

*The*  
***Mediator***



*A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts*

**ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

*Bridging Cultures for Christ*  
*1 Timothy 2:5*

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**Volume XIII, Number 1**  
**December 2017**

*The Mediator* provides a forum for dialogue about theological issues related to ministry in Asian and Pacific contexts. The views expressed in the Journal reflect those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the seminary, its administration, or the editorial committee.

*The Mediator* is the official journal of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary and has been in publication since 1996. Please send all correspondence, comments, or questions to the editor at the address below.

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ISSN 1655-4175

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## Preface

*The Mediator's* present issue features the installation speeches of five APNTS faculty members (Dick O. Eugenio, Phillip E. Davis, Daniel Behr, Rebecca Davis, and Lynn D. Schmidt) and the inauguration address of APNTS's seventh president, Dr. Bruce E. Oldham.

Naturally, the six inductees represent six different academic disciplines. One would expect, therefore, that the articles in the present issue would exhibit a pronounced lack of cohesion. The discerning reader, therefore, will be pleasantly surprised to discover the high degree to which our authors coalesce around the common theme of evangelism as central to APNTS's *raison d'être*.

But make no mistake! The authors take divergent approaches to this theme. Especially is this the case between the first two principle authors, Dick Eugenio and Phillip Davis. Just as the compilers of the Rabbinic literature juxtaposed apparently contradictory perspectives without judging one to be right and the other wrong—thereby inviting the reader to pursue a deeper, synthetic truth—so also the present issue bids readers to im-bibe deeply of the dialogical richness.

Each of the installation and inauguration speeches is followed by a response from another faculty member, thereby underscoring yet again the dialogical nature of this *Mediator* issue. In this respect, the present issue mirrors the articulate collegiality that exists within a robust theological faculty such as one finds at APNTS.

Darin H. Land, Ph.D.

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**Theology as Evangelism:  
Transformation by the Renewing of Minds**

December 4, 2014\*

Dick O. Eugenio, Ph.D.

Among the five branches of theological studies, the least appreciated and most slighted is systematic theology. People are interested in biblical, historical, practical, and contextual theology; but the sheer mention of systematic theology makes people want to puke. If at all possible, doctrinal subjects are avoided by students and ministers alike, not just because it causes people to nosebleed, but primarily because of their widely-perceived irrelevance.\*\* In a pragmatic world such as ours, coupled with our evangelical activism, Christians consider it a waste of time to sit down and let the mind do some work. To think, for many Christians, is not a useful Christian verb. Our Christian calling is to evangelize, the argument continues, and doing theology is simply a digression.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, I would like to argue that theology is actually evangelism. Theology is essentially the proclamation of the gospel that calls for both decision and action. It is all about conversion, repentance, and transformation. In contrast to evangelical conversion, however, the target audience of theology to call to repentance are Christians. Although we agree that Christian conversion includes a holistic transformation of the human life, heart, and mind, and although *metanoia* or repentance primarily means “change of mind” instead of “change of life,” the actual transformation of the mind is usually neglected in Christian spirituality. Especially among evangelicals, the tendency is to emphasize changed allegiance and lifestyle at the expense of what Paul called as having “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16). Even within the Wesleyan-holiness tradition, preachers tend to emphasize only the call to consecration of Romans 12:1 without following things up with the call to be “transformed by the renewing of [the] mind” found in the next verse.

Nevertheless, before theology is able to do its evangelistic function, it must itself be evangelized. It must be admitted, quite embarrassingly, that theology

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\* This paper was presented by Dr. Eugenio on the occasion of his installation as Assistant (now Associate) Professor of Theology at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

\*\* Editor’s Note: “Nosebleed” is a Filipino expression to describe a cognitively challenging discussion.

as a field in the academia, has been severely corrupted over the last several centuries. The animosity and suspicion that theology and theologians receive today is not entirely without foundation. Since the rise of modernity in the sixteenth century, particularly within Protestantism, there was the tendency to make theological discussion too technical and complex that the uneducated simply cannot relate and follow. Because of the categories theologians employed in their theologizing, theology had become elitist, accessible only to those who underwent formal education. As a result, even the capability of theologians today to communicate the gospel is highly suspected.

### The Rise of Systematic Theology

How did theology come to where it is now, at the bottom of a sink? What follows is a historical account of what happened to theology as a field of inquiry, and how the terrible decisions of its major representatives since the modern era contributed to its inevitable demise.

The “modern era” reached its apex in the eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment, but its beginning reaches back to the Renaissance, when European art and thinking were flourishing. The births of “modern science” in the work of Francis Bacon (1561–1625) and “modern philosophy” in the work of René Descartes (1595–1650) were also major contributors. Overall, the main tenor of the modern era was suspicion and rejection of the authority of the church in relation to truth, and thus the invalidity of Christian doctrines. The newly minted canons of truth provided by modern science and philosophy found Christian doctrines to be superfluous and irrational. Modernity does not reject the possibility of knowing truth as such, but argues that such truth is no longer found in the authoritative declaration of the church, and can only be discovered and verified through the instruments it provides. Truth claims must be judged by rational consistency and empirical verifiability. Facing such pressure from the intelligentsia, the church accepted these judgments and impositions. As a consequence, many modern theologians attempted to deconstruct doctrinal contents in order to take up the challenge of radical reformulation. Christian theology became philosophical theology.

Among the several competing canons of truth in the modern era, rationalism which asserts that truth is true if it is explained in a logical and coherent manner, had one of the loudest claims. Logicity and coherency were the canons of authenticity. This set the way for the birth of *systematic theology*. To be systematic in something is to engage a subject according to a prescribed



and recognizable rational order. The clearest example is Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768–1834) theological agenda. For him, Christian doctrine (*Lehre*) is only satisfactorily articulated when “the system of doctrine has become a complete system (*Lehregebäude*), in which every moment of the religious and Christian consciousness is given its developed dogmatic expression, and all the dogmatic propositions are brought into relation with each other.”<sup>1</sup> In a sense, theology has always been “systematic.” Even the early fathers were doing “systematic” theology.<sup>2</sup> The problem of the modern version of systematic theology, however is this: the rational order is not provided by theology itself, but by philosophy. For theological claims to be truthful, according to modernity, it must employ the logic and canons of science and philosophy; otherwise, it does not provide genuine knowledge. The systematic theology of the early fathers, where the logic it employed is *intrinsic* to it, is in stark contrast to the *extrinsicist* foundationalism developed and advocated by René Descartes and John Locke.

