eighteenth century. Murray describes five doctrinal distinctives of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism that are reflective of the Evangelical movement of today. As attractive as these tenets appeared to Ryle and appear to those of us with a Reformed frame, it was the extreme application of grace and the ecclesiastical independence that prevented Ryle from openly embracing the movement.

A third movement Murray identifies is the Anglo-Catholic movement. Anglo-Catholicism is defined by Murray as the system of belief that assigns authority to Anglican bishops by virtue of apostolic succession to the same line as the Church of Rome. The reliance on tradition and their dependence on sacraments for salvation would allow Ryle no more than dialogue with this movement.

Yet another movement that posed a threat to Anglicanism was the rise of higher criticism, which would captivate some in the Church in the late nineteenth century. To this Ryle would write, Scripture is "altogether and entirely the Word of God" and "the very keel and foundation of Christianity. If Christians have no divine book to turn to as their warrant for their doctrine and practice, they have no solid ground for peace or hope, and no right to claim the attention of mankind" (194). In fact, Bishop Ryle would fire his own son, Herbert, over the issue of inerrancy.

As impressive as those qualities—independent thinking, passionate defense of the gospel, Calvinistic theological preciseness, and the heart of a lion as it relates to evangelism—were in Ryle, what is at least as impressive is that Ryle, 150 years later, still speaks today. He speaks today through his extant publications, both books and pamphlets, and his expository thoughts. Some of his nineteenth-century quotes are repeated or paraphrased today and are still relevant:

It is not Atheism I fear so much in the present times as Pantheism. It is not the system which says nothing is true, so much as the system that says *everything is true*. ... It is the system which is so charitable, that it will allow everything to be true. It is the system which is so scrupulous about the feelings of others that we are never to say they are wrong. (140)

I always felt that popularity, as it was called, was a very worthless thing and a very bad thing for a man's soul. (185)

Unity which is obtained by the sacrifice of truth is worth nothing. (223)

But of one thing I am very sure,—the State that begins by sowing the seed of national neglect of God, will sooner or later reap a harvest of national disaster and national ruin. (231)

It was the heart behind the words that made Ryle an interesting subject for Murray and a worthy mentor for aspiring pastors and ministry-involved laity. Murray is an engaging storyteller and makes *Prepared to Stand Alone* an easy read. However, Murray's work will have its full effect only on those who know the history and operation of Ryle's beloved Anglican Church, so more study on the subject would be useful for a more complete understanding of Ryle's service to it.

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# Theology and Science: An Analytic-Synthetic Integration Model as a Solution to the Problem of Dualism and Secularism

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## Abstract

In Indonesia, dualism and secularism have posed serious challenges to theological higher education in particular. These challenges have led to a dis-integration and mis-integration between theology and science and have resulted in confusion, hypocrisy, paralysis, and theological stagnation. This study on the integration of theology and science, using integrative research methods, attempts to find an analytical-synthetic integration model that provides an introduction to integrative studies, such as *sophitheology*, *sociotheology*, *biotheology*, *ecotheology*, *physicotheology*, and *anthropotheology*. These integrative studies would hopefully enable theologians and scientists to reverse the negative influence of dualism and secularism that tends to lead to debate, division, and hostility and to restore theology and science to their original roles as God has intended them for the benefit of humanity.

## Keywords

*Integration, theology, science, model, dualism, secularism analytic-synthetic, theological higher education*

## Introduction

**T**heology and science are two areas of study that cannot stand alone. Not only are they compatible with one another and without conflict, but they are basically inseparable,<sup>1</sup> as many experts, such as Peter Kurti, agree.<sup>2</sup> Theology and science are essentially an integrative unit between the study of God's word (biblical-theological studies) and God's world (scientific studies),<sup>3</sup> between material (natural) objects and formal (supernatural) objects. Theology comes from special revelation, while science comes from general revelation, both without contradiction, originating from the same source, namely, God.<sup>4</sup> David Wilkinson, an astrophysics professor at Durham University asserts, "Science is a gift from God."<sup>5</sup> The integration can be described in the following way: theology without science will be paralyzed, while science without theology will be blind.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, theology not integrated with science is just like "a gong that rings and cymbals tinkling" or is just a text without context, while science that is not integrated with theology is like livestock that though healthy and fat end up only as dinner.

In essence, the relationship between theology and science can be either acknowledged or denied.<sup>7</sup> Ian Barbour, adopting Richard Niebuhr's view, describes the two attitudes in terms of four possible relationships: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration.<sup>8</sup> In addition, other experts propose parallelism<sup>9</sup> and mutualism<sup>10</sup> as other forms of the relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Molly Cruitt, "Science and Faith Aren't Just Compatible—They're Inseparable," *Grotto*, February 22, 2022, <https://grottonetwork.com/keep-the-faith/belief/how-faith-and-science-are-inseparable>.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Kurti, "Faith and Reason Inseparable," *The Centre for Independent Studies*, November 3, 2017, <https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/articles/faith-and-reason-inseparable>.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Tenneson, David Bundrick, and Matthew Stanford, "A New Survey Instrument and Its Finding for Relating Science and Theology, Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 67.3 (2015): 201.

<sup>4</sup> Stevri P. N. I. Lumintang, "Theology as a Science and Asciense: An Answer to Scientists and Warning to Theologians," *Verbum Christi* 8.1 (2021): 75.

<sup>5</sup> David Wilkinson, "Science Is a Gift from God," *Templeton Religion Trust*, January 1, 2020, <https://templetonreligiontrust.org/explore/science-is-a-gift-from-god/>.

