“Our Hope *of* Sharing *the* Glory of God”

Essays in Honor of
STEPHEN B. CLARK

"Our Hope *of* Sharing *the* Glory of God"

Essays in Honor of
STEPHEN B. CLARK

Contents

Preface

The idea for this volume of essays in honor of Stephen B. Clark originated with Bruce Yocum. Bruce wanted to produce—as an expression of appreciation for Steve—a volume of essays from a range of authors who could comment on various aspects of the contribution that Steve has made through his writing and teaching.

Sadly, Bruce went home to the Lord before he was able to finish this project, and before he was able to write his own essay for the volume.

We trust that Bruce would be glad for this final edition of twelve essays, half of which are authored by Steve's brothers in the Servants of the Word, and half of which come from men and women who have been impacted by Steve's writing and teaching over many years. The essays are of different kinds: some are biblical meditations, some scholarly papers, some reflections on the world in which we live. We hope and pray that all of them contribute to the glory of God.

Daniel A. Keating
General Editor

CHAPTER 1

An Introduction to the Life of Steve Clark

Mike Shaughnessy

The Foundations

Stephen B. Clark was born on June 1st, 1940 in New York City. He attended Bellerose Public School on Long Island and then Peddie Boys School in Hightstown, New Jersey. In 1958 he began his university studies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. There, in 1960, he was converted to Christianity as he looked to ground his life in the truth. Reading about Christianity convinced his intellect, but two books about Francis of Assisi were key in bringing him to a personal faith. The books were *The Little Flowers* and *The Mirror of Perfection*. In reading these he saw that being a Christian involved a living, personal relationship with Jesus Christ—that there was more to faith than intellectual assent. Like Francis, Steve quickly made a concrete response to live as a radical disciple of Christ and to call others to a serious personal response as well. This decision became the seed for Steve living single for the Lord.

Steve then got involved with the Morehouse Catholic Chaplaincy at Yale. He studied the catechism in depth and presented himself for baptism. The chaplaincy also had a "community" and Steve saw that those involved in Christian activities tended to grow in faith and holiness, while those who only attended church on Sunday seemed to struggle with their faith and often left the church during their university years. It was, in part, this experience that began to form the basis of Steve's vision of building a "community of disciples on mission."

In the autumn of 1963 he began work on a doctorate at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. There he connected with the Cursillo Movement, which he had encountered as a summer missionary in Latin America. Bringing others to Christ was the main focus of Cursillo but they also formed mission based communities. At the time Cursillo was only beginning in the United States and according Cursillo's rules, Steve was still too young to attend or lead a retreat – he attended one anyway and then helped put on the first Cursillo retreat in South Bend. In less than two years he was asked to serve on their National Secretariat in East Lansing, Michigan.

Steve was interested in how he could be more effective in the work of building a transformative community. He began to believe something of God's power was missing and wondered if it was to be found among Pentecostals. This conviction was deepened after he attended his first Pentecostal prayer meeting and began reading *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

He and Ralph Martin shared about what they were learning at the national Cursillo gathering in 1966. They recommended to the other leaders that they all read *The Cross and the*

Switchblade. Early in 1967, two of those who read the book, William Storey and Ralph Kiefer, sponsored a retreat that became known as the Duquesne Weekend, an event from which the Catholic Charismatic Renewal came forth. Like so many others at the beginning of this Renewal, Steve experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by someone who had previously had the same experience.

The Formation of Community

Steve had a vision for where he believed the Church should be going and he applied his whole life toward that goal: building committed Christian communities comprised of radical disciples who wanted to do mission with the power manifested in the early church.

Much of the template for how to do this was already written by 1966 and was part of the action plan for working with the outreach to students at Michigan State University, but it was the charismatic experience of the Holy Spirit and the transformative effect that it had on people's lives that made the template live.

In the autumn of 1967 Steve, Ralph Martin, Gerry Rauch, and Jim Cavnar moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan. (Things charismatic weren't well received in Lansing at first.) In Ann Arbor, they began a charismatic prayer meeting that met on Thursday nights with a dozen people in a two-bedroom apartment above Campus Corner Drug Store.

Within weeks, more than one hundred people were attending, so they moved the prayer meeting to the basement of St.

Mary's Student Chapel. People began coming from all over the American Midwest, some driving four hours each way to learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit.

By 1970, people were traveling hundreds of miles just to see what was happening in places like Ann Arbor and Notre Dame. A shared charismatic community life was still the important driver of the success of what they were doing, but the excitement of the prayer meetings was the attraction. Speaking in tongues, spontaneous worship, and prophetic utterances were novel. Bruce Yocum, one of those involved in the very beginnings of community recounts:

> We wanted something more, that could focus on our own relationships with one another in Ann Arbor, so we started a Monday night meeting in addition. God began to lead us into something deeper. In the Summer of 1969 we began to get prophecies about covenant. We didn't understand it very well and we started doing a scripture study on covenant ... you go pretty quickly to the idea of Christian community ... and by the beginning of 1970 we were talking about establishing a community by making significant commitments to one another.

In 1970, what had simply been known as "The Community" took on the name the "Word of God" and soon after people began making a serious commitment to one another in "covenant." This was a new and important step in establishing the intentional community that was conceived in the 60s. Very soon thereafter covenant communities began sprouting up not just in North America, but in Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

Steve began turning his teaching on community into articles and books. These provided the foundational understanding of how communities would be led and governed. Steve also contributed to the growth and organization of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He was instrumental in establishing the original International Communications Office (ICO) for the Charismatic Renewal, which eventually developed into ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services), and has now been succeeded by CHARIS. Steve was also one of the main organizers of the landmark Kansas City Conference in the summer of 1977.

Steve's role had burgeoned from doing campus ministry, to being a leader in Cursillo and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, to founding stable communities, but he was also instrumental at this time in starting the Servants of the Word, a brotherhood of celibate men.

The Servants of the Word

The development of the Servants of the Word was inextricably bound up with everything else going on at the time, although the idea of living "single for the Lord" was rooted in his experience at Yale. At the time of his conversion to Christianity as a university student, Steve was intrigued with the life of Francis of Assisi and the advantages that remaining single for the Lord had for ministry and prayer. In the earliest days of the Ann Arbor community, a number of men were also intrigued by the celibate life and how they could live more radically for the Lord after getting baptized in the

Spirit. Soon they began talking about forming a brotherhood. They read various rules for religious life and on Pentecost, in 1971, these men made a one-year commitment to live single for the Lord.

While Steve's primary vision was to establish communities, a brotherhood gradually formed around him. At a retreat that fall in Dexter, Michigan, the began what became known as the "prayer room." The brothers did an unstructured time of morning prayer together which eventually found a form similar to the Divine Office. On that retreat the men also sketched an outline of their rule of life, choosing for real brotherhood with love for one another, simplicity, subordination and a common life. They also decided they were open to being an ecumenical brotherhood. Most of the major elements of their life together were decided in two weeks and they articulated their reasons for "living single for the Lord" with an updated apologetic for the 20th century.

At the end of that retreat, the men made a temporary commitment to living together according to the covenant at 335 Packard Street in Ann Arbor. That life together became the basis of Steve's teaching on Christian Personal Relationships as an essential element of living together well in community. In the fall and Winter of 1973, the first brothers made their permanent commitments to living single for the Lord, and then, on January 5, 1974, they made the first "life-long commitments" to their covenant and each other as part of a brotherhood together.

Writings

Steve's writings have been directed toward multiple audiences: Cursillo, the Charismatic renewal, covenant communities, and Christians in general or Catholics specifically. What follows are some of his landmark works.

Building Christian Communities (1972) was originally published for Cursillo but became something of a handbook in the communities' movement. In it he makes the case that authentic Christianity necessarily implies faith must be lived out daily in the context of stable relationships—that is community—and for a community to thrive it needs to give pastoral care to its members.

Unordained Elders and Renewal Communities (1976) covers the validity of lay-led movements, building on what was a significant thrust of Vatican II.

In *Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts* (1970), *Growing in Faith* (1972), *and Knowing God's Will* (1974), Steve offers a scriptural basis and balanced understanding of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, especially as a life-transforming experience and not just an emotional phenomenon.

Steve, along with others, produced *The Light in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual* (1971). This short course, which continues in use today, contributed powerfully to the growth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, a worldwide movement estimated to have impacted hundreds of millions of people.

Man and Woman in Christ (1980) is Steve's analysis of the roles of men and women in scripture, Christian tradition,

and historical practice. The book is undergirded with what we can learn from modern social sciences. He applies all of this to modern technological society and compares that to the traditional societies of the past. In this book he gives a clear analysis of how we should approach Scripture in forming a worldview and what modern Christians need to do to remain faithful.

Redeemer: Understanding the Meaning of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (1992) is a close examination of some of the key ways the authors of Scripture portray the saving work of Jesus Christ, covering topics such as salvation, justification, redemption, and gaining eternal life.

In *How to Be Ecumenical Today* (1996), Steve gives very practical advice on how Christians can be united to one-another without watering things down to a lowest common denominator.

Catholics and the Eucharist: A Scriptural Introduction (2000) offers a profound understanding of the Eucharist, showing how the Eucharist is grounded in the Scriptures and offering explanations for challenging topics. And in *Charismatic Spirituality: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and Practice* (2004), Steve presents a mature, faith-filled description of what charismatic spirituality can look like.

In his final published work, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New* (2017), Steve offers a summary of the stages of God's plan by looking at the key figures and covenants of the Old Testament that find their fulfilment in Christ. This work reflects the core elements of Steve's biblical teaching over the course of his life.

In his forty years of leadership Steve wrote more than twenty books and several hundred articles, but most importantly he taught and discipled many people in what is today a world-wide community of disciples on mission and a brotherhood of men living single for the Lord.

CHAPTER 2

The People of God as Ecumenical Imperative: The Ecumenical Legacy of Stephen B. Clark

Mark S. Kinzer

In Christ, God has made a covenant with us—a covenant which we have joyfully received and entered into by faith and baptism. He has become our God and we have become his people…He has joined us together in a bond of steadfast love and faithfulness and has given us a particular call and mission…We desire to consecrate our lives to him, not simply as individuals, but as members of a people….
—The Community Covenant of The Word of God, 1970

In the winter of 1971-72 I attended a retreat in Monroe, Michigan. Called a "community weekend," the retreat introduced its attendees to the concept of covenant community. My most vivid memory from that weekend is of Steve Clark standing before a chalkboard outline of Exodus 19-24, teaching about

the covenant which God established with the people of Israel. From that teaching I recall his explanation of two Hebrew words, *chesed* (steadfast love) and *emet* (faithfulness). Those words characterize God's irrevocable commitment to his people, but also serve as a summons to that people to reciprocate with *chesed* and *emet* towards their divine sovereign, and towards one another.

This teaching initiated a process of reordering my sense of self. To that point I had thought about my life in individualistic terms, even when responding to Jesus's call to discipleship. But Steve had placed before me an explosive new idea that challenged my entrenched individualism: the notion of peoplehood. And he had done so through an exposition of the Hebrew Bible, with its narrative about God's covenant with the people of Israel. Steve's teaching impacted me, a Jewish follower of Jesus, with particular force. My identity as a member of the Jewish people and the body of Christ would never be the same.

At that point I did not know anything about the Second Vatican Council or its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). I did not know that *Lumen Gentium* had reconfigured the Church's theological understanding of herself around the central theme of the people of God. I did not know that this reconfiguration undermined any simple equation of the Church with her clerical hierarchy, and instead presented Pope, Vatican, ordained clergy, and religious orders as servants of the people as a whole. Of course, Steve had in-depth knowledge of all these things.

Steve befriended me in the months after that community weekend. Catholicism was a strange and alienating phenomenon

to me in those days, and I would have been repelled if Steve had been like other religious Catholics I had known. But, in truth, he was not like *anyone* I had known. He had consecrated himself to Christ and his service, yet he had not pursued seminary education or priestly ordination. While not *anti*-clerical, he was emphatically *non*-clerical, a Catholic layman through and through. And, in addition to being smarter, more knowledgeable, and wiser than anyone I had ever encountered, he was entirely original in his way of thinking. The fact that he had a Jewish father and came from New York City was mere frosting on the cake. I was hooked.

Steve's passion was to live fully for God, and his vocation was to evangelize, form disciples, and build community. His goal was to win wholehearted followers of Jesus, and to bring them together in a way that reflected the Church's character as the people of God. Ecumenism did not come first in this vision, but it was a necessary consequence. Moreover, the shape of Steve's ecumenical vision was determined by his grasp of the truth of Christian peoplehood. And this truth was rooted in the message of the Old Testament, and its witness to the identity of the people of Israel.

Peoplehood and Christian (Dis-)Unity

Steve's 1982 Allies for Faith and Renewal paper on ecumenism manifests the logic of peoplehood without employing the term itself.[1] In the course of his argument he contrasts dialogue

1. Stephen B. Clark, "Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics: What Basis for Cooperation?" in *How to Be Ecumenical Today* (Dexter, MI: Tabor House, 1996), 17-35.

ecumenism with cooperative ecumenism. The former focuses on bridging theological differences. This could suggest that the primary basis of unity is theological agreement, and the primary obstacle to that unity is theological disagreement. On the other hand, cooperative ecumenism—as expounded by Steve—focuses not on common theological affirmations but instead on *committed relationships*.

The center-point of Steve's ecumenism is also the center-point of his life: a radical commitment to the person of Jesus. "The cause of schism is putting something human above Christ as the point of unity and division in our personal relations, so that we join with and separate from others over something other than faithfulness to Christ. I believe there is a solution to this aspect of the problem of Christian unity, and the solution is our common commitment to Christ. It lies in together putting our commitment to Christ and to the cause of Christ in the world over everything else."[2] In other words, the solution is *chesed* and *emet* in relation to the one whom God has sent to renew Israel's covenant and to redeem the world.

Our relationship to Jesus brings us into relationship with all those who follow him. We become brothers and sisters to one another, an extended family. And, "[i]f we are brothers and sisters in Christ, we ought to be able to love one another. That does not just mean that we should feel sentiments of solidarity.…It means that we should be *committed to one another* in an ongoing, practical way."[3] The language of committed love reflects Steve's understanding of *chesed* and *emet* as the

2. "Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics," 33.
3. "Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics," 22 (emphasis added).

essential characteristics of God's covenant with the people of Israel. The language of familial relationship points in the same direction. A *people* is not an institution, nor a party espousing a common ideology, nor a task force assembled to accomplish a particular objective. A *people* is an extended family whose identity spans past and future, and whose bonds can be damaged but not permanently severed.

One can discern the ecumenical logic of peoplehood in the article's key biblical text. Steve cites Second Chronicles 28:1-15, which describes a war between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The passage faults the victorious northern kingdom for failing to treat its defeated foe in a manner appropriate to their relationship as *brothers.*[4] While the conflict itself was problematic, the eruption of military hostilities did not free the warring parties from an obligation to treat captives as family. Even while at war, the two kingdoms were expected by God to fight as those who were bound by familial ties. This biblical example displays the underlying context for Steve's reflections on ecumenism: it is the Israel-like character of the Church as a New Covenant embodiment of the people of God.

The ecumenical logic of peoplehood likewise appears in Steve's references to the work of Christopher Dawson, a Catholic historian from the mid-twentieth century. Dawson viewed Christian disunity as rooted in schism, i.e., relational rupture, rather than in heresy, i.e., irresolvable theological disagreement. Steve's lengthy quotations from Dawson include the following: "it is in the question of schism rather than that of heresy

4. "Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics," 25-26.

that the key to the problem of disunity of Christendom is to be found. For heresy as a rule is not the cause of schism but an excuse for it, or rather a rationalization of it. Behind every heresy lies some kind of social conflict, and it is only by the resolution of this conflict that unity can be restored."[5] Just as Christian unity must be viewed against the backdrop of the relational obligations of peoplehood, so the historical reality of Christian *dis*unity must be seen preeminently as a violation of those obligations.

A final sign of this ecumenical logic appears early in Steve's article, and its significance could easily be missed, for it looks to be merely a brief illustrative analogy. "Many people are remarking these days upon the success of the solidarity of American Jews with [the State of] Israel's ability to maintain itself in the world today."[6] Steve then contrasts this Jewish solidarity with the failure of Christians of different denominations to rally to the aid of needy Christians around the world. Without using the language of peoplehood, Steve here again associates Christian disunity with the loss of the relational dynamic of *chesed* and *emet* that is intrinsic to a covenantal family—a dynamic he sees in this particular case as more adequately embodied in the life of the Jewish people.

"An Israel-like View of the Church"

Steve's ecclesiological vision bears a striking resemblance to that of the late Lutheran ecumenist, George Lindbeck. In

5. "Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics," 32.
6. "Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics," 18.

1990 Lindbeck wrote an article for *The Christian Century* entitled "Confession and Community: An Israel-like View of the Church." In this article Lindbeck identifies three priorities for the renewal of the Church: (1) "the spread of proficiency in premodern yet postcritical Bible reading"; (2) the "restructuring" of "the churches into something like pre-Constantinian organizational patterns"; and (3) "the development of an Israel-like understanding of the Church." He categorizes these three priorities as "hermeneutical, organizational and ecclesiological."[7]

While these priorities are distinct in their angle of approach to contemporary challenges, they are all intimately interrelated. Lindbeck explains:

> These elements belong together. For classic hermeneutics, the Hebrew Bible is the basic ecclesiological textbook. Christians see themselves within those texts, when read in the light of Christ, as God's people, chosen for service not preferment, and bound together in a historically and sociologically continuous community that God refuses to disown whether it is faithful or unfaithful, united or disunited, in the catacombs or on the throne.[8]

Rooting herself in a Christian reading of the Old Testament leads the Church to identify with Israel, and to see herself as a people. And this has powerful ecumenical implications. Lindbeck again: "'Oneness in Christ' gains a concrete specificity

7. George A. Lindbeck, "Confession and Community: An Israel-like View of the Church," in *The Church in a Postliberal Age* (ed. James J Buckley: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 7.
8. "Confession and Community," 8.

that it otherwise lacks. All Christians, whether Catholics Protestants or Orthodox or African, American, and Chinese, belong to a single community of morally imperative responsibility for one another like the members of the early church or contemporary Jews."[9]

Lindbeck's list of priorities for the renewal of the Church fit well with Steve's life-work. For decades Steve has pointed Christians to a "premodern yet postcritical" retrieval of the Hebrew Bible, culminating in his 2017 volume, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New.*[10] This intensive investment in biblical exegesis was both the result of, and the catalyst for, a vision of corporate Christian identity as peoplehood (i.e., Lindbeck's "Israel-like understanding of the Church"). Steve's biblical teaching and ecclesiological vision provided the theoretical foundations for his practical organizational labor of community building, a labor that has defined his adult life. As with Lindbeck, so with Steve, the three priorities—postcritical Bible reading, recovery of pre-Constantinian organizational patterns of communal life, and development of an Israel-like understanding of the Church—result in an ecumenical imperative summoning Christians to concrete relationships of mutual care and commitment.

And, like Lindbeck, Steve has mined the experience of the Jewish people in his effort to renew Christian peoplehood. In my first year of living with Steve in 1974, our household read rabbinic texts in order to better understand the nature of

9. "Confession and Community," 8.

10. Stephen B. Clark, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New: The Stages of God's Plan* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2017).

discipleship. That same year Steve tasked me with developing Lord's Day rituals based on Jewish traditions of Sabbath-observance. I also recall at that time his reading the memoir of Golda Meir, motivated in large part by admiration for the vision and dedication of Jews like her whom (in this respect) he saw as models for Christians seeking the renewal of the Church. A couple of years later Steve urged community leaders to read the novels of Chaim Potok, which explore the cultural conflict experienced by Orthodox Jews in twentieth century America. Steve's purpose was to encourage Christians to view themselves, like Orthodox Jews, as a cultural minority living within a post-Christian society. This background sheds light on the apparently insignificant comment in Steve's 1982 article, which points to the solidarity of American Jews with Israel as a model for Christians to follow in their relationships with one another. Christians can learn to be a people not only from *biblical* Israel, but also from Jews of the past two thousand years.

This also sheds light on the role I assumed in the life of The Sword of the Spirit in the 1980s. With Steve's encouragement and blessing, I became a teacher of scripture, with a special focus on the Hebrew Bible. I also served as a mediator of Jewish wisdom for community life, as well as a chief exponent of cooperative ecumenism. This last aspect of my remit was related to the other two. My identity as a Messianic Jew—as someone who appreciated both Catholic and Protestant viewpoints without fully identifying with either—gave me a unique perspective and persona in community life. But it was the wisdom drawn from Jewish tradition which had the capacity to bypass the Catholic/

Protestant divide and enable our ecumenical community to find common ground.

While Steve's "Israel-like view of the Church" bore a close resemblance to that of Lindbeck, one point emphasized by the Lutheran ecumenist did not play a major role in Steve's teaching or strategic vision. In the past thirty years that one point has become the centerpiece of my own vocation. It is not at all inconsistent with Steve's lifework, and could even be seen as its logical extension. I am speaking of Lindbeck's *post*-supersessionist ecclesiology.[11]

Christian Peoplehood and Post-Supersessionism

Lindbeck refers to the Church not as Israel, but as "Israel-*like*." For Lindbeck, the Church is truly part of the covenant people of God, but she is not the whole—she is not Israel, simply and without remainder. She is only Israel in her bond with the Jewish people. The early church's failure to honor this limitation left it vulnerable to a triumphalism that undermined its mission and message. Having properly identified with biblical Israel, these Christians also claimed to have replaced Israel, thus denying that the Jews were any longer, except negatively, God's chosen people; and they were triumphalists who believed that the Church could not be unfaithful as Israel had been. The logic of Christian

11. As defined by the Society for Post-Supersessionist theology, Post-supersessionism is "a family of theological perspectives that affirms God's irrevocable covenant with the Jewish people as a central and coherent part of ecclesial teaching. It seeks to overcome understandings of the New Covenant that entail the abrogation or obsolescence of God's covenant with the Jewish people, of the Torah as a demarcator of Jewish communal identity, or of the Jewish people themselves." See www.spostst.org.

faith thereby became perversely opposed in a variety of ways to the fundamental belief in Jesus as the crucified Messiah. It has taken the disasters of Christian apostasy, often disguised as orthodoxy…to unmask the problems.[12]

To my knowledge, Steve has never offered such a harsh critique of supersessionism. However, as one probes Lindbeck's analysis of the emergence of supersessionism in the early church, one discovers a point of contact with Steve's thinking that had an enormous impact on my own life. In a 2003 publication, Lindbeck describes the pre-70 CE unity of the early Jesus-movement as founded upon "its geographical center in Jerusalem" and the leadership of "Torah-observant Jews who approved Paul's mission to the gentiles."[13] The first schism in the history of the Church occurred after the destruction of Jerusalem, and involved "the sundering of gentile and Jewish Christianities."[14] Lindbeck notes the role played by Torah observance (and non-observance) in this story.

As they became the great majority, gentile Christians increasingly looked askance at the continued Torah observance of their Jewish fellow believers. Ultimately the few Jews within the church were canonically compelled to be non-practicing, that is, assimilated and in effect deprived of their Jewish identity. Completely forgotten was the need for Torah-observant Jewish participation in the church if it is to be truly Israel in the new age. Instead, it was affirmed by universal practice,

12. "Confession and Community," 8.
13. George Lindbeck, "The Church as Israel: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism," in *Jews and Christians: People of God* (eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 82-83.
14. "The Church as Israel," 82.

even if not always in theological theory, that the church can be Israel without Jews, and from there it is but a short step to the supersessionist absurdity of condemning Christian Jews for Torah-observance, that is, for worshiping God as did Jesus and the apostles.[15]

The contact-point between Steve and Lindbeck regards the Torah-observance of Jewish disciples of Jesus. Already in my first Servants of the Word household Steve encouraged me to live a distinctively Jewish life.[16] When I told him I wanted to attend the local Conservative synagogue, he supported my decision—and shared his almost-prophetic sense that my involvement with Jewish religious life could be of enormous spiritual significance, and not only for me personally. Three years later he guided me through a study project which resulted in my decision to live a Torah-observant life. A few years after that he endorsed the brotherhood's decision to set up a household that would make such a life communally possible. At every stage of the process, Steve's attitude toward this matter was firm and unambiguous. And this view diverged dramatically from the historical Christian approach that, as Lindbeck indicates, resulted from a long history of supersessionist ecclesiology.

Eventually, in his volume on the Old Testament, Steve articulated explicitly his thinking on Jewish followers of Jesus and the Torah. His rhetorical style is less aggressive than that of Lindbeck, but his conclusion is the same: "What parts of the Law of Moses, then, do Christians have to obey and do, and what parts do they not have to do? This is a complex issue,

15. "The Church as Israel," 83-84.

16. The Servants of the Word is an ecumenical celibate brotherhood which Steve founded.

especially because the New Testament writers seem to have believed that Jewish Christians and non-Jewish Christians should approach it differently. There is evidence that New Testament Christians thought that Jewish Christians should observe the provisions of the old covenant law."[17] A few pages later Steve elaborates on this point, beginning an excursus devoted to it with the following italicized subheading: "*Jewish Christians originally kept the ceremonial law. The Messianic Jews of today try to do so as well.*"[18]

Unlike Lindbeck, Steve does not connect this insight to an overtly post-supersessionist ecclesiology. But his longstanding and consistent adherence to this position set me on a path in which peoplehood, post-supersessionism, and ecumenism would be inseparable commitments.

Post-Supersessionism, Ecumenism, and a Chastened Eschatological Vision

Steve set me on this path. But it was a partnership with the late Fr. Peter Hocken that guided me further along the same road. Like Steve, Fr. Peter was a pioneering Catholic charismatic ecumenist. Like George Lindbeck, Fr. Peter's ecumenism was intimately connected to a post-supersessionist ecclesiology. But Fr. Peter added an element which was unique to him: a prophetic eschatological sensibility. He was convinced that the ecumenical, Pentecostal-charismatic, and Messianic Jewish movements were all prophetic signs that

17. *Old Testament in Light of the New*, 245.
18. *Old Testament in Light of the New*, 264.

needed to be interpreted in relation to the eschatological *telos* of history.

Fr. Peter was influenced deeply by the life and work of the French Reformed pastor Louis Dallière (1897-1976) who founded the Union de Prière of Charmes-sur-Rhône in 1946. In Fr. Peter's words, Dallière "was the first "charismatic theologian" in the sense of a Christian scholar in an older Church tradition, baptized in the Spirit and articulating the Pentecostal experience in a non-revivalist theological framework. For Dallière, the heart of the Pentecostal movement was the restoration of a living-faith desire for Jesus' second coming."[19] Dallière was also an ecumenist, and the fellowship he founded included prayer for Christian unity as one of its four pillars. But in his mind Christian unity was linked both to God's work among the Jewish people and to the second coming of Jesus (two of the three remaining pillars). Fr. Peter explains these connections by citing and interpreting the charter of the Union de Prière:

> The charter of the Union de Prière affirms: "Prayer for unity is bound up with prayer for the illumination of the Jewish people" (para. 38). The Church was most united, the charter states, when the Churches of the Gentiles were 'imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea' (1 Thess 2:14). The section of the charter on Christian unity ends with the striking statement: 'The Union senses that it will be the converted Jewish people who will restore to the Church its visible unity. What the younger son of the parable has not been able

19. Peter Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the 20th Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford, Surrey: Eagle, 1994), 63.

> to do, despite all his love for the Christ, the older brother will help him to accomplish—we do not know where or how—when, restored to the banquet of his Father, they will prepare together 'the church…holy and without blemish' (Eph 5:27), that will be presented to the Lord on his return' (para 48).[20]

Fr. Peter's eschatological perspective, based on the teaching of Dallière, integrated for me the insights of Steve with those of Lindbeck in a way that made sense of my own experience as a Messianic Jew formed as a disciple in an ecumenical charismatic covenant community.

That experience, of course, includes the many ways that the ecumenical, Pentecostal-charismatic, covenant-community, and Messianic Jewish movements have failed to realize the hopes of their early adherents. And that story only recapitulates a pattern seen time and again in movements of spiritual renewal. Here Fr. Peter again provided guidance, for he exemplified a chastened and penitent eschatological perspective, which further informed his ecumenical vision. He proposed as "a foundational principle" the rule that "the promises and threats" of the Church's Old Testament "are given by the Lord to the same people."[21] Therefore, "it is unbiblical to adopt any dichotomy that says in effect: you people sinned and have lost the inheritance; we haven't and are now the heirs."[22] Fr. Peter then proceeded to take Paul's exhortation to gentile Jesus-followers regarding their attitude to Jews, and directed it to charismatic, apocalyptic, or merely anti-denominational Christians: "'I ask, then, has

20. *Glory and Shame*, 93.
21. *Glory and Shame*, 111.
22. *Glory and Shame*, 114.