The modern approach to theology brought problems and challenges. The Church was no longer free to claim doctrinal truths unless such claims are verifiable by external measuring instruments. Modernity effectively caged theology and placed boundaries to both the process of investigation and the product of cogitation. Theology as a field lost its right to speak for itself. It always stood in the tribunals of modernity. Theologians spent their efforts studying the canons and rules of modernity and used whatever they scavenged to reformulate the doctrines of the church. The changes in theological formulation were drastic. First, theology operated on the basis of doubt. Anselm's dictum *fides quaerens intellectum* was swept away as theologians avoided being branded as fideists. The theology schools of the universities became the very sphere where doubting doctrinal statements is not only applauded, but encouraged. Secondly, theology only communicated and became understandable to the elite few who understood and knew philosophy. Theology became a purely academic enterprise, and it never successfully left the confines of the university or the seminary. Quite naturally, many uneducated church people (which comprised the majority of Christians), owing to the complexity and

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<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 87. The fact that Schleiermacher uses the word *Gebäude* echoes Descartes's program of beginning the structure again on new foundations.

<sup>2</sup> See the examples of Gunton, “Historical and Systematic Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, chap 1.

incomprehensibility of theological statements, avowed theology to be a useless enterprise. Thirdly, theologians made sure that their reconstructed theology is as far different as can be from the original faith statements of the Christian tradition. Quite ironically, by trying to appeal to the tribunals of modernity, instead of being spokespersons of the church, theologians became the sources of confusions and unbelief. In this sense, it was the theologians themselves who caused the marginalization of theology in life of the Church. Peter Berger was right to claim that,

A secularized Christianity has to go to considerable exertion to demonstrate that the religious label, as modified in conformity with the spirit of the age, has anything special to offer. Why should one buy psychotherapy or racial liberalism in a “Christian” package, when the same commodities are available under purely secular and for that very reason even more modernistic labels? The preference for the former will probably be limited to people with sentimental nostalgia for traditional symbols, a group that, under the influence of the secularizing theologian, is steadily dwindling... In other words, the theological surrender... represents the self-liquidation of theology and of the institutions in which the theological tradition is embodied.<sup>3</sup>

Because of modern biases, the terms “dogmatic,” “dogmatics,” “dogmatism,” and the like have fallen from usage. To be dogmatic is equated with being a fundamentalist, or someone whose mind is closed to new reflections and whose views are already securely entrenched. The origin of this bifurcation was the Enlightenment, when the *dogmatics* and the *sceptics* were contrasted. Those who were willing to examine their beliefs using the tools provided by rationalism were called “sceptics,” and those who were unwilling to use external sources as valid instruments in judging the truthfulness of their beliefs were called “dogmatics.” Of course, in an age where skepticism was the order of the day, to be non-skeptical about one’s own belief was a terrible position. To be a sceptic is a sign of a thinking being.

In its original usage, *dogmatics* refers to the kind of knowledge that is forced upon us when we are true to the facts we are up against, and in which we let our thinking follow the witness of those facts to their own nature and reality. Thomas F. Torrance (1913–2007) argued that this dogmatic science was already employed by the early fathers. For instance, Cyril of Alexandria spoke of Christian theology as *ἐπιστήμη δογματική* (*epistēmē dogmatikē*). In

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<sup>3</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 25–26.

particular, Cyril argued that the nature of God, as He has revealed Himself to humanity through the reality of the incarnate Word should govern how theologians were to think out and give rigorous expression to its truth by conformity to it. Dogmatics thus rejects any categories or “systems” imposed to theology. Theology is not guided by a system or by ideals, but is guided through and through by its transcendent Subject/Object, the Lord. This is why, when Karl Barth produced his *magnum opus Kirche Dogmatike*, the first volume argued that,

As a theological discipline dogmatics is the scientific self-examination of the Christian Church with respect to the content of its *distinctive* talk about God... Dogmatics is a theological discipline... But theology is a function of the Church... The Church confesses God as it talks about God (CD I/1: 3).

For Barth, the approach modern theologians rejected was precisely the approach that theology should implement. Proper theology should not be concerned with fashioning an understanding of God that fits a logical system imposed from without. Theology is more directly intertwined with biblical theology than dependent on ideas that come from cultural, philosophical, and sociological sources.

### Scientific Theology

It is as dogmatics that theology is a science. Here, we use “science” in terms of the German *Wissenschaft*, “a rigorous and disciplined inquiry of the object according to its unique nature.” A rational person, no matter how free he or she is, should think as he or she is compelled to think by the external world. For instance, if a flower reveals itself as yellow, the rational mind, like a true scientist, should concede that the flower is yellow. It cannot argue against the nature of the flower as it reveals itself, no matter how culturally or philosophically questionable or disagreeable such acceptance could be. The theologian, like a true scientist, thinks in strict accordance with the reality under investigation. Theology, thus, is not “free thinking,”<sup>4</sup> or purely speculative. Rather, it is a thinking bound to its object.