<sup>6</sup> Lumintang, "Theology as a Science and Asciense," 73.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Barbour, "Ways of Relating Science and Theology," in *Physics, Philosophy and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding*, ed. Robert J. Russell (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 21–48.

<sup>9</sup> John Polkingdorne, "Science and Theology, Parallelisms," *Religion Science, Interdisciplinary Encyclopedia of Religion and Science*, January 15, 2022, <https://inters.org/science-theology>.

<sup>10</sup> Alan G. Padgett, *Science and the Study of God: A Mutuality Model for Theology and Science* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1–21.

Dialogue, integration, parallelism, and mutualism are attitudes acknowledging the existence of a harmonious relationship between the two. In fact, during the Middle Ages, from the era of Augustine to Thomas Aquinas and even up to the Reformation, the relationship between theology and science was harmonious.<sup>11</sup> However, the development of science during the modern era has created a substantial change in this relationship, as scientists follow absolute scientific standards characterized by objective, rational, and empirical thinking. They have thus rejected theology, and scientists in general have increasingly adhered to secularism. The intellectual community has also become more scientific and less religious.<sup>12</sup> If one wants to achieve progress in civilization through science, one should not be religious.<sup>13</sup>

The separation of theology and science reached its climax in the nineteenth century with the development of the evolution theory and cosmology, followed by radical secularization and atheism. Scientists and scientism have become increasingly exclusive, claiming that everything not based on science is pseudoknowledge, myth, and fake news.<sup>14</sup> Theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, and Karl Barth were influenced by this new development in science and tried to adapt to its paradigm.<sup>15</sup> They subjected the Bible to critical scientific evaluation in such a way that theology started to lose its spiritual and supernatural dimension.<sup>16</sup> Other theologians, however, in view of Barbour's classification of the four relationships between theology and science, have considered science as inferior to theology.<sup>17</sup> This contradiction has resulted in an ever-widening and unbridgeable gap between theology and science.

While the above problems were still unresolved, another change happened during the shift from the modern era to the postmodern. Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty define the postmodern era as ultramodernism and the death of modernism.<sup>18</sup> The postmodern rejection of the modern

<sup>11</sup> Lumintang, "Theology as a Science and Ascience," 56.

<sup>12</sup> Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Gereja Abad XXI: Gereja Menjadi Serupa Dunia* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2017), 117.

<sup>13</sup> Erick L. Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity* (Malang: SAAT, 2012), 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ted Peters, "Science and Religion: Ten Models of War, Truce and Partnership," *Theology and Science* 16.1 (2018): 11–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746700.2017.1402163>.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of theology and science in the nineteenth century, see Johannes Zachhuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From F. C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Lumintang, "Theology as a Science and Ascience," 57.

<sup>17</sup> Tenneson, Bundrick, and Stanford, "A New Survey Instrument," 202.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas C. Oden, "The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality," in *The Challenge of Postmodernism: A Evangelical Engagement*, ed. David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 26.

worldview<sup>19</sup> has resulted in another change of paradigm in science and theology. As postmodernism tends to reject all foundations of metaphysical and metanarrative truth,<sup>20</sup> theology in churches and colleges is lost,<sup>21</sup> liberal and contemporary theology is dead,<sup>22</sup> and Evangelical theology becomes stagnant.<sup>23</sup> The increasing influence of dualism and secularism on religion has impacted the state's affairs as well. Indonesia used to be known as a religious state, but it has now become a secular state, as Manning Nash observes: "Malaysia and Indonesia are Islamic nations but secular states."<sup>24</sup> The religious values and ideology of Pancasila have become mere symbols; practical-atheist practices are now widely spread in the form of corruption, physical violence, and even murder in the name of religion.<sup>25</sup>

However, in the postmodern era the study of dialogue, parallelism, mutualism, and integration has also begun. In theological education, interest in integrative studies has been pioneered by Indonesian theologians such as Stevri Lumintang. Lumintang has written on the topic of *sophitheology*, that is, the integration of theology and philosophy.<sup>26</sup> This interest, however, is not widespread; very few seminaries and Christian universities currently offer integrative studies.<sup>27</sup> Courses on social sciences, for example, are taught in all theological seminaries, but as separate from theology.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>19</sup> David S. Dockery, "The Challenge of Postmodernism," in *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, ed. Dockery, 6; Timothy R. Phillips, *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 27.

<sup>20</sup> Graham Ward, "Deconstruction Theology," in *Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009), 77; H. W. B. Sumakul, *Postmodernitas: Memaknai Masyarakat Plural Abad ke-21* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 5.

<sup>21</sup> David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2004), 5.

<sup>22</sup> David F. Wells, *Mengatasi Segala Kuasa Dunia: Kristus di dalam Dunia Postmodernisme* (Surabaya: Penerbit Momentum, 2013), 351.

<sup>23</sup> Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Gereja Abad XXI*, 186–88.

<sup>24</sup> Manning Nash, "Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia and Indonesia," in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 691–739.

<sup>25</sup> Stevri Pentti Novri Indra Lumintang, "Lordship and Humanity Principles for the Peace of Indonesia: An Integrative Study of Theology and Ideology," *Analisa Journal of Social Science and Religion* 6.2 (2021): 199, <https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v6i02.1470>.

<sup>26</sup> Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science and the Master of Philosophy* (Jakarta: Genava Insani Indonesia, 2015), 73–134.