God rejected his people?' (Rom 11:1)…Paul's question is similar to that posed by Christians who are tempted to despair of historic Christianity, whether in its Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican or Protestant forms…Paul's answer to his question about Israel should, I am convinced, also be ours."[23] In the wake of the many disappointments experienced over the years by those of us involved in ecumenism, the charismatic renewal, covenant community, and Messianic Judaism, the exhortation of Paul and Fr. Peter also speaks to us about God's enduring *chesed* and *emet*—not only towards us as individuals, but also to the communal bodies to which we belong.

On this point Fr. Peter's teaching overlapped substantially with that of George Lindbeck. While Lindbeck's post-supersessionist ecumenical ecclesiology of peoplehood was not set within an eschatological framework, it countered triumphalism with similar arguments as those marshalled by Fr. Peter. Lindbeck affirms the same "foundational principle" of interpreting biblical promises and threats, and notes how that principle is perversely mirrored in a medieval hermeneutical rule: "all good elements in the texts (e.g., consolations, etc.) should be referred to Jesus Christ and his Church, while all bad elements (e.g., sufferings, punishments) should be referred to the Jews and to human sin in general."[24] Lindbeck notes that the last phrase, which speaks of "human sin in general," provided "a warrant for extending the rule to those who are not Jews, and thus Protestants and Catholics have abused each other's churches in the same language the Old Testament directs against

23. *Glory and Shame*, 133.

24. "Church as Israel," 91. In footnote 11 Lindbeck indicates that the principle is derived from Rupert of Deutz (in *Patrologia Latina,* 167:1379).

unfaithful Israel, while reserving for their own communities the praises and the blessings."[25] This practice continues to this day. "Each separated communion has too much invested in the claim that it is fully even if not exclusively the church, to be able to admit that it could be in as sorry a state as God-forsaken Israel. The Christian reluctance to be as communally self-critical and penitent as Old Testament Israel (and much contemporary Judaism) remains alive."[26] Lindbeck associates this triumphalist resistance to communal repentance with "the supersessionist conviction that the covenant with Israel had been revoked. This conviction presupposes that the election of the Jews as a people was conditional on their faithfulness: because they rejected the Messiah, God annulled his promises to them and transferred these to the church. When churches become equally unfaithful, so the logic of this reasoning implies, God will cast them out just as he has Israel. This makes their situation precarious."[27] The original supersessionist turn thus set the Church on a course that would inevitably lead to schism, the mutual denial of the legitimacy of rival ecclesial groups, and the breakdown of Christian peoplehood.

Adopting a similar post-supersessionist ecumenical perspective, Fr. Peter taught and modeled an eschatological vision oriented to Christian communal self-examination and repentance. Much of his ministry focused on the need for Christians to repent for sins committed by their communities towards Jews and other Christians. In his view, this was the way to heed the summons of Isaiah to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Is 40:3).

25. "Church as Israel," 91.
26. "Church as Israel," 91-92.
27. "Church as Israel," 92.

The ecumenical vision of the people of God, received originally from Steve, was only enriched and deepened through my association with this prophetic English priest.

A Covenant Founded on God's *Chesed* and *Emet*

An ecumenical vision of the people of God—that is, in essence, what Steve began to impart to that nineteen-year-old Jewish disciple of Jesus in the winter of 1971-72. The vision matured over the coming decades, at first through Steve's continued teaching and example; later through immersion in the Messianic Jewish movement; and finally, through Messianic Jewish / Roman Catholic dialogue (in partnership with Fr. Peter), and the formation of an international ecumenical fellowship of Jewish disciples of Jesus. At every stage of my journey, I have never lost sight of Steve's chalkboard outline of Israel's call to a corporate life of *chesed* and *emet*.

Looking back over the past half-century, Steve and I both have much to be grateful for. I rejoice with him in the rich life of the Servants of the Word and the Sword of the Spirit, and I am confident that he rejoices with me in the fruit that has been borne through my labor in the Messianic Jewish world. At the same time, all has not gone as we had hoped. Like biblical Israel and the Jewish people through history, like the Christian Church in all its branches, like every movement of spiritual renewal in the whole people of God, our lives and our communities have experienced the fraying of covenantal *chesed* and *emet*. There has been shame as well as glory.

But it is a good thing to be humbled and chastened by a loving Father. On the other end of that half-century, we see clearly the heart of the covenantal life of the people of God, which is not our *chesed* and *emet* but that of the One who has lifted us on eagles' wings and brought us to himself. Despite our failures, and even by means of them, God has reaped a rich harvest. And we ourselves have learned to be faithful to our brothers and sisters, even when they stumble.

In all their frailty, Israel and the Church together bear witness to the eternal *chesed* and *emet* of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. His Spirit dwells ever among us, and inspires us to pray and work for the conversion of souls, the illumination of Israel, the unity of the Church, and the second coming of the Messiah. God is faithful, and he will do it.

CHAPTER 3

God's Glory Revealed in Christ

John P. Yocum

Introduction

This article is an essay in the theologically articulate explication of the gospel, drawing on two crucial passages in the Old Testament in order to draw out the meaning of several passages in the Gospel of John. Anyone who is familiar with Steve Clark's writings will easily see his influence behind what I have written. Far from being sheepish about that, I'm proud to bear some marks of Steve's patient tutelage.

One of the consistent themes in Clark's writing, signaled in the title of this volume, is *glory*. Glory is a term that refers to God's own nature, and to human acknowledgment of his nature in praise, thanksgiving, petition, and obedience. It refers as well to the divine nature shared with us by the outpouring of the Spirit of adoption. This essay will take up the theme of glory as it appears in the passion account in the Gospel of John, read against two Old Testament passages.

John's Narrative of Christ's Passion

We begin with the opening of John's narrative of Christ's passion: "Now before the feast of the Passover, when *Jesus knew that his hour had come* to depart out of this world to the Father, *having loved his own* who were in the world, *he loved them to the end* (Jn 13:1).[1] This is a dense verse. It brings together a number of key themes in the Gospel of John, especially in the Passion account, for which this verse functions as an introduction: the Passover, the hour of Jesus, this world, and the relation of Jesus to the Father. This verse in many ways sums up the relation of Jesus to his disciples. He loved them as his own, and He loved them to the end: to the point of completion; to the full extent; to the utmost; to the greatest degree possible. I want to look at several passages in the Scripture that place this, and the whole Passion of Jesus, in the context of God's steadfast love, and are tied together by the notion of *glory*.

Glory is a key term in John's gospel, occurring in various forms more than two dozen times.[2] Glory is an especially crucial

1. Emphasis added. All Scripture references are from the RSV.

2. The Hebrew term, *kavod*, translated by *doxa* in the Septuagint, derives from a metaphor of weight. *Doxa* turns on a metaphor of light. Paul combines the two metaphorical roots in his phrase "the weight of glory" (*baros doxes*) in 2 Cor 4:17. Both the underlying metaphors, weight and radiance, are connected to the manifestation of importance, majesty, influence, power, and so are often used of reputation or fame. In English, one might communicate the same idea by speaking of a person's "brilliance" or "weightiness." G.B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 2002), 28-30. See also W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Greek Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 202-3.

theme in John's account of the Passion of Christ.[3] On the day before Christ's arrest, some Greek-speaking Jews come to meet Jesus. This seems to be a signal to Him that his "hour"—the hour to offer his life to the Father (10:17-18)—had arrived (see Jn 2:4; 4:6, 21; 7:30; 8:20).

> Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." (Jn 12:20-28)

Jesus tells the crowd who stand about, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine."

The evangelist adds that this was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Is 53:1). This is a glorification of the Father's name that defies the

3. The final section of the Gospel of John is often called "The Book of Glory."

expectations of the crowd. Isaiah, the evangelist tells us, saw Christ's glory and spoke of him, knowing as well that many would not believe (Jn 12:41).[4] In order to grasp the significance of the notion of glory at work here, and the irony of the misunderstanding of the crowd, two Old Testament passages are worth reviewing.

The Old Testament Context

The first passage, among the most dramatic[5] and important in the Old Testament, is from Exodus.[6] After Israel's idolatry with the golden calf, and after Moses has broken the original two tablets inscribed with the Decalogue, Moses comes to stand before the Lord and intercede for the people of Israel. The Lord tells Moses, in response, that He will not, as He had just proposed, destroy Israel and make a new nation, beginning with Moses. On the other hand, He will not accompany Israel, but rather let them go their own way. Moses pleads with the Lord to relent, and go with the people of Israel, despite their sin. Furthermore, He asks the Lord to let Him know his ways,

4. Is 6:10; 29:10.

5. Gary A. Anderson, *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament: Theology in the Service of Biblical Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 24.

6. Ex 34:6 is quoted verbatim seven times in the Old Testament, often in similar instances of intercession for God's favorable presence (Neh 9:17; Ps 86:7; 103:8; 145:8; Jl 2:13; Jon 4:2). The description "gracious and merciful" is applied to God four other times (2 Chron 30:9; Neh 31:3; Ps 112:4; 116:5). The most notable repetition is when the people of Israel have refused to enter the promised land after hearing the report of the spies sent to reconnoiter it, proposing instead to go back to Egypt (Num 14:1-4). The Lord repeats the threat to wipe out Israel and make of Moses a new, great nation. Moses appeals to the compassionate nature of the Lord, quoting Ex 34:6 almost verbatim (Num 14:18-19).

and to show him his glory; that is, to know who it is with whom he is dealing. Moses wants to know what kind of God this is that is calling him to lead this stiff-necked and rebellious people. What can he expect of him?

> "For how shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? Is it not in thy going with us, so that we are distinct, I and thy people, from all other people that are upon the face of the earth?" And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." Moses said, "I pray thee, show me thy glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live." And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen." (Ex 33:16-23)

The Lord then arranges to meet with Moses and keeps his appointment.

> The LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tables of stone like the first; and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which you broke. Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain…. And the

> LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful [*rahum*] and gracious [*hannun*], slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love [*hesed*] and faithfulness [*emet*], keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." And Moses made haste to bow his head toward the earth, and worshiped. (Ex 34:1-2, 5-8)

Recall the context: God has revealed his glory in the deliverance, showing himself more glorious than Pharaoh, the pre-eminent political and military leader in the world.[7] Exodus describes this deliverance as both an act of war[8] and as an act of judgment, not only on Pharaoh, but on the gods of Egypt.[9] The deliverance was not an end in itself, however, but was aimed at the covenant established on Sinai. When the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, he brought them to himself, in order to make of them his own possession through a covenant that enjoined obedience upon Israel.[10] Almost immediately, Israel violated that covenant, making the work of their hands an object of worship.

Thus, Moses' request of the Lord is existentially charged. He knows the Lord heard the cry of the people of Israel groaning under their bondage to the Egyptians and saw their affliction.

7. Ex 14:2, 7.
8. Ex 15:3.
9. Ex 12:12.
10. Ex 19:4-6.

He knows the stated purpose of the Lord to bring the descendants of Abraham into a good and broad land, flowing with milk and honey.[11] But he has also seen the power of God displayed against those who oppose his will, not only the Egyptians, but Amalek as well.[12] Up until the time when Moses ascended the mountain, the Israelites had shown themselves timid, unbelieving, complaining,[13] but they had not yet entered into the covenant. Now, however, they had pledged, solemnly, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."[14] No sooner had Moses gone to represent them before the Lord, than they immediately violated that pledge, making by their own hands an idol to worship. Moses had good reason to ask to see the Lord's ways, to understand in what his glory consists. Who is this God whom Moses implores to accompany Israel?

In that context, the crucial aspect of God's nature revealed to Moses is that he forgives sin. The terrifying power of God, displayed in his acts of judgment upon Egypt and in his descent upon Sinai are a danger, not a remedy, it would seem. Nor would it meet the need here were God to proclaim his fearsome holiness, as Isaiah's vision hears it proclaimed by the seraphim; that could elicit only the same cry uttered by Isaiah: Woe is me! (Is 6:5). God's holiness and ineffable purity untempered by mercy present sinful Israel with the prospect of destruction. What God reveals to Moses in this proclamation is that steadfast love issues in mercy and grace, without compromise of divine justice.

11. Ex 3:7-9.
12. Ex 17:8-14.
13. Ex 13:17; 15:23-24; 16:3-7, 20, 27; 17:2-3.
14. Ex 19:8.

By the same authority by which he visits iniquity upon three or four generations, the Lord shows steadfast love for thousands (of generations), forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. In fact, forgiveness indicates a higher level of personal authority than punishment. In human judgment, the judge is bound by the law, an authority outside himself, so that the judge is not free to pardon on the grounds of his own choice, even when moved by, say, compassion for the poor.[15] God, however, can remit punishment by his own authority, indeed by the same authority by which he punishes the guilty: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."[16] The glory of the Lord, then, is his ability to forgive, to show mercy, while remaining just, his mercy excelling all others, even as his justice remains at times inscrutable to human perception. The steadfast love of the Lord is founded upon this ability and willingness to forgive sin.

A second passage in which the term glory features that offers background to the significance of the term in the Gospel of John comes from Isaiah:

> Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth he earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the

15. Ex 23:3; Lev 19:15.

16. Ex 33:19. See Yves Congar, "Mercy: God's Supreme Attribute," in *The Revelation of God*, trans. A. Manson and L.C. Sheppard (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 49-62; Thomas Aquinas, *In Eph*. 2:4; *Exp. in Ps 50*; *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*), II-II, 67, 4; II, 46, 2, ad 3.

> eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." (Is 42:5-9)

There are four elements of this passage worth noting for our purposes. First, this comes in the context of one of the Servant Songs of Isaiah.[17] In the first four verses of Isaiah 42, God speaks of his Servant, identified with Christ in Matt 12:17-21. The term "servant" (Hebrew *ebed*) in Isaiah 40-48 is applied to a variety of figures: to Israel as a whole; perhaps to the prophet; to a figure distinct from Israel, who acts on behalf of Israel; to Cyrus, the Persian king who delivered Israel from the Babylonians.[18] In these verses, however, the servant is distinguished from Cyrus or any military conqueror by the manner in which he gains his victory; he will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoldering wick; he will not wrangle or cry aloud. It is this manner of acting that Matthew attributes to Jesus in summing up his narrative of a number of miraculous healings.[19]

17. The term is a modern one, coined by Bernard Duhm, in his influential commentary of 1892, but the commonalities among these songs had long been observed. Use of the term does not require subscription to Duhm's theory about the composition and setting of the passages.
18. On the unity of Is 42:1-9, and on the variety of ways in which the term servant is applied in this section of Isaiah, see Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville/London: The Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 323-27.
19. See Matt 11:29; 1 Pet 2:23.

Second, we should take note of the covenantal context. Just as Exodus 34 takes place in the larger context of the giving, breaking, and reaffirming of the covenant, so here the Servant is himself given as a covenant, not only to the benefit of Israel, but to the nations, whom he will enlighten.[20] In John 12, the apparent signal to Jesus that his hour is imminent is the Greeks' request for an audience, and this is borne out by Jesus' subsequent declaration: "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to myself." (Jn 12:32)

Third, in this passage, the *glory* of the Lord carries a second sense, evident from its parallel with *praise* in the second half of the couplet in 42:8. "Glory" here refers to the laudatory acknowledgement of God's glory. He cedes this acknowledgement to no other, especially, as Isaiah 40-48 repeatedly affirms, with any object of worship made by human hands.[21]

Finally, as in Jn 12:28, the glory of the Lord is associated with his name, the name revealed to Moses in the wilderness. As the glory that properly belongs to the Lord is not to be offered to graven images, so the name of the Lord is not to be spoken in vain. This name is unique and mysterious, as is its bearer.[22]

20. Childs, *Isaiah*, 326.

21. Isaiah 40-60 consistently affirms that, whereas idols are the work of human hands, by contrast human beings themselves, as well as the whole of heaven and earth, are the work of the Lord's hands (Is 40:18-19; 44:7-20; 45:16, 19; 46:1-2; 48:3-5).

22. Is 45:15; Ex 33:20. On the mysterious naming of God, see Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, I, 13, 11, ad 1.

Return to the Passion Narrative

Returning now to the passion account in John (Jn 13:31-32),[23] Jesus has just washed the disciples feet (13:12), and has announced that one of his own disciples would betray him (13:21). After giving Judas the morsel that is the sign to his beloved disciple that this is his betrayer (13:26), Judas goes out, "and it was night" (13:30). At this point, Jesus declares: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once (Jn 13:31b-32).

The verb *doxazo* ("glorify") appears in these verses five times, three times in the passive. What is this glorification of the Son of man, in whom God is glorified?[24] Scholars have made various proposals about this: that it refers to some past event in Jesus' ministry; to Judas' betrayal; to the cross, but not what follows the cross.[25] The most compelling interpretation, however, is that it refers to "the entire complex of events, considered as one, which includes Jesus death, resurrection,

23. I follow here the Nestle-Aland text, supported by Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London/New York: United Bible Society, 1975).

24. I prescind here from the debate as to whether to translate the final clause as "God is glorified in him" or "God has revealed his glory in him." In what follows it will be clear that whatever the subject of the clause is, the essential meaning is that the glory of God is manifested in the Son.

25. Peter Ensor, "The Glorification of the Son of Man: An Analysis of John 13:31-32," *Tyndale Bulletin* 58:2 (2007), 234. Ensor cites F.L. Godet for the first view, R.C.H. Lenski for the second, and R. Bultmann, F.J. Moloney, and W. Thüsing for the third.

and ascension, and may be summed up as Jesus' return to the Father by way of the cross."[26]

In the conclusion to the entire discourse that occupies Jn 13:31-17:26, Jesus addresses the Father directly in prayer:

> When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made. (Jn 17:1-5)

Jesus here prays for the mutual glorification of the Father and Son. When the Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father. How does the Son glorify the Father? By accomplishing the work that the Father has given him to do. This hearkens back to the opening verses of John's account of the Passion: Jesus has loved those who were his own in the world, to the end. He has lost none of those given to him, except the son of perdition (17:12). The Son's glorification of the Father is the earthly completion of the work that belongs jointly to

26. Ensor, "The Glorification of the Son of Man," 233. Ensor reaches this conclusion by observing: the broad ways in which John uses the term "now," beginning in Jn 12:31. His conclusion is shared by, among others, George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 246; Raymond Brown, *John*, vol. 2, The Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 610.

the Father and Son, the Father sending the Son and the Son accomplishing the work for which he was sent. The glorification of the Son is the Father's response to Christ's accomplished work, manifest in the resurrection and ascension because this will take place in the Father's own presence, whence Jesus has come and to which he is about to return.

It is crucial, however, to see that this glory is not an addition to Christ, but a manifestation of a glory he already possessed. This is the glory that belonged to Christ before the foundation of the world (Jn 17:5). The Father gives him this glory in his love for the Son (Jn 17:24). This is consistent with a pattern in the gospel as a whole.[27] When John speaks of Jesus being "glorified," it is a revelation of a glory that always belonged to him as God, but was obscured to human eyes during his earthly life.[28] This glory, the glory which the only begotten Son receives from the Father (Jn 1:14), is fully acknowledged by his disciples only after his glorification by the Father in his death and resurrection (7:39; 20:28, 31). Thus, in his return to the Father by way of the cross, Jesus' divinity is revealed, and in that revelation the nature of God shines forth.[29]

The accomplishment of the Father's work in the Son manifests the nature of God in a variety of ways: through showing forth the power of God in his triumph over death (Jn 10:17-18); through the vindication of Christ in his resurrection and exaltation; through manifesting the truth of Christ's word (Jn 1:14, 17; 8:31-32, 40; 14:6; 17:8, 19; 18:37). Crucial to the

27. Jn 1:1, 14, 18; 2:11; 8:54; 11:4.
28. Ensor, "The Glorification of the Son of Man," 236.
29. Ensor, "The Glorification of the Son of Man," 236.

account in the Gospel of John, however, is the manifestation of God's steadfast love, his *hesed*, in Christ's death.

Conclusion

In Exodus 34, God revealed his glory to Moses, declaring simultaneously the meaning of what Moses was seeing: that the divine glory consists in his grace and mercy, his steadfast love and faithfulness. In Jesus Christ, we receive grace beyond even the grace of the Mosaic dispensation (Jn 1:16). To sinful human beings, as to the people of Israel, that grace is predicated upon forgiveness of sins (Jn 1:54; 5:14; 8:11). The basis of the forgiveness of sins is the steadfast love that Christ demonstrated from beginning to end toward his own (Jn 13:1; 3:16). Christ reveals this love in the highest manner possible: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:31). More than human love, however, this is divine love in human form. He who was in the beginning with God, whose glory is that of the Son from the Father, makes his glory known precisely in this act of grace.

In Exodus 34, God revealed his mercy and steadfast love in keeping the covenant faithfully, even when Israel had proven faithless. In Christ, God sends his Son, as himself the covenant, the establishment of a new birth as children of God (Jn 1:12-12; 3:5). This covenant extends beyond the people of Israel to encompass the nations, in fulfillment of Is 42:6. Christ, lifted up on the cross, and glorified in the Father's presence, draws all men to himself (Jn 12:32). In Christ God is glorified and in Christ God reveals the glory that belongs to no other (Is 42:8).

CHAPTER 4

Mary of Bethany: Love beyond Measure

Jeanne Kun

Introduction

As an undergraduate student at university, I was motivated by Steve Clark's encouragement to young people in the charismatic renewal to seek the Lord regarding "state of life" choices. Subsequently, after serious prayer and discernment, I made a lifelong commitment to live "single for the Lord," that is, to live a celibate life dedicated to God, available to follow and serve him in whatever ways he would lead me.

Moreover, Steve's wisdom and teachings about Scripture and about formation in Christian living impacted me greatly. And his advice to me personally guided me into several of the paths that my life has taken: the pastoral care for women in their various states of life; the development of Scripture-based material for women's retreats and conferences; and professional work as an author of inspirational articles, poetry, books, and Bible study guides.

Thus, it is with great gratitude to the Lord and to Steve that I contribute the article "Mary of Bethany: Love beyond Measure" to this book in Steve's honor. The article reflects many aspects of how Steve has profoundly influenced my life.

At the Feet of Jesus

Mary of Bethany was a simple first-century woman from a negligible village in a country overshadowed by the Roman Empire, yet the memory of her has endured through two millennia. Her fame is widespread, even though relatively little is known about her life. The evangelists tell us nothing of her birth, family background, or social standing. However, the descriptions they vividly painted of her encounters with Jesus give us a truer picture of her than we would gain from an entry in *Who's Who?* And in each of the gospel accounts about Mary of Bethany, we see her in the same place—at the Lord's feet.

In the House of Martha and Mary: Luke 10:38-42[1]

Now as they went on their way, [Jesus] entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are

1. Note: All Scripture texts are from the Revised Standard Version.

anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus were dear friends of Jesus (cf. Jn 11:5). Their home was a haven where he found rest and refreshment in its loving atmosphere.

Hospitality is regarded very highly in the cultures of the Middle East, so it's natural that Martha wanted to serve Jesus well. She loved Jesus deeply, and expressed this love concretely by offering him refreshment and preparing him a fine meal.

Martha received Jesus with open arms and then got on with the work of meeting his needs. Welcoming the Lord into her house shows Martha's immediate realization of his humanity. Martha, in a sense, comprehended the concrete reality of the Incarnation—that Jesus was a human, a man with human needs for rest and food. In her friendship, Martha welcomed him and allowed herself to be involved in the experience of the Incarnation in a very real way. We should admire Martha for her human warmth and hospitality that offered to meet and supply Jesus' human need. Jesus knew that Martha's solicitude was genuine, that she was translating her love for him into hospitable acts.

However, Martha lost sight of the Lord in her work. She was a busy hostess, so occupied with caring for Jesus and serving him that she couldn't take the time to sit down with her guest. Jesus appreciated Martha's loving care, but urged her to relax and enjoy his company.

When Martha indignantly asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" (Lk 10:40), she

showed a self-concern that robbed her of the ability to appreciate the precious gift of the moment—fellowship with Jesus. In her complaint we find the same Greek verb, *melei*, that the disciples used in their accusation of Jesus during the storm at sea: "Do you not care if we perish?" (Mk 4:38). Jesus responded the same way to both upheavals: He calmed the troubled hearts and storms that swept around him. Jesus gently reproached Martha—"You are anxious and troubled about many things (worried and distracted)." His words were not a harsh reproof. He recognized the generosity of her bustling nature, but his response was meant to help her recognize how senseless and unnecessary her anxieties were. Only one thing is needed (Lk 10:41-42).

Martha may have been troubled, even resentful of serving alone, yet she had a profound love for Jesus; she was at ease with him, comfortable and secure in his love and her friendship with him. She knew where to go when she needed help—to Jesus—and he pointed her on the right track, helped her to unify her life and prioritize her concerns.

Unlike Martha, Mary was wholly present to Jesus, wholly *there* for him. She stayed near to him, not wasting any of the brief moments he spent in their house. She simply sat still at Jesus' feet and listened to his conversation. She didn't want to miss a single word he spoke. She had indeed chosen the "good portion" (Lk 10:42). Mother Basilea Schlink, founder of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, described Mary well:

> In Bethany Jesus found open hearts that loved him and eagerly awaited him at all times. Mary laid all else aside; it was of secondary importance to her. When Jesus came, she hastened to him and devoted herself fully to him. She was completely captivated by Jesus. She had eyes and ears for him alone, for him whom her soul loved. To love Jesus, to hear words of eternal life from his lips meant everything to her.[2]

When the Lord came to their house, Martha spent herself in giving to him. But Mary had no thought for what she could offer but understood that Jesus was coming to give himself, his friendship, to them—to offer the gift of himself as the Word made flesh. And so Mary sat at Jesus' feet, ready and eager and open to receive from him. Poverty of spirit and simplicity of heart characterized her attitude; she had nothing to do, nothing to say. She had only to receive what the Lord was pouring into her heart and her life. In Mary's experience, the important thing was not what she did or had to offer, but what God was doing in her.

As Mary sat at Jesus' feet, she was *still* and *attentive*. There, so close to him, she became sensitive to what was on his heart.

Mary was *occupied solely* with the presence of Jesus and kept her vision *focused* on him, not on herself. Often in prayer, my focus is on myself, either how I'm doing in life and what I need, or how I am doing right then in the prayer time. But Mary was focused on the Lord and was *available* to him, at his disposal. We, too, can ask ourselves:

2. Mother Basilea Schlink, *The Holy Places Today* (Darmstadt-Eberstadt, West Germany: Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, 1975), 19.

How can I simply "be there" for Jesus? What does this mean for you practically?

She listened to Jesus' word—and it was a living word for her. She found truth and comfort and strength and wisdom in it. Similarly, Jesus wants to be a living word to us, wants us to find truth and strength from our Scripture reading and reflection and our daily prayer times.

Mary had an *undivided* love—something divided is separated; lacks unity; is shared out in portions; divergent; partial. She had a *single-hearted*, *wholehearted* love—she was united in heart within herself; without inner conflict; not at cross-purposes; integral and integrated; not portioned out piecemeal; entire.

We may feel sorry for Martha, left to fix the dinner alone, and resent Mary's "portion." But rather than seeing the two postures as mutually exclusive, might we not find in Martha and Mary complementary aspects of the call given to all followers of Christ? As we balance action and contemplation in a creative tension in our own lives, we dynamically express our love for Jesus through both.

Both Martha and Mary welcomed the Lord with love, each in her own way. Here is what Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero of Turin wrote:

> It is clear that these two are not opposed, they do not negate one another. No one can say: I take my stand with Mary; or I stand by Martha. Both of them together tell us in very impressive fashion something precisely on the lines of the friendship, love, intimacy with which we should greet the Lord.
> In our house there is room for Martha and room for Mary and we must occupy both places. We must be Mary because

> we are welcoming the Word; and we must be Martha because we are receiving the Son of Man, the Word who became incarnate precisely in order to share the human condition, and within it to save humanity and the world…. The house is one and Mary's task and Martha's are not alternatives, but dispositions which give full realization to the welcome that should be made to Jesus."[3]

At the Raising of Lazarus: John 11:1-44

Mary's attentiveness to Jesus and her availability to him are also evident in the story of the raising of her brother Lazarus from the dead. John tells us that Mary had stayed behind grieving in the house, allowing Martha to speak with Jesus first as he arrived on the outskirts of the village (Jn 11:20, 30). But when Martha told her, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you," Mary responded immediately to her master's request and quickly rose to go to meet him (Jn 11:28-29). "Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet" (Jn 11:32).