Owing to the resigned acceptance of the Church of the separation between faith and science, it is mistakenly assumed that the scientific methodology has nothing to do with theology. The opposite is actually the case. In fact, when we say theology should employ the scientific methodology, we are not saying that

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<sup>4</sup> Marianne H. Micks argues that theology is a “discipline thinking,” in *Introduction to Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1983), xiii.

we should *borrow* something from the sciences. In his book *Theological Science*, Torrance argues that the scientific methodology was actually employed in the early Alexandrian theological tradition, in which Clement, Origen, and Athanasius stood. According to Torrance, Alexandria, influenced by the developing Greek science, espoused an investigative procedure in strict accordance with the nature of the reality under scrutiny, or *kata physin*, which is also “to know things... in accordance with their truth or reality (*kat’ aletheian*) and thus to think and speak truly (*alethos*) of them.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, *kata physin* requires that theologians begin a discussion of the knowledge of God by looking at God himself. “If we are to have any true and precise scientific knowledge of God,” Torrance argues, “we must allow his own nature, as he comes revealed to us, to determine how we are to know him, how we are to think of him, and what we are to say of him.”<sup>6</sup>

Theology should employ investigative techniques proper to its Object of inquiry. We reject Descartes’s notion of a *scientia universalis* with its apparatuses applicable to all sciences. Rather, we should follow the distinction Torrance made between *formal* scientific procedure and *material* scientific procedure. In short, there is a *formal* procedure common to all sciences, i.e., thinking *kata physin*. But in each particular field, science requires a modification of its formal procedure in a way appropriate to the distinct nature of its object. For instance, it is illogical and unscientific for a microbiologist to use a telescope in his/her field, because the nature of his/her object of investigation requires her to employ other relevant apparatuses such as the microscope. Therefore, theology is scientific and rational only if theologians study the Object of theological investigation in light of the Object’s nature as God. This employment of scientific procedure also guarantees the ethical dimension of theologizing. We approach God as God, not as something else. To approach God as if He is a rock by using tools of geography or as a concept by using the tools of philosophy does not make sense. We do not need to use the apparatuses of natural sciences or philosophical inquiry to measure God.

Like all branches of knowledge, theology (1) has a definite subject matter to investigate; (2) deals with objective matters (not merely subjective feelings); (3) has a definite methodology for investigating its subject matter; (4) has a method of verifying its propositions; (5) has a logic that establishes the coher-

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<sup>5</sup> Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 51.

<sup>6</sup> Torrance, *Trinitarian Faith*, 52.

ence of propositions; (6) is NOT subject to principles or axioms, and answerable to the same canons or logic of other disciplines; and (7) does NOT employ methodologies from other disciplines. Theology is not an irrational or illogical endeavor. Because coherency is important, it employs logic in its formulations, which it does not borrow from external sources. It also does not allow logic derived from culture, philosophy, or sociology to dictate how theology should be done. Theology has its own internal logic.

### Evangelizing Theology

It is only as dogmatics that theology becomes an evangelizing endeavor. So long as theological formulation is guided by extrinsic mechanisms, theology can never communicate the unadulterated truth of the gospel. But as soon as theology speaks in accordance with its own logic and proclaims the gospel without being filtered by philosophical and cultural biases, theology becomes an instrument of gospel proclamation. Theology should not care whether philosophy finds its statements incoherent or unattractive. In the same way, it should not care whether its truth claims are offensive to cultures and worldviews. The task of theology is to call people to subject their minds to the truth of the gospel, and not to please secular tribunals. Theology is not an enterprise where we try to fit the gospel in Procrustean beds established by culture and philosophy. Theology actually serves the world by calling into question culture and philosophy, and challenging them to be transformed in the light of the gospel. Assimilation runs the risk of diluting theology and turning theology into a worldly venture. It *might* gain the approval of the world, but it becomes irrelevant to the Church it serves. The philosopher of science Michael Polanyi reminds us that we cannot convince others by formal argument, for so long as we argue within their framework, we can never persuade them to abandon it.<sup>7</sup> And yet this is the erroneous approach usually taken by apologists and missiologists. Whenever we take that line we are simply reducing ourselves to be servants of the ideas of the dominant culture, and in being so, we have nothing at all to offer to people which they do not already know or cannot tell to themselves much better than we do. This also deprives theological knowledge of its proper meaning. We must remember all the time that theological instruction is not descriptive, compelling assent; it is persuasive, challenging conversion.

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<sup>7</sup> Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1974), 151.

Secondly, in theology we are face-to-face with God Himself. Like all encounters, we cannot genuinely encounter the Truth (John 14:6) without personal relation to the Truth. While it can be true that natural sciences can study micro-organisms in a detached manner, such an approach is improper in theology. In theology we are face-to-face with an eloquent Being, someone who speaks and communicates, and wants the recipients of His Self-speech to respond in a relationship of intimacy, humility, and submission. “To know the Truth is to become a participant to it.”<sup>8</sup> Alan Torrance actually argues that “to be absolutely neutral before God is to be absolutely hostile to God,” because knowledge of God entails intellectual obedience and submission.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, knowing God involves “participation and coordination with its communicated pattern and inner organization.”<sup>10</sup> Christians cannot know God, a personal Being, in detachment, and in a way that measures or calculates Him with the tools provided by the human sciences. Doing this to God is not theology, but atheism. Moreover, in theology we encounter God as Lord. We meet a Person who is wholly given; a Person who fully gives Himself to us. Because we encounter Him as Creator, Savior, and Sanctifier, we meet Him in gratitude, praise, and worship. Because God is *Kyrios*, we encounter Him in utter humility, and our rational faculties could not but respond in worshipful “Yes” to His Self-objectification. We do not respond to His Self-revelation in unbelief or doubt; rather, we respond in submission to His Self-manifestation, no matter how illogical the method and content of revelation might be to our human minds. This is where the absurdity of systematic theology is most evident. Systematic theology treats God not as Lord but an object that can forcefully be fitted, measured, deconstructed, and reconstructed according to borrowed rules. Its initial response to God’s Word is rebellious doubt, not a worshipful Amen.

Finally, to know always involves the transformation of the learner. Theology requires that we adapt our rationalities to the logic of God’s revelation, not

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<sup>8</sup> Torrance, *Theological Science* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1969), 87; *Conflict and Agreement in the Church*, vol. 2: *The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel* (London: Lutterworth, 1960), 62.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Descriptions and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 12–15; T. F. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (London: Oxford U. Press, 1971), 166.

<sup>10</sup> Torrance, *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge: Explorations in the Interrelations of Scientific and Theological Enterprise* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 92.

the other way around. As we know God, we are transformed in how and what we think about Him. In theology, we do not set out to meet humanity's question; rather, we are met by the Questioner. We do not subject God to torture and inquisition, or to impious re-shaping so that He fits in our previously acknowledged truths. God comes to us not in accordance with our own prejudices; rather, He comes to us in an unexpected way. He comes to us *kata phusin*, in strict accordance with His nature as God. He comes into our experience and into the midst of our knowledge as a *novum*, a new reality which we cannot incorporate into a series of other objects, or simply assimilate to what we already know. His Personal nature disallows him to be pigeonholed using human-created categories.