<sup>27</sup> *Curriculum Guide for State One (S1) Study Program of Theology, Christian Religious Education, Missiology College of Theology and Christian College of Religion in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Ministry of Religion Directorate General of Christian Community Guidance, 2011), 61–81; list of Undergraduate Philosophy of Divinity Courses, Duta Wacana Christian University Yogyakarta, February 20, 2022, <https://www.ukdw.ac.id/akademik/fakultas-teologi/sarjana-filsafat-keilahanian>; Kurikulum Program M.Th., STT Reformed Indonesia, February 21, 2022, <https://www.reformedindonesia.ac.id>.

<sup>28</sup> "Doktor Teologi (S-3)," Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Jakarta, February 21, 2022, <https://stftjakarta.ac.id/sarjana/doktor-teologi.s3-2/>.

In the Indonesian context, another impediment to integrative studies between theology and science is the lack of literature written by Indonesian scientists and theologians; only translated works are currently available.<sup>29</sup> It is therefore important to equip theological education in Indonesia with an introduction to integrative studies that answers this question: Could a model that integrates theology and science provide a solution to the problem of dualism and secularism that has resulted in the narrowness and stagnation of theological studies at theological universities in Indonesia? Integrative theology asserts that there is no space without God and thus there is no world of dualism and no world of secularism.

Aside from providing this introduction, the purpose of this article is also to raise the interest of students and lecturers in theology to engage in further research to produce the urgently needed integrative works.

## **I. Method**

In this research, through scientific procedures, we use an integrative research method that concerns not only studies within one theological study group (biblical, systematic, historical, and practical) that Gordon Lewis initiated<sup>30</sup> but also integrative research methods between scientific disciplines—namely, theology and science—as a result of cognitive processes of theology and one of the scientific fields of study.<sup>31</sup> This method is based on the ideas of Bahman Shirazi, particularly regarding the analytical-synthetic integration model, and aims to provide a synthesis of knowledge and the applicability of the results of significant studies as well as a model to practice.<sup>32</sup>

The integrative research method takes a qualitative approach,<sup>33</sup> combining dialectically two different fields of study—theology and science—in which each is regarded as autonomous; at the same time, the two are integrated in synergy according to their natures and not united or mixed. Following the analytical-synthesis integration model, the content analysis method consists of three steps. The first is to conduct an analysis through literature study on

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<sup>29</sup> Eric L. Johnson, ed., *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views* (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2012), 7–401; Celia Deane-Drummond, *Teologi dan Ekologi* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006), 1–191.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon R. Lewis, *Integrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2010), 87–89.

<sup>31</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 119.

<sup>32</sup> Bahman A. K. Shirazi, “Integrative Research: Integral Epistemology and Integrative Methodology,” *Integral Review* 11.1 (2015): 21.

<sup>33</sup> Audrey Gilmore and David Carson, “Integrative Qualitative Methods in a Services Context,” *Marketing Intelligence and Planning* 14.6 (1996): 21–26.

the natures of theology and science and to find similarities and parallels based on presuppositions, sources, nature, methods, and findings. The second is to analyze several proposals for integrating theology and science to find how they work together. The third is to synthesize theology and science based on the principle that science clarifies theology and theology fills in the blanks of the sciences.

## II. *Findings and Discussion*

Since ancient Greece, the dualism of the material world as a source of science has been questioned by philosophers of monism, pluralism, and nihilism.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the dualism of Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas with regard to humans explains the contradiction between the (material) body and the (nonmaterial) soul:<sup>35</sup> the body is the material or physical world that is evil, and the soul is the immaterial or spiritual world that is good.<sup>36</sup> Such a dualistic mindset has developed into the subject of modern philosophical debates between rationalism (idea-form), empiricism, and idealism (noumena-phenomena).<sup>37</sup> Knowledge is classified on the basis of its source: first, from God's revelation (theology); second, from nature, reason, and human experience (science). This tendency climaxed in the modern era, when not a few scientists and philosophers attacked theology and the Bible.<sup>38</sup>

Scientists and philosophers have used their scientific and philosophical laws to attack religion, theology, and the Bible both directly and indirectly. Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) with his rationalism, attacked the Bible and forms of theism,<sup>39</sup> whereas Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) rejected the idea of God's revelation and thereby rejected the Bible and theology.<sup>40</sup> Later on Charles Darwin (1809–1882) produced the theory of evolution regarding the origin of man, thereby rejecting the the Bible's account of

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<sup>34</sup> Stevri P. N. I. Lumintang, "Philosophical Arguments and Reformed Theology of Monism as a Critique on the Religious Pluralism and Problem Solving of the Religious Plurality in Indonesia" (PhD diss, Los Angeles, International Theological Seminary, 2011), 33–34.

<sup>35</sup> Howard Robinson, "Dualism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, September 11, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/>.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Helm, "Dualism," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 211.

<sup>37</sup> Hwa Yung, *Mangoes and Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 3–4.

<sup>38</sup> Helm, "Dualism," 22.

<sup>39</sup> Steven Nadler, "Baruch Spinoza," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, April 16, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza/>.

<sup>40</sup> Dennis Nineham, "Historical Criticism," in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson, (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1983), 259.

creation. While Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) proposed his concept of a dead God, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), with his analytical theory, considered religion as just an illusion. Then Ludwig Feuerbach (1904–1972), with his natural concept of God, rejected the God described in the Bible.<sup>41</sup> Many more scientists could be mentioned who hold to absolute dualism because they only recognize science.