This simple, straightforward exchange between Jesus and Mary can be a model for us in our own responsiveness to the Lord. Jesus asks us to be available to him, ready to answer his call and his wishes at all times. That includes those difficult times when we are weighed down by some concern or sorrow, like Mary was when she was mourning for Lazarus. But we also need to set aside time to sit at Jesus' feet in the course of our day-to-day lives, like Mary did when Jesus visited her house for refreshment, to enjoy his presence and keep him company.

3. Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero, *Martha and Mary: Meeting Christ as* Friend (Middlegreen, UK: St. Paul's, 1994), 39.

In 1978, during the papal conclave, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was shaken by the way the voting began to indicate that he might be elected pope. "Pope John Paul II himself has provided one small detail about the conclave. At a certain point in the proceedings, his old rector at the Belgian College, Cardinal Maximian De Fürstenberg, approached him and asked, in words reminiscent of the liturgy for the ordination of a priest, '*Deus adest et vocat te?*' [God is here, and calling you?]."[4] In these words, put to him in the form of a question both challenging and encouraging him to embrace the surprising will of God, Wojtyla would have also recognized the words of Martha to Mary, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you," and he responded willingly.

The Anointing: John 12:1-8 (see also Matt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9)

John's Gospel places the story of Mary anointing Jesus' feet shortly before the Passover. Slightly different versions appear in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels, where an unnamed woman anoints Jesus' head with precious oil.

> Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. (Jn 12:1-2)

4. George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York, NY: Cliff Street Books, 1999), 252.

During the last days of Jesus' life he taught daily in the temple and withdrew to the Mount of Olives or to Bethany at night, perhaps to avoid being arrested by his enemies. Most likely, it was in the house of his three friends that Jesus took refuge when he was unable to spend the night in Jerusalem because of the plots of the Pharisees.

So, several nights before Passover, Jesus was having dinner in Bethany with his friends, and

> Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." (Jn 12:3-8)

We know already that Mary loved to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to him. Now she found another way to show her love at this dinner party.

It was the custom to honor guests by offering them scented water and washing their feet. Mary carried out this act with special love and refinement and delicacy.

She wasn't concerned about what the other guests might think of her. She cared only for Jesus and what he thought, and she was moved to this generous act by her love for him. Her love was not self-seeking or self-interested.

This ointment Mary used to anoint Jesus was the aromatic essence of spikenard. This small plant bears only inconspicuous flowers, but its hairy stem gives off a rich, sweet-smelling fragrance. The dried stems, used to make perfume, became an important trade item in the ancient world, being transported on camelback from the Himalayan mountains where it grew, to merchants in the Near East.

Or another variety of nard grew in Palestine—a soft, rich brown moss that grows in the hollows of rocks. It required more than 200 pounds of moss to yield a single liter of perfume. So the product of either of these plants was quite costly. Mary wasn't stingy in pouring out this oil, which represents her lavish love.

Mary and her family probably weren't wealthy—Martha prepared and served the meals herself, so they probably didn't have servants. Yet the perfume was worth 300 denarii. A laborer's wage at that time was a denarius a day, so the perfume was equivalent to almost a year's wages. What would you think of spending all the money you earned in a year on a bottle of perfume and then pouring it out all at one time?

John tells us that Mary used a *pound* (some translations say *liter*) of this fragrant oil, which is no small amount.

Mark's Gospel (Mk 14:3) adds that the perfume was held in an alabaster jar that Mary broke. Alabaster, a fine, white or translucent variety of gypsum or calcite, was used for carving ornamental objects such as flasks, lamps, and vases. This flask may have been a family treasure.

Breaking this exquisite vessel allowed the last drop of perfume to flow out, but also showed that the flask was to serve

no one else and no other purpose. Mary showed by doing this that Jesus merited everything.

The jar filled with costly perfume is a symbol of Mary's love and devotion, broken and poured out on Jesus. *Do you have something precious in your life to offer Jesus? Your hopes, your dreams, your energy, your willingness to obey God or surrender totally to him? Or do you have something you must willingly break, for example, your rebelliousness or your fears and inhibitions, your false expectations and preconceived ideas about God or about others, or about yourself?*

What are some truths that we can see and learn from Mary and carry out in lavishing our love upon Jesus?

Love is *extravagant* and *never calculates*; love wants to give its all, the utmost. Prudence and common sense would caution that this gesture was an extravagant waste, but love obeys the dictates of the heart.

It's lavish and profuse, abundant, unstinting. These words embarrass us or seem exaggerated, but they are the way we should respond to Jesus, whose love for us was even more generous, more total in its giving.

Mary illustrated the nature of love's generosity and total self-giving to another. Love doesn't worry much about the cost of a gift to the beloved. The gift must symbolize the total surrender of true love, regardless of the price, which may be big or small. If the price is small, but that is all one has, that is total giving. Mary focused her loving attention completely

on Jesus. Her deed was simplicity itself, humble, direct, uncomplicated, selfless, loving."[5]

The disciples complained of this extravagance, indignantly saying: "Why this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum, and given to the poor" (Matt 26:8-9).

But it was Jesus himself who interpreted Mary's gesture as a "beautiful" thing, a "good" thing, a "kindness" (Mk 14:6). The actual Greek word means more than moral good, but something lovely and beautiful.

Jesus also explained that this anointing was in preparation for his burial (Matt 26:10; Mk 14:6, 8). At Jesus' birth the Magi had presented the gift of myrrh (Matt 2:11), commonly used when wrapping a body in a burial shroud, which foreshadowed Jesus' death. Now Jesus attached the same significance to Mary's deed of anointing him with pure nard.

Mary's gesture was *spontaneous*. She *seized the moment*. Often things must be done when the opportunity arises, or the moment will pass us by. How often have you been moved by a generous impulse, but failed to act on it? Missed your chance and couldn't regain it?

Yet Mary's act also grew out of a *long-practiced attentiveness* to Jesus. She had loved to sit at his feet and listen to him. Surely she was attentive to his moods and very sensitive to his thoughts and his will.

5. Alfred McBride, *The Divine Presence of Jesus* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992), 110-11.

The apostles hadn't understood when Jesus spoke about his impending passion, but perhaps Mary sensed that he was troubled by the coming trials and she sought to comfort him with this last token of her love. We know a shadow was lying over the dinner party, since the raising of Lazarus had drawn so much attention to Jesus that the religious authorities secretly decided to have Jesus killed—and Lazarus also.

As Mary had knelt at Jesus' feet, anointing them and wiping them with her hair, she certainly had no thought that her action would become famous and that her name would be known throughout the world for all generations to come. Her sole thought was to let the Lord know how much she loved him, and to honor him and bring him comfort.

Jesus treasured her love and in turn honored her, and gave her gesture a universal value. In Matthew's account, Jesus said that "wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of, in memory of her" (Matt 26:13).

This prophecy has been fulfilled. St. John Chrysostom wrote:

> Certainly we do hear her story told in all the churches…. Wherever in the world you may go, everyone respectfully listens to the story of [Mary's] good service…. And yet hers was not a deed of renown. For what renown was there in pouring out some ointment? Nor was she a distinguished person…. Nor was there a large audience…. Nor was the place one where she could easily be seen…. Nonetheless, even though she was a lowly person, even though only a few were there to witness it, even though the place was undistinguished, neither these facts nor any others could obscure the memory of that woman.

> Today, she is more illustrious than any king or queen; no passage of years has buried in oblivion the service she performed."[6]

Chrysostom wrote that more than 1,500 years ago, and it's still true today.

A Divine Love Story

The story of Mary of Bethany is a divine love story. And it's a love story that God invites each of us to participate in.

God has created us out of love—freely, generously, graciously, simply because he wanted to share his life with us. God **is** love and life … there's no life and love apart from him. His desire is for us. He yearns for us—and he wants our love in return. We were created *in* love, out of God's love … and we've been created *for* love, created *to* love God in return. We are in a divine love story with God!

The one who began this love story is God himself— as the First Letter of St. John tells us: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son. . . . We love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:10, 19). That's the greatest reality and truth of the universe, and it's the foundation of our lives and of our relationship with the Lord. St. John also went on to say, "We *know* and *believe* the love God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16).

God has loved us, laid claim to us, and wants to captivate us with his goodness, his mercy, and his generosity in sending

6. John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews*, Homily V.II.3, 5-6. https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_adversus_judaeos_05_homily5.htm.

his Son to us. He has captured each of us for himself and won us by his love.

It's in response to God's overwhelming love for us and the revelation of himself to us that we then love him. God is constantly wooing and pursuing us—and invites us to respond to his overtures by loving him in return.

God has loved us with a love beyond measure. It only makes sense that we love him in return. As St. Bernard of Clairvaux once noted: "You wish me to tell you why and how God should be loved. My answer is that God himself is the reason why he should be loved. As for how he is to be loved, there is to be no limit to that love."[7]

That's how Mary of Bethany loved Jesus, pouring out the nard, pouring out herself, without measure. That's how we, too, are to love Jesus. And when we do that, we're doing just what we've been made for!

As Amy Carmichael, a Protestant missionary to India, once wrote: "Ours should be the love that asks not 'How little?' but 'How much?'; the love that pours its all and revels in the joy of having something to pour out on the feet of its beloved; love that laughs at limits—rather does not see them, would not heed them if it did."[8]

---

7. Jeanne Kun, ed., *Love Songs: Wisdom from Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Ijamsville, MD: The Word Among Us Press, 2001), 31.
8. https://www.gotquestions.org/Amy-Carmichael.html.

Bethany Revisited:
My Love's Anointing[1]

Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard
and anointed the feet of Jesus . . .
and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

Supremely free from herself
(what enviable liberty!)
and careless of all others' thought of her,
(would that I, too, lacked such inhibition
and could cease to serve my reputation)
Mary poured the costliest of gifts
upon your feet, O Lord:
a love unmeasured and full-spent,
wholly wasted for your good pleasure and praise.

Withholding nothing for herself,
generous and unreserved
she anointed those feet
(where once she sat so earnest
listening to your word)
with purest perfume,
the scent of her heart's sacrifice.

1.

She has done a beautiful thing.

And wishing to learn from Mary's lead,
what are the spices of my life
to crush to sweet fragrance for you
for like anointing?

My hopes and dreams and disappointments;
my joys and longings and little daily delights foregone;
my fears won over and sins repented of;
my chaste fervor and innocence—

Such is my offering
distilled to perfume beyond all price,
its essence nothing but my love for you.

CHAPTER 5

Forming Mature Disciples of Jesus Among the Members of Generation Z

Thomas E. Bergler
Professor of Christian Thought and Practice
Huntington University

Protestant Christians in America have spent the past thirty years rediscovering some of the insights on Christian formation that Steve Clark pioneered in the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, contemporary Protestants are rediscovering the importance of intergenerational Christian formation of young people that is intentionally aimed at spiritual maturity and that is sustained by immersive relational environments and practices.[1] While some progress has been made in reforming

1. See, for example, Jim Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008; 2nd edition 2022); Dorothy Bass, ed. *Practicing Our Faith: A Guide for Learning, Conversation and Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997; 2nd edition 2019); Timothy Paul Jones, ed. *Perspectives on Family Ministry: Three Views* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009); Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole*

youth work along these lines, none of these approaches has yet combined all of the elements that Steve Clark and other leaders in the Sword of the Spirit have been refining over the past 50 years. In this essay, I will update my previous work on helping young people toward spiritual maturity with an eye toward the current generation of adolescents and young adults, labeled "Generation Z." Along the way, I will note ways that Steve Clark's work shapes my approach. Steve Clark's legacy of communal Christian formation has significant contributions to make to our ongoing efforts to form mature disciples among Generation Z.

The Goal: Spiritually Mature Disciples of Jesus

Very early in his life of following Jesus, Steve Clark realized the importance of forming communities of disciples who could help one another grow to spiritual maturity, evangelize unbelievers, and renew the Church.[2] His unwavering clarity on this point led him to leadership roles in the Cursillo Movement, the charismatic renewal, and eventually to his founding role in the Sword of the Spirit. Steve proposed something radical: disciples of Jesus should actually live the way of life taught by their master. And he realized that in order to live as mature disciples, American Christians needed different kinds of help

Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012); James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009); James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016).

2. Stephen B. Clark, *Building Christian Communities: Strategy for Renewing the Church* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1972).

than they often found in their local congregations. Steve's teaching influenced me to look for maturity among Christians and regard it as a problem if it is missing. That perspective helped me identify the problem of "juvenilization" in the recent history of American Christianity.[3] Steve's teaching also influenced me to look for a solution to juvenilization in the biblical teaching on spiritual maturity.

So what does the New Testament teach about spiritual maturity? The New Testament writers use the word "mature" to describe a spiritual state that should be attained by most disciples of Jesus after a reasonable period of growth. All the passages in which the Greek word *teleios* and its various forms should be translated "mature" (1 Cor 2:14-3:4, 14:20; Eph 4:1-5:2; Phil 3:1-16; Col 1:28; Heb 5:11 – 6:2) either explicitly teach or assume this perspective.[4] So, for example, the writer of Hebrews says:

> About this we have much to say that is hard to explain, since you have become dull in understanding. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food; for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature [*teleios*], for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let

3. Thomas E. Bergler, *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).
4. Thomas E. Bergler, *From Here to Maturity: Overcoming the Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 26-53.

> us go on toward perfection [*teleiotes*] … not laying again the foundation … (Heb 5:11-6:1).[5]

The author takes for granted that his readers should have already moved from spiritual infancy to spiritual adulthood. Elsewhere, Paul assumes that some of his readers are already "mature" (Phil 3:15) and rebukes the believers in Corinth for still being spiritual infants (1 Cor 3:1-3).

Mature discipleship begins with a full conversion, a new birth, resulting in a state of spiritual infancy. Spiritual newborns are eager for the "spiritual milk" of God's word (1Pet 1:22-2:3), signifying the basic teachings or "first principles" (Heb 5:12) of the faith. But spiritual infants and children must grow into spiritual adults, otherwise they will be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles" (Eph 4:14). And they will be unable to discern even basic "spiritual" things such as knowing that they should treat each other lovingly and seek unity rather than divide into prideful factions (1 Cor 2:14 – 3:4).

In the ideal process, spiritual infants grow up by the power of God and through the nurture of the Church to become spiritually mature disciples of Jesus who display the following competencies. First, mature disciples have a secure knowledge of the basic teachings of the faith. We have already seen this emphasis in Hebrews 5:11 – 6:2 and Ephesians 4, but the same teaching appears in every passage that uses the metaphor of human development to describe spiritual growth. Indicators

5. All Scripture references are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

that a disciple has this trait of maturity are that he or she 1) is able to teach others the basic truths of the faith (Heb 5:12; Eph 4:15), 2) is not easily shaken by false teachings (Eph 4:14), and 3) is starting to show an interest in deeper theology (Heb 5:12-14).

Second, mature disciples display spiritual discernment. They are learning by experience how to apply the basic teachings of the faith to everyday situations. The author of Hebrews emphasizes that the mature "have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." And Paul makes much of the difference between "spiritual" (mature) believers and "unspiritual" (infant) ones with regard to their ability to understand and live God's word (1 Cor 2:6-3:4). Discernment can be seen in believers when they (1) understand the Gospel (Phil 3:2-11, 15), and (2) recognize and accept what Christian love requires in everyday situations (1 Cor 3:1-4).

Third, mature believers are putting off sinful patterns of behavior and putting on godly patterns of behavior. For example, Paul teaches believers to stop speaking evil, destructive words, but instead speak words that build up their brothers and sisters (see Eph 4:22 – 5:2). The reason Paul could be so confident that the believers in Corinth were still spiritual "infants" is that they were boasting about sins for which they should be repenting (1 Cor 3:1-4, 21; 5:1-2). Thus, mature believers are (1) receptive to moral teaching and correction and (2) active in stopping obvious sins and replacing them with their positive opposites. Mature believers are not morally perfect, but they are actively engaged in the process of putting off sins and putting on virtues, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, mature believers serve interdependently in the body of Christ. Paul argues that the body of Christ is a corporate entity (Eph 4:13, 16) and each of its members individually (Eph 4:14) can only grow to maturity as each "member of the body" does his or her part. Indicators that a believer is mature in this way include (1) actively seeking to maintain unity with the church by being patient, humble and forbearing (Eph 4:1-3) and (2) serving in ways that help others in the body of Christ grow toward maturity and that further the mission of the church (Eph 4:11-16).

Finally, mature believers display a Christ-centered spirituality that accepts *both* suffering and consolation as part of the process of knowing Christ more (Phil 3:2-16) and proclaiming the Gospel (2 Cor 4:7-15). Believers who follow Christ this way will (1) make sacrifices and re-arrange their priorities in order to pursue Christ (Phil 3:7-8) and (2) accept challenges and even suffering as opportunities to know Christ more deeply (Phil 3:10, 12-14). They will be less likely than immature believers to pull back or fall away in the face of emotional struggles, persecution, suffering, or discipline from the Lord.

The New Testament writers teach about the Christian life in many different ways. But the biblical metaphor of moving from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity is especially valuable for North American Christians in our day.[6] The biblical indicators of spiritual maturity can guide us in assessing our spiritual formation practices and adjusting them to address new challenges, such as those faced by the members of Generation Z.

6. Bergler, *From Here to Maturity*, chapters 1 and 2.

The Challenge: Traits of Generation Z

Steve Clark taught his students to be vigilant about ways that their cultures were mal-forming disciples of Jesus. For example, Steve drew on the work of Jacques Ellul to analyze differences between traditional societies and technological societies. In addition to raising our awareness of the particular challenges to discipleship that he identified—most of which are just as relevant today as they were thirty or forty years ago—Steve equipped his students to continue the work of critical cultural analysis.

Those who hope to form mature disciples of Jesus among today's adolescents and young adults would do well to learn more about the influences that are shaping them. Gen Z is the cohort of young people born sometime between 1995 and 2015, with the generational "sweet spot" probably being those born between 2000 and 2010.[7] Four influences are especially significant for understanding the unique discipleship challenges Gen Z faces.[8] First, they have only known a world of *demographic and sexual diversity*. They

7. Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (New York: Atria Books, 2017); Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation* (Barna Group and Impact 360 Institute, 2018); Jason R. Dorsey and Denise Villa, *Zconomy: How Gen Z Will Change the Future of Business—and What to Do about It* (New York: Harper Business, 2020).

8. I have identified these four influences by surveying the research literature on Gen Z. The two most important studies of Gen Z are Twenge, *iGen,* and Roberta Katz, Sarah Ogilvie, Jane Shaw and Linda Woodhead, *Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

are much more likely than older generations to have had frequent contact with people of different ethnicities and sexual orientations and to demand that their faith speak to those experiences. In a 2021 poll, 39% of all 13 to 25-year-olds claimed to have participated in protests for justice on a monthly basis, and 58% claimed to have participated at least once in a protest "as a religious or spiritual practice."[9] Second, they have come of age in a period of *institutional shaking*. Gen Z has never lived in a world in which adults and their institutions seemed stable, competent and moral. The oldest experienced the recession of 2008 as a formative life experience. And all have now lived through the Covid 19 pandemic and its disruptions. Third, they have been living *hybrid digital lives*[10] for as long as they can remember. As of 2019, 8- to 12-year-olds spent an average of 4 hours and 44 minutes and 13- to 18-year-olds spent 7 hours and 22 minutes per day using screens for recreational purposes.[11] Members of Gen Z are navigating their crucial identity formation years on a 24/7 digital stage where they struggle to achieve "authenticity" while carefully managing their online image. As one high school student put it, "Your online

9. Josh Packard, William J. Barber II, A. Kazimir Brown, "If Faith Leaders Want to Reach Gen Z, Meet Them in the Streets." Religion News Service, October 21, 2021, retrieved Nov. 2, 2021 from https://religionnews.com/2021/10/21/if-faith-leaders-want-to-reach-gen-z-meet-them-in-the-streets/.

10. The phrase "hybrid digital living" is taken from Angela Williams Gorrell, *Always On: Practicing Faith in a New Media Landscape* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019).

11. Victoria Rideout and Michael B. Robb, *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens* (San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media, 2019), 3.

reputation is like a trailer to your movie—am I living for me or my audience?"[12]

Finally, the parents of Gen Z raised them using a *concerted cultivation parenting* style. In this parenting style, parents intensively curate extracurricular activities and family experiences to help their children become their best selves and achieve a happy, meaningful life. The focus is on the child's future prospects. Churches, schools, sports teams or even family life itself serve as means toward that end.[13] One recent study found that the most religious parents in America are teaching their Gen Z children to approach faith and church involvement more like a "personal identity accessory" than a "communal solidarity project."[14]

How have these formative influences shaped Gen Z? First, they are highly committed to pursuing "fine-grained identities" through "modular belonging."[15] Members of Gen Z are highly attuned to self-consciously constructing their own unique collection of identity elements that are both inviolable—they believe it is immoral for others to challenge their self-selected

12. Katz et. al. *Gen Z, Explained,* 80.

13. First named by Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*, 2nd Edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), concerted cultivation parenting is now widespread. Patrick Ishizuka, "Social Class, Gender and Contemporary Parenting Standards in the United States: Evidence from a National Survey Experiment" *Social Forces* 98:1 (September 2019): 31-58, doi: 10.1093/sf/soy107.

14. Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk, *Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 73.

15. Both "fine-grained identities" and "modular belonging" are concepts created by Katz et. al. to describe what they observed in their extensive qualitative research on Gen Z. See Katz, et. al., *Gen Z, Explained,* chapters 2 and 4.

identity markers—and open to change as they discover new things about themselves. To illustrate what they mean, the authors of *Gen Z, Explained* offer the example of Marcus, a young man who self-identifies as Chinese, Christian and Gay. Through several different online communities, he was able to nurture each element of his "fine grained identity."[16] The phrase "modular belonging" describes how members of Gen Z mix and match their communities of belonging in much the way that someone might re-arrange the modular furniture in a living room.[17] The members of Gen Z find or create communities to support their identities; they do not look to communities to form their identities.

Members of Gen Z want to make a difference but are skeptical of institutions. For example, Ethan says of organized religion, "I think it *can* be done well, but often times it tends just to lead to abuse."[18] Institutions must support Gen Z values in order to win their support. As one college student named Eve put it, she and her peers want institutions that "protect the right for [all] individuals to be their authentic, real selves without dictating who they are."[19] It is easy to hear in Eve's words an echo or her own "fine-grained identity" search and of her parents' "concerted cultivation parenting" advice. Members of Gen Z are willing to give institutions a chance, but will react with fight or flight if they perceive that those institutions are infringing on their unfettered identity exploration.

16. Katz, et. al., *Gen Z, Explained*, 39-40.
17. Katz, et. al., *Gen Z, Explained*, 98-99.
18. Katz et. al., *Gen Z, Explained,* 147.
19. Katz et. al., *Gen Z, Explained,* 172.

Today's teenagers and young adults are more likely to feel lonely, anxious, hopeless, sad or depressed than previous generations were at the same stage in life. Unlike some generational differences that can be hard to quantify, we have hard data showing that adolescent and young adult mental health declined significantly between 2009 and 2019 compared to previous cohorts. For example, self-reported anxiety and stress among college freshmen rose sharply between 2009 and 2016 and has remained high. By 2019, 42.7% of college freshmen reported "frequently" or "occasionally" feeling "overwhelmed by all I have to do," and 37% reported feeling anxious.[20] One in four 18-to-22-year-olds considered suicide during the pandemic.[21] In December 2021 the office of the United States Surgeon General issued an advisory on youth mental health.[22] The members of Gen Z use the word "stressful" much more often than the general population.[23] The conditions that shape Gen Z lives make it hard for them to thrive.

---

20. Ellen Bara Stolzenberg, Melissa C. Aragon, Edgar Romo, Victoria Couch, Destiny McClennan, M. Kevin Egan, Nathaniel Kang, *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2019* (Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, 2020), 16-17. Accessed Sept. 9, 2021 from https://heri.ucla.edu/publications-tfs/ Stolzenberg et. al., 40. Kevin Egan, Ellen Bara Stolzenberg, Hilary B. Zimmerman, Melissa C. Aragon, Hannah Whang Sayson, Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2016* (Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, 2017), 71. Accessed Sept 9, 2021 from https://heri.ucla.edu/publications-tfs/
21. Barna Group, *Gen Z, Volume 2: Caring for Young Souls and Cultivating Resilience* (Barna Group and Impact 360, 2021), 18-19.
22. Office of the Surgeon General, *Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U. S. Surgeon General's Advisory* (Washington, DC: Office of the Surgeon General of the United States, 2021)
23. Katz, et. al., *Gen Z, Explained*, 162.

How might all of this impact efforts to form members of Generation Z into mature disciples of Jesus? Because of their "fine-grained identity" exploration, "modular belonging" and suspicion of institutions, members of Gen Z are more likely than previous generations to "unbundle" and "remix" the elements of their religious lives.[24] They take it for granted that no one needs to accept the full package of a religious tradition. But that means they are less likely to have internalized the basic teachings of the faith. They rely on themselves or their peers to decide who they are and what they value, but that may well interfere with developing mature Christian discernment.[25] They shy away from commitment to spiritual growth communities because they are "too stressed" or "don't have time." One reason they have no time is that they are spending 5 hours or more per day on recreational screen use. They long for community, but on their own terms. As a result, members of Gen Z will be less likely to look to their churches to guide them in "putting off" sins and "putting on" the Christian way of life. And they may not be serving with others in the body of Christ. Because they rely on themselves or peers to deal with negative emotions and may even blame God for not fixing their emotional pain, they are less likely to embrace a mature spirituality of suffering and comfort.[26]

In short, members of Gen Z are likely to get stuck and fail to develop the biblical traits of spiritual maturity. And when

24. Josh Packard, Megan Bissell, Amanda Hernandez, Adrianna Smell and Sean Zimney, *The State of Religion and Young People 2021: Navigating Uncertainty* (Springtide Research Institute, 2021), 58-85.
25. Katz et. al., *Gen Z, Explained*, chapters 2 and 4.
26. For evidence that Gen Z turns almost exclusively to self or close friends to deal with emotional struggles see Katz et. al. *Gen Z, Explained*, 166-72.

a member of Gen Z's spiritual growth stalls, or she experiences suffering that God doesn't seem to be taking away, she may be likely to interpret such experiences as signs that the Christian life is "not who I am."[27] We should not expect our standard discipleship tools to work as well with Generation Z as they have in the past.

The Process: Formation in a Communal Way of Life

How can we lead members of Generation Z toward spiritual maturity? Steve Clark's legacy of a communal formation process empowered by the Holy Spirit is still as relevant to youth disciple making as ever.[28] If anything, Gen Z needs this kind of immersive, communal approach even more than previous generations did. Steve has taught generations of leaders that "formation" is the intentional process by which a Christian community trains its new members to live the Christian way of life. A person is "formed" when he or she is able to actually live the way of life he or she has been taught. In this section, I will briefly review the elements of the formation process Steve and others in the Sword of the Spirit have developed over the past 50 years, explaining in general terms how each can help Gen Z. I will then briefly consider two areas that

27. This theme appears frequently in the spiritual autobiographies that I assign in my freshmen theology class.

28.For a comprehensive explanation of the approach to Christian formation developed by Steve Clark and his fellow leaders in the Sword of the Spirit see Gordon C. DeMarais and Daniel A. Keating, *Called to Christian Joy and Maturity: Forming Missionary Disciples* (Frederick, MD: The Word Among Us Press, 2021).

we must tackle more effectively if we are to form members of Gen Z into mature disciples: their digital lives and their emotional health.

Christian formation begins with full conversion to Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Generation Z is less likely than previous generations to have been led toward conversion by their Christian parents.[29] Meanwhile, many in Gen Z are in the process of questioning whether the Christian life will work for them. They need an experiential relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit so that they see enough progress in their growth to have hope for the future. Christian leaders need to carefully consider how their formation practices are helping members of Gen Z experience God's transforming presence in their lives. Presenting good Christian content but neglecting the power of the Holy Spirit will be even less effective among the members of Gen Z than it has been in the past.

The context of an effective formation process is an intentional community living a common way of life that includes worship, mission, pastoral care and other shared daily life practices. Steve uses the word "environment" to communicate that it is the combination of the quality of the relationships in the group and the group's intentional activities that form young disciples more fully than either would on its own. The leaders of an "environment" are constantly seeking to translate into daily, ordinary life some of the elements that make mission trips, retreats and Christian camps so formative. Even more than previous generations, the members of Gen Z will need

29. Christian Smith, Bridget Ritz and Michael Rotolo, *Religious Parenting: Transmitting Faith and Values in Contemporary America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 27.

to experience immersive *daily life* Christian environments in order to begin to see the faith as more of a "communal solidarity project" and less of a "personal identity accessory."