Thus, the presupposition that we have to do theology or explain the mysteries of the gospel in the light of the existing dominant or popular ways of thought needs to be challenged. Even the supposed "dialogue" between the dominant culture and Christianity is evidently one-sided, because one dictates the criteria of formulation to the other. An *aggiornamento*, which Peter Berger notes as the *via media* between assimilation and defiance, involves a bargaining process where there is a sort of "mutual cognitive contamination."<sup>11</sup> But the critical question is: "Who is the stronger party?" As Berger concludes, "the theologian who trades ideas with the modern world... is likely to come out with a poor bargain, that is, he will probably have to give far more than he will get."<sup>12</sup> The problem, thus, is that in the dialogue between culture and the gospel, it is Christianity that is mostly contaminated. It is Christianity which seems to have given up a lot of its previous commitments in order to gain very little (or nothing!). The devilry of the situation is this: "The theologian who sups with [the world] will find his spoon getting shorter and shorter—until that last supper in which he is left alone at the table, with no spoon at all and with an empty plate. The devil, one may guess, will by then have gone away to more interesting company."<sup>13</sup> The goal of theology is not to dialogue with the world but to transform it.

### Conclusion: The Mind of Christ

Admittedly, there are Christians whose ways of thinking are still more influ-

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<sup>11</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*, 26–27.

<sup>12</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*, 28.

enced by the world and its standards than by the Scripture. Even in the way Christians view God, there are those who are not yet entirely emancipated from their old ways of thinking and allegiances. The goal of theology is to call these previous ways of thinking into question and challenge Christians to no longer conform to the “patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Rom 12:2). There is a distinct Christian way of thinking. Ephesians 4:17–24 is clear about this. It asserts that we are called to think “in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus” (4:20), and admonishes that we “must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking” (4:17). Gentiles here refer to those who have not heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is why “they are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of their ignorance” (4:18). The message is clear: Christians have already heard and believed in the Gospel of salvation, and as such are no longer darkened in understanding and ignorant. Hence, the expectation is that they now should think differently, not futile in their thinking, but always productive for the Lord (One will notice that the discussion of the redeemed mind was immediately after the discussion of the unity and maturity in the Church). Christians are asked to abandon their former way of thinking in favor of the “way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus” (4:20). The truth that in Jesus (cf. John 14:6, Jesus is the Truth) must transform us until we are “made new in the attitude of your minds” (4:23). This is *metanoia*.

The goal is to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), which Paul contrasts with “the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age” (2:6). God’s wisdom, for Paul, is not achieved through common sense, because it is “a mystery that has been hidden” (2:7) and “none of the leaders of this age understood it” (2:8). It is only through the Spirit that we are able to know these things (2:10, 11) and understand what God has given us (2:12). “Spiritual realities” are learned only through “Spirit-taught words” (2:13). It is because the Spirit is working in us, revealing God’s will to us, that we possess “the mind of Christ” (2:16). In the power of the Spirit, we are able to think like Christ thought and to have “the same mindset as Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5).

It is true that the world will never understand how Christians think and behave. The Christian life and mentality runs “against the flow.” We should not expect to be understood. Paul himself already said that even the message of salvation through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is “stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor 1:23). What the world considers as



foolishness, we consider as “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:24). People may laugh at us and mock us with our distinct way of thinking about God, the world, and ourselves, because they do not understand. Paul explains that this is something we should not be surprised about, because “the person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit” (1 Cor 2:14). They may call us foolish, but let us continue not to be ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16), because “the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom” (1 Cor 1:25).

The problem is deep, because we are accustomed to live in our accustomed and inherited frames of reference. We do not learn how to think; we just think the way we think. Thus to experience a paradigm shift from one to another involves radical self-denial on the one hand and reconciliation to the new frame of reference on the other hand. Our untruth must be challenged and changed by the truth of the gospel. Only when our minds are reconciled to God’s truth are we able to think in the light of His revelation. Therefore, the last thing we must ever attempt to do is to eliminate the real difficulties that confront us in the nature of the God’s Truth, even if it is for the noble intention to make it easy for people to believe and understand. This is because in doing so, we actually make it next to impossible for them to receive the true gospel and be transformed by it. Torrance’s warning is important: “If there were no offence, we would find nothing new in the Scriptures, hear nothing we could not and have not already been able to tell ourselves. That which challenges us, which calls us in question, is the radically new, the element we are unable to assimilate into what we already know without a logical reconstruction of all our preconceptions and a repentant rethinking of what we already claim to know.”<sup>14</sup> The Gospel is not cheap. It demands a radical and complete reconciliation to God’s ways and logic. The role of the theologian is to call Christians to have a mind-surgery until our minds that transformed by God’s own Self-revelation.

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<sup>14</sup> Torrance, *Theology of Reconstruction* (London: SCM, 1965), 29.



**Seven Propositions for Evangelism**  
**The Theological Vision of *Worship, Wonder, and Way*\***

Grant Zweigle, D.Min.

In my book, *Worship, Wonder, and Way: Reimagining Evangelism as Missional Practice*, I attempt to communicate a theological vision for evangelism as a missional practice of the Christian church and describe practices of evangelistic witness that I hope will be both hopeful and helpful in the context of the local church. Since the book was written to be accessible to readers in local churches around the world, the academic research that informs the book is not explicit in the book. However, a deep well of theological resources inform the book. In this paper, I will make explicit the implicit theological vision of the book.<sup>1</sup>

In their introduction to *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, Paul Chilcote and Lacey Warner suggest six propositions concerning evangelism as a summary of the theological vision that informs that book.<sup>2</sup> Through the experience of researching and implementing my doctoral project in evangelism, I gained an appreciation for these propositions. In this paper, I expand on the original six propositions of Chilcote and Warner and add one more proposition to fill out a perspective that I feel needed greater attention in my context.