During the modern era, many theologians have been affected by this scientific revolution and have implemented a critical modern approach to the study of theology by treating theology as pure science and no longer as revealed and transcendental. On the other hand, among Evangelical fundamentalist groups there are some who oppose this liberal approach to the extent of closing themselves to all science and becoming anti-intellectual and antirational.<sup>42</sup> They study the Bible to find things that contradict science.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, three of the four views in *Science and Christianity* tend to dis-integrate theology and science; only Howard Van Till's view supports integration, as does Richard Wright in his book *Biology through the Eyes of Faith*.<sup>44</sup> Many more works of both liberal and fundamentalist theologians, such as Karissa Carlson, Ted Peters, David Livingstone, and John Hedley Brooke, argue for a very dualistic war between theology and science.<sup>45</sup>

Dualism is closely related to secularism; both made a negative impact on education and, in particular, religious higher education<sup>46</sup> and Christian education.<sup>47</sup> Secularism is the latest development of dualism that was expanded by philosophers and scientists. Secularist philosophers do not recognize the metaphysical or transcendental world, secularist sociologists tend to negate the role of religion in the state, and liberal secularist

<sup>41</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Ernest R. Sandeen, "Christian Fundamentalism: American Protestant Movement," *Britannica*, December 9, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-fundamentalism>.

<sup>43</sup> Henry M. Morris, *Science and the Bible* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 25.

<sup>44</sup> Richard F. Carlson, ed., *Science and Christianity: Found Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 55; Richard T. Wright, *Biology Through the Eyes of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003), 5–309.

<sup>45</sup> Karissa D. Carlson, *Conflicts between Science and Theology: Historical Perspective* (Orange City, IA: Department of Chemistry, Northwestern College, 2012), 1–31, <https://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1016&context=tenurepapers>; Peters, "Science and Religion," 15.

<sup>46</sup> Musa Matovu, "Education Dualism and Secularism: An Integrated Education Approach to the Education System in Uganda," *International Journal for Educational Studies* 5.2 (2018): 117.

<sup>47</sup> Gary Brumbelow, "The Hidden Effect of Secular Education on Christian Children," *Darrow Miller and Friends*, March 11, 2013, <http://darrowmillerandfriends.com/2013/03/11/dualism-hidden-effect-secular-education-christian-children/>.



theologians are more interested in human intelligence than divine guidance.<sup>48</sup> Christian education needs to integrate academic pursuit with spiritual, moral, and character training, so an integration of theological studies and the various scientific disciplines is necessary, and its study can no longer be avoided, as in previous centuries.

### III. *The Necessity of Integrating Theology and Science*

Nothing that comes from God is separate or in conflict with any other thing. All truth is God's truth and there is no truth apart from God.<sup>49</sup> Theological and scientific truths are truths that come from God. This statement implies that truth is holistic; it includes not only rational truth but also nonrational truth, not only natural truths but also supernatural truths, not only transcendental truths but also immanent truths, and not only the truth of the past but also the truth of the present and the future.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, there is absolutely no contradiction between kinds of knowledge, including between theology and science. As truth is holistic, integrative studies are therefore a necessity.

Integrative study must start with God. God created all human beings according to his image (Gen 1:27) with the ability to think, feel, and will. This means that humans were created to have theological as well as scientific knowledge and with it to rule the world.<sup>51</sup> The ability to think in this way is in accordance with the laws of orderly thinking and the laws of an orderly universe. Millard Erickson states, "There is a congruity between the human mind and the creation about us. The order of the human mind is basically the same as the order of the universe."<sup>52</sup> This rational ability does not conflict with the ability to be morally responsible. God is manifested not only in the intellectual nature of human beings but also in their moral nature. Since moral responsibility entails the ability to respond, a human being in God's image is also "a free moral creature."<sup>53</sup> God not only created humans

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<sup>48</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 341.

<sup>49</sup> Keith Mathison, "All Truth Is God's Truth—A Reformed Approach to Science and Scripture," *Ligonier*, May 11, 2012, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/all-truth-gods-truth-reformed-approach-science-and-scripture>.

<sup>50</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 25.

<sup>51</sup> John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 785.

<sup>52</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 43.

<sup>53</sup> Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 67.



as knowledgeable and moral beings but also all creation as the source of knowledge<sup>54</sup>—knowledge in the broad sense of the word, not only natural knowledge (Ps 91:1; Job 12:7–9; Acts 14:15–17; 17:24–25; Rom 1:20). Again, Erickson asserts, “God has given us an objective, valid, rational revelation of Himself in nature, history, and human personality. It is there for anyone who wants to observe it.”<sup>55</sup> As human beings are part of God’s general revelation, they are also a source of knowledge, including religious knowledge (Rom 1:19–20).<sup>56</sup> Within the framework of general revelation, science and religion are an integrated entity.

General revelation alone is unable to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge about God; it only gives access to general knowledge about nature, art, the social sciences, and religion. According to his statutes, God manifests himself specifically by speaking, and the center of his word is Christ. His words are written only in the Scriptures (Rom 10:9–17, 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 1:23–25); they are thus the first and main source of theological studies.<sup>57</sup> The purpose of special revelation provides the goal for theology. It enables human beings to know the person and work of God personally, to have fellowship with God, to be conformed to God’s will, and to become fully obedient and devoted to God.<sup>58</sup> Theology cannot be separated from science because God’s revelation in particular, which is the source of theology, is congruent with God’s revelation in general, which is the source of science. God reveals himself in the context of space and time in human history.