Once young disciples have spent some time in the Christian community environment and found it attractive, they can be invited into an intentional formation process. That invitation includes both a call to consider joining the community and its way of life and a commitment to all elements of the process. Many in Gen Z are lonely and are longing for a community of people who can support them emotionally. But because of their tendency toward "modular belonging" and their suspicion of institutions, they may be even more likely than previous generations to avoid the full package of community life. They may need extra time and a variety of opportunities before finally accepting the full formation process.

Young people in formation receive basic teaching about how to live the Christian life as practiced in that community. In addition to standard teaching on the Gospel and Christian living, the members of Generation Z will need clear biblical teaching on identity and belonging. They need to know what it means to be created in the image of God and conformed to the image of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit through membership in a specific, local body of Christ. We will need to teach members of Gen Z to reject the messages about identity and belonging that they have internalized and replace them with the truth.

The members of Gen Z will need more interactive learning activities and more repetition in order to understand and retain what they are being taught. And they may have a greater

need to experience the content as "relatable," meaning that it is engaging and compelling because it connects with elements of their lives that they regard as important.[30] In addition to teaching about identity and belonging—core issues for Gen Z—we can make basic Christian teaching more "relatable" by providing practical wisdom and theological principles to help them live healthy digital and emotional lives.

In a formation approach, the community helps young disciples internalize the teaching and put it into practice in their lives through same-sex small groups and one-on-one mentoring by an older, established member of the community. Members of Gen Z are eager to benefit from the "relational authority" [31] of a trusted mentor, but those mentors may need to work harder to convince young people to embrace all elements of the formation process. For example, those in formation should be engaged in mission, but members of Gen Z struggle even more than previous generations to believe they have enough time and emotional energy for it. Because they so commonly feel overwhelmed, they may shrink not just from mission, but from many of the perceived demands of community life.

What else can we do to help Gen Z move from "overwhelmed" seekers of "modular belonging" to fully investing in a communal formation process so that they can grow to maturity? First, mentors need to learn how to help young people put their digital lives in order. A growing number of

30. Katz et. al., *Gen Z, Explained*, 23-24, 95-96

31. Josh Packard, Ellen Koneck and Maura Thompson Hagarty, *The State of Religion and Young People, 2020: Relational Authority* (Bloomington, MN: Springtide Research Institute, 2020).

resources are making use of the concept of "rule of life" as a way to keep digital technologies in their place. For example, one common element of a "rule of life" is "Bible before phone" in the morning.[32] Christian communities should incorporate specific teaching on "digital discipleship" into their formation curriculum. Small groups and mentors should help those in formation to change their digital habits by example, wise advice and accountability. In addition to helping members of Gen Z have more time for spiritual formation and mission, cutting down on social media will help many of them feel less anxious, lonely and depressed.[33]

But cutting back on screen time will not be enough by itself to help members of Gen Z become emotionally mature. Many of them have experienced multiple traumas.[34] Even those who have not been traumatized experience high levels of stress and loneliness. It is hard to grow, or even just show up to small group, when you are overwhelmed. More young people are turning to professional therapists for help, and this should be encouraged. But is there anything else we can be doing in our Christian communities to help members of Gen Z grow emotionally?

32. For examples of this emerging theological and pastoral literature, see Gorrell, *Always On*, Adam McLane, *Tuning In: Six Ways to Reclaim Your Life from Technology* (San Diego: The Youth Cartel, 2017), Justin Whitmel Early, *The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World* (Waterbrook, 2019).
33. For a strong argument that smart phones and social media have contributed to the rise of mental health problems among Gen Z, see Twenge, *iGen,* 93-118.
34. Barna Group, *Gen Z, Volume 2*, 15-18.

Deliverance prayer has been proven to help people overcome besetting sins and other persistent obstacles to spiritual growth. Deliverance prayer is a process in which a person is guided to reflect on his life to see ways that evil spirits may be exploiting weaknesses and past experiences to harass him or block his spiritual growth. Then trained leaders pray with him and lead him in renouncing the work of the devil and receiving the freedom that Christ has won on the cross.[35] Many people have experienced significant breakthroughs, especially in areas of their lives that seemed hopelessly stuck, through deliverance prayer. The members of Generation Z, because of their high levels of trauma and stress, may need deliverance prayer earlier and more often in their discipleship journeys.

Jim Wilder and others in his sphere of influence have been developing another promising set of tools for encouraging emotional maturity.[36] Like other Christian leaders, Wilder and his colleagues have been frustrated with the lack of progress that many Christians, whether victims of trauma or not, experience when it comes to responding to stress, dealing with conflict, and avoiding narcissism. Drawing on the neuroscience of interpersonal relationships and character formation, they argue that we should supplement our typical spiritual formation tools

35. For a careful approach to deliverance prayer that has been officially approved by some church authorities, see Neal Lozano, *Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2003).
36. E. James Wilder, *Renovated: God, Dallas Willard and the Church That Transforms* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2020). Jim Wilder and Michel Hendricks, *The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2020). See also Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature While Remaining Emotionally Immature,* 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017).

with practices that influence our "automatic," pre-cognitive responses. They have identified 19 different "relational brain skills" that work best when practiced in small groups that include both more mature and less mature believers. Over time, participants who practice these skills overcome longstanding negative emotional and relational patterns. They can "return to joy" more quickly and can respond calmly and lovingly even when under attack. Whether we implement "relational brain skills" or some other approach, Christian leaders must identify specific strategies for helping members of Gen Z grow emotionally and relationally. In the past, simply participating in a godly relational environment was enough to help many people establish healthy emotional lives. But among the members of Generation Z, supplemental tools will most likely be needed.

The communal Christian formation approach pioneered by Steve Clark and the Sword of the Spirit has much to teach those of us who want to help the members of Generation Z grow to spiritual maturity. When we invite members of Gen Z into an intentional process of being formed in the way of life of a Christian community, we create conditions which can help them grow. And as we provide practical wisdom and social support that facilitate the Holy Spirit's work of transforming their digital lives, their emotions and their relationships, we will see them get "unstuck" in their spiritual growth and make progress toward spiritual maturity.

CHAPTER 6

Original Mortality in Athanasius

Joseph Mathias

Introduction

That all men are mortal is a statement so uncontroversial, it has long served as a stock premise in logic textbooks. That most men would prefer not to be so is equally well known, and has remained more or less constant from the quest of Gilgamesh to the transhumanist movement of our own day. It is often cited by Christian apologists as evidence of man's destiny of eternal life in communion with God: we desire to live forever because we were made to live forever.[1]

Does it follow, however, that the first and unfallen man was created with an immortal nature? Paul's statement that "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin" (Rom 5:12) might be taken to mean that man was immune from death prior to the fall.[2] According to Stephen B. Clark, however, the presence of the tree of life in the garden of Eden indicates that Adam and Eve were mortal: "If Adam were to

1. See, e.g., C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Fount, 1997), 113.
2. Scripture citations are from the RSV unless otherwise cited.

eat of the tree of life, he would live forever. The fruit would impart some kind of immortality, enabling human beings to overcome a limitation they had as a result of the way they were created. Sooner or later they would die, at least physically, unless they ate of the tree of life."[3] So was unfallen man mortal or immortal? As this paper will show, Clark's position is consistent with that of the earliest Christian teaching, most notably Athanasius in his dual treatise *Against the Heathen — On the Incarnation*, and has been maintained through subsequent developments in the Christian theological tradition.

Athanasius on Original Mortality

Man's original mortality is a key assumption underlying Athanasius' account of creation, fall, and redemption:

> For if, out of a former normal state of non-existence, they were called into being by the Presence and loving-kindness of the Word, it followed naturally that when men were bereft of the knowledge of God and were turned back to what was not (for what is evil is not, but what is good is), they should, since they derive their being from God who IS, be everlastingly bereft even of being; in other words, that they should be disintegrated and abide in death and corruption. For man is by nature mortal, inasmuch as he is made out of what is not.[4]

3. Stephen B. Clark, *Redeemer: Understanding the Meaning of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1992), 34-35.
4. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 4.5-6., trans. Archibald Robertson, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 4 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1892), 38.

For Athanasius, mortality follows from creatureliness: man's natural inclination is to return to the nothingness from which he was created. The proposition is similar to Aristotle's theory of natural motion: just as the element of earth moves earthward, and fire ascends toward the empyrean, so the natural motion of that which is made from nonbeing is to dissolve back into nonbeing.

One can also explain the tendency toward disintegration in terms of corporeality, as Athanasius does when he defends the doctrine of an incorporeal God against polytheistic notions of corporeal divinities: "And generally, if they conceive the Deity to be corporeal … it follows that it must be capable of all other bodily casualties as well, of being cut and divided, and even of perishing altogether."[5] The same argument refutes pantheism:

> But the following point, drawn from the observation of our human body, is enough to refute [the pantheistic philosophers]. For just as … a single body is composed of these distinct parts—having its parts combined for use, but destined to be divided in course of time when nature, that brought them together, shall divide them at the will of God, Who so ordered it—thus … if we combine the parts of creation into one body and proclaim it God, it follows … that He is destined to be divided again, in accordance with the natural tendency of the parts to separation.[6]

5. Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, 22.2, trans. Archibald Robertson, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 4 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1892), 15.
6. *Against the Heathen*, 28.4., 19.

Athanasius' reasoning is simple: what is corporeal has parts; what has parts can be divided; what can be divided can be destroyed. This places the incorporeal, indivisible, and immortal God in one column, and corporeal, composite, mortal man in the other. Khaled Anatolios calls this "a strict ontological dialectic between a creation that comes to be from nonbeing and an uncreated divinity."[7]

According to Athanasius, however, man enjoys an advantage over the rest of creation, because God "made them after His own image, giving them a portion even of the power of His own Word; so that having as it were a kind of reflection of the Word [*logos*], and being made rational [*logikoi*], they might be able to abide ever in blessedness, living the true life."[8] As Anatolios points out, this statement by Athanasius is "simultaneously anthropological and christological: to be created according to the Image is to be granted a participation in the one who is the true and full Image of the Father."[9] It was man's participation in the Word, and not the possession of an immortal nature, that preserved him, prior to the fall, from the death to which his corporeal substance was naturally prone: "For because of the Word dwelling with them, even their natural corruption did not come near them, as Wisdom also says: 'God made man for incorruption, and as an image of His own eternity.'"[10]

7. Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 105.
8. *On the Incarnation*, 3.3, 37.
9. Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 107.
10. *On the Incarnation*, 5.2., 38, quoting Wis 2:23.

What Athanasius means by participation can be discovered from his sounding of this theme in *Against the Heathen*. There he stresses that the Son is "the Father's Power and Wisdom and Word, not being so by participation [*metochē*], nor as if these qualities were imparted to Him from without, as they are to those who partake of Him and are made wise by Him, and receive power and reason in Him."[11] What the Son is by nature, man receives as an imparted gift, "from without." For Athanasius, this includes immortality. Thus the rebellion of Adam and Eve, and their consequent forfeiture of eternal life, amounts to a true death, as Genesis 2:17 tells us — not, however, in the sense of a change in man's intrinsic nature from immortal to mortal, but in the sense that "they were incurring that corruption in death which was theirs by nature."[12] Death comes into the world through sin, just as Rom 5:12-14 teaches, but not as an alien element introduced into man's nature. Rather, death is a relapse into nonbeing,[13] precisely because sin is a turning toward nonbeing.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the sin of idolatry. To worship an idol is to worship a god who is not there, and so to surrender oneself to nonbeing:

> And just as men who have turned from the sun and are come into dark places go round by many pathless ways, and see not those who are present, while they imagine those to be there who are not, and seeing see not; so they that have turned from God and whose soul is darkened, have their mind in a roving

11. *Against the Heathen*, 46.8, 29.
12. *On the Incarnation*, 3.4, 37-38.
13. *On the Incarnation*, 4.4, 38.

> state, and like men who are drunk and cannot see, imagine what is not true.[14]

Just as to lie is to say that what is not, is, and to be deceived is to imagine that what is not, is, so sin is to act as though that which is not, is — to live a lie. The background for this passage is Ps 115, which states that the idols "have eyes, but do not see…. Those who make them become like them." The idolatrous nations at which the treatise is aimed are perishing into nothingness because they have turned toward images that are nothing. Like the corporeal images of stone, wood, gold, and silver that the idolators worship, and which their constant ministrations vainly attempt to preserve from earthly decay,[15] the idolators themselves will relapse into nothingness — unless they turn from false images of gods that are not, to the true Image of Him Who Is.

Salvation, then, must involve a restoration of the Image of God in which man was made, and which man has disfigured by sin: "Whence also when it gets rid of all the filth of sin which covers it and retains only the likeness of the Image in its purity, then surely this latter being thoroughly brightened, the soul beholds as in a mirror the Image of the Father, even the Word, and by His means reaches the idea of the Father, Whose Image the Savior is."[16] The imagery here contrasts sharply with that of the passage previously cited. When one scrapes the bird droppings off an idol and polishes it up,

14. *Against the Heathen*, 23.5, 16.
15. *Against the Heathen*, 22.3, 16. Athanasius is so bold as to refer to scrubbing the filth off the idols on which the animals have defecated.
16. *Against the Heathen*, 34.2-3, 22.

the image thus viewed, having no referent but itself, can confer no knowledge, but only deceive. But when one restores the divine likeness to man by washing away the filth of sin, one sees the character of Christ, and thus comes to know the Father. As Anatolios sums up the argument, "when humanity lost its stability, which depended on remaining in the state of being according to the Image, the incarnate Word repaired the image of God in humanity by reuniting it with his own divine imaging of the Father."[17]

Such a restoration could only be effected by the Incarnation of the Image Himself: "For His it was once more both to bring the corruptible to incorruption, and to maintain intact the just claim of the Father upon all. For being Word of the Father, and above all, He alone of natural fitness was both able to recreate everything, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be ambassador for all with the Father."[18] Athanasius' logic in this passage would become familiar to the West through its development in Anselm's theology of atonement: only the Incarnate Word of God can both represent man, as man, to the Father upon the cross, and also effect man's salvation, as God, by granting forgiveness and new life.

The two reasons which Athanasius offers for the Incarnation—to destroy death by dying for mankind and to render the Image of the invisible God visible to man in the form of man[19]—are closely related. By rising from the dead, Christ showed himself more powerful than death

17. Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 107.
18. *On the Incarnation*, 7.5, 40.
19. *On the Incarnation*, 8-10 (40-41) and 15-16 (44-45), respectively.

itself; and because of his solidarity with the human race whose nature he now shares, mankind now shares in this conquest of death. Moreover, the joining of the Word to a human nature reintroduces the original power by which man was held in immortality before the fall: the Incarnation restores the divine Image, and thus, knowledge of the Father.[20] The result is a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between the human race and death itself: "Now that the common Savior of all has died on our behalf, we, the faithful in Christ, no longer die the death as before … but, corruption ceasing and being put away by the grace of the Resurrection, henceforth we are only dissolved, agreeably to our bodies' mortal nature, at the time God has fixed for each, that we may be able to gain a better resurrection."[21] We are still mortal by nature, just as we were before the redemption—even as we were before the fall. But where the death of unredeemed man was subject to irreversible corruption, the death of the faithful is, like the death of Christ, a temporary "dissolution" which will be followed by a new and better life at the general resurrection, just as a seed breaking apart in the soil is raised to become something greater than it was when sown.[22]

Original Mortality in the Christian Tradition

Such is the role of mortality in Athanasius' account of salvation. But while his conclusions on the reasons for the

20. *On the Incarnation*, 20, 46-47.
21. *On the Incarnation*, 21.1, 47.
22. *On the Incarnation*, 21.2, 47.

Incarnation have been received by the Church as a classic account of the apostolic faith, the theological anthropology from which his argument begins may strike some Christians today as eccentric. The Alexandrian patriarch teaches, in no uncertain terms, that man's mortality is naturally consequent upon his corporeality, even apart from the fall. A generation after him, we seem to find a direct refutation of this doctrine at the Council of Carthage (418): "Whosoever says that Adam, the first man, was created mortal, so that whether he had sinned or not, he would have died in body—that is, he would have gone forth of the body, not because his sin merited this, but by natural necessity, let him be anathema."[23] This local synod boasted no less illustrious a figure than Augustine of Hippo, whose doctrine of original sin is reflected in this canon on prelapsarian mortality. Are these positions not mutually exclusive?

If we consult the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we find what appears to be either a synthesis or a conflicted juxtaposition of the Athanasian and Augustinian formulae:

> Death is a consequence of sin. The Church's Magisterium, as authentic interpreter of the affirmations of Scripture and Tradition, teaches that death entered the world on account of man's sin. Even though man's nature is mortal God had destined him not to die. Death was therefore contrary to the plans of God the Creator and entered the world as a consequence of sin. "Bodily

23. Council of Carthage (418), Canon 109: www.newadvent.org/fathers/3816.htm.

> death, from which man would have been immune had he not sinned" is thus "the last enemy" of man left to be conquered.[24]

The generalization "man's nature is mortal" could be construed ambiguously as referring to a common property of human nature before and after the fall (as in Athanasius), or to man's present, that is, fallen, condition. The translation renders in the present tense what the Latin expresses in the imperfect: *Quamquam homo naturam possidebat mortalem,* i.e., "Though man *possessed* a mortal nature." This is more amenable to Athanasius' position, but would seem to be contradicted a few lines later in the quotation from *Gaudium et Spes* 18, where the translator offers "would have been immune" for *subtractus fuisset*. But where immunity from death posits immortality as an innate property inhering in unfallen man, the subjunctive construction in the original, *subtractus fuisset* ("would have been removed, drawn away from"), suggests an outside actor preserving Adam and Eve from death—a notion much more conformable to Athanasius' theology of immortality through participation in the Word.

If we return to the Council of Carthage with the Catechism in mind, we will find that the anathema can be read in such a way that it would not apply to the Athanasian position. The 109th Canon condemns a notion of prelapsarian mortality whereby a guiltless Adam "*would have* died." Athanasius clearly held that man, had he not fallen, would have remained preserved from death *despite* mortality and "natural necessity." The teaching of Carthage and that of Athanasius, then, might

24. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1008, citing *Gaudium et Spes*, 18.2.

be reconciled, if mortality and immortality can be understood in more than one sense.[25]

Thomas Aquinas, in his treatment of man's original state in the *Summa*, employs an illuminating distinction in this regard. Following Augustine, he comes down on the side of man's original immortality (or incorruptibility—for his purposes, the terms are here interchangeable), adducing Rom 5:12 in support.[26] Something may be corruptible by nature (as an angel), by form (as he supposes the stars to be), or by efficient cause—as man was in the state of original justice. Grace, in fact, is the efficient cause of man's original immortality: "For man's body was indissoluble not by reason of any intrinsic vigor of immortality, but by reason of a supernatural force given by God to the soul, whereby it was enabled to preserve the body from all corruption so long as it remained itself subject to God…. The power of preserving the body was not natural to the soul, but was the gift of grace."[27]

Aquinas agrees with Athanasius that Adam was, in the original state, mortal by nature, but immortal by grace. And his treatment of prelapsarian impassibility and the use of food in the second and third articles of the same question draw out a

25. Elsewhere, in fact, Augustine distinguishes between two different kinds of immortality, a prelapsarian type and a post-parousia type: "The first immortality which Adam lost by sinning consisted in his being able not to die, while the last shall consist in his not being able to die." Augustine, *City of God*, 22.30, trans. Marcus Dods, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 10 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1887), 510.

26. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 97. a. 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Third Edition (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1938), 336.

27. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 97. a. 1, 336-37.

range of implications according to the same logic we find in Athanasius' metaphysics. Just as Athanasius regards corporeality as entailing mortality, inasmuch as a corporeal body can be cut and divided, so Aquinas regards the prelapsarian human body as potentially passible, as a soft body relative to a harder one, but preserved—first, by the use of reason, and secondly, by divine Providence. Similarly, the body of Adam would have starved to death, had he not taken nourishment; but that physical possibility would never have been realized in the state of grace, since God had enjoined upon him the eating of the fruit of the garden. So while Aquinas refers to man's immortality in the original state, he, like Aquinas, does not ascribe it to a physical property of invulnerability inherent in Adam's nature.

In short, Athanasius and Aquinas are not in contradiction to each other. When Athanasius says that man was mortal before the fall, he is referring to man's natural constitution, which involved the possibility of death—which the fall itself demonstrated. When Aquinas says that man was immortal, he refers to the destiny to which God had ordained him, and according to which his grace would have preserved him, had he not sinned. Both recognize freedom from death as a preternatural gift in Adam's original state, and death as a consequence of sin in his fallen state.[28] It is also in this sense that Athanasius' teaching harmonizes with that of the Council of Carthage, with the Catechism, and with *Gaudium et Spes*.

28. See Ludwig Ott on the real states of human nature, in §19 of *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 11th ed. (London: Baronius, 2010).

Conclusion: Original Mortality and Modern Science

We may conclude by noting that Athanasius' doctrine of man's natural mortality prior to the fall is not only fully in accord with the tradition of the Church, but useful for the task to which he originally applied it in his treatise: the persuasion of unbelievers toward the reasonableness of the Gospel and the necessity of Christ for salvation. Immortality remains the desideratum of modern man, no less than of the ancients: witness the transhumanist proposal of uploading one's brain patterns to the cloud, so as to guarantee the perdurance of one's consciousness in a medium less ephemeral than the central nervous system.[29] Yet today's technocrat or philosophical materialist will raise a doubtful brow if a Christian tells him that man was created immortal. Why, then (he may retort), does the present course of his aging and decrepitude so nearly resemble that of, say, his pet terrier? Did the animals, too, incur mortality as a result of man's sin, and if so, who planted all the dinosaur bones before we arrived on the scene? Did prelapsarian man, impassible as he was, lack the pain neurons which he now shares with other primates, and which seem to be coded into his genome with such a degree of similarity to that of the chimpanzees that a patent court could only pass a verdict of plagiarism upon the resemblance? If mosquitoes did not bite before the fall, what did they do? And what would have happened to Adam if,

29. Wesley J. Smith, "Even Materialists Crave Religion," *First Things* (June 12, 2015): https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/06/even-materialists-crave-religion (accessed September 9, 2023).

prior to the fall, the as-yet-unsavage rhinoceros had stepped on his impassible toe, or a 150-foot cedar of Lebanon came crashing down upon his immortal head? Would the trunk, like the Satanic cannonballs of Milton's angelomachy, bounce harmlessly off the patriarch's skull?

In short, the assertion that man was created immortal presents certain anthropological problems to the modern scientific worldview. When a skeptic, having voiced such objections, hears the Christian explain, as has one contemporary apologist, that "Adam was Superman, not Tarzan," he is not likely to warm up to his would-be evangelist.[30]

Athanasius' teaching on the natural mortality of unfallen man goes a long way to obviating these objections. The immortality of the primitive state, and the immortal destiny which continues to haunt even the most hardened materialist, do not entail a physically inconceivable view of human nature before the fall, or a mythical prelapsarian past devoid of entropy, carnivorism, and the death and decay of animals. Death as we know it fits into the world as we know it—and so does the promise of eternal life.

But Athanasius' doctrine of the necessary corruptibility of the corporeal order goes still further toward meeting the concerns of a materialist longing to escape death. For if transhumanism proposes to cheat death through technology, the cold light of modern physics calls the bluff. According to some projections, the expansion of the universe and the second law of thermodynamics places cosmological heat death — the point

30. Melinda Selmys, "Before Sin: Creation, Adam and Eve, and the Garden of Eden," Catholic Answers: https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=9753 (accessed September 9, 2023).

beyond which no transfer of energy, and thus no activity, can take place—somewhere around 10^{100} times the current age of the universe.[31] If the 21st century philosophical materialist is led on by the promise of transhumanism, it is into the dismal cosmological abyss.

The second law of thermodynamics, however, applies only to closed systems. According to Athanasius, the universe is not a closed system, "for it partakes of the Word who derives true existence from the Father, and is helped by Him so as to exist, lest that should come to it which would have come but for the maintenance of it by the Word — namely, dissolution — 'for He is the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of all Creation, for through Him and in Him all things consist.'"[32] Just as redeemed humanity, by participating in the life of the Son of God, can hope for a better resurrection, so creation looks forward to a new heavens and new earth, sustained by the Word who became flesh. It is through the person of Christ, reigning on God's throne in both his human and divine natures, that eternal life is supernaturally given to redeemed humanity.

As Stephen B. Clark points out, Christ "was given a new kind of life that allowed his human nature to function in a heavenly way. He was therefore enabled to take a position as human that he had previously held as divine…. 'By nature'

31. Fred C. Adams and Gregory Laughlin, "A dying universe: the long-term fate and evolution of astrophysical objects," in *Reviews of Modern Physics*, 1996 (2), 337-72. I believe I have correctly calculated the figure from Adams' and Laughlin's formulation, which is given in the logarithmic unit of "cosmological decades." The time scale is less relevant, however, than the simple point that materialist extrapolations forecast an ineluctable and irreversible disintegration of the universe.

32. *Against the Heathen*, 41.3, 26.

Christ was united to his Father, so that not only was his divine nature one in being with the Father, but his human nature was also united with his divine nature in oneness of person, and therefore with the Father's divine nature."[33] Adam was mortal by human nature, though had he not eaten the fruit, he would have been preserved from death by divine grace. Christ is immortal by divine nature, yet through the joining of his human and divine natures in a single person, he divinizes our own human nature by grace, such that, at the general resurrection, we will not only be able not to die, but no longer be able to die; our creaturely proneness to death will be swallowed up in the divine life of the Redeemer.

33. Clark, *Redeemer*, 258-59.

CHAPTER 7

Ressourcement and the Renewal of Christian Life

Jake C. Yap

Ressourcement, the French term for "return (or going back) to the source (or sources)," "can be regarded," according to Aidan Nichols, "as the chief inspiration of the Second Vatican Council and the predominant theological influence on the pontificate of John Paul II."[1] More recently, Bernard Sesboüé described it as "the originality of twentieth-century Catholic theology."[2] While, as it will be made clear below, the term *ressourcement* can have various referents and shades of meaning and application, in this essay the focus will be on its use as

1. Aidan Nichols, "Thomism and the Nouvelle Théologie," *The Thomist*, 64 (2000): 1-19, at 1-2. In the text Nichols is referring to "Neopatristic theology" which, in the context, can be taken to mean ressourcement theology.
2. Bernard Sesboüé, La théologie au XXe siècle et l'avenir de la foi: Entretiens avec Marc Leboucher (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2007), 11, cited by Jürgen Mettepenningen, "Nouvelle Théologie: Four Historical Stages of Theological Reform Towards Ressourcement (1935-1965)," chapter 11 in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth–Century Catholic Theology*, eds. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 172. The author of the present essay also contributed to the book.

a theological method, chiefly by certain prominent Catholic priest-theologians in mid-20th century France.

The aim is not merely to produce a historical sketch of a few decades of controversy peculiar to 20th century French Catholicism, nor simply to recapture a "moment" of theological ferment which later significantly shaped Vatican II and which can still be of great utility in the renewal of Christian life today. As part of the present collection of articles written specifically to honor Stephen B. Clark, I hope that the careful reader will perceive how Steve himself, in his theological and spiritual writings—indeed, in his life work and various achievements—exemplifies the concerns and methods of a *ressourcement* theologian.

After an initial general exposition of *ressourcement*, this essay will relate it with what came to be called "*la nouvelle théologie*,"[3] singling out one particular article—by the Jesuit priest, later cardinal, Jean Daniélou (1905-1974)—which Joseph Komonchak says has "all the appearance of a manifesto and a call to action" of the new movement.[4] The paper concludes with some prospects for *ressourcement* to continue renewing Church life, and how, through *ressourcement*, Steve Clark has contributed to the enrichment of the lives of many Christians.

---

3. French for "the new theology." According to Joseph Komonchak, "Vatican II is unintelligible without an understanding of the controversy over 'la nouvele théologie.'" See his "Theology and Culture at Mid–Century: The Example of Henri de Lubac," *Theological Studies*, 51 (1990): 579-602, at 580.

4. See below for a more detailed presentation of the Jesuit Jean Daniélou's "Les orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse," *Études*, 249 (1946): 5-21. For Komonchak, see his essay "Humani Generis and Nouvelle Théologie," chapter 9 in *Ressourcement*, eds. Flynn and Murray, 143.

What is *Ressourcement*?