**Proposition One: The Mission of God**

Evangelism is a vital part of something larger than itself, the mission of God.

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\* This paper is an extended response to Dr. Dick Eugenio’s installation address, “Theology as Evangelism: Transformation by the Renewing of Minds,” pages 1–11, above.

<sup>1</sup> I refer briefly to the theological vision in the introduction. Grant Zweigle, *Worship, Wonder, and Way: Reimagining Evangelism as Missional Practice* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2015), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner, eds., *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), xxvi–xxvii. Propositions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 are directly attributable to Chilcote and Warner, however I present them in a different order than Chilcote and Warner. Proposition 6 is my addition.

David Bosch calls evangelism the core, heart, or center of the mission of God.<sup>3</sup> In *Transforming Mission*, Bosch summarizes mission as “the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate,” and argues that “authentic evangelism is imbedded in the total mission of the church.”<sup>4</sup> Witness is a term that encapsulates this larger mission of the church.

In *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, Darrell Guder writes,

The concept of witness provides a common missiological thread through all the New Testament language that expounds the church’s mission. It serves as an overarching term drawing together proclamation (*kerygma*), community (*koinonia*), and service (*diakonia*). These are all essential dimensions of the Spirit-enabled witness for which the Christian church is called and sent.<sup>5</sup>

Conceptualizing evangelism as a vital part, but not the whole of the mission of the church is helpful because it opens up space for a larger conversation about the church’s mission and reduces the tendency to set up evangelism in competition with other aspects of a congregation’s mission. Not everything the church does is or needs to be evangelism, but everything the church does is an aspect of its mission of witness.

At the same time, the metaphor of core, heart or center, reminds us of the importance of evangelism in relation to the larger mission of the church. If a local church or denomination ceases to initiate persons into the life and mission of the Triune God through its witness in the world, that local church or denomination will cease to exist. Remove the heart and the body dies.

### Proposition Two: Disciple

In *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor*, Scott Jones defines evangelism as “that set of loving, intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating persons into Christian discipleship in response to the reign of God.”<sup>6</sup> This means that evangelism is not primarily about growing churches or saving people; it is about initiating people into discipleship to Jesus. Since disciple-

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<sup>3</sup> David J. Bosch, “Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-Currents Today,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 3 (July 1, 1987): 98–103.

<sup>4</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 412.

<sup>5</sup> Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 53; See also Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Updated (Guildford: Eagle, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor: A Theology of Witness and Discipleship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 18.

ship requires ecclesial participation, evangelism will likely result in numerical church growth. And discipleship to Jesus, the One who is King of the Kingdom of God, is part and parcel of salvation.

The point to understand here is that evangelism functions in the mission of the church as the bridge between a congregation's wider mission of witness and their more focused mission of discipleship. This understanding of the *telos* of evangelism eliminates the need to separate persons into "the Decided" and "the Discipled."<sup>7</sup>

### Proposition Three: The Reign of God

Chilcote and Warner sum up this proposition well when they write that "evangelism is oriented toward the reign of God."

The ultimate goal toward which evangelism moves is the realization of God's reign in human life. While not unconcerned with the salvation of the individual in and through Christ, initiating persons into an alternative community of God's people who give themselves for the life of the world is its proper end.<sup>8</sup>

This proposition is in line with Mortimer Arias' characterization of evangelism as recruitment, "an invitation to participate in the blessings of the kingdom, to celebrate the hopes of the kingdom, and to engage in the tasks of the kingdom."<sup>9</sup>

Calling churches to engage in Kingdom activities has become popular in much of the missional literature today.<sup>10</sup> However, what is often missing is a vision of evangelism that is intentioned toward recruiting persons into the life and mission of the Kingdom of God through specific congregational practices of recruitment and initiation.<sup>11</sup> Traditional practices of evangelism that lack

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<sup>7</sup> See Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 32, for a helpful discussion on the problem of moving "the Decided" to "the Discipled."

<sup>8</sup> Chilcote and Warner, *The Study of Evangelism*, xxvi.

<sup>9</sup> Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), 105.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008); Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009); and N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> See William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 92-

connection with the larger vision of the Kingdom of God will ring hollow in churches that are appropriating Kingdom language into their mission and vision.

#### Proposition Four: Conversion

Conversion matters. Though it may sound offensive in a multicultural and pluralistic world, evangelism is about converting people. However, the *telos* of conversion is not to the point of view of the witness or sectarian doctrines of a particular congregation, but, as has already been stated, to the Kingdom of God. The only way into the Kingdom of God is through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is oriented toward a good start in the process of conversion. Gordon Smith reminds us that “conversion itself is but a beginning.”

Because the problem is complex, conversion will need to be comprehensive, affecting the whole of our beings. I stress that conversion itself is but a beginning. It will not, as a single or even complex experience, lead to a complete resolution of the human predicament. We are not suddenly made whole and completely healed persons. However, we are “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17) in the sense that a beachhead has been established. The old identity is gone; we have entered into a new identity that is grounded on faith (Rom. 1:17) and that supports the transformation that will follow.<sup>12</sup>

Congregational practices of evangelism need to be intentioned toward facilitating a good start in the process of conversion in ways that are consistent with biblical and historic Christian practices and will support the transformation that follows. Conversion is a process that may or may not include crisis moments, depending on the way the Spirit chooses to work in the life of the particular constituent of the church’s witness.

#### Proposition Five: The Whole People of God

Evangelism is a missional practice of the whole people of God together. It is not a simple activity, but inclusive of a wide range of congregational practices. Brian Stone argues that,

The most evangelistic thing the church can do today is to be the church—to be formed imaginatively by the Holy Spirit through core practices such as worship, forgiveness, hospitality, and economic sharing into a distinctive

people in the world, a new social option, the body of Christ.<sup>13</sup>

This perspective does not diminish the value of those with the gift of evangelism, but rather calls the church to encourage those with the gift of evangelism to exercise their gift in a manner that builds up the whole body of Christ so that together they can be more fruitful and faithful participants in God's mission.