Norman Geisler emphasizes the necessity of integrating theology and science: “Between these two, when properly understood, there are no conflicts, since God is the Author of both, and he cannot contradict himself.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, theology and science are a harmonious unity, as Bernard Ramm observes: “The task of the scientist is to explore the works of God in creation, and that of the theologian the speech of God in the Bible.... It is the thesis of this author that the two tasks and the two bodies of conclusions should exist in a state of harmony.”<sup>60</sup> There is a difference, however, between general and special revelation: Aspects of science are not found in the Bible,

<sup>54</sup> Stevri I. Lumintang and Danik A. Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian Theologis* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2016), 17.

<sup>55</sup> Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 148.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>57</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Wiley & Sons, 2011), 120–21.

<sup>58</sup> Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Keunikan Theologia di Tengah Kepalsuan* (Batu: Departemen Literatur PPII, 2010), 8–25.

<sup>59</sup> Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia*, 691.

<sup>60</sup> Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 35–36.

and major elements of theology are absent from science. God's word does not include most of the truths of science, history, mathematics, and the arts. The bulk of truth in all of these areas is found only in God's general revelation. "While the Bible is scientifically accurate, it is not a textbook on science."<sup>61</sup> In fact, science enriches theology with information that does not conflict with biblical truth, and theology enriches science with substantive values for science.

Finally, the inevitability of the relationship between theology and science can be explained by the following examples: "Believing in God's providence through the availability of food ingredients (theology) cannot be separated from knowing the types of healthy food (science). Giving advice to a mother not to abort her child (theology) cannot be separated from knowing the mother's health condition (science). Praying for people with heart disease cannot be separated from giving advice on healthy lifestyle and eating. Praying for and choosing a candidate for President of a country cannot be separated from knowing the ideology of a political party and the track record of that person. Choosing a good and appropriate study program for one's children cannot be separated from knowing and believing in God's guidance for their future."<sup>62</sup>

#### ***IV. Models of Integration of Theology and Science and Their Limitations***

Several experts who do not agree with the separation between theology and science have proposed models of the relationship between the two. Four of them will be discussed here, namely, Ted Peters, Ian Barbour, Howard Van Till, and James Porter Moreland.

Peters, Professor Emeritus of theology and ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, proposes ten models of the relationship between theology and science. The fifth to tenth models can suitably be called a partnership model. In the fifth model, for example, the universe is understood through science so that the mind of God can be found in it. The seventh model involves a union between theology and science. The eighth model suggests an interaction between theology and science, which are viewed as partners conversing about the same reality.<sup>63</sup> However, all of these models still maintain two separate sides and do not conform to the full truth. As such, Peters's approach cannot be regarded as an integration.

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<sup>61</sup> Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 70.

<sup>62</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 15–16.

<sup>63</sup> Peters, "Science and Religion," 13–34.

Barbour (1923–2013), an American scholar and emeritus professor of science, technology, and society, assumes in his book *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues*<sup>64</sup> that theology and science can be synergized and even have something in common. Theology and science have similar methods and characteristics. In method, both involve data verification and vigorous language analysis. In characteristics, both require coherence, comprehensiveness, and usefulness. However, two examples from Barbour's interaction model—natural theology and systematic synthesis—reveal the limitations of his integration model. First, the research conducted should use specific methods in accordance with the fields of science and theology rather than a general one. Second, natural theology ignores Scripture as the first and main source of theology and theological tradition as the second. Barbour's integration model produces only what medieval theologians had produced.

Howard Van Till (born 1938), professor of physics at Calvin College, wrote an article entitled "Partnership: Science and Christian Theology as Partners."<sup>65</sup> He first examines the natures of theology and science individually, particularly on the subject of creation. Though he is committed to upholding the Christian faith, Van Till as a physicist seems to narrow the theological space in his statement that "both science and theology are honestly seeking growth in authentic human knowledge about ourselves and about the universe in which we reside."<sup>66</sup> It is obvious that theology does not limit its purpose to seeking only true knowledge about humans and the world in which they live. Instead, the main purpose of theology is to seek to know God's will so that it can be obeyed and carried out in the world, now and in the future. This model of partnership between theology and science tends to result in a dichotomy between Creator and creation.

Moreland (born 1948)—philosopher, theologian, and apologist—has described in his book *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* six models of the integration of theology and science.<sup>67</sup> In the first model, science and theology focus on two distinct but not overlapping areas of research, between the natural and the supernatural. In the second, science and theology contain two different and complementary approaches in terms of

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<sup>64</sup> Ian Barbour, *Science and Religion: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1997), 98.

<sup>65</sup> Howard J. Van Till, "Partnership: Science and Christian Theology as Partners," in *Science and Christianity: Found Views*, ed. Richard F. Carlson (Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 195–234.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>67</sup> James Porter Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for A Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 350–51.

describing the same reality (truth) from different perspectives. In the third model, science can fill in the details of what theology lacks or apply theological principles and vice versa. In the fourth model, theology provides the foundation for metaphysics and epistemology, especially the presuppositions for science. In the fifth model, science provides the boundaries within which theologians must work. Theology can do this only after consulting science, not the other way around. In the sixth model, science and theology are directly involved in interacting with each other to strengthen or compete with each other. The first five models cannot be categorized as integration because they still emphasize two different, independent, and separate fields of study not involved in a synergistic role. Only the sixth model involves integration, but there is no need for competition between theology and science.