The word—though not the actual practice—seems to have been first used by Charles Péguy (1873-1914), the French poet and man of letters who influenced Yves Congar (1904-1995). Congar, a Dominican priest and theologian, would emerge as one of leading figures of the *ressourcement* movement, and one of the most influential figures in 20th century Roman Catholic theology. Péguy had called for "a new and deeper sounding of ancient, inexhaustible, and common resources,"[5] and, although Congar is not certain who exactly coined the substantive *ressourcement*, he attributes the term's essence to his French-predecessor who wrote: "a [true] revolution is a call from a less perfect tradition to a more perfect tradition, a call from a shallower tradition to a deeper tradition, a backing-up of tradition, an overtaking of depth, an investigation into deeper sources; in the literal sense of the word, a 're-source.'"[6]

The Jesuit historian John W. O'Malley has pointed out that in fact *ressourcement* can be traced back to the great Renaissance humanists whose Latin motto, *Ad Fontes*—To the Sources!—bore great similarity to its 20th century counterpart. "The Renaissance return to the sources, especially to the Bible and the Fathers of the Church, was what inspired humanists like Erasmus because they believed it would lead

5. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, "Ressourcement theology, aggiornamento, and the hermeneutics of tradition," *Communio*, 18 (Winter 1991): 530-55, at 537.
6. D'Ambrosio, 537, quoting Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'eglise* (1950).

to a reform of theology, piety, and education."[7] Indeed, one could well call any "return to the sources," and especially to Sacred Scripture, as a kind of religious *ressourcement*.[8] O'Malley concludes quite simply: "In brief, some form of *ressourcement* lay behind every reform movement in Western Christianity—and behind every reform movement in Western culture—at least up to the Enlightenment."[9]

In the Roman Catholic Church, the mid-20th century theological *ressourcement* in continental Europe was preceded by revivals in the study of the Church Fathers and in the Sacred Liturgy. Even earlier, Pope Leo XIII had strongly endorsed a "return to Thomas" (Saint Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274, the "Angelic Doctor" who arguably was the greatest Catholic theologian of the Middle Ages). Such a recommendation from the highest authority led to a revival of Thomistic philosophy and theology, soon to be called either neo-Thomism or neo-scholasticism. As Walter Kasper explains:

> [Neoscholasticism was] the attempt to solve the modern crisis of theology by picking up the thread of the high scholastic tradition of mediaeval times. The aim was to establish a timeless, unified theology that would provide a norm for the universal church. It is impossible to deny

7. John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA/London: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2008), 41.
8. "Return to the sources is what drove the Protestant Reformers, as they sought to restore the authentic Gospel that in their opinion the papal church had obscured and perverted." (O'Malley, *What Happened*, 41). Even the "return to Thomas" advocated by Pope Leo XIII, which gave rise to neo–Thomism and neo-scholasticism, can be called a kind of Thomistic ressourcement.
9. O'Malley, *What Happened*, 41.

this attempt a certain grandeur. But in the long run a restoration of this kind was bound to fail.[10]

Endemic to the European or Western style of theologizing is the tendency to systematize the great body of knowledge. One thinks of the medieval *summas*, those theological and doctrinal summaries of the Christian (especially Catholic) faith. The same tendency was now manifesting itself, in the face of perceived threats to religious faith and theological orthodoxy, by the Enlightenment and by Catholic Modernism[11] respectively, in a peculiar genre of textbooks knows as "manuals," officially sanctioned and jealously used in Catholic seminaries. For example, at the Collegio Angelico, the Dominican House of Studies in Rome, one of the most eminent teachers of neo-scholastic theology of the time was Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964). He was a "model Thomist"[12] if

10. James A. Weisheipl, "Neoscholasticism and Neothomism," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 10:337, cited by Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), vii.

11. The literature on Modernism, a period spanning the 1890s up to about 1910, is vast. Here is a brief helpful description: "Catholic Modernism, as it became referred to, represented a range of belated attempts to catch up with cultural and philosophical developments since the Enlightenment, not least the growth of historical consciousness, and its application to the interpretation of the scriptures. […] The subsequent naming and condemnation of Modernism in the decree *Lamentabile* and the encyclical *Pascendi* by Pius X in 1907 was aimed at putting an end to all belated Catholic attempts to engage with the intellectual currents of the time." Andrew Louth, "French Ressourcement Theology and Orthodoxy: A Living Mutual Relationship?" in *Ressourcement*, eds. Flynn and Murray, 496.

12. Fergus Kerr, a fellow Dominican of a later generation, describes him as "the model Thomist," "a controversial figure, much admired but also often caricatured, even demonized." Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 10.

there was one, and wrote, by way of introducing his students to the Blessed Trinity:

> On the subject of the Thomistic synthesis as regards the mystery of the Trinity, we will first examine what St. Thomas owes to St. Augustine, then the doctrine of St. Thomas himself on the divine processions and relations and persons, and on the notional acts of generation and spiration. This doctrine then will enable us to see better why the Blessed Trinity is unknowable by natural reason. Next we will study the law of appropriation, and lastly the manner of the Trinity's indwelling in the souls of the just. Throughout we will emphasize the principles which underlie the development of theological science.[13]

There is undoubtedly something crisp, clean and certain in such an orderly presentation. Garrigou-Lagrange—himself trained in a rigorous Thomistic and manualist discipline—would have no truck with the call issued by the *ressourcement* theologians for, among other things, an "experience" of the mystery of God. To "spiritualize" theology, he was firm in believing, would deprive theology of its "scientific" objectivity, making it simply an exercise in sentiment. This would be "the morass into which we are led if we abandon the notion of truth as conformity with objective reality, proposing rather to define truth as conformity with constantly developing experience, moral and religious."[14]

13. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, trans. Patrick Cummins (Ex Fontibus, 2006), 117.
14. Kerr, Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians, 15.

In reality, the *ressourcement* theologians were proposing nothing of the sort. Yet each side of the camp was tending to caricature the other side, and "both-and" thinking was subverted into an "either-or" stance. By the 1930s in France and in Rome, the privileged position enjoyed by this neo-scholastic manualist tradition, which had braved and triumphed over Modernism, now came under attack by a growing number of theologians, many of them Jesuits and Dominicans. Daniélou called it a "mummification (*momification*) of thinking which remains frozen in its scholarly forms, having lost contact with philosophical and scientific movements."[15] In the same article he quoted his Jesuit colleague, Yves de Montcheuil, who had noted that when it comes to dealing with truths that are more valid and contemporary, "theology today gives an impression of being absent and unreal."[16] Congar, not one to mince words, had in 1935 published in the Catholic newspaper *Sept* what would today be called an op-ed, in which he compared neo-scholastic theology to a "wax mask," a face devoid of expression and lacking any real connection with present reality.[17] He and his close associate Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990), another important French *ressourcement* theologian, were of one mind that such a "Baroque

15. Daniélou, "Les orientations présentes," 6.
16. Daniélou, "Les orientations présentes," 5. He quotes Montcheuil again two pages later: "Modernism will not be done away with (liquidé) as long as we have not given satisfaction in our theological method to the exigences which gave birth to it."
17. Cf. Jürgen Mettepenningen, "Nouvelle Théologie: Four Historical Stages of Theological Reform Towards Ressourcement (1935-1965)," chapter 11 in *Ressourcement*, eds. Flynn and Murray, 174.

theology" needed to be "liquidated"[18] Walter Kasper writes, "There is no doubt that the outstanding event in the Catholic theology of our [twentieth] century is the surmounting of neo-scholasticism."[19]

By now one may already see one of the principal preoccupations of the *ressourcement* theologians, signaling that this movement is not the ivory-tower sort. *Ressourcement* theology aspires to reach out, converse with, and minister to ordinary human beings, whether Christian believer, agnostic or atheist, precisely in that stressful period that was post-World War I, and in a period which would soon again engulf the world in another catastrophic war. As Gabriel Flynn, the main editor of the compendium *Ressourcement*, puts it: "The achievement of

18. Cf. Yves Congar, "The Brother I Have Known," trans. Boniface Ramsey, *The Thomist*, 49 (1985): 495-503, at 499. In this tribute to his mentor Chenu, Congar wrote: "One day, chatting at the entrance of the old Saulchoir, we found ourselves in profound accord … on the idea of undertaking a 'liquidation of baroque theology.' […] What would a little later be called 'ressourcement' was then at the heart of our efforts. It was not a matter either of mechanically replacing some [neo-scholastic] theses by other theses or of creating a 'revolution' but of appealing, as Péguy says, from one tradition less profound to another more profound."

19. Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (London: SCM, 1989), 1, quoted by Kerr, *Twentieth–Century Catholic Theologians*, vii. More recent theologians have likewise severely criticized the neo-scholastic system. Komonchak paints it as "domesticated" and "safe"; a theology that was "under the closest supervision and tightest control which theologians had ever experienced in the history of the [Roman Catholic] Church"; theology "in a state of emigration or exile from the modern cultural world, off in an intellectual ghetto." Cf. "Theology and Culture at Mid–Century," 579.
Maureen Sullivan, in *The Road to Vatican II: Key Changes in Theology* (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2007), calls neo-scholasticism "a closed, static, and—at times—arrogant system. Its preoccupation with the need for certitude, with having answers for every question, greatly impoverished the theological enterprise." It was "ahistorical and rationalistic," trapped in its "fortress mentality" (p. 35).

the *ressourcement* theologians lay not so much in their rejection of a long since arid neo-scholasticism as in their dual concern to engage with the contemporary world and to ensure the essential unity of theology."[20]

The stage is now set for a showdown of sorts, though its main arena is the realm of academic periodicals and theological publications. The main actors can be divided into two broad camps: on one side are neo-Thomists such as Garrigou-Lagrange, and on the other are the *ressourcement* theologians (sometimes also referred to as "the new theologians," *nouveaux théologiens*) such as Congar, Chenu, Daniélou, and Henri de Lubac). The ensuing drama has been described as "the only theological debate of any importance at least in France, between the condemnation of modernism and the Second Vatican Council."[21]

Ressourcement and *Nouvelle Théologie*

"*La nouvelle théologie*" was the blanket term used against the *ressourcement* theologians by their critics and opponents. Like an earlier term of opprobrium, Modernism, "*nouvelle théologie*" was similarly vague, and difficult if not impossible to attach with certainty to specific individuals except by its adversaries. Among others, Congar and de Lubac would vehemently deny that the term applied to them. And, like Modernism, "*nouvelle théologie*," although an imprecise term, nevertheless tainted

20. Gabriel Flynn, "Introduction" to *Ressourcement*, eds. Flynn and Murray, 9.
21. Etienne Fouilloux, "Dialogue théologique? (1946-1948)," in *Saint Thomas au XXe siècle: Actes du colloque Centenaire de la "Revue Thomiste."* Toulouse, 25-28 mars 1993, ed. S-T. Bonino (Paris, 1994): 153, cited by Nichols, "Thomism and Nouvelle Théologie," 2.

the reputation of those accused of it: their books were banned (placed on the *Index of Forbidden Books*), their teaching and writing curtailed, and they themselves often sent (exiled) to other religious houses.

It is not hard to see why the *ressourcement* project and method in theology might be seen as "new" when compared with the neo-scholastic ideal of fixity and certainty in dogma, which was couched in syllogisms and theological "conclusions." In a different context, Jesus had said of the scribes and Pharisees—the theological experts and doctrinal police of his time—that, having drunk of the old wine, they would not now desire the new wine of his teaching, for they say, "The old is good" (Luke 5:39). So the term "new theology" was used as an accusation and a cry of alarm: "The new theology—where is it going? It is returning to Modernism."[22]

Granted that the shoe fit insofar as the theology being practiced by the *ressourcement* theologians was far different from the reigning neo-scholastic type, what was "new" about the new theology? Gerald O'Collins characterizes neo-scholasticism as employing a "regressive" method, by this meaning that it "began with whatever was the present teaching of the pope and bishops and returned to the past in order to show how this teaching was first expressed in the scriptures, developed by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and deployed

22. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange not only asked the question, but answered it, in his essay, "La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?" *Angelicum*, 23 (1946): 126-45, at 143. Some pages earlier (134), the answer he gave to his own rhetorical question was: "Where is it heading if not down the road to skepticism, fantasy, and heresy?"

in official teaching."[23] In other words, the regressive method privileges and begins with current dogma and doctrine, and then finds proof-texts in Scripture and in the tradition. In contrast, *ressourcement* and *nouvelle théologie* employ what O'Collins calls a "genetic" method, "a return to the sources that studied first the biblical witness and then the subsequent history of doctrinal development,"[24] especially as it is articulated and compellingly brought to life by the Fathers and in the liturgy. In so doing, the theology that *ressourcement* produced was enriched by biblical understanding and imagery, steeped in the "mystery" celebrated in the liturgy, experiential, historically-aware, existential (a favorite word), and committed (*engagée*, another favorite word).

Is there really a difference between *ressourcement* and *nouvelle théologie*? Although the two terms are often used equivalently and interchangeably, it is worthwhile noting that Congar, de Lubac, et al., would gladly accept being typified as *ressourcement* theologians, and would with equal vehemence reject the other designation. Flynn explains the difference thus: "What distinguishes the *ressourcement* theologians from the *nouveaux théologiens* is that the former were also *nouveaux théologiens* while the latter were not always committed to *ressourcement*."[25] In other words, in terms of their aim, which is the retrieval of "more profound" traditions," *ressourcement* theologians—intentionally or not—promoted a "new theol-

23. Gerald O'Collins, "Ressourcement and Vatican II," chapter 24 in *Ressourcement*, 375.
24. Gerald O'Collins, "Ressourcement and Vatican II," chapter 24 in *Ressourcement*, 375.
25. Cf. his "Introduction" to *Ressourcement*, 11.

ogy." *Ressourcement* was the method, *nouvelle théologie* its outcome. However, one might champion a "new theology" without necessarily returning to the sources.

Some writers have noted the double irony of the appellation "new theology," coined and sneeringly employed by the neo-scholastic adversaries of the *ressourcement* theologians. In the first place, one can argue that the "new theology" being advocated by the likes of Congar and de Lubac was in fact an "old" theology. The return to the sources, or the emergence of a historical consciousness, was a revival of theological instincts connatural with the Fathers or the Renaissance humanists. In the second place, one can also point out that the neo-scholastic theologians, in recasting Thomism in a rigid and artificial framework and insofar as they misinterpreted Thomas (and perpetuated such a misinterpretation—so de Lubac charges in *Surnaturel*), are in fact the real "new theologians."

A "Manifesto" of the New Theology

"If a single work was considered to typify the 'new theology,'" Komonchak asserts, "it was de Lubac's *Surnaturel*."[26] Similarly, one essay published in 1946 can arguably be identified as its manifesto. This at least was the profound belief of Garrigou-Lagrange. In a private letter to one of his Dominican confrères, Garrigou-Lagrange wrote, "Fr. Daniélou's article in last April's *Études* appears to be the manifesto of this new theology…. But here [in Rome] people are closely watching this new movement,

26. Komonchak, "Theology and Culture at Mid-Century," 580.

which is a return to Modernism."[27] The reference is to Jean Daniélou's programmatic essay, "Les orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse," published in the Jesuit journal *Études*. By this time Daniélou, key figure though he was in *ressourcement* and, by accusation, in the despised *nouvelle théologie*, was not the only one sounding the trumpet for a new way of doing theology. Two notable precedents were Chenu's, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (1937), in which he proudly extolled the new style of theologizing being practiced with much success by the Dominican professors, and Louis Charlier's *Essai sur le problème théologique* (1938).[28] But Daniélou had many times peppered his 1946 essay "Les orientations présentes" with the word "new" and its cognates, including the phrase "*nouvelle théologie*," so perhaps Garrigou-Lagrange can be excused for training his guns on that article.[29]

From his perch in mid-20th century France, Daniélou is able to survey the contemporary scene around him, both inside the Catholic Church with its promising initiatives of renewal, and outside in the world of ideas and ideologies. His programmatic essay aptly titled "the present orientations of religious thought" can be rendered more idiomatically: What are religious people thinking about today? He begins by announcing that the problems and concerns of religious theology and philosophy, for a long time only of interest to specialists and select initiates (*une élite d'initiés*), are now reaching and affecting more people. Although he does not say so, the fact that he is

27. Cited by Komonchak, "Humani Generis and Nouvelle Théologie," in *Ressourcement*, 145-46 (brackets in original).
28. In 1942, both of these works were placed on the Index.
29. All quotations are the author's translation.

writing in post-war France reeling from near-defeat and still recovering from catastrophe gives a sobering context for this growing interest in religious questions. He does mention "the virulence of current forms of atheism which call into question not simply this or that aspect of Christianity, but its total vision of the world."[30]

Numerous times in his article Daniélou calls for a revitalized theology that can respond to the human existential needs and concerns of people today. "One must point out this great appeal of spirits and souls who are asking for a living Christian thought-system (*pensée*) which feels in a manner more acute and decisive," and (in a clause calculated to ruffle the feathers of the neo-scholastics) "which the present-day theological, apologetical and exegetical teaching is too often insufficient in."[31] Holding up the example of Marxists and existentialist thinkers (again, hardly congenial to the theological establishment), Daniélou repeatedly sounds the call for action and engagement, what in other contexts might be called solidarity and social commitment. "Theology will be a living one only if it responds to these aspirations."[32] Quoting Karl Marx ("Philosophy has until now only interpreted the world; now it is a matter of transforming it."), he declares, "It is impossible in our world [today] to separate thinking and living (*la pensée et la vie*). An idea (*pensée*) which is not first of all a testimony (*témoignage*) would seem to be something negligible."[33]

30. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 5.
31. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 5.
32. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 7.
33. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 17.

If that is the task, what are the means? It is by returning to the sources (*le retour aux sources*) of Christian faith, and by conversing with extra-ecclesial contemporary thought, what today might be called an interdisciplinary approach. Thus, by such access to both the past (the tradition as it is embodied in Scripture, commented upon by the Fathers, and celebrated in the liturgy) and the present (secular dialogue-partners), theology can "retake its place in intellectual life and become present once again to our time."[34] Daniélou finishes his call to action with a flourish: "Such are the great lines of the task which offers itself today to Christian thought. It must be said that the hour is decisive for it. Former generations have accumulated the materials; it is now a matter of building."[35]

The Threefold "Returns" of *Ressourcement*

"A first characteristic marking contemporary religious thought is the contact made once again with the essential sources which are the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, and the liturgy."[36] Daniélou here identifies the three main streams or currents of recent revival and scholarly research that have been making their presence felt since the previous century. Primacy of place must go to the return to Sacred Scripture. This was "accompanied by a remarkable renewal in patristic theology. And this is not astonishing if one recalls that the work of the Fathers is largely a vast commentary on Sacred Scripture." Unlike the more archaeological approach to patristic studies by previous scholars,

34. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 7.
35. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 21.
36. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 7.

Daniélou says that today's *ressourcement* "asks more from the Fathers, seeing them as more than simply true witnesses of a bygone era; they are again the most current nourishment for people today, since we find in them precisely a certain number of categories which are those of contemporary thinking and which scholastic theology has lost"—categories such as the notion of history.[37] This makes *ressourcement* patrology very current (*actuelle*).

A third source of theology "fuels" contemplation: the Christian liturgy which teaches, re-presents, and celebrates the mystery of God. Again, Daniélou cautions against any superficial work of archaeology, as if *ressourcement* were merely "digging out" the past. Rather, it is "the contemplation of realities hidden behind sacramental signs." While pre-*ressourcement* emphasis was on the *efficacy* of the sacramental signs—an almost one-sided stress on *ex opere operato*—one must remember that the sacraments are "efficacious in the first place because they signify," that is, they point to the greater reality of God himself. Liturgical renewal thus restores the prayer of the Church to its place as "encounter between the human being and the Mystery of God, made present in the act of worship (*le culte*) without losing its numinous value," this last phrase a bow to Rudolf Otto.[38]

Closer inspection shows that these three—the return to the Bible, the Fathers, and the liturgy—are deeply interconnected and complementary to one another. As one writer puts it:

37. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 9, 10. The historical sense is "étrangère au thomisme," he writes.
38. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 11, 12.

> The desire to contact the sources of theology cannot terminate in a purely Biblical revival but continues of its nature into liturgical renewal, into the field of worship where the people of God are formed and nourished and where they receive the Word in a living Church. The writings of the Fathers from an era of Christian history in immediate contact with the Apostolic Age cannot be divorced from the consideration of Scripture or liturgy. Thus each movement as it develops tends to influence, strengthen and confirm the other.[39]

For Daniélou, both the Church Fathers and the liturgy privilege a particular way of interpreting Scripture, showing the essential unity of the two Testaments; they "invite us to search in the Old Testament the types (*des figures*) of Christ, helping us to better understand 'the unfathomable riches.'" Then, in an ecumenical move, he quotes the Swiss evangelical exegete, Wilhelm Vischer: "The Old Testament shows us *that* it is the Christ; the New Testament, *who* is the Christ."[40] Five years hence, in 1951, Daniélou would publish his masterful *The Bible and the Liturgy* (French original: *Bible et Liturgie. La théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Eglise*), a work of enduring significance, erudition and even beauty.

It is no accident that the *ressourcement* method of doing theology lends itself well to ecumenical collaborations. Andrew Louth notes that "French *ressourcement* was, under God's providence, a movement in which Catholic and Orthodox found

39. James M. Connolly, *The Voices of France: A Survey of Contemporary Theology in France* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 30.
40. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 9.

themselves gaining mutual benefit from each other. The opportunities for such mutually enriching engagement are still there."[41]

Ressourcement and Church Renewal

What Daniélou and many of the other *ressourcement* theologians are advocating is not simply a theological renewal, but also an ecclesial one. It is no accident that the most significant output of the Catholic *ressourcement* in the 20th century was precisely the most important event in the Catholic Church in the same century, the Second Vatican Council, often called "the council *on* the Church." Vatican II, an ecclesial event, was itself primarily concerned with ecclesiology in its varied aspects: the inner life of the ecclesial body, its prayer, its mission in the world, its relationship with fellow Christians, and the like. *Ressourcement*, it must be said, leads to Church renewal and the revitalization of Christian life. When Daniélou in 1946 expounded on the task of a *nouvelle théologie*, he may as well have been describing the task of a *renouvelée église* (a renewed Church). Here is one paragraph from his "Les orientations présentes" with the word "theology" replaced by "the Church":

> Thus [the Church] today faces a triple necessity (*exigence*): It needs to consider God as God, not as an object but rather the Subject *par excellence* who manifests himself when and as he

41. Louth, "French Ressourcement Theology and Orthodoxy," in *Ressourcement*, 507. John Webster points out that Karl Barth can be seen as a ressourcement practitioner, and this in turn made Barth's theology a much more church-oriented one. See his "Ressourcement Theology and Protestantism" in *Ressourcement*, 487.

> wills, and thus [the Church] must first be penetrated by a religious spirit (*pénétrée d'esprit de religion*). It needs to respond to modern people's experiences and take stock of the new dimensions which science and history have given to space and time. Finally, it needs to be a concrete attitude before human existence, a response which engages with the whole human race, the interior light of an action or a life played out in its entirety. [The Church] will be a living one only if it responds to these aspirations.[42]

In the post-Vatican II Catholic Church, these three exigences enunciated by Daniélou continue to demand attention and pastoral solution. One suspects that these tasks will never be fully achieved this side of heaven.

It is here, finally, where one sees how—as this paper asserted at the beginning—Steve Clark, in his theological and spiritual writings, in his various achievements and indeed in his life work, exemplifies the concerns and methods of a *ressourcement* theologian. A sampling of his books shows how he practices *ressourcement*'s threefold return: *The Old Testament in the Light of the New* (2017)—biblical renewal; *Redeemer* (1992)—biblical and patristic renewal; and *Catholics and the Eucharist* (2000)—liturgical renewal. His pioneering involvement and eventual leadership in the Catholic charismatic renewal are expressions of a "return" to the grace of Pentecost, which Steve instinctively saw as a way of renewing Christian life today. An early book, *Unordained Elders and Renewal Communities* (1976) is a historical study with contemporary

42. Daniélou, "Les orientations," 7.

applications in today's Church. *Building Christian Communities: Strategy for Renewing the Church* (1975) identifies key elements which make Christian community possible and doable. The scholarly yet readable *Man and Woman in Christ* (1980) shows the confluences between the scriptural teaching and the findings of the modern social sciences, demonstrating that an interdisciplinary approach can succeed in presenting a coherent teaching for people today. These are only a few examples of Steve's legacy which has touched numerous lives, in many Christian communities, in places around the world. And, by constantly returning to the scriptures, Steve, a *ressourcement* theologian, is able to engage ecumenically with other Christian traditions and believers.

CHAPTER 8

Appreciation for Biblical Femininity in *Man And Woman In Christ*

By Molly Kilpatrick

Introduction

I still remember the first time I began reading *Man and Woman In Christ*,[1] many years ago now. I felt edified, considered, and necessary as a woman. Truths I had believed but didn't understand and certainly could not explain began to make sense. New and inspiring ideas that would form how I understood manhood and womanhood opened a door into deepening purposefulness, beauty, and integration which would set me on a course of joyful response to God's call on my life as a woman. To say the least, *Man and Woman in Christ* has been a game-changer for my personal 'yes' to the Lord, and to His people. It has built within me an intellectual foundation and

1. All citations of *Man and Woman in Christ* are taken from the second edition: Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (East Lansing: Tabor House, 2006).

a scripturally sound vision for a Christian approach to manhood and womanhood, without which I would probably to this day be struggling in my pursuit to live as a daughter of God.

I am honored by this opportunity to share a few thoughts which reveal Steve Clark, displayed in his work *Man and Woman in Christ*, as a man who spent a great deal of his intellectual energy teaching and defending the value of women, recognizing the need for a vision for the Christian people that is scripturally sound, simple, and united with the Christian tradition. Steve shows a shrewd understanding of the insecure and divided notions about manhood and womanhood in our age. His exegesis and accompanying insights unpack and challenge these notions, reminding us which truths have stood the test of time, and clarifying how to understand the scriptural texts in the light of their proper contexts.

Steve's scriptural exegesis in *Man And Woman in Christ* freed me to value femininity, while at the same time liberating me from believing countless ideas which the world presents about women: that women are less important or less capable, that women are weaker, and that women have smaller capacity for character than men. This work freed me from any need to compete with men, or compare my productivity to that of men. It freed me from many stereotypes of what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man. It freed me from feeling like I need to accept the age-old adage that 'boys will be boys' and accept low expectations for the men with whom I share life. It freed me from the fear that there are not good men out there, men who are worthy to be husbands and heads of family and leaders of people. (It also freed me from prideful

thinking that I would make a great wife without immense help from the Lord and from others.)

This work freed me *for* a vision of manhood and womanhood that is good, beautiful, and harmonious: to pursue intentional relationships within the body of Christ with hope and trust; to desire Christian marriage and to see it is a good thing as God designed it; to desire to serve within the Christian community; to learn the irreplaceable contribution that women are designed to make; to serve in leadership and to be able to embrace the way of life I believed God had already called me to.

Although I could name many more, I will share three topics that have been a source of this freedom, three key notes of *Man and Women in Christ* to which I return again and again for my own sense of confidence, for my continued receptivity to the Lord's will, and in my pastoral and teaching work. They are the clear sense of the dignity of women, Steve's treatment of subordination in the marriage relationship, and finally, his insistence on the irreplaceable role of women in the family.

The Clear Sense of The Dignity of Woman

In his work, *Man and Woman in Christ*, Steve Clark highlights and defends the dignity of women. His work both assumes women's dignity but also explains it, tirelessly, patiently. It seems he knows not to assume all Christians and intellectuals who live during his time will assume it, and therefore he explains it again and again, reminding his reader not to forget what is clear and consistent in the Scriptures and God's intention for

the family and society. I will mention a few instances from his scriptural exegesis which display this.

First, Steve establishes the unquestionable equality in personal value and dignity between men and women from Scripture. He points out and unpacks misunderstandings of how people have used lines from Scripture to degrade women, to misunderstand their dignity, and clarifies the true meaning and re-establishes the dignity of women as a necessary foundation for all he will say afterward.

One example is Steve's treatment of Genesis 2:22: "And the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man."[2] While some have used this verse in a mocking way toward women, Steve highlights the scholarship that shows it means that woman is made of the same substance as man and stands by his side,

> The context of Genesis 2 shows that the overriding significance of the mode of the creation of woman is that woman is the same kind of being as man, not a different and inferior species…. The clearest point to be drawn from the building of woman from man's rib is not any inferiority on woman's part but quite the contrary. The "rib" indicates the sameness of nature between man and woman (11).