#### Proposition Six: Personal

The Christian gospel emphasizes God's love for persons and God's desire to include all persons in the eternal Triune fellowship of divine love that is inherently Personal. Evangelism is personal because God's being is a communion of Persons. While the wider mission of God is inclusive of God's cosmic plan to reconcile all things, things in heaven and earth to Himself, evangelism is narrowly focused on God's plan to reconcile persons to Himself.

In *The Jesus Way*, Eugene Peterson reminds us that,

The ways Jesus goes about loving and saving the world are personal: nothing disembodied, nothing abstract, nothing impersonal. Incarnate, flesh and blood, relational, particular, local. The ways employed in our North American culture are conspicuously impersonal: programs, organizations, techniques, general guidelines, information detached from place. In matters of ways and means, the vocabulary of numbers is preferred over names, ideologies crowd out ideas, the gray fog of abstraction absorbs the sharp particularities of the recognizable face and the familiar street.<sup>14</sup>

Evangelism is personal. Revisioning evangelism as a missional practice of the church includes reimagining the language of personal evangelism in a way that is rooted in the incarnational ways of Jesus.

#### Proposition Seven: Contextual

Because it is personal, evangelism is inescapably contextual. This calls congregations to understand both themselves and the context of the constituents of their witness. Many evangelism programs are dis-carnate, created in another place in another time and then marketed to a mass audience. Congregational leaders in evangelism need to be careful students of context and culture. It

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<sup>13</sup> Bryan P. Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 15.

<sup>14</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1.

may be that the first step in helping a congregation to revision evangelism is to ask them not to do anything but listen and learn. It involves sitting and listening to children, absorbing the rants and anger of disaffected former attenders and skeptical neighbors, eating and drinking with sinners, immersing yourself in places where you come to know stories and local histories.

Darrell Guder reminds us that Christ's way of proclaiming the good news began with kenotic self-emptying.<sup>15</sup> Jesus then was able to embody the gospel in a way that was relatable, understandable and compelling to his first century Jewish constituency. This way takes time and is costly. It is the way of the cross. But it is also the way to life. Revisioning evangelism as a missional practice of the church may be costly, but it is also a pathway to life and renewal.

### Conclusion

These seven propositions offer a theological vision of evangelism that I have discovered to be helpful as the pastor of congregations that are seeking to revision and renew their practices of evangelism in their own unique and wonderful contexts. My hope is that this theological vision can be helpful to other pastors and congregations in their own unique and wonderful contexts as well.

Announcing and embodying the good news of the Kingdom of God as realized in the life, death, resurrection, ascension and coming return of Jesus Christ and lovingly initiating persons into discipleship to the King of that Kingdom is worthy of the church's best efforts and creative energies. Jesus promises that these efforts and energies will be inspired, enlivened and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Evangelism is the heart of the mission of the church. A renewed theological vision for evangelism as a missional practice of the church will contribute to heart-healthy churches. Such churches will experience the joy that comes from faithfully and fruitfully participating in God's mission for the life of the world and find pathways for renewal in the places they have been called to bear witness.

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<sup>15</sup> Darrell L. Guder, "Incarnation and the Church's Evangelistic Mission," in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, ed. Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 173.



## **In Hope of a Graceful Event**

February 7, 2017\*

Phillip E. Davis, Ph.D.

On the morning of this installation, it falls to me to convey my understanding of theology and role at this seminary. An installation is an important moment in the life of an academic institution which allows a faculty member to situate his or her philosophical perspective on what he or she has to offer to theological education. Today, my lot has come up, and I will be the first of a number of faculty this semester to do so.

I hope, therefore, for a graceful event. But I'm aware that this talk is too complex, too theoretical. Still, the remarks I give reflect hours, days, months, and years of deep reflection on the role of theology in contemporary culture. Whether or not I achieve my goal today, you will decide. As an event, this installation message will come and go before we can fully understand what is happening, or what I'm trying to express. But I trust my words will be received with gracious hearts by those attending this event this morning.

So, to begin, I attempt to do three things. First, to communicate my understanding of theology and its place in contemporary society. Second, to briefly lay out my theological project and its dialogue partners. And, finally, to express the interruption and value of systematic theology in the life of the Church.

### Theology and Its Place in Contemporary Society

For eleven years, I served in pastoral ministry in four different churches. Most of these years I worked as an assistant pastor under the leadership of two senior pastors: Dr. Frank Robinson and Dr. David Vardaman. Those years of experience have marked my work as a theologian. Pastors and the people from former congregations appear in my mind as I read (often) esoteric philosophical writings and engage in theological thinking.

Recently, I earned my doctorate from the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium. During my years of study at the faculty, I participated in the research

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\* This paper was presented by Dr. Davis on the occasion of his installation as Assistant Professor of Theology at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

group “Theology in a Postmodern Context.” At Leuven, we were trained in a form of theology that follows the dictum Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) put forward in the eleventh century: *fides quaerens intellectum* (i.e., faith seeking understanding). In short, these words express the conviction that theology should seek a greater understanding of the faith in dialogue with disciplines like philosophy. Surely for theologians—and other Christians—love stands at the heart of our faith. Anselm argued that our love for God, in fact, drives us to learn as much as we can about God and what He has done. Simply said, we want to better understand our Beloved.

Perhaps we could say that such a faith seeks to comprehend who God is and what He has done in creation and redemption; who we are in relation to Him; and how we should live in the world in which we find ourselves. Our love for God inspires us to seek to understand, to reflect on, and to bear witness to our faith in the midst of our contemporaries.