## **V. An Analytic-Synthetic Model Integrating Theology and Science**

The models of integration proposed above have not succeeded in producing a model that fits the nature and presuppositions of the integration of theology and science. In the following discussion, we offer an analytic-synthetic model of the integration of theology and science that involves two steps, namely, analysis and synthesis. The first step uses an inductive process by presenting the facts of the dis-integration problem and the inappropriate integration problem. The second step uses a new premise, namely, a synthetic process of integration.

### **1. Reasons for an Analytic-Synthetic Integration**

We consider the integration models offered by the four experts above as not in full accord with the nature and presuppositions of theology and science; they can therefore not be categorized as integrative study. Nevertheless, the strength of each model has contributed substantially to the formulation of the synthetic integration model offered below. Barbour's integration of the content and methods of theology and those of science, Van Till's synergy between Creator and creation, and Moreland's interacting natural and supernatural areas all contribute to the strengths of the analytic-synthetic integration model.

The analytic-synthetic model of integration is adopted from an idea of Shirazi in his book *Integrative Research: Integral Epistemology and Integrative Methodology*. Shirazi classifies integrative research into three basic strategies: integral dialectical synthesis, unity-in-diversity, and analytic-synthetic

integration.<sup>68</sup> Analytic and synthetic integration are two areas of study that need to complement each other; that is, they should not contradict each other or be separated one from another.<sup>69</sup> Analytic-synthetic integration is very suitable for the study of the integration between theology and science since both theology and science come from the same source: revelation from God (in Scripture and nature, respectively). Thus, science is natural, theology is natural and supernatural.

## 2. Definition of the Integration of Theology and Science

In the research literature, integration is a general term that describes a process, condition, system, and final state.<sup>70</sup> Integration adapted to the field of science could take various forms. Philosophically, the word *integration* connotes a process of bringing together two or more different things in a way that is in accordance with the nature of these things so that they become a whole.<sup>71</sup> Thus the integration of theology and science could be defined as “a complementary process of encounter (synthesis), in which science fills in the unclear parts of theology and theology fills in those that do not exist in science.”<sup>72</sup> As John Habgood observes, theology and science are two fields that need and depend on each other.<sup>73</sup> Certain things are not clear in theology because they do not concern the core of truth and the Bible deliberately does not discuss them. In this case, science can fill in what is not clear in theology and, in turn, theology can fill in what is not clear in science.

Science does talk about truth, knowledge, facts, and experience, but science does not talk about, nor ascertain, the existence of a “final origin” and “supreme reality” of truth, knowledge, facts, and experience. Albert Einstein states that scientific thinking cannot provide us with a sense of ultimate and fundamental ends.<sup>74</sup> Ultimate reality cannot be reached by using any scientific approach and method since, as Van Till asserts, “the

<sup>68</sup> Shirazi, “Integrative Research,” 17–27.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Gullledge, “What Is Integration?,” *Industrial Management and Data System* 106.1 (2006): 5.

<sup>71</sup> Jeff Landauer and Joseph Rowlands define integration as “the act of mentally combining information or ideas. It is the process of taking isolated ideas and consoling them into a unified whole.” *Importance of Philosophy*, April 12, 2021, [http://www.importanceofphilosophy.com/Epistemology\\_Integration.html](http://www.importanceofphilosophy.com/Epistemology_Integration.html).

<sup>72</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 63.

<sup>73</sup> John Habgood, “Can Science Survive Without Religion?,” *RSA Journal* 139.5416 (1991): 242–50.

<sup>74</sup> Albert Einstein, “Science and Religion,” *Princeton Theological Seminary*, May 19, 1939, <https://www.panarchy.org/einstein/science.religion>.

ultimate reality is not the world but the Creator of all creation.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore, theology can fill in what is not found in science. Science is not complete without theology.<sup>76</sup> Theology can talk about the created world and the Creator. What exists in science and philosophy is the idea, nomenclature, and concept of God, which is impersonal and without certainty; theology, on the other hand, can provide the truth about God, who is personal and definite.<sup>77</sup> Science only talks about humans until the point of death, while theology talks not only about life after death but also about the value of eternity that humans can experience from birth to death and thereafter. Science only admits that errors and mistakes do happen, but theology admits not only to errors but to sinfulness. Science offers forgiveness; theology offers forgiveness of sins. Accordingly, theology and science are indeed two areas of study that completely need and complement each other in the sense stated above.

### ***3. The Presupposition of Integrative Studies between Theology and Science: All Truth Is God's Truth***

There is no knowledge or truth without the revelation of God. God's revelation is the presupposition for knowledge and truth in theology and science. General revelation in the form of all of God's creation is a medium for God's self-revelation to humans and also a medium for human research on the science of God's creation. Special revelation is the person of God himself revealing himself and his will to humans and thus generates theology. God's revelation is therefore the presupposition for both theology and science.<sup>78</sup> All knowledge and truth in theology and science come from the revelation of God. Hence all truth is God's truth.

### ***4. Prerequisites and Requirements for Integrative Studies between Theology and Science***

A prerequisite to integrative studies is for the researcher to have an open mind. Open-mindedness is a cognitive attitude that shows one's openness to learning about other fields of study in addition to one's own and to connecting one's professional knowledge in one's field of mastery with that of

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<sup>75</sup> Cornelius G. Hunter, *Science's Blind Spot* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 36; Van Till, "Partnership," 195.

<sup>76</sup> George E. Keller III, "What Is the Relationship between Science and Religion?", *Center for Science and Religion*, Samford University, March 18, 2020. <https://www.samford.edu>.