Steve clarifies here that woman shares her nature, value, and dignity with man—they are of the same kind—and that woman is not below man. When you come to know that this is God's firm design, it is easier to trust His good will for your

2. Scriptural citations are taken from the RSV.

life as a woman, rather than juggling the ever lingering questions: *Did* God make me inferior to men? *Is* it my job to prove my worth?

In my years working with university aged women, I've met few women who haven't had to wrestle with these questions. Every year I find myself working with a handful or more of young adult women who battle basic identity questions and lies daily. It is not always clear to them that, as women, they share the same dignity as men. Simply growing up in our society has done enough to deeply undermine, within their sense of self, the truth that it is good that God made them to be women—that men and women have equal dignity and eternal value.

In the same section, Steve proceeds to clarify the true meaning of the Hebrew word for "to cling" or "to cleave" in order to establish the strength of the marriage relationship. "The word 'cling' or 'cleave' indicates a committed personal relationship. It does not mean weak dependence, as the English word, 'clings' suggests" (11). The modern usage, "Gosh, that woman is so clingy" is far from the correct sense. Instead this word conveys a mutual and purposeful interdependence between man and woman, an expression of the fundamental reality that "it is not good for man to be alone," and that they each have something to contribute that the other needs.

A third instance makes clear that woman, being an image bearer of God like man, shares in the commission with man to have dominion over the living creatures. Her role is that of helper to the man in his ruling function, not to be ruled by him like the other animals.

Nothing in Gen 1:26-31 indicates that women do not take part in the commission associated with being in God's image, namely, having dominion over the living creatures. Rather, the fact that the commission is repeated in v. 28 following the statement about the human race being created male and female indicates that women share not only the commission but also the image of God which makes the commission possible (9).

These are a few of many ways in which Steve breaks down the meaning of the Scriptures to establish the inherent value of woman and her basic relationship to man as sharing in the same dignity: according to God's purpose in creation, she is created and called to be an image bearer of the Living God to the rest of creation.

Although the church has always taught that men and women are equal in dignity, each new age seems to bring its own way of forgetting and distorting this profound truth. Steve's voice has been one in our time to point out and make clear the dignity of women and their irreplaceable role in the world. I am grateful to Steve for the time and care he has put into his work which grounds the dignity of women in the word of God as a challenge to those in the world who would like to put women's dignity up for debate.

And yet his affirmation of the fundamental equality of men and women does not prevent Steve from clearly speaking about their differences in an illuminating way. *Because* men and women are equal in dignity, their differences can function together in a complementary way.

In some ways, the term "complementarity" best sums up the relationship between the man and the woman in Genesis.

"Complementarity" implies an equality, a correspondence between man and woman. It also implies a difference. Woman complements man in a way that makes her a helper to him. Her role is not identical to his. Their complementarity allows them to be a partnership in which each needs the other, because each provides something different from what the other provides. The partnership of man and woman is based upon a community of nature and an interdependence due to a complementarity of role (13).

A common tactic that claims to uphold the value of women is to affirm that women are just as good as men—there are no differences except perhaps for the obvious differences of sexual organs. But saying that women are valuable because they can (and should) do the same things men can do does not attribute any value to women as women—men are still the standard by which all are judged. Women are valued for what they can do in comparison to what men can do, not for who they are. The world's narrative fosters a culture in which men and women are urged to homogeneity. But God's plan for men and women is not androgyny but complementarity. Steve's work brings together the best of both biblical exegesis and social scientific research to fruitfully speak of men and women as different and yet still equal by emphasizing the following:

> The differences between men and women should be stated descriptively rather than evaluatively…. Any comparison of a male trait with a female trait which judges that one is intrinsically better than another is distorted because it presumes an identity of role or function. For example, to deplore women's "emotionalism" presumes that men and women are both

> "supposed to" express their emotions in an identical fashion. However, such a judgment is not possible if men and women are supposed to express their emotions differently, or if emotions are supposed to be expressed differently in different situations (273-74).

Not only are men and women equal in dignity by virtue of their creation, they also equal in their contribution to their fallenness; they share responsibility for the fall in a complementary way. We can cast aside the idea that women are by nature seductresses, or that women are responsible for men's struggle with the sin of lust, or that women are always victims of men's wrongdoing. Adam and Eve share the responsibility for the fall, and it has hit all of their offspring, men and women alike. Likewise they are equal in redemption and destined to be co-heirs in the kingdom of God. "Woman functions in complementarity to man. She complemented him in the Fall, to the misfortune of the human race, and she complemented him in redemption, to the blessing of the human race. The former showed her weakness, the latter her strength" (144).

Finally, I have deeply appreciated, and frankly, needed to hear the way in which Steve's articulation of complementarity of man and woman elevates women without denigrating men. I have found in some reflections of Christian femininity that woman seems to be elevated above man: woman is the true climax of creation, and is of greater significance in the redeemed life than man. Perhaps this stems from an attempt on behalf of womankind to balance out the experience of being denigrated time and time again. But there is a better way to understand

this challenge, and Steve shows us clearly that a complementary view of man and woman is the approach most consistent with the Word of God, and the most beautiful approach for living together as men and women in reality—the vision we would do best to pursue.

Subordination In The Marriage Relationship

Onto the ever challenging topic of subordination! Steve's exegesis of subordination takes great care to unpack different understandings and types of subordination to establish that in the Biblical understanding, subordination in the marriage relationship and Christian community assumes the equal value of women and men. He begins by establishing that subordination does not include an idea of inferiority in value.

> The English word "subordination" means literally "ordered under," and its Greek counterpart means almost the same. The word does not carry with it a notion of inferior value. A subordinate could be more valuable in many ways than the person over him or her. Nor does the word carry with it a notion of oppression or the use of force for domination. The word can be used to describe an oppressive relationship, but its normal use is for relationships in which the subordination involved is either neutral or good (13).

According to Steve, subordination in marriage includes the man taking a real responsibility for his wife before the Lord, for how he protects her (or doesn't), how he relates with her, and even for how she acts. Her good is now his good. Certainly

some people do not like the idea of men having some kind of responsibility for women, but I would personally find the alternative—if men had no responsibility to care for and protect the women they married and the daughters they raise—much more of a threatening position for women.

Finally, Steve's explanation of whether subordination was part of God's original design in creation, or fundamentally a result of the Fall is an important one. The summary of the view he puts forward as the most convincing provides the balance which many women need to hear:

> Oppressive subordination between man and woman stems from the transgression and curse, marring the original form of subordination present in creation. According to this view, man should be the head of woman, at least in marriage, and was her head from the first moment of woman's creation. However, because of the transgression and curse, man dominates woman and causes her pain through something that should have been a blessing to her (19).

Oppressive subordination is caused by sin. Original subordination in marriage is designed for the good of family unity, and subordination redeemed in Christ is the goal for Christian marriage. The good expression of subordination has long been missed and hidden for many Christians and non-Christians alike. Perhaps its good is so hidden, and requires so much hope, trust, and self-emptying on the part of both men and women, that few think it is possible to live and worth embracing.

Steve clearly understands the qualms women can understandably have with the prospect of subordinating themselves

in a marriage relationship, and the misunderstandings which can lead men to abuse or abdicate their role of leadership in the relationship, and addresses them in such a way as to point out that God's design is not the problem. His work on subordination here especially frees women to be women, without having to be rebellious, or always to place themselves in comparison to men. Understanding subordination has given me high expectations for how the men in my life will treat the women in their lives: with humility in any position of authority they hold, committing their strength to the service of others, and always with the good of the corporate body in mind, and at the expense of their own personal preference. If anything, understanding this has made me more grateful for men who are willing to take up the call to manhood which requires such courage and self-denial. Understanding biblical subordination has increased my respect for men who are courageous enough to serve others in roles of authority. It can be done, and can work in reality as it is taught in the scriptures, but it requires submission to Christ on the part of both the man and the woman, and any trace of the world's distorted notion of authority and power will sabotage the whole thing.

Some assume that since subordination can be associated with the abuse of authority, that it necessarily always will be. I am honestly not sure how anyone could grow up in our society without a dysfunctional view of authority and subordination. Even if you were blessed enough to grow up in a home which modeled a biblical approach to authority, surely your experience in society and any glimpse into the

world of politics, commerce, and media will have done much to undermine and distort a proper understanding. The treatment of subordination in *Man and Woman in Christ* brings out the true meaning and hope that has been obscured by the world, the flesh, and the devil. It has also trained me to recognize abuse within a subordination relationship, to say "that is not subordination; that is abuse of power," or "that is selfishness." Subordination itself is not the problem; it is our sin that is the problem.

There are at least three other insights on subordination, to mention in brief, which I find to be extremely important for women, and for which I am very grateful to Steve for helping me to understand: (1) that the subordination relationship involves both men and women having ruling roles; (2) that the subordination relationship makes the family stronger, more united, and more able to be fruitful; and (3) that all women are not subordinated to all men, as some have misinterpreted the meaning of Biblical subordination to mean.

In my mission work, I attempt to convey these truths to university students. Steve's exegesis of the meaning of the scriptural texts has helped me to do that. Without this help, I might have personally accepted the Scriptures at their word and surrendered myself to them, but lived according to it just out of obligation. Or possibly I just would not have considered marriage for myself. But without the help of this Scripture study, I would not have understood the good, the fruit, and the purpose of marriage and the complementarity of men and women, such that I could point others to it, live it joyfully,

and encourage others in it. This account of subordination in marriage provides the foundation for the advice I find myself giving to women: "Don't marry a man whose subordination to Christ you don't respect and trust. Choose a man based on his subordination to Christ."

The Irreplaceable Role of Women

Finally, Steve's scripture exegesis makes clear that the Old Testament wife and woman of the home was a strong, capable ruler of the household. That was a completely new idea to me. It's hard to say which era's distorted and limited notion of women in the home most obscures this truth, but the reigning ideas of women in the home seem to be the 1950's housewife stereotype, the weak and easily scandalized Victorian woman, or the modern woman who is a super-human perfect mother and successful CEO.

Steve's description of the scriptural role of the wife in the household freed me from those stereotypes, and helped me to begin to understand the heart of the call of woman, which is not to be exiled to the home primarily because men don't want women in the workplace, or because all that women are capable of is making and raising babies and washing dishes, or because women are so capable that they can and should do everything to make a household run. Instead, at the center is the vision of what the home should be, and what its place is meant to be in the church and society.

Steve offers a helpful analogy of a head and a heart as both essential and complementary organs in a proper functioning

body to describe the interdependent and necessary roles of the husband and wife within the household:

> This understanding of the husband's and wife's roles raises the question of how the old statement "a woman's place is in the home" relates to New Testament teaching. The New Testament does indicate that the woman's role in the family is primarily within the household. She is expected to rule the household. The picture of the wider pattern of social relations in the early church also indicates that the woman's responsibility in the home entails her being in the home more than the husband. But the New Testament does not teach in any explicit way that the home is the only place the woman can be or serve. Moreover, the indications that the woman's role is primarily in the household occur alongside indications that the household is a place of major service in the Christian community. If many of the educational, social service, and economic functions of the household have been removed, it does not automatically make sense to leave the woman behind so that she cannot take an active responsibility for these services. In order for her place in the home to have the significance it had in New Testament times, the home would have to be restored to its importance as a place of service (67).

As far as most households go in our day, managing a household is a much smaller production and responsibility than for the women of the New Testament era. Understanding that cultural difference makes recognizing the importance of both the wife and the household possible. When the household was the center of so much life and activity—serving as a hotel and

a hospital, a tailor and farm, as well as the school and the apprenticeship—no person who managed that kind of domain would be bored or be considered unimportant and superfluous. Instead, the roles that women are normally called to take on require that they be strong, active, and competent; nowhere do the Scriptures indicate that women are or are expected to be weak, passive, and incompetent.

In the following passage which describes the role of the woman in the home, it is clear that the role is one that fulfills both concrete practical needs of the members of the household but also contributes to the building up of the wider community.

> To summarize, the passages examined here illustrate some important elements in the role of the wife in scripture. The wife is the ruler or manager of the household. She is the heart of household life, ordering the life of the household and seeing that the needs of the people in the household are met. She takes an active responsibility for the affairs of the house and is expected to handle them competently. She rules the household in subordination to her husband, but she rules the household nonetheless. Within the household, her special concern is to see that the members of the household are served in their needs: fed, clothed, provided with what each needs to function well. She makes the household a home, a place where others are strengthened and refreshed. The wife is a source of strength to her husband and to the other members of the household because of her personal service to them. Finally, she is actively involved in what we call charity work. She serves the needy of the community either personally or by seeing that other members of the household provide help (41).

Not only then is the woman's role extremely valuable in running the activity of the household, but it is when she is in the role of 'the heart' of the household that she cultivates a place for household members to be strengthened and refreshed. This can refer to physical strengthening and refreshment, but in the context it seems more to refer to spiritual, relational, emotional thriving. The wife is the source of warmth, the hearth within the home where members are drawn together, and find rest, shelter, comfort, and love.

What is a home without warmth? It is sterile and cold, not a home for a family who love one another, but a building where people stay and perform functions. Today we try so hard to make a house function well for a family if we can just get all the gadgets present and all the chores, meals, and tasks assigned or outsourced. It is here where we see the great loss it has been to society and family that the idea of 'heart' of the household has been weakened in our society by the departure of women from the homefront, into the world of full time work outside the home—to the detriment of family life, table fellowship, and culture.

It was through understanding this change in our social culture that I first began to realize the modern day situation that many of us experience and are easily drawn into that pressures a woman to abdicate her role from the home in order to fulfill the role of the modern working woman, the result of which is often that the home begins to have no heart, no draw, no culture, no life. No one wants to be there. It doesn't produce fruit or play a valuable formative role in the lives of the people who live and grow up there.

Just as when men abdicate their role as leaders, fathers, and husbands, the wife and children are vulnerable to poverty, manipulation, and insecurity of basic needs, so when women abdicate the role of managing and ruling the household, the household simply ceases to exist as a valuable center of activity, and as a heart within a social unit, instead of a first school of love, as it is meant to be.

A favorite Chesterton passage which expresses this better than I can, says:

> Those who believe in the dignity of the domestic tradition, who happen to be the overwhelming majority of mankind, regard the home as a sphere of vast social importance and supreme spiritual significance; and to talk of being confined to it is like talking of being chained to a throne, or set in a seat of judgment as if it were the stocks…. We cannot simply take it for granted that kings are humiliated by being crowned. We cannot accept it as a first principle that a man is made a judge because he is a fool. And we cannot assume, as both sides in this curious controversy do often do assume, that bringing forth and rearing and ruling the living beings of the future is a servile task suited to a silly person.[3]

Pope John Paul II also underlines the importance of women serving in the home, and exhorts modern societies to make this presence possible and valued:

3. G.K. Chesterton, "The Dignity of Domesticity," *Illustrated London News* (Nov 16, 1929), cited in Dale Ahlquist, *The Story of the Family* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2022), 216.

> Experience confirms that there must be a *social re-evaluation of the mother's role,* of the toil connected with it, and of the need that children have for care, love and affection in order that they may develop into responsible, morally and religiously mature and psychologically stable persons. It will redound to the credit of society to make it possible for a mother—without inhibiting her freedom, without psychological or practical discrimination, and without penalizing her as compared with other women—to devote herself to taking care of her children and educating them in accordance with their needs, which vary with age. Having to abandon these tasks in order to take up paid work outside the home is wrong from the point of view of the good of society and of the family when it contradicts or hinders these primary goals of the mission of a mother.[4]

In summary, *Man and Woman in Christ* has taught me, delighted me, and been a resource to which I will continue to return again and again to encourage me in my call as a daughter of God, and to help me encourage others in their call as sons and daughters of God.

4. Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (Sept. 14, 1981), 19. Laborem Exercens (14 September 1981) | John Paul II (vatican.va).

CHAPTER 9

Paul and the Law: the Stages of God's Plan

Daniel A. Keating

The Stages of God's Plan in Christ

One characteristic feature that runs through Steve Clark's teaching on the Scripture is what he calls "the stages of God's plan." In his last published work to date, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New: The Stages of God's Plan*, Clark identifies seven stages in God's outworking of his purpose, offering a summary chart of the seven stages as an outline of God's work of salvation from beginning to end.[1] In Clark's view,

> It is difficult for most Christian readers of the Old Testament to believe that they are reading a book of Christian instruction unless they understand the stages of God's plan. Otherwise the material in it seems too disparate and much of it even pointless

1. Stephen B. Clark, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New: The Stages of God's Plan* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2017), 127-40 (for the chart, see p. 133).

> from the Christian point of view. Only an understanding of the stages of God's plan allows us to gain a coherent view of the Bible as a whole, Old and New Testament together.[2]

Clark's presentation of "stages" in God's plan means more than just seeing individual "types" of God's plan in the Old Testament that apply to Christ (as important as these are). It involves more than gathering up the key prophecies of the Old Testament that point to Christ (though these are crucial as well). These individual types and prophetic words are located in broader "ages," often defined by specific covenants, that define how God has been at work at a given time. And the "stages" show a progression from one to another that enables us to see how God is acting through history to fulfill his greater purpose.

The seven stages are grouped into three main categories: (1) God's working with the whole human race (stages 1-2); (2) God's working with the people of Israel (stages 3-5); and (3) God's working through Jesus in the New Covenant (stages 6-7). The first category includes two stages marked by Adam and Noah (Gen 1-11); the second category incorporates three stages centered around Abraham, Moses, and David; the third category includes our present age of life in Christ through the Spirit as well as the age to come (eternal life).

The central idea governing the stages of God's plan as Clark articulates them is that God chooses to work differently at different times. What he does in one age may be different than how he acts in another. This is not because

2. Clark, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New*, 8.

God is inconsistent or has changed his mind, but because he deals with the human race in stages in order to bring about his full plan. Just as parents deal with children differently depending on their age, so God has acted in human history in discrete ways in order to unfold his mature purpose. Furthermore, each stage as it unfolds allows us to see something more about the whole plan. We look back on previous stages with new eyes and understand the overall landscape more clearly because we stand on higher ground. This is especially true of the revelation of Jesus: because we now have life in him through the Spirit we can see the purpose of God's plan more clearly and so understand with greater insight the stages by which we arrived here.

What I propose to do in this essay is to make use of Clark's principle of "the stages of God's plan" in order to show how Paul understands the law of Moses, and in so doing to illustrate how Clark's "stages" help us understand the Scripture. By any account, Paul's treatment of the law is complex and I cannot hope to present a thorough view of the law in Paul or treat all of the many questions raised by Paul's various writings on the law. What I hope to do is to consider in summary form how Paul, a zealous Pharisee whose life centered wholly around fulfilling the law of Moses, came to see the role of the law differently—without rejecting the law of Moses—because of the revelation he received from the living and risen Christ. To do this I will consider especially how Paul came to see the role of the law in the light of Christ, what he means by being "under the law," and how he came to the conviction that Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, though equally redeemed

by Christ's grace through faith, have distinctive and different obligations with respect to the law of Moses.

Evidence for the Stages of God's Plan in Paul

In his writings on salvation history, Paul clearly recognizes distinct stages or "ages" of God's working. These distinct stages emerge as Paul relates the figure of Adam both to the giving of the law and to the coming of Christ, the new Adam. For Paul, Adam is preeminently the figure through whom "sin came into the world" (Rom 5:12).[3] It was through his "trespass" of the commandment given by God in the garden that sin entered the world, bringing two distinct but related woeful consequences. First, "through sin" death came into the world, the logic being that death is the first consequence of sin, and so "death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom 5:12). As a result, "many died through one man's trespass" (Rom 5:15). Second, the sin of Adam also brought "condemnation" to all human beings who came from Adam: "one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men" (Rom 5:18). In short, from the time of Adam going forwards, the human race inherited from Adam the twin results of condemnation and death.

But Paul sees a distinction between the sin of Adam and the sins of his progeny. In a complex explanation for how sin carried on after Adam, Paul says: "Sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over

3. Scripture citations are from the RSV unless otherwise cited.

those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam" (Rom 5:13-14). Paul's point is that sin "reigned" over the human race even when there was no law to reveal sin and give it boundaries. How do we know this? Because of death—death is the evidence for Paul that sin reigned, even when that sin was not reckoned or counted by the law. Adam's own sin was against the law, because he transgressed a direct commandment. Subsequent sin (after Adam but before Moses) was not of this genus, but is nonetheless shown to be sin because it brought forth the fruit of death.

What does Paul's reasoning reveal about the stages of God's plan? Adam's sin ushered in a new age of sin and death that infected the entire human race and encompassed all the nations. This also illuminates something that we will have occasion to note as we go forward, namely, that for Paul, *sin* is the problem and death and condemnation are its primary effects. For him, the "law" is not the problem that needs a solution. It is the "sin-problem" and the reign of death from which Christ principally came to deliver us.[4]

But Paul also sees the giving of the law as a marker of a new stage in God's plan. The law given through Moses laid down God's commandments and so cast a light on how the people of Israel were to live. Now once again, as with Adam, genuine "transgression" of the law is possible because the lines of the law are publicly marked out.

4. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 157: "Human failure is *not* the law's fault. The real culprit is sin." N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 199: "It is sin, in the humanity which the Jew shares with everyone else, that is the problem from which he or she needs to be delivered."

We might ask: On what basis can the Gentile nations be judged for sin if they have no law to tell them how to live? One important line of response relies on Paul's notion that sin is not merely a moral choice but is a power or a dominion that enslaves us. Because of Adam's sin, all alike lie under the dominion of sin and are in need of redemption. Rom 2:12 makes this clear: "All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law." But as a second line of response, Paul also appeals to a law located in the heart: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them" (Rom 2:14-15). Even though the Gentile nations in this period have no written law given and authorized by God, the basic demands of that law are written on their hearts, and therefore they have no excuse.

Where does this bring us in terms of Paul's conception of the stages of God's plan? The broadest and most fundamental arc runs from the first Adam to the second Adam (Jesus Christ). What the first Adam brought into being (sin, death, and condemnation), the second Adam has reversed and redeemed. This is the burden of Rom 5:12-21 and 1 Cor 15:20-22, 44-49. For Paul, these are the two most fundamental stages in God's plan.

Following the sin of Adam, the next decisive stage in Paul's view begins with the call of Abraham and the giving of the promise received by faith. In Galatians 3 and Romans 4, Paul describes how the promise to Abraham, and Abraham's

response in faith, is decisive for how God was working in a new way with his people. Paul is so bold as to say that "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham" (Gal 3:8). Paul concludes that the covenant of the law made on Sinai does not abrogate this earlier covenant and promise given to Abraham: "The law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void" (Gal 3:17). The point for us is that Paul identifies discrete stages in God's plan that include the sin of Adam, the promise and covenant given to Abraham, the giving of the law, and the fulfillment of God's purposes in Jesus Christ.[5] The question that lies before us is: How does Paul envision the plan of God being worked out across these distinctive stages, and what is the role of the law in this plan?[6]

Paul's Conception of the Place of the Law in God's Plan

Paul offers several distinct ways of distinguishing the age of "the law" from the age of "the Spirit" (that is, the age of Jesus the Messiah). Each one sheds light on how Paul considers

5. Paul, in his division of the stages of God's plan, does not refer to the figure of Noah or the covenant made with him. Nor does Paul identify the figure of David with a discrete stage of God's plan. Christ is descended from David (Rom 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8), and David witnesses to the principle of justification by faith (Rom 4:6), but Paul does not draw attention to David as marking out a new and distinctive stage.

6. When Paul refers to "law" or "the law" in his writings, he normally is referring to the law of Moses, not to law in general. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 133: "As a rule we can assume that when Paul spoke of *nomos* [law] and *ho nomos* [the law] he was thinking of the Torah."

the function of the covenant on Sinai in the overall plan and purpose of God.

The first appears in Paul's description of his apostolic ministry in 2 Cor 3:6-9. He identifies himself (and his co-workers) as "ministers" (*diakonoi*) of a new covenant, and plainly contrasts two distinct "ministries," that of the "letter" and that of the "Spirit." The former brought death and condemnation, not because it was evil in itself but because it revealed the sin-problem which led to death. Paul is plainly referring here to Moses and the giving of the law of Sinai, and he praises it for coming with genuine "glory" (*doxa*). But for Paul the new covenant, the ministry of the Spirit, comes with an even greater glory.

The second most common way that Paul identifies the age or dispensation of the law is through the phrase "under the law" (*hupo nomon*).[7] His most expansive presentation of this appears in Galatians:

> Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made…. Now before faith came, we were held captive *under the law*, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer *under a guardian*, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith (Gal 3:19, 23-26, ESV, emphasis added).

7. The phrase, "under the law" (*hupo nomon*), appears in Paul 9 times in 6 verses: 1 Cor 9:20 (4x); Gal 3:23; 4:4, 4:5, 4:21; 5:18. In Rom 3:19; 12:2 and Phil 3:6, Paul uses comparable phrases, "in the law" / "in law," to mean "under the law" or "based on the law."

Paul is responding to the questions: Why was the law added so many years after the covenant with Abraham? What was its purpose? For Paul, the law played a crucial role in the stages of God's plan. Fundamentally, the law acted as a "guardian" and "teacher" until Christ himself came to bring us to the freedom of sons under the guidance of the Spirit:[8]

> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born *under the law*, to redeem those who were *under the law*, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:4-6, ESV, emphasis added)

Paul is quite firm that those who are now in Christ are no longer "under the law" in the sense that he intends here: "But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law" (Gal 5:18). He makes a similar statement in Romans about those in Christ being no longer "under the law" but "under grace": "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" (Rom 6:14-15).

Paul's most personal and complex statement about not being "under the law" occurs in his First Letter to the Corinthians.

8. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 88-89, 90: "Paul's answer is in effect that the law had a temporary role as guardian of Israel in the period prior to the coming of Christ and the eschatological fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.... The role of the *paidagogos* was essentially a positive one, and included the protection of the youth put in his charge."

Once again, Paul states clearly that he understands himself to be no longer "under the law" in the sense that he intends: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those *under the law* I became as one *under the law*—though not being myself *under the law*—that I might win those *under the law*" (1 Cor 9:20, emphasis added). Just what Paul, the Jew, means by "became as a Jew," we would all like to know! But it clearly does not mean that he sees himself outside the law of God, for in his next statement he says, "To those outside the law I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law" (2 Cor 9:21). Paul clearly does not reject the law of God as such, showing this by saying that he is "under the law of Christ" (RSV, ESV) or perhaps better "within the law of Christ" (NAB, translating *ennomos Christou*).

All this can sound as if Paul is being insincere and inconsistent, if not hypocritical, unless we understand what he means by "under the law." He is referring specifically to an "age" of the law that preceded the coming of Christ, an age that prepared the way for Christ because it showed the inability of the law to deal with sin. But this does not mean that Paul is rejecting "law" in general or the law of Moses in particular—he obviously views himself as still under the law of God and Christ even as he caters, in his mission, to the distinctive needs of the Jews and the Gentiles.

A third expression, "dying to the law," should be seen in the same light. Paul writes of himself in Galatians: "For I through the law *died to the law*, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ

who lives in me" (Gal 2:19-20, emphasis added). Through the law that brought Israel into covenant with the Lord God, Paul (and other Jews) who have now encountered Jesus the Messiah have "died to the law" in the sense that they are no longer relating to God primarily on the basis of keeping the law (the Mosaic covenant), but are now found in the Messiah and primarily relate to the Lord God through living in the Messiah, Jesus. Paul's exhortation to the Romans mirrors this same reality of dying to the law: "Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God" (Rom 7:4, emphasis added). This does not mean that Christians are now dead to the demands of the law of God. It means that we are no longer relating to God on the basis of the covenant of the law, but have now been joined in the new covenant to Jesus the Messiah through whom the law is fulfilled in us.

In a similar way, Paul is pointing to the same "age of the law" when he says that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4, ESV). This does not mean that the law of Moses has come to an end, but that Christ has fulfilled the law and brought it to its full completion.[9]

In each of these distinct ways of speaking, Paul is pointing to the same reality: the covenant on Sinai and the giving of the law marked the beginning of a special stage in God's overall plan. With the coming of Christ, the law *as it had functioned*

9. See Matt 5:17 for Jesus' own statement that he has come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it.

in that stage has now been fulfilled in Christ, and neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ is "under the law" in the sense of this special dispensation. Christ has accomplished what the law itself could not, and brought us fully into relationship with the living God as his sons and daughters through the Spirit.[10]

How Paul Upholds the Law

Paul seems to say some critical things about the law that might lead us to conclude that he has set himself against the law of Moses and considers it a baleful influence. He says that the written code "kills" (2 Cor 3:6); and that "the law brings wrath" (Rom 4:15) and "condemnation" (2 Cor 3:9); and he concludes that "now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive" (Rom 7:6).