### Technological Change and Disruption

How are we to do that today? How should we bear witness to our faith in Jesus Christ in an increasingly complex age? How should theology engage in a world of dizzying change? To say the increasingly obvious sounds cliché. But here I go. As we all know, everything is speeding up. The growth of knowledge is staggering. Communication between continents is common-place. And so on. In my home country, in the United States, an internet retailer regularly offers two-day service. When Amazon.com first introduced their service, it delighted people. You could order almost any item from their website and receive it in *two* days! With only a few clicks, a person could order almost any item, and it would appear in the mail sometimes in a single day. But people have grown accustomed to such prompt service. Two days—or even a single day—is too slow. Now Amazon.com is working on drone service for people living in large metropolitan cities. Within 30 minutes of making your order, a drone will bring your package to your work address or place of residence. If they ever accomplish this feat, it too will someday become routine. More and more, those in the postindustrial world live in what Jeffrey Nealon describes as the post-postmodern or “just-in-time capitalism.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nealon argues that the process of development in capitalism has intensified. Indeed, “late” capitalism, about which Fredric Jameson wrote, present in the 1970s and 80s, “has intensified into the ‘just-in-time’ (which is to say, all-the-time) capitalism of our neoliberal era.” Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Stanford,

Simply the rate of development and change disrupts culture and identity in places all over the world. In fact, many of us carry around in our pockets perhaps the greatest disrupter of all—the smart phone. This device is radically changing (youth) culture around the world. Millennials around the planet are uniting around an online culture that their parents do not understand. Attitudes, tastes, opinions, and beliefs are shaped every day by communications occurring between cell-towers. But the young are not alone. Even their parent's view of the world shifts when *they* pick up their smart phones. Commonly held convictions in cultures around the world come now into question, simply because of our access to information and our awareness of differences.

Last year I attended a missionary retreat in Houghton, New York. There I met a friend. We took a leisurely walk between two waterfalls and talked about how life has changed in Central and South America. Rev. Rick West has more than forty years of service to countries in this part of the world as a missionary with The Wesleyan Church. Rick said that the biggest change is this: no matter where you are, whether in a city or in the jungle, people know what's happening in the world. Everyone has cell-phones and connections to the Internet. You cannot assume that people don't know what's going on. Even those in the poorest and remotest countries instantly know whatever happens somewhere else on the planet.

Access to this flood of information produces other effects, as well. Traditions no longer transfer automatically from one generation to another as in the past.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, a disconnect develops between young people and their elders. Those with access to modern forms of communication see and hear different ideas, perspectives, beliefs, and tastes. Suddenly mores, beliefs, and practices come into question. All of these can be different, as everyone can see on his or her cell-phone. Sociologists call this social process “detraditionalization.”<sup>3</sup> One's culture stands at risk when traditions no longer easily pass from one generation to another. The foundations undergirding a culture erode, as people become more aware of the contingencies of cultural development. Increasingly an awareness develops which says, “Things could have been differ-

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CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2012), x–xi.

<sup>2</sup> Lieven Boeve, *God Interrupts History: Theology in a Time of Upheaval* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 21–23, 74–75, and 141–144.

<sup>3</sup> For thought-provoking reflections on the processes of detraditionalization and retraditionalization, see Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris, eds., *Detraditionalization*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

ent; after all, look at those other cultures!”

As individuals come into contact with people of different cultures, they tend to respond in one of two ways. Some resist the other—the person who is different—and retreat into their own cultural identity. We see this, perhaps, with Brexit, the rise of Marine Le Pen in France, and Germany-first parties. At the same time, other individuals fully embrace what-ever is new as inherently good (i.e., as progress). Often these people are not truly happy with their own cultural identity. It must change somehow. Today we see these responses occurring as cultural forces affect different countries and cultures around the world.

Theological education takes place on a complex social, educational, philosophical, and religious field. In some ways, Asians are familiar with such a diverse social environment. However, as technology continues to develop, social groupings in Asia come under ever greater pressure and continue to fragment. Thus, the question of tradition remains germane for a seminary that trains and equips pastors and church leaders, for Christianity, as a faith, confesses long-standing traditions. These very traditions come under pressure in today’s world due to the factors I already mentioned: the development of technology, the use of digital communications, and the explosion of knowledge. I constantly wrestle with this question: how do we pass on the Christian tradition to future generations? On a pastoral level, we can restate the question in biblical terms: today, how do we follow the apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy to “entrust to reliable people” “the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses” (2 Tim 2:2)? Or to speak as a theologian, how should *theology* reflect on its project, on its form of knowledge, in our current world?

### My Theological Project

As I already said, my training lies in the area of the postmodern. Thus, following the Anselmian dictum, my dialogue partners tend to be French postmodern philosophers. In particular, I am interested in the writings of Jean-François Lyotard, who rose to international fame through the publication of his report on knowledge presented to the government of Quebec. In 1979, Lyotard’s pamphlet *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (published later in English as *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*) described the social developments arising in the most highly developed countries

due to the advance of science and technology.<sup>4</sup> He writes as a philosopher, but in the vein of sociology. Much of what he said can only be fully understood if you read a further work which he announced in that report.<sup>5</sup> Very few people have read this second work, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, because of its exceedingly difficult text.<sup>6</sup>

I do not have time to fully explain Lyotard's analysis of phrase pragmatics as he practices them in *The Differend*; however, I can relay the heart of his project. Lyotard attempts to "bear witness to the event." In philosophical terms, an event is any occurrence that asks to be expressed by a phrase, or by a sentence or gesture. An event is something that occurs. It's a happening. Therefore, an event can be a momentous occurrence in history—Lyotard often uses the example of the French Revolution in 1789. Or an event can be something as simple as a cat's tail. Americans will, perhaps, immediately think of the events of 9/11. However, an event also occurs when a boy steals a glance across a room at a girl. The question arises, "What's happening?" What is the cat saying with its tail? What does this tumult in the heart of France mean for royalty across the European continent? How did a plane fly into a skyscraper; which becomes, "Who's attacking us?" Events come too quickly for reason. However, a thought must follow, something must be said. Therefore, a phrase must follow, or a gesture, or silence. Somehow we must express the event in language, even if it is as simple as "The cat's hungry."

In *The Differend*, Lyotard demonstrates the dispute that breaks out around any event. Many different ways of phrasing what happens are possible, but only one phrase will win. One of the myriad of possible phrases will succeed in expressing the event. When a phrase finally links to the event, all other possible expressions fall away forgotten. A wrong is suffered and the wound heals.