<sup>77</sup> Lumintang, "Theology as a Science and Ascience," 74.

<sup>78</sup> Lumintang and Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian dan Penelitian Theologis*, 8.

others.<sup>79</sup> One's open-mindedness would also encourage one to dare to think beyond the normative. This attitude would greatly enable theologians and scientists to conduct integrative studies between theology and any science.

Integrative study is in-depth study that requires researchers to have a comprehensive as well as in-depth knowledge of both fields of study. If theologians intend to explore God's word by means of science and integrate their theological beliefs with the results of that exploration, they need a deeper understanding of science itself.<sup>80</sup> Einstein observes that scientists who engage in integrative study between science and theology without themselves having mastered theology will tend to produce deviations or errors because they are "blind." Likewise, theologians engaging in integrative study with certain sciences without studying science in depth will tend to produce discrepancies because they are "paralyzed." Thus, integrative studies require that theologians study certain sciences in depth and scientists study theology adequately.

Furthermore, the absolute requirement in integrative studies is a readiness to seek harmony of thought among scientists and theologians. The authors present four considerations as the basis for achieving this harmony.<sup>81</sup> First, there is absolutely no contradiction between general revelation and special revelation. God's special revelation fills in the blanks in God's general revelation. God's general revelation in creation (science) clarifies our understanding of God's special revelation through his word (theology). Second, the difference between theology and science is not a contradiction but a difference of paradigm. Science encompasses only measurable matter (the narrative), while theology encompasses beyond matter and measurements (the metanarrative). Their difference in scope is not a contradiction. Third, even though theology is the queen of the sciences, both theologians and scientists are limited in both knowledge and method. Fourth, the Bible is not a science textbook, and science cannot become a final source of truth. Science involves dynamic processes and continues to change, whether in knowledge, methods, or standards.<sup>82</sup> Understanding and realizing these limitations could encourage theologians and scientists to strive for harmony of thought in conducting their integrative studies to achieve the goal of finding holistic truth.

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<sup>79</sup> Joseph Tong, "Fundamental Apologetics" (PhD diss., Los Angeles: International Theological Seminary, 1999), 5.

<sup>80</sup> Moreland, "Philosophical Foundations," 307.

<sup>81</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 66–67.

<sup>82</sup> Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia*, 692.

### **5. *Analytic-Synthetic Model of the Integration of Theology and Science***

The dis-integration and mis-integration mentioned in the above discussion are the outcomes of an analysis of the integration of theology and science. Figure 1 shows the formulation of the integration process between theology and science based on the understanding, presupposition, prerequisites, and requirements for integration.

Figure 1 describes a model of the process and procedure of integration of theology and science. It starts with the presupposition that “all truth is God’s truth.” This statement is based on the theistic worldview that builds on the general and special revelation of God as its basis. Therefore, no law of dis-integration and mis-integration that causes dualism and secularism should actually exist. God’s general revelation relates to all of God’s natural (immanent) creation, while God’s special revelation is related to the supernatural (transcendent) word of God. The two are neither contradictory nor inseparable, but rather a unified whole. Theologians examine their sources by using scientific theological research methods and produce theologies (biblical, systematic, historical, philosophical, and practical). Likewise, philosophers and scientists examine their sources by using natural or social research methods scientifically to produce knowledge according to their fields, such as philosophy, sociology, biology, ecology, and anthropology.<sup>83</sup>

The process of integrating theology and science—or, more precisely, between one area of theological study and one area of scientific study—begins by analyzing the findings of previous integration studies by both theologians and scientists of each area. The next stage is to establish the synthetic integration process, which is a process of encountering theology and science in which science explains certain parts that are lacking in theology, and theology fills in areas that do not exist in science. Science enriches theology with additional information, and theology enriches science with basic, ultimate, and final information.<sup>84</sup>