Yet Paul is quite clear that the law is a good gift from God, holy in itself. "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! … For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good" (Rom 7:7, 11-12). Rather than setting faith against the law, Paul claims that in the gospel he preaches he is upholding the law: "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law" (Rom 3:31). Paul asks whether the law is

10. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 149, ties together the key Pauline passages that identify the role of the law before the coming of Christ: "In short, the law as *gramma* in 2 Corinthians 3 matches the Sinai of slavery in Galatians 4 and the law as the ally of sin in Romans 5. In each case the focus is on the negative side of the law's role in the epoch which stretched from Moses to Christ."

somehow opposed to the true and merciful promises of God and answers this question decisively in the negative: "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not" (Gal 3:21).

The Role of the Law and its Limitations in Paul's Teaching

Paul's apparently conflicting statements on the value of the law can only be reconciled when we recognize that the negative consequences of the law for Israel came about because of God's good plan. For a season, leading up to the coming of Christ, the law played a special role to prepare us for Christ and his redemption. Good and holy in itself, the coming of the law revealed and even provoked condemnation and death.

At this point we need to return to Paul's conviction about the essential problem. *Sin* is the problem that needs to be resolved, and death as sin's consequence. For Paul, the problem since the sin of Adam is that the entire human race, Jew and Gentile alike, was under the power of sin and so subject to death. This was true even when there was no positive law that outlined how we were to live. The Lord prepared the way for Christ first of all by his call and promise to Abraham. And this promise was met essentially *by faith* before the covenant of circumcision was given and before the law of Moses was promulgated. By this, God was showing that his deliverance of his people was meant to be met by faith and trust in God.

Why then the law? Paul asks. What did it add? The law of Moses genuinely revealed the way that God's people were intended to "walk." The Decalogue played a central role as

constituting the essential content of the covenant. The law was truly good, righteous, and holy, even if some elements in it were concessions to human weakness rather than expressions of God's full plan (see Matt 19:8).

The law truly is for Israel and for the Gentiles a lamp for their feet and a light for their path (Ps 119:105). It continues to teach us who God is and who we are in him; it instructs us in how we are to worship the Lord; and it shows us how we are to conduct ourselves toward one another. In all this, the law is a great blessing.[11] But the law was unable to deliver us from the power and sovereignty of sin or bring us back from death to life. "For if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Gal 3:21-22).[12] In fact, not only could the law not deliver us from sin, it even served to reveal and provoke the power of sin at work in us. "Law came in, to increase the trespass" (Rom 5:20). And by revealing sin to be sin, the law acted as our judge and brought condemnation. "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me?

11. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 142, sums up the positive use of the law in Israel: "The law was given as an act of God's magnanimity for Israel's benefit, probably as a means of dealing with Israel's sin, and certainly with constrictive consequences, but basically to protect, instruct, and discipline."

12. According to Steve Clark, *The Old Testament in the Light of the New*, 313: "The law of Moses, the written code, gave instructions about how to live and death penalties for not living accordingly. However, it lacked something; namely, a provision for giving the people an adequate forgiveness of sins … and the ability then to keep the commandments and live the law." Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 150: "This is not, then, to say that the Torah is bad; merely that, in the face of divine covenant judgment on Israel, one cannot say that the Torah, and the attempt to keep it, provide the way to life."

By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin" (Rom 7:13).[13]

When explaining this use of the law in this stage of God's plan, I liken it to a very sick patient who is fed with good, rich food. The food itself is good and meant to bring blessing and life. But if the patient is so sick that he cannot keep the food down, this "good food" only makes him sicker and shows him to be sick and in need of healing. The food is good but can't heal the patient. But then the problem is not with the food but with the patient who is sick unto death. Likewise, the law is good but cannot deal with the sin-problem. Instead, the same Scriptures that propose the law also point to the coming of the Messiah—Jesus—who will deal with the sin problem and rescue us from death. "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Rom 3:21-22).

The Ongoing Role of the Law

The role of the law since the coming of Jesus the Messiah is an enormously controverted and complex question that I cannot hope to address here in a thorough way. What I want to show, however, is that if we recognize the stages of God's

13. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 134-35, concludes that this role for the law was clear from the Old Testament witness itself: "We need hardly ask from where it was that Paul learned this role of the law in defining transgression and making people conscious of transgression. It is implicit in the law codes as a whole.... The law's function in defining sin and making people conscious of sin was not an issue."

plan with respect to the law, then certain puzzling things that we see in Paul (and more widely in the New Testament) become more understandable.

Clearly for Paul neither Jew nor Gentile is "under the law" in the way that the Jews were "under the law" before the coming of Christ. "So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith" (Gal 3:24-26, ESV). Christ has come and everything is new, though not everything is jettisoned or cast off. Instead, Paul upholds the goodness of the law which is brought to completion and fulfillment in Christ.[14]

Paul's summary statement in Romans 8 is enormously significant for grasping how Paul sees the law fulfilled in Christ:

> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8:3-4)

The law of Moses was incapable of dealing with sin and death, but God the Father provided the remedy by sending his own Son. By his perfect sacrifice the Son "condemned sin in the flesh" so that "the just requirement of the law might be

14. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 645: "The coming of Christ and of faith in Christ had brought emancipation from the law in its temporary, constrictive function (Gal 3:19–4:7).... But nothing that Paul says indicates that for him Christ had brough emancipation from the law as God's rule of right and wrong, as God's guidelines for conduct."

fulfilled in us." This comes through the Spirit by whose action we have been rescued from the dominion of sin and by whose power we can now conquer over sin. But the gift of the Spirit, and the way of life in the Spirit, is not *another* way of life distinct from the law of God. Rather, the law is actually fulfilled in us through the gift of the Spirit. This accords with the profound promise, given by Ezekiel, of the gift of the Spirit given in the heart so that we can keep the law from the heart: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezek 36:26-27). We are no longer "under the law" in terms of its stage in God's plan but we are called to keep the law of God as fulfilled in Jesus.[15]

Paul's positive references to the commands of the Decalogue show that the law of God remains in place for believers in Jesus (Rom 13:8-10; Eph 6:2). The commandments of the Decalogue are now summed up in the command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Gal 5:14), but those individual commands remain in force.[16] By the power of the Spirit now at work in us we are

15. Mark Kinzer sums up the new reconfiguration of the law (the Torah) around Jesus in this way: "While the Torah loses none of its commanding force, the new era inaugurated by Jesus and embodied communally in his *ekklesia* radically re-centers the Torah's demands…. What Jesus adds is not a *new law* but the gift of the Holy Spirit which will enable Israel to obey the true intent of the Torah given at Sinai in the way that Jesus himself does." *Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen: The Resurrected Messiah, the Jewish People, and the Land of Promise* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 166.
16. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 656: "[Paul's] concern was not to abstract or separate the love command from the rest, but to emphasize the 'whole law' as still obligatory for believers (Gal 5:14). To fulfill the law of Christ was to fulfill the law."

called to "put to death" everything that is opposed to God's law and walk in the way of the Spirit (Rom 8:13). For if "the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot" (Rom 8:7), then clearly the mind set on the Spirit can and does submit to God's law.

How the law was kept in the apostolic generation of the Church when the majority of the apostles were still living is not given in detail, but we can grasp the general outlines. The ruling in Acts 15, that Gentile believers in Jesus were not to be required to keep the whole law (that is, to practice circumcision and all that this entailed) only makes sense if it was still incumbent on Jewish believers in Jesus to keep the law and continue to identify as Jews. Paul's circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3) was not an abandonment of his own approach, but a principled decision to bring Timothy into the fullness of the covenant of Abraham because of his Jewish heritage.

For our purposes here, the central conclusion is to recognize that in Paul's writings on the law he was treating the law in terms of its special stage—and that stage reached its completion with the coming of Christ. Those in Christ, both Jew and Gentile, are no longer "under the law" but have "died to the law" in terms of its temporary role in preparing for Christ. But Paul neither condemns the law nor casts it off. For Paul, the law is now fulfilled in Christ through the life and power of the Spirit, with the Jewish and Gentile members of the Church living out the law in distinctive ways.

CHAPTER 10

Covenant Communities

Msgr. Robert Oliver

Covenant communities are a new form of Christian life that has connected Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Free Church confessions around the world. This contemporary inspiration is best understood within the long and colorful history of "movements" in the Christian churches together with the theology that undergirds our understanding of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. In appreciation of the profound role of Steve Clark in this movement of God's grace, this short paper looks at the these communities through the eyes of two great leaders during the years when they have been formed and grown, Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) and Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI).

Historical Foundations

At the "First World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities," held in Rome in May 1998, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger observed that:

> …. apostolic movements appear in ever new forms throughout history—necessarily, because they are the Holy Spirit's answer to the changing situations in which the Church lives…. One looking back at the history of the Church will be able to observe with gratitude that it has managed time and again in spite of all difficulties to make room for the great new awakenings.[1]

Church fathers like Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, and Augustine of Hippo witnessed to the growth of communities formed by the faithful in the nascent Church. During the sixth and seventh centuries, the first great expansion of communities of the Christian faithful occurred, mostly among those connected to monasteries. This early movement became known as "Missionary Monasticism," a first great wave that received the support of the papacy from Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) to Pope Gregory III (731–741).

A second great wave of communities followed a century later under the influence of the monastery at Cluny. The "Cluniac reform" aimed for a renewal of the whole Church, inspiring all members of the Church to embrace a way of living the Gospel in a radical, new form, one adapted to new conditions in the Church and in society. Cardinal Ratzinger made a foundational observation in his address to the World Congress, underlining that renewed forms of life always lead to new inspirations for the *vita apostolica*, new ways to answer the call to the Gospel mission amid new challenges and needs. During these years Christians came together in small communities across Europe, helping one another to follow Christ,

1. Joseph Ratzinger, "The Theological Locus of Ecclesial Movements, *Communio*, 25 (Fall 1998), 496-97.

living the Christian life in radical fullness. Their response led to an explosive new apostolic life, which came to include the great missions of Patrick in Ireland, Augustine in the British Isles, the Irish monks in Germany, and Cyril and Methodius to the Slavic world.

A third wave of new communities was an important part of the many great renewals during the Middle Ages, especially in connection with the new mendicant religious orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans. These orders revitalized consecrated life with a sweeping vision for the Gospel life, a vision that was addressed to all Christians. Cardinal Ratzinger remarked:

> [Francis] wanted simply to call the Church back to the whole gospel, to gather the "new people," to renew the Church with the gospel. The two meanings of the word "evangelical life" are inextricably intertwined: whoever lives the gospel in poverty, giving up possession and progeny, must at the same time proclaim that gospel.[2]

Laypeople formed many new communities connected to the new religious orders. They wanted to live the Gospel life and to evangelize the people among whom they lived in the quickly changing social environment of western Europe. To live radical lives and to give themselves to the Church's mission, they developed new forms of community. Some were eventually recognized formally by Church authority, such as the "third orders" and "confraternities."

2. Ratzinger, "The Theological Locus of Ecclesial Movements," 493.

Unsurprisingly, tensions arose in many places during these years and local synods and councils began to pass the first laws restricting laypeople from forming associations in the Church. A notable exception was Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254), whose authoritative commentary upheld a right of the faithful to establish such associations within the Church. But it would take many centuries before this right was formally accepted by the Second Vatican Council.

Beginning in the 15th century, a fourth great wave of new communities greatly influenced the worldwide expansion of the Christian faith to the Americas, Africa and Asia. This great missionary movement was again inspired by members of the faithful who wished to live new forms of the *vita evangelica* connected to a renewed zeal for the *vita apostolica*. New "missionary congregations" were soon formed to support their work for mission to continents not yet reached by the Christian faith.

This historical perspective sheds a helpful light on an unexpected quality of a new wave of Christian communities in the middle part of the twentieth century. Up until that time, communities of lay people were almost always connected to monasteries and to religious orders, inspired by a spirituality and a divine call to live in the world in new ways. Following the destruction wrought by World War II, a new, great flourishing of lay movements began with groups like Catholic Action, Cursillo, the Christian Family Movement, the Charismatic Renewal, and the Sword of the Spirit. Lay renewal communities were formed around the world proposing new ways for the Christian faithful to live a Gospel life, joined together in community and undertaking mission together.

The lay character of these movements was the defining feature of this new wave of communities. Before Vatican II, the *Code of Canon Law* stated that "only associations erected or approved by ecclesiastical authority exist in the Church" (can. 686). As the future Pope Benedict XVI stated at the 1998 Pentecost gathering, however, "every irruption of the Holy Spirit always upsets human plans."[3] In 1965 the bishops gathered for the Second Vatican Council declared that associations established by the faithful are connected to the divine will for the Church and are a true "sign of communion and the unity of the Church in Christ." These communities are truly "ecclesial."[4]

With these foundations, Vatican II taught that "if the right relation with ecclesiastical authority is preserved, it is lawful for laypeople to found and run associations and to join those that exist."[5] In 1983, this principle was acknowledged and guaranteed in the new *Code of Canon Law*, which states: "The Christian faithful are at liberty to found and govern associations for charitable and religious purposes or for the promotion of the Christian vocation in the world; they are free to hold meetings to pursue these purposes in common."[6]

After identifying the main outlines of this rich history, Cardinal Ratzinger encouraged ecclesial movements and new communities to deepen their understanding of the unfolding of God's plan by examining the theological foundations

3. Ratzinger, "The Theological Locus of Ecclesial Movements," 481.
4. Decree on the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 18-19.
5. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 19.
6. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 215.

established by Pope John Paul II shortly after the new *Code of Canon Law* had been issued.

Theological Foundations

The official recognition of communities of the faithful in Church law is firmly rooted in Christian theology. The theological science of "ecclesiology" is the study of God's revelation (the "logos") of the nature and mission of the Church (the "ecclesia"). The word "ecclesia" comes from a Greek verb signifying a "call" (*kalein*) from God. The Church is the response given by the people who hear God's call with obedient faith and participate in the mission of salvation given by Jesus Christ.

In his 1988 "Letter to the Laity," *Christifideles laici* (CL), St. Pope John Paul II wrote that the "ecclesiology of communion" will provide a solid foundation for understanding the place of lay communities in the Church today: "The profound reason that justifies and demands the lay faithful's forming of lay groups comes from a theology based on ecclesiology."[7] Three principles define this ecclesiology of communion: mystery, communion, and mission. The Church lives within the "mystery" of the Triune God, is established in the world as a "communion" of persons, and is of its essence a "mission," a people sent by the Holy Spirit to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The call to form Christian communities is a profound expression of this understanding of the Church, a call that the Holy Father stated can

7. *Christifideles laici*, 29e.

only be fully understood "from inside the Church's mystery of communion."[8]

The "mystery" of the Church is foreshadowed in our Lord's words, "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5).[9] Believers are joined to Christ, the true vine, and they become the instrument through which the Lord communicates the divine life of the Holy Trinity. John Paul II wrote that because the lay faithful are "made one body with Christ and are established among the People of God … they carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world."[10] They share fully in the one vocation to holiness and in the call to evangelize the societies in which the Church lives.[11]

The heart of this mystery is "communion" in the love in God. God's people are "called to relive the very communion of God and to manifest it and communicate it in history, in mission."[12] The very life and love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is freely offered to all those born of water and the Holy Spirit. Each is called to the radical newness of the Christian life and God's own Spirit has come to dwell personally in their hearts, consecrating the faithful as a spiritual temple and making them sharers in the mission of salvation entrusted by the Father to Jesus.[13]

The "mission" of God's church is universal, and it is essential to every Christian vocation and to every community formed

8. *Christifideles laici*, 8.
9. All Scripture citations are from the RSV unless otherwise noted.
10. *Christifideles laici*, 9.
11. *Christifideles laici*, 16-17.
12. *Christifideles laici*, 9.
13. *Christifideles laici*, 10, 13.

by God's people. Every follower of Jesus Christ is called, John Paul II exhorted, to the "mission to communion." They are commissioned to this apostolate by the Lord Jesus himself, the one who has united himself to them as Head. In baptism, Christ anoints the faithful with the Holy Spirit, who in turn pours out upon them special gifts.[14]

Bringing these ecclesial dimensions together, the pope asserted: "From the acceptance of these charisms, arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world … in the freedom of the Holy Spirit."[15] These foundations underlie the teaching of Vatican II that the Church of Christ is "missionary by its very nature," having its origin in the mission entrusted by the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit. This mission is given to all Christians, a call to live as a sign of communion in the world and to lead all people into union with God and with his people. In this way "communion begets communion" and the Church lives a "mission on behalf of communion…. Communion and mission are so profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other."[16]

Pope John Paul offered the ecclesiology of communion as the essential theological foundation for understanding "the formation of groups of the lay faithful for spiritual purposes and apostolic work."[17] These communities are a response to a divine call, and their role in the Church is to live as a "sign" that manifests the "communion" and "mission" of the Church.

14. *Christifideles laici*, 20.
15. *Christifideles laici*, 24.
16. *Christifideles laici*, 32.
17. *Christifideles laici*, 29.

The *Letter to the Laity* cited St. Paul, who wrote that "the love of Christ impels us" (2 Cor 5:14, NAB), because God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). The members of each community are to stive to manifest a life of communion in their relationships with one another, generously calling all people into the gift of divine communion.

In his own *Address* to the 1998 World Congress, John Paul II proclaimed again that new communities today meet the "urgent need for a strong testimony and a Christian formation that is solid and deep in today's world," finishing with a stirring summons to respond to the Lord's call in our own time:

> What a great need there is today for mature Christian personalities who are aware of their baptismal identity, of their call and mission in the Church and in the world! What great need there is of living Christian communities! This is where the ecclesial movements and new communities appear: they are the answer which has been raised up by the Holy Spirit to this dramatic challenge at the end of the millennium. *You are this providential answer!*[18]

Covenant communities partake in this rich history of inspirations of the Holy Spirit, forming a contemporary expression of an ecclesiology rooted in God's call to communion and mission. In these communities the Christian faithful seek to

18. Pope John Paul II, "Address to the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities (30 May 1998)," in Pontifical Council for Laity, *Movements in the Church, World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, 27-29 May 1998* (Vatican City: Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1999), 223.

respond to the divine call, accepting charisms given by the Holy Spirit to live a radical Gospel life and fruitful mission in this time of history. They unite themselves, seeking to live at the heart of the Church as communion and encouraging one another to strive for an authentic and lasting experience of the love of the Triune God. In a time where our contemporaries so often experience division and loneliness, this new form of Christian life focuses on developing deep personal relationships and helping brothers and sisters in Christ to answer the call of God's love. In these ways, the members of covenant communities seek the gift of unity proclaimed by St. Paul to the community of Ephesus:

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us. For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph 1:3-10)

CHAPTER 11

A Reflection on *Man and Woman in Christ* by Stephen B. Clark: Where We've Come in the Last Forty Years

Jim Kolar

In the iconic film *The Wizard of Oz,* the main character is beginning to realize that she and her dog have been transported to a different land. "Toto," she says to him, "I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." A lot of people have had a similar experience to Dorothy. Things have changed enormously since Steve Clark wrote his book *Man and Women in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in light of Scriptures and the Social Sciences,* and unlike Dorothy and her dog, not changes for the good.

The title of Clark's book is not catchy—not the kind that would reach out and grab your attention. It doesn't cause you to say to yourself, "I've got to get that book and read it." Nor is the title pithy and easily memorized or repeated. Besides

that, it is a big book, over seven hundred pages long. Those who know Steve Clark would smile at all of this, because the title so aptly captures much of not only the book but something of the heart and person of the author. The book is dispassionate in its style, thorough, balanced, well researched and clearly written. And while the author is not polemical and shrill, he is quite clear on the matter at hand and its importance not only for Christian life but for human life. He covers a great deal of territory in the book: key Scriptural texts and how interpretation of the texts has developed or devolved over the years; what social sciences have to say about the area of men's and women's roles; the importance of understanding technological society and the enormous impact technology has had on how human life works; the emergence of a set of ideologies and their impact on how people understand and think; and lastly a whole set of issues or factors involved in how to think about a Christian approach to the whole area today. That is a lot of territory to cover.

There is a central overarching theme that underlies the work as a whole, and that has to do with the vital importance of God's plan for the human race. That plan was inscribed into creation, and in particular into the creation of Adam and Eve—and their descendants. It has to do with the relation of man to woman, and of man and woman to their offspring. It further has to do with the way their life was to be put together and structured. The social structure that unfolded is a key part in the overall creational story.

I would like to meander a bit through a set of reflections having to do with Clark's book and some of the main themes in it.

In particular I would like to note that the issues of technology and ideology that Clark has identified have increasingly deepened their hold on the modern world, in ways that perhaps even he could not have imagined. I suspect that if a person time traveled from the 1950s, say, to 2022, and read the newspaper or watched the news they would be incredulous regarding what they were reading or hearing. And, of course the Christian churches are caught up in the midst of it all. And they are all struggling to find a way to respond. Clark is exceptionally prescient in both his diagnosis and in the remedy that he proposes.

In the 60's and early 70's there was more "discussion" about "roles" of men and women, with particular reference to the inherent evils of patriarchy and the systemic oppression of women. The solution for people through the years was to reject the outmoded and oppressive structures of patriarchy and allow women to do any job, hold any position or role that had been previously restricted to males. It was seen as a matter of justice and equality of rights. The religious and cultural basis for division of roles was dismissed as simply the product of a bygone historical period, and we were now able to see more clearly the truth of the matter. That discussion had its day, and now it has moved on to other matters. When younger people in the West hear about "roles" of men and women they tend to find it "quaint" and "peculiar." And of course, the underlying momentum has continued into new realms—same sex relationships, gender identity (56 possibilities for that one), gender-reassignment surgery and so on. As Dorothy said to her dog Toto when they landed in Oz: "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." No, indeed we're not.

Clark's book is about the roles of men and women, but it is about much more than that. Let's look for a moment at the Scriptural account. It begins of course in the book of Genesis—the account of the "beginnings." The story about Adam and Eve in the garden conversing with God in the cool of the day, and the tree in the center of the garden, and the serpent is located precisely within the context of the "creation" account. It does have to do with the reality that creation presupposes a Creator. There are some big, some very big questions afoot in all of this: Is it all really a creation or did it just somehow emerge on its own? If it all didn't just emerge on its own, then it brings into discussion the issue of a Creator—which raises the teleological question—why was this world created? Why was Adam created as a male? Why was Eve created as a female? The account in the story describes the creation of Adam and Eve—and a part of the account is their sameness, their difference and the telos of their relationship—being drawn to one another so as to become the source of new life. The serpent enters the picture and things begin to go sideways. But that doesn't vitiate the teleology of it all. As the story unfolds, we see the sorry plight of Adam and Eve as they discover that they really aren't the source of the true and the good, and see the result of believing that they were. The account goes on to describe the origin of fratricide and how that became the first instance of a bad relationship between brother and brother. The unraveling continues and results in the flood. And yet God intervenes, using a "righteous and just man" to begin again the human race. It then moves on the recreation account—God directly intervening to reconstruct the human race according to

his plan and design. As we know, in this reconstruction Abraham was a key figure.

Leon Kass, in his study of Genesis (*The Beginning of Wisdom*), spends a good deal of time on the Abrahamic narratives. He notes that in these narratives God was teaching Abraham about two things: 1) the meaning of being a husband, and 2) the meaning of being a father—a patriarch. And in this God was teaching Sarah: 1) the meaning of being a wife, and 2) the meaning of being a mother. The account of Cain and Abel was about the meaning of being brothers—by the graphic example of what happens when this goes awry. The account of Noah is another part of this familial narrative—the call and role of a father within a family. Clearly the creational account spends a great deal of effort and time on the whole area of men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.

Throughout these narratives there was revelation and instruction about all of these fundamental human realities. These accounts are a key part of the revelational content of Genesis. They have to do with God's creational intent for the human race—which in large part has to do with forming the "right" kind of environment for human life to be lived, formed and nurtured and passed on (and by graphically illustrating the tragic results when this didn't happen). And the context for this was a man and a woman living together in a certain way—a pattern in which men and women became a husband and a wife, a father and a mother. It was within this context that human life was to be conceived, formed and passed on. This family life was the basis of the broader family—the clan, the tribe

and later on the Nation as a whole. The further developments of "the people," the revelation of the law and the birth of a nation all came out of this familial reality. This was all founded on, indeed originated from, God's design for the human person, and how the human person was to live as one created in the image of a God who is personal and who lives in his very inner nature a life of union and fellowship.

It is this social structure that was an inherent dimension of how human beings lived and understood their lives. That is, until two other realities emerged that have had a great impact on modern life. In *Man and Women in Christ*, Clark identifies these two realities—technology and secondly, ideologies. These two realities have greatly shaped how modern life works, and how people understand themselves and the world in which they live. At its core, technology identifies "technique" as paramount, driving reality in modern life. Technology influences and shapes not only what a person does in life as a job or a career, but how a person approaches and lives his or her life. It has led, on the one hand, to a kind of broad-based functionalism—the key determinant in a person's life is what they "do," their function. This function determines where they live and how they spend most of their time and energy. Realities such as family, neighborhood, Church, state, etc. are subservient to what the person needs to do to fulfill their function.

Coupled with technology is the reality of ideologies—ways of looking at, interpreting and understanding the self and the world that the self inhabits. Marxism is perhaps the most well-known ideology. There is a whole raft of others operative

today. There is a kind of romanticism that is based on a person identifying not only with what they do, but with believing their deepest personal identity, located and centered in their feelings—that is, our feelings are the real "me," the deepest and most real dimension of who I am as an individual. This is closely related to what is called "expressive individualism," that the heart or core of the human person is the individual psychological experience of who they are, as mediated through their own emotional truths. There is, as well, the view that the human persons's sexuality is at the core of who they are. There is involved in this a basic repudiation of history as a source of any kind of authority and wisdom.

With a more Marxist bent, this becomes the conviction that external, objective truths are simply constructs designed by the powerful to intimidate and to harm (and to control and use) the weak. As Carl Trueman notes, "There is no great reality to which we are accountable" (*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*). The abandonment of all sacred order leaves culture without any foundation. Trueman further notes that both those who hold to a theocentric world view, and those who hold to a secular order based in Western history and culture lack a basis for a meaningful discussion with those who believe in neither the theocentric or the Western cultural perspective—because they do not acknowledge any transcendent authority by which morals and behavior can be justified. Alasdair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* notes that in the Aristotelian-Thomist approach a teleological view of human nature and moral action, a particular act can only be assessed in terms of its end—its *telos*. As McIntyre notes, "A basic repudiation of history as a

source of authority and wisdom has removed teleology from the story of mankind" (*After Virtue*). Another author notes that "the individual is given enormous latitude in fabricating his own particular private life—a kind of do-it-yourself universe" (Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind*). In a more colorful diagnosis George Gilder comments: "The liberationists have no idea where their program would take us. The movement is counseling us to walk off a cliff" (*Sexual Suicide*).

How technology and ideologies have impacted modern life is not restricted to roles of men and women or how leadership functions within the Christian churches. Their impact can be seen across a broad spectrum of life. Some arenas in which this impact can be seen are as follows.

1) European History

Expunging Christianity from its history: Winston Churchill proposed back in the 1940's that Europe could join together in a kind of alliance, a form of the "United States of Europe." More recently the European Union has been formed (trade policies, economic guidelines, common currency, juridical system to handle problems, etc.). They have been at work putting together a history as part of their European Union's constitution. The amazing thing about the drafts for this history is the complete excision of Christianity from its history. It's like it never happened—it has been sanitized out—even as an historical reality. John Paul II wrote a book entitled *Memory and Identity* in which he talked about how ignorance of the past undermines the truth of the future.

Church involvement: Ireland, which for many years was the engine that trained and formed missionaries for all over the world, now has very few clergy at all. Fifty years ago there were 12 seminaries and 6,000 seminarians; now there is one seminary and 70 seminarians for the entire country. Mexico which has an almost exclusively Catholic heritage, now has less than 10% of its people involved in the Church.

2) **"Keep your religious views to yourself"**

We see this in the culture wars in the U.S., over a whole raft of moral, hot button issues. An example: in a Southern state not too long ago there was a hot discussion about whether or not creationism or intelligent design should be included in the high school science curriculum along with evolution. Tom Brokaw, the newsman, was interviewing a university professor who was of the view that intelligent design should be included. With a great deal of impatience Brokaw said: "That's just a religious perspective," as if that were grounds for dismissing it. In other words, perspectives that originate in one's religious beliefs have no place in the public arena, so keep them to yourselves. This is not only the privatization of religion, it is the marginalizing of it. In every other human culture, religious beliefs have been the core, the foundation of the entire culture. To remove them willy nilly is to remove the very foundation.