### **VI. *The Impact of Integrating Theology and Science: Theology as the Queen of the Sciences***

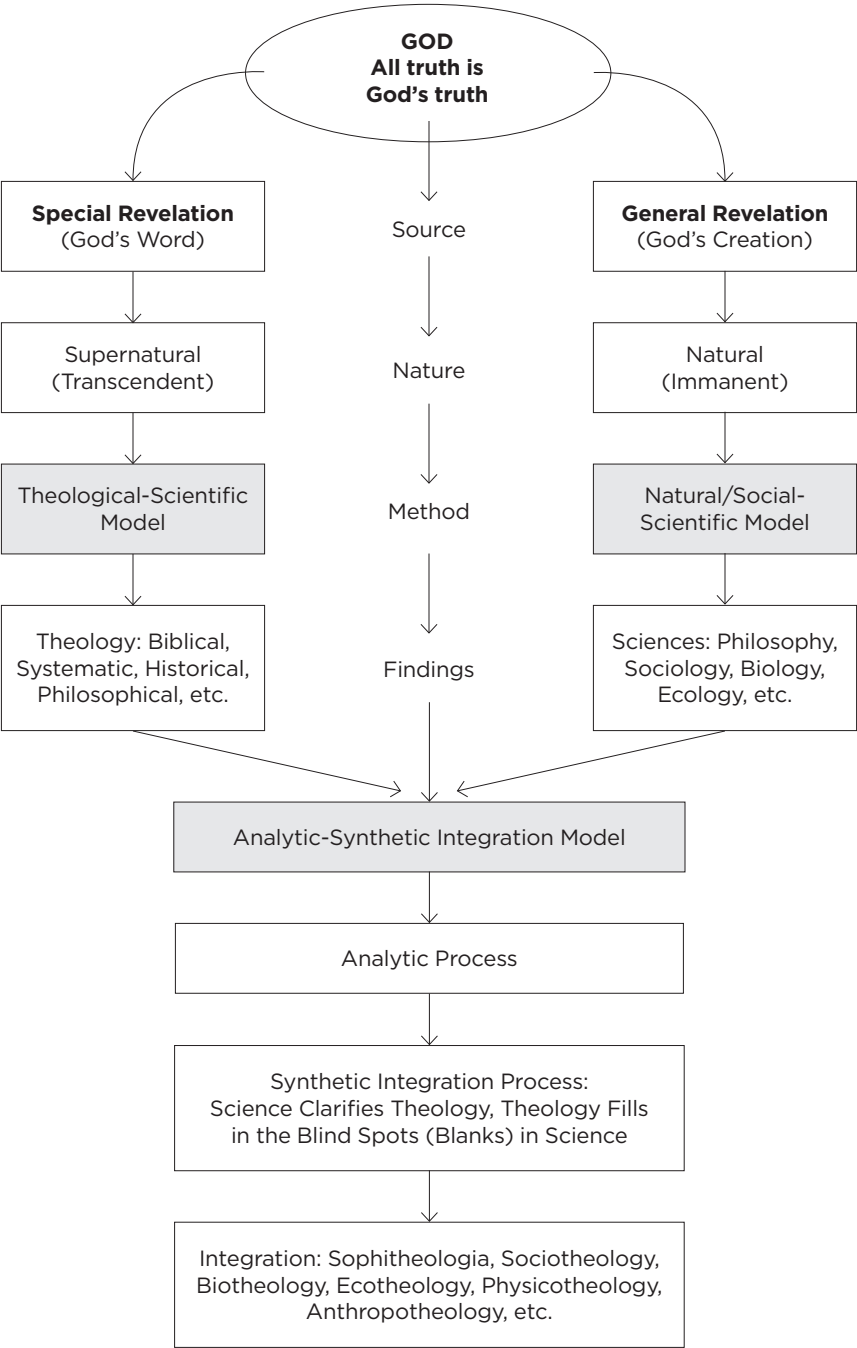
In Indonesia, very few studies of the integration of theology and science have been conducted. Except for areas related to spirituality, morality, and

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<sup>83</sup> Lumintang, *Theology the Queen of Science*, 71–72.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 73–134.





**Figure 1.** A Model of Analytic-Synthetic Integration of Theology and Science

human psychology, theology has not been studied in integration with the natural sciences or social sciences with their diverse areas that greatly impact the national as well as the world community today. Christians are often no different from non-Christians in continuing to live in dualism and secularism, which are apparent from their ways of thinking and ways of life that contradict both faith and science and both religion and morality; they engage in hatred as well as prayer, murder as well as worship. In such cases theology seems to make no impact on the real life of the Christian.

Nevertheless, if theologians and scientists would now begin to engage themselves in the studies of how theology and science are integrated, we believe that this pursuit would create a positive impact on the academic world in general and theological education in particular. In this postmodern era theology could perhaps once again play its role as the queen of the sciences as it did during the Middle Ages, which was a result of the many studies of the integration of theology, philosophy, and science. Without integrative studies, theology and science will continue to be confined their respective narrow areas, as carried out by theologians and scientists of the modern era. With the influence of integration studies, the mindsets and ways of life of Christians and the world community could be synergized and reconciled to benefit the efforts of both to return wholeness to society.

## Conclusion

Realizing the need for and benefits of integrative studies is crucial for both theological education and Christian higher education since the nature and presuppositions of all knowledge originate in God as its ultimate source. Theology and science, in spite of their differences, are basically one whole, comprehensive entity, without dis-integration and mis-integration. In theological education and Christian higher education, a curriculum could be developed that includes courses on integration between theology and the sciences, and provides all lecturers and students with the necessary resources in the attempt to free the world from the tendency to think and behave in dualistic and secularistic ways that have created confusion, hypocrisy, paralysis and theological stagnation. In addition, the theological and scientific world could have developed more rapidly through integrative studies in the form of sophitheology, sociotheology, biotheology, eco-theology, physicotheology, anthropotheology, and the like. Theologians and scientists could play a crucial role in exerting a greater influence on the transformation of individuals, communities, nations, and the world towards a better direction.

Integration studies could enable theologians and scientists to have a comprehensive and unified knowledge and the tendency to think integratively—complementing and enriching each other, avoiding unnecessary arguments and fundamentalistic attitudes asserting one-sided truth claims, as well as avoiding narrow scientific and religious fanaticism. The integration of theology and science would consequently substantiate its claim that theology is the queen of science. Christian scientists who conduct integrative studies between science and theology would prove that their knowledge is open and fundamental and not limited to objects, methods, or certain scientific opinions; theoscientology would thus enable them to overcome the traps of dualism and secularism. With the study of integration, theologians and scientists could increasingly become the “salt and light of the world” (cf. Matt 5:13) by influencing the world with the whole truth, and increasingly prevent evil and chaos in a world that is divided due to a narrow view of knowledge. The world could also become more peaceful as the dis-integration and mis-integration of knowledge and religion could be reduced, until eventually complete knowledge is achieved that will rule the world and the prayer taught by the Lord Jesus Christ could be realized: “Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:9–10).



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