3) **Life issues**

This includes the beginning of life, end of life, what constitutes "human life," and genetic engineering. For all of human history there was a clear understanding about a whole set of things:

That human sexuality had an intrinsic connection with bringing new life into the world. It has only been in the last number of years that this understanding has changed significantly. Now sexuality is mainly considered a mode of relating.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding *Roe vs Wade* was a momentous one in which the justices stated that the decision about abortion was the responsibility of the state governments. Nonetheless the majority of Americans favor the individual's right to choose abortion.

That life needed to end with natural death and that the medical profession should do nothing to harm or hurt the person. Now euthanasia is a matter of policy in some places and discussion in others.

The genome project: For what reason and to what extent can genes be manipulated to produce what results?

4) **Gender issues**

It is certainly the case that the pressure of these modern ideologies has pushed the boundaries of the discussion far beyond family life or Church order. Abigail Favale in the *Genesis of Gender* states that the central cultural struggle of the 21st century is the relationship between technology and the human person. The basis for this claim is the attempt to separate

gendered social roles and attributes from embodiment—that there is no intrinsic connection between our physiology and our interests, attributes or social roles. Liberation is viewed as an escape from our sexual embodiment. Artificial birth control and legalized abortion are indelibly associated with a woman's ability to attain full personhood with control over fertility. This is needed to overcome the sexual asymmetry between men and women. Women then, like men, could live as sexual beings without carrying the burden of fertility. Favale asserts that it was this connection between contraception and abortion that drove the feminist shift toward gender. The overall goal is to divorce femaleness from the concept of women—severing bodily sex from procreative potential. This unmooring of reproduction from sex and our bodies through technology would be the way to gain control over nature. The body then would not be the foundation of personal identity but rather a lifeless tool.

Robert George names this attempt "gnostic liberalism" (*First Things,* December 2016). Gnosticism sharply divides the material/bodily from the spiritual/mental. The latter is what really matters—it is really the person. The body is only to serve the real "person." If we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies, then we can think that we enjoy absolute power over all creation. In the traditional Christian view, the living body is not something we merely inhabit—it is an integral part of our personal reality. Sexual identity is an essential part of who we are. In George's words "Changing sex is a metaphysical impossibility because it is a biological impossibility."

5) **Modern art:**

The classical understanding of art was that it is a powerful means of communicating something significant about reality—that it is a means of representing truth. Art was thought of as a powerful means to shape our thoughts, move our emotions, and enlarge our imaginations. In modern art, there is hostility toward anything that could be considered an objective standard. Examples include Marcel Duchamp's rework of the Mona Lisa, putting a mustache on her; or Duchamp's painting of a commercially produced urinal; Jackson Pollack dropping paint randomly on a canvass; Andy Warhol painting Campbell Soup cans; artists exhibiting junk art, or creating it from objects found along the way such as bricks, broken glass, crushed aluminum cans; Andres Serrano's photo of a crucifix in a jar of urine.

In music, John Cage's piece entitled "4-33 presents a pianist who sits at the piano gazing at on open score, his hands suspended above the keyboard, who does this for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, and then shuts the score and leaves the stage. Luigi Russalo recorded the sound of valves opening and closing, pistons going up and down, the howl of power saws. This shows a view of art that is "characterized by attack on authority, ridicule of anything established, distortion of objects, indifferent to clear meaning, violence to the human form, and return to primitive elements of sensation" (*Dawn to Decadence,* Jacques Barzun).

6) **Education:**

In the late 1970s a protest at a major university in California proclaimed that "Western Civ has got to go." Course offerings at many universities ceased to be a curriculum—which is a fixed series of courses required for graduation—and became instead a kind of smorgasbord. One university catalogue has 50-some majors, 31 areas of concentration, 100s of electives, offers a Doctorate in Sensuality that includes courses in Niceness and Meanness, Mutual Pleasurable Stimulation of the Human Nervous System, and is described by some as the Academy of Carnal Knowledge. In the words of H.G. Wells: "Certain ideas are so outrageous that only an intellectual would believe them." Or from William Buckley Jr.: "I'd rather be governed by the first 2000 people in the Boston phone book than by the faculty of Harvard." Education is governed by "distrust attached to anything that retained a shadow of authoritativeness—old people, old ideas, old conceptions of what a leader or a teacher was meant to be."

7) **Marriage and family life:**

According to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, in 1960 45% of U.S. households were two parents and kids; in 1980, it was 30.8%; in 2000, it was 23.5% (less than one in four). Illegitimacy rates in inner cities are over 90%. There are numerous studies about the impact of fatherlessness. In a recent survey by David Popenoe, only 16% of young adults saw having children as an important part of married life. His

conclusion: "If the family trends of recent decades are extended into the future, the result will be not only growing uncertainty within marriage, but the gradual elimination of marriage in favor of casual liaisons oriented to adult experimentation and self-fulfillment. The problem with this scenario is that children will be harmed, adults will probably be no happier, and the social order will collapse."

To complicate matters even further, there's growing controversy about what exactly is a "family." Perhaps it's a loose collection of rights-bearing individuals. "However you define family, that's what we mean by family values" (Barbara Bush—quoted in *How Now Shall We Live*).

8) Continued decline in Church involvement in the U.S. and in Western Europe.

In the United States in 1937, 73% of the population were Church members. In 1999, 70% were Church members; in 2020, 47% claimed Church membership (Gallop Poll, March 29th, 2021). The percentage of those who claim no religious affiliation continues to rise—especially among those under forty. Church attendance continues to decline. The number of baptisms and marriages continues to decline. The age at which young people disengage from participation in a church continues to be younger and younger. Belief in traditional Christian teaching such as the reality of heaven, hell, divinity of Jesus, etc., continues to decline. A study by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton concluded that the best descriptor of young people's religious beliefs would be "moralistic, therapeutic

deism" (*Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Experience of American Teen Agers*). Other ways to describe this would be emotivism, relativism, and expressive individualism.

We live in an era that is witnessing the passing of one age and the birth of another. As some have commented, it is the end of "Christendom" but not the end of "Christianity"—Christendom was the culture in the West from the early middle ages through the late middle ages. It was the blend of Judaism, Christianity, Roman law, and Greek philosophy. Beginning with the Enlightenment it has been undergoing a process of progressive disintegration and dismemberment. There are still vestiges of it, especially in places like the heartland of America, but it is rapidly being extirpated by the dominant trends and ideologies of our time.

> Previous civilizations have been overthrown from without by the incursion of barbarian hordes. Christendom has dreamed up its own dissolution in the minds of its own intellectual elite. Our barbarians are home products, indoctrinated by public expense, and urged on by the media systematically stage by stage, dismantling Christendom, depreciating and deprecating all its values. The whole social structure is now tumbling down, dethroning its God, undermining all its certainties (Malcolm Muggeridge, *The End of Christendom*).

History—like all things human—has cycles of birth, maturing, and decay. We happen to be living in a time of great change that cuts across all aspects and dimensions of life. It is a very complicated process with roots that go back hundreds of years. Our destiny is not in "this age," but we travel through "it":

this age that we live in, this world that we live in, is passing away. We have no lasting home here. As Scripture says, we are sojourners, travelers, resident aliens. There is no permanence here; it is like a cloth that is wearing out. When you are young and full of energy and most of your life is in front of you, that may seem like a far distant truth. At my age, it isn't so far or so distant. Of course the fundamental reason why Scripture teaches us this is so that we focus on what is eternal, what lasts forever, what is of intrinsic value and worth.

However just because we live in a transient, passing age, doesn't mean that this age is unimportant. It is extraordinarily important. How we deal with these passing realities builds a foundation that will endure for eternity. In other words, the kind of person we become in living in this age will determine how and where we will spend the eternal age that follows.

"The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person" (Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, letter to Fr. Henri DeLubac, 1968). John Paul II was a prolific thinker and writer—his published materials are extraordinarily diverse and comprehensive. It is somewhat dangerous to try to condense all of his thought into one or two points. Having said that, I think a good case can be made that what he saw and experienced in Poland under the Nazis and the Communists was the culmination of the process begun in the Enlightenment that resulted in the loss of the meaning and dignity of the human person. The dismantling of a Christian worldview resulted not just in the loss of God and the loss of a theocentric culture, but it resulted in the loss of an

objective and solid framework within which to understand the meaning and dignity of the human person. He saw it as a profound crisis of culture, rooted in the very idea of the human. There was a loss of the objective truth and meaning of being a human being. The pursuit of freedom untethered from moral truth results in self destruction. For if there is only my truth and your truth and neither one of us recognizes an objective, transcendent truth by which to settle our differences, then either you will impose your power on me or I will impose my power on you. Nietzsche, the great mad prophet of the 19th century got at least that right. The false humanism of freedom misconstrued as, "I did it my way," inevitably leads to freedom's decay and then to perversion.

We are faced with the question of "man," created in the "image and likeness of God" as the fundamental creational reality. And this implicates the meaning of the human person.

1. Our origin, source and destiny, is "in" God—we came from God, not from undirected evolution, not by accident or cosmic chance. Our origin, our source, is in God and from God. He fashioned and formed us and breathed life into us. There is a delightful Jewish story: before the soul leaves heaven and is embodied, an angel places his finger over our lips making the crease that is there saying "don't forget where you came from"—and that's why when we are trying to remember something we purse our lips and put our finger there.
2. We are capable of knowing the truth, choosing the good and loving the beautiful. God created us like himself—con-

scious, free, able to know the truth, to choose the good and to love the beautiful. This is characterized by our ability, our capacity, to not only enter into ourselves via self-consciousness but to enter into the whole of reality with our mind, will and desires—to transcend ourselves.

3. We are a two dimensional being—matter and spirit—joined in one reality. God made us of earth and of the spirit—matter and the spiritual—in two dimensions, living in, as it were, two realities joined together. The temptation throughout history has been to deny the truth of one or the another—angelism or animalism.
4. We are male and female—a complementarity, a reality that reflects something of the perfection of the creator. Gender is a creational reality: God is not a gender, either male nor female. Males and females are not incomplete models of the human; their difference reflects something of the perfection and wholeness of God.
5. We are created for "communion"—we discover who we are and what our fulfillment is in and through relationships. God created us in his image and likeness so we could become like him—so we can relate with him, be part of his family, his household, an eternal sharing of life.

Here we face the reality of freedom, the high destiny of freedom and its great temptation to deny who we are, to deny our dependence, and to create ourselves. The Fall shattered the likeness. We are the broken image. We have lost sight of the high calling and the innate dignity in which we were created. We cannot understand who we are as human persons apart

from understanding who Christ is (the perfect revelation of both man and God).

The Catholic Church "holds that in the Lord can be found the key, the focal point and goal of man, as well as of all human history" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* 10). "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. Christ, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (*Redemptor Hominis,* 10).

"The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God, for man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it, and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to his creator" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 19). "In Christ … God has revealed himself fully to mankind and has definitely drawn close to him. At the same time in Christ, man has acquired full awareness of his dignity, of the heights to which he is raised, of the surpassing worth of his own humanity and the meaning of his existence" (*Redemptor Hominis*, 11).

Bringing Christianity into the age that is being birthed. We live in a changing of the ages—one culture is passing away and another one is in the process of being birthed. All human cultures have their season and then they pass away. In the year 410, the news was brought to Augustine in Carthage that Rome had been sacked. His response: "All earthly cities are vulnerable; men build them and men destroy them. There is

however the City of God which men did not build and cannot destroy and which is everlasting." The task in the changing of the ages is to carry the life and truth that is in Christ into the age that is being birthed.

The task of carrying the life of Christ into the age that is being birthed is to be a bridge over which the life of Christ can be transported into the new age, a bridge that serve as a carrier of the plan and purpose of God. "He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:15-17). The point of these verses is the supremacy of Christ—all things were created through him and for him and all things come together, hold together, in Christ. The root of the Greek term for *word—logos*—means to "gather together, to collect, to bring together." All things in the universe come together in the word, in Christ. All things "cohere" in Christ: they hold together, stick together, in him. "Coherence" is only found in Christ. The purpose, meaning, intelligibility of anything is found only "in Christ."

Adherence to the Word brings about coherence in life. The "home" for everything is found in Christ. The key that unlocks the meaning of everything is Christ. Adherence to Christ, being rightly related to Christ, brings about coherence in life. Our life only comes together, fits together, stays together "in Christ." Apart from Christ our life "disintegrates"—it cannot hold together.

The communal nature of the work as a carrier of Christianity into the new millennium. And, of course those who believe in Christ and who have received the Holy Spirit are now "members" of Christ—living parts of his Body—a Body that lives by and manifests the life of its "head." It is this body that witnesses to the life of its Lord. Christology—who Christ is—is the basis and foundation of ecclesiology—what the Church is. A key dimension of what is to be carried over the bridge in the years to come has to do with what the Church is. A variety of authors have written about what this bridge needs to be. Alistair McIntyre in *After Virtue* analyzes the struggle going on between competing moral systems in our day. He concludes by positing that what we're waiting for is a "new St. Benedict"—who is the father of Western monasticism. Benedict founded an intentional community of Christians who gathered together to dedicate their lives to Christ and who together formed a common, communal way of life, a way of life that carried Christianity into the new culture. Thomas Cahill in *How the Irish Saved Civilization* makes the same point—using Irish monasticism as the carrier. Here were men who gathered together to dedicate their lives to Christ, and who lived a common, committed way of life. In *Twilight of American Culture,* the author—whose collection of information is vastly superior to his insight into the information—suggests that new forms of monasticism are needed to form the basis for a new culture. More recently Rod Dreher has written *The Benedict Option*, which is about how intentional communities of dedicated Christians are the bridge by which the truth of Christ can be passed from the old culture into the new one.

This is the point at the heart of Clark's work. In the New Testament there is a set of teachings on Christian Personal relationships. These teachings lay out the way Christians are to relate to one another, based on their common life together in Christ. Their life together forms a "corporate body" in which they are all living parts. The relationships they have with one another are centered on their relationship with Christ. It is in fact Christ who is living in them, and their relationships with one another are a living testimony to the reality that they indeed are living together "in" Christ. It is this living together in Christ that gives evidence that Christ is indeed present and alive. Jesus says in the Gospel of John: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 17:34-35).

This understanding of the nature of the Christian community as being a people, with a concrete way of life, in which relationships with one another are to reflect the reality of Christ's life, alive and active in them, is not just a "theological construct" that exists apart from reality. It is based on the fulfillment of creational realities that are inscribed in human beings from the beginning. Clark points out, for example, that every social grouping needs to have an ordered way of living together and relating with one another, some kind of structure—a way to order relationships and divide responsibilities, handle problems and govern life together. These social structures are intended to support and order the relationships between human beings. These structures exist because human

beings are ordered toward being in relationship with other human beings.

We are "social" by our nature. This is not simply a matter of relationships being a good thing to have. It is in the context of human relationships that our "identity" is shaped and formed. We do not in fact discover who we are in the midst of a "splendid isolation" but rather our identity is formed and shaped in the midst of a context of personal relationships. "True identity does not precede relationships but is instead produced by relationships" (*Man and Woman in Christ*, 589). And as Carl Trueman notes: "Selves are socially constructed. Each of us in a sense is the sum total of the network of relationships we have with others" (*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*). The creational realities of man and woman, husband and wife, and parents and children are not merely culturally conditioned phenomena, but are a key part of the pattern of how human life is designed to be lived. As such they are main building blocks of how the Church is to understand herself. A family is not fundamentally an "institution"—it is a web of relationships in which its members are knit together in a common life of love and service to one another. Nor is the Church fundamentally an institution—it is a web of relationships in which its members are knit together in a common life of love and service to one another based on their life in Christ.

Social structures are not an easy sell in Western culture today. The dominant forces in the culture are moving farther and farther away from these. I suspect that many in the Christian world would say that we can't rewind the clock. It is not without good reason that near the close of the book Clark

emphasizes that "Christianity in contemporary society will need to draw from people a higher level of commitment to the Lord and to the Christian community if it is to survive at all" (*Man and Woman in Christ*, 618). That certainly would seem to be the case. Clark then makes a particularly telling comment, one that identifies clearly what the real issue is: "The crucial issue is not whether the restoration of Christian social structure is feasible. The issue is whether Christianity is feasible without a restoration of a genuine Christian social structure" (*Man and Woman in Christ*, 618). The conviction behind that statement has not waned over the years. It has been over forty years since Clark wrote this book on men and women. During these forty years he has continued to be active in writing and teaching about various aspects of Christian renewal and how to build a bridge into the age that is being birthed. As a part of his work he has been active in helping to form these environments of Christian life that involve "the restoration of a genuine Christian social structure." I have known and learned from Steve Clark for over forty years, and it is a distinct privilege to be able to express appreciation for his gifting, insight, faithfulness, and hard work over these many years.

CHAPTER 12

Heavenly Citizenship

Luis Arce

But our commonwealth is in heaven,
and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ
—(Phil 3:20)[1]

Introduction

The clarity of Steve Clark's writing and teaching has always impressed me. He analyzes deep and complicated topics in a systematic and understandable way, and aims to explain how a truth from the Scriptures can be understood and put into practice in the life of the Christian people today. The teaching of the Scriptures is meant to be lived in daily life. This clarity and applicability of his teachings are for me a source of deep inspiration.

The life we live on earth as Christians has been impacted and transformed by the saving action of Jesus Christ on the cross. We are living on earth, but our lives are connected to heaven.

1. Scripture passages are from the RSV unless otherwise noted.

We are members of a new reality, the life of heaven. How can this be possible? It is because in our union with Christ we live already in heaven, but not yet fully. I owe a debt to Steve for his teaching on this concept of "already and not yet." This fascinating reality is what allows us to live the new life in Christ: we are citizens of heaven even while living on earth.

Believers in Christ are incorporated together with Christ into the kingdom of God. They are no longer only residents or citizens of their own country or nation, but they are foremost citizens of heaven and members of the people of God. They have received new passports and now belong to a new country, but while on earth they live as ambassadors, foreigners in this world and pilgrims on their way to the heavenly Jerusalem.

This essay seeks to understand the identity that Christians have as citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20), members of the people of God (1 Pet 2:10) and of God's household (Eph 2:19), and sons and daughters of the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26).

Politeuma

Paul writes to the Philippians that they should not be like those who have their minds "set on earthly things" (Phil 3:19), seeking pleasures and goods of this world. Those who do so live as "enemies of the cross of Christ." Christians have to realize that they are different; they share even now in the identity of Christ's true kingdom, their "commonwealth is in heaven" (*politeuma en ouranois hyparchei*, Phil 3:20), and therefore

they have to display the "authentic Christian mentality looking toward heaven."[2]

The apostle Paul uses the noun *politeuma*, translated as "citizenship"[3] or "commonwealth,"[4] only in Phil 3:20. The root word is *polis*, which means, "city." As a noun, *politeuma* can mean the "result of an action," "political acts, dealings, or machinations," "acts or departments of the government," or "those who hold power or have a share in it."[5] The word can refer to the authorities who execute political actions, but can also refer to the state itself.[6] The *politeuma* of someone defines where his state and government are, and therefore where his loyalty lies. The term encompasses a way of life that relates to his identity, "the idea of being a good citizen."[7] Paul uses this word to communicate to the Philippians where their true city is located, where their citizenship and commonwealth are, and therefore how are they expected to conduct themselves. The word is wisely chosen to appeal directly to his audience. Philippi was a colony of Rome, where Latin was the official language, and its citizens

2. Dennis Hamm, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon,* Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 136.
3. ESV, NIV, NKJV, NASB.
4. RSV2CE, RSV.
5. Hermann Strathmann, "πόλις, πολίτης, πολιτεύομαι, πολιτεία, πολίτευμα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 519.
6. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 98.
7. Hamm, "*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*," 136. In Philippians, Paul also uses a word from the same root, *politeuesthe*, which means "to conduct oneself," "to live a way of life" (Phil 1:27).

were Roman citizens "and proud of it."[8] For his readers, *polis* and other derived terms are very familiar.

Paul in essence is making the claim that the state and constitutive government of Christians is in heaven. Their *politeuma* is no longer in Rome but in heaven, and therefore their Lord is no longer Caesar but Christ.[9] It is the responsibility of a citizen to represent, and even to think in accord with, his city. This is true even when one is physically distant from it.[10] Paul exhorts the Philippians that their conduct and way of life, even now, must reflect their true identity.[11]

Foreigners and no Longer Foreigners

Clement of Alexandria, commenting on this passage in Philippians, wrote: "We know that this is well said, for we ought to live as strangers and expatriates in the world … not using creation to satisfy our passions but high-mindedly and with thanksgiving."[12] To think of heaven and to live for heaven changes the way of life on earth; the believer becomes a stranger or foreigner in this world. This presents a paradoxical under-

8. Joseph H. Hellerman, *Philippians*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/shms/detail.action?docID=4412653. (accessed April 7, 2020).
9. Hamm, "*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*," 136.
10. Mark Reasoner, "Citizenship, Roman and Heavenly," in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 140.
11. Lincoln, "*Paradise Now and Not Yet*," 100.
12. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.95, in Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999), 277.

standing of the Christian citizenship. The commonwealth of Christians is in heaven and no longer on earth, so Christians are now strangers and foreigners on earth, as they are pilgrims on the way home to heaven.

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes that Christians "are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19). The language seems contrary to what he says in his letter to the Philippians, but the meaning is the same. Paul is referring to the Gentile Christians, who have been brought into relationship with Christ, and so into communion with the Church.[13] Paul uses the word, *sympolitai*, a compound of *syn-* (with) and *politēs* (citizen). In other words, Christians are co-citizens or citizens together with those who belong to God's household. The fact that Christians have been welcomed as members of the household of God (*oikeioi tou Theou*) means that they have been brought "inside." Gentiles were strangers to God and his promises to Israel, but now in Christ their condition has changed. Peter O'Brien says that Paul here seems to be alluding to the same citizenship named in Phil 3:20, *politeuma en ouranois*: "Gentile Christians now have a homeland or commonwealth. They 'belong' as fellow citizens with the rest of believers in that heavenly commonwealth ruled by God."[14]

This image of citizenship is taken further in Ephesians. Paul speaks not only of a nation to belong to in a political sense,

13. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 210.
14. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 211.

but adds to this the image of the *oikos*, meaning God's own family or household.[15] Members of the family do not have the status of citizens or servants, but the title of sons and daughters, with fullness of rights to name and inheritance.[16]

In Ephesians, then, the contrast is sharper and the point even stronger than in Philippians. Christians are foreigners in this world, but only because they are no longer foreigners to God's kingdom. Their citizenship has been granted; they have been adopted into the household of God. Now we can see even more clearly Paul's point in Phil 3:20: the conduct of Christians on earth must represent and imitate their king who is also their Father.

God's People

The apostle Peter also speaks of the new identity of Christians in his first letter: "Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet 2:10). This passage is significant because it uses a very important image from the Old Testament, the people of God (*laos Theou*).

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel are not just any nation, they are God's chosen people. In the Septuagint (LXX) the word *laos*, by itself, refers almost exclusively to Israel, the

15. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 212.
16. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 303.

elect people of God.[17] When Peter addresses the Christian community as *laos Theou*, he is ascribing to the Church all the significance and honor of Israel.[18] The promise that God gave through the prophet Hosea is fulfilled by the inclusion of the Gentiles into the Christian community: "And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God'" (Hosea 2:21 ESV).[19] This means that "what Israel was and is called to be has now been fulfilled in the Church through the deliverance Christ has accomplished."[20]

Sharing in the Inheritance

To belong to God's people means to participate also in the promise of inheritance. Paul writes to the Colossians that God has qualified them "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (*tou klērou tōn hagiōn en tō phōti*, Col 1:12). The word *klēros*, meaning "part," "lot," or "share"[21] is a very significant term in the Old Testament because it recalls the promise made by God to Abraham (Gen 13:14-17). God

17. There are two words for "people" in Hebrew, ʿam and *goy*. In the LXX, ʿam is mainly used in reference to Israel, and translated *laos*, while *goy* is translated *ethnos* and used mainly in reference to other peoples, with some exceptions. Hermann Strathmann and R. Meyer, "λαός," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. IV, ed. Gerhard Kittel, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 32-35.
18. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. IV, 55.
19. Daniel Keating, *First and Second Peter, Jude,* Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 56-57.
20. Keating, *First and Second Peter*, 55. This does not mean that God's purpose for Israel—and for the Jewish people today—is removed or superseded.
21. Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Colombia: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 26.

promised Abraham that he was to become the father of a great nation and that this nation would inherit the land of Canaan. The promise of being a great nation is fulfilled in the people of Israel, but now in a more complete way in the Christian people, both Jew and Gentile. The promise, of the land—the inheritance—is initially fulfilled when the people of Israel conquer Canaan under the guidance of Joshua. But the promised inheritance also has a broader meaning in the new covenant in Christ. The inheritance is no longer limited to the land of Canaan, but now includes an eternal and heavenly reality that is located beyond this world and can be enjoyed eternally.[22] Where is this inheritance? It is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city (see Rev 21:1-3).

The Heavenly Jerusalem

Writing to the Galatians, the apostle Paul says, "but the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother" (Gal 4:26). Paul is naming the true city of Christians. They belong to the heavenly Jerusalem; that is their home, their household, and their inheritance. Paul makes a comparison between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem. To explain this, he develops an argument contrasting Hagar and Sarah, both of whom bore a son to Abraham, one a slave and the other free. He expands the comparison to the covenant of Sinai and the new covenant in Christ. The interesting twist in his comparison is that he does not speak of the present Jerusalem and the future one, but he speaks of the earthly

22. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 26.

Jerusalem and the heavenly one.[23] The relationship is again not only a political one but a familial one, for the heavenly Jerusalem is a mother.[24]

The letter to the Hebrews also makes a comparison between Mount Sinai and the heavenly Jerusalem, and declares that Christians have come to, have access to, and already participate in the worship of heaven with Christ (Heb 12:18-24). Likewise, the book of Revelation presents believers on earth as already participating in the life of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 11:1-2; 13:6).[25] In a spectacular description of the future, the book also shows how at the end of time the heavenly city will come down to earth (Rev 21:1-3). "Her children already possess heavenly citizenship due to their union with the risen Christ, who has ascended into heaven (Eph 2:6; Phil 3:20; Col 3:1-4)."[26]

Already and Not Yet

The language of the passages we have examined in this essay reveals that heavenly citizenship is a reality already present in the life of Christian believers, and at the same time one that

23. Cardinal Albert Vanhoye, Peter S. Williamson, *Galatians,* Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 162.
24. "Behind Paul's image here in Galatians lies Isaiah 66:7–11, where Zion is pictured as a mother giving birth to her children and providing abundantly for them as they grow." Grant R. Osborne, *Philippians Verse by Verse* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2017). ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/shms/detail.action?docID=5153192. (accessed April 7, 2020).
25. Peter S. Williamson, *Revelation*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 187, 228.
26. Vanhoye and Williamson, *Galatians*, 163.

will be fully revealed and enjoyed only when Christ returns and establishes his kingdom. In Phil 3:20 ("but our commonwealth is in heaven"), the verb *hyparchō* is not just a substitute for the verb "to be," but means "to exist, to be present," and so emphasizes the actual present existence of our heavenly commonwealth.[27] In Col 1:12 ("… giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light"), the verb "has qualified" is in the aorist tense, and so declares that it has already happened. Paul announces what God has *already* done in Christ, and that believers participate in it even now, while at the same time waiting for the "hope laid up for you in heaven" (Col 1:5). Likewise in Galatians, the heavenly Jerusalem is already present in the life of the Church on earth,[28] but it will be fully revealed only in the future when it descends from heaven, as described in the book of Revelation (Rev 21:2). The citizens of heaven are to follow Christ to the cross, and endure persecution and suffering, but they also receive the true life with him that they share through baptism while walking in his path.

Conclusion

The topic of heavenly citizenship, explored in this essay, comes into focus through the image of the heavenly Jerusalem. To have life in Christ means to receive a new nationality, a true citizenship in the kingdom of God, and a place in his family. To belong to the kingdom of heaven means no longer being

27. Hellerman, *Philippians*, ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/shms/detail.action?docID=4412653 (accessed April 7, 2020).
28. Vanhoye and Williamson, *Galatians*, 162-63.

a stranger to God's house but sharing fully in the inheritance together with all the saints who believe in Christ. Belonging to heaven means becoming a foreigner to this world and its sinful ways. To be a citizen of heaven means fixing one's gaze and hope on that which is to come, and living not for this world and its interests, but for those of the coming kingdom.