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<sup>4</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979). For the English translation, see Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Theory and History of Literature, Vol 10, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Lyotard admits that his report is written "from a somewhat sociologizing slant," which "truncates" but also "situates" his analysis. He consoles himself, however, "with the thought that the formal and pragmatic analysis of certain philosophical and ethico-political discourses of legitimation, which underlies the report, will subsequently see the light of day" (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxv). That subsequent work appeared later as Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Theory and History of Literature, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> First published in French as *Le Différend* (Paris: Les Éditions Minuit, 1983).

Ultimately, no one particular phrase can possibly express the event, because other possibilities presented themselves, which are ignored (e.g., descriptions, denotations, prescriptions, jokes, etc.). Lyotard attempts to resist the modern metanarratives by calling people to recognize the limits of language, as well as through his call to “bear witness to the *différend*” (i.e., to the dispute).

Lyotard argues for the radical heterogeneity of phrases, phrase regimen, and genres of discourse. To say this in an overly simplified manner, Lyotard thinks about the complexity of experience and language’s limitations in bearing witness to the event.

Why this concern for the event and the limits of language? It emerges because of the horrors of Auschwitz. After the Allied forces liberated the camp and freed the survivors, a question emerged: “Why don’t the detainees speak?” They remained silent for years after the war. Lyotard notes that that silence is a phrase in abeyance. It is an event struggling with language, trying to find a way to express in words the horrors of the death camp. How can one possibly put into language the event of Auschwitz? Decades flew by, and survivors died. Then some Jews started talking. Deep in their hearts lay the conviction, “Never again!” Something must be said, lest people forget. And so—years after it was already passed—they began to narrate the event of Auschwitz.

A theology that attempts to follow *fides quaerens intellectum* will look deeply at postmodern writings, especially those dealing with the death camps, because these events lie deep at the DNA level of our current culture. International law, entertainment, philosophical thought, novels, screenplays, and artistic works reflect and wrestle with life after the death camps. After the last century, when hundreds of millions of people were imprisoned in work camps, fed starvation diets, gassed, shot, and dumped in mass graves, how could it be otherwise?

Too few evangelical theologians have taken the postmoderns seriously. We neglect their writings, often with an arrogant attitude that we already have the truth. We have not listened to what they tried to say. As a result, we are not part of a conversation happening all around us. In fact, we are not even aware that it is taking place. I want to help pastors and churches better understand the complex world we live in, to recognize how the traumas of history, as well as the technological and commercial processes influencing the world, create an ever-more complex environment in which to practice pastoral ministry.

I think Lyotard correctly notes that “science has always been in conflict

with narratives.”<sup>7</sup> Stories fulfill an important function. They undergird our culture(s) and give us a sense of identity. But science delegitimizes these as “myths.” In postmodern cultures, the modern metanarratives come into question. They are replaced rather by the technological, which legitimizes knowledge based on performativity. That is, “It works.” This produces a problem for people alive today; for as Lyotard says, the technological “has no relevance for judging what is true or just.”<sup>8</sup> Perhaps this indicates why people struggle with determining truth and justice in a technology-saturated world.

I follow Lieven Boeve’s suggestion that theologians begin to think in terms of the event. In that case, God’s activities in time and space are thought of in terms of “interruption.”<sup>9</sup> Revelation occurs as God interrupts the normal course of our lives—our narrative—in order to accomplish His will. In this case, we would think of these moments of divine activity—what Wesleyans call, for instance, prevenient grace—as “events of grace.” Events that happen too quickly, before cognition, but which change everything. In such a case, the incarnation, the life, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth are seen as “events of grace” *par excellence* for theology. Events which we are called to reflect on and follow.

### The Interruption of Systematic Theology

As a young pastor, I confess that systematic theologians bothered me. Their writings often pose difficult questions, which upset young Christians. Consider my surprise to find that God has led me to become a systematic theologian! But as I said earlier, my mind always turns to pastors and their people.

I believe that systematic theology should function as an interruption in people’s thinking, for the world is constantly changing. Former theological expressions, which adequately conveyed truth to previous generations often lose plausibility, because knowledge changes. When this occurs, theology needs to find new ways to express the Christian tradition in terms that are plausible for contemporary people. This interrupts our tradition and spurs on its further development. However, as Boeve argues, interruption is not rup-

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<sup>7</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxiii.

<sup>8</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxv.

<sup>9</sup> For more on Boeve’s view of interruption, inspired by his deep conversation with Lyotard’s philosophical thought, see Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context*, Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 30 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2003).

ture. I do not believe the systematic theologian's role consists in rupturing the tradition—i.e., making a complete break with the faith we have inherited from prior generations. Rather, theologians should courageously seek new thoughts in search of plausible ways of expressing “the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people” (Jude 3). When cultural and philosophical understandings change, older ways of expressing that faith lose plausibility. As a result, they lose their ability to convey the Gospel and their ability to speak in meaningful terms for people today.<sup>10</sup> I believe our Master has called me to help with this.

Here I follow my mentor, Boeve, who writes of the Gospel as God's interruption in history.<sup>11</sup> And, as I attempt this, it is a privilege to serve the community here at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

### Conclusion

I follow the Anselmian project of *fides quaerens intellectum*. I am a systematic theologian who engages deeply in conversation with Lyotard, because he is arguably the “father of postmodern philosophy.” His writings have deeply touched the fabric of Western culture, especially in the field of literature, and thus continue to have a profound influence on world culture. They give us a good glimpse into the current critical consciousness. Lastly, I believe that the Church needs new ways of expressing the faith we have received from prior generations. As a seminary, we need to equip pastors and church leaders for the current contemporary context. We do so in hope of the “event of grace” when God interrupts our narrative(s) and makes all the difference.

Now as this event concludes, faculty and students will begin to phrase what happened. Will this installation address receive a gracious reception? I hope so. But the event is now over. Narrations follow. Was I understood? Will the audience receive it with grace? I don't know, but you will decide, even if the phrase that follows is silence.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a major argument in Boeve's essay, *Interrupting Tradition*.

<sup>11</sup> See Boeve, *God Interrupts History*.



## **Response to “In Hope of a Graceful Event”\***

Dick O. Eugenio, Ph.D.

As Prof. Davis’s article eloquently articulates, we live in a fast-changing world. It causes me amusement to realize how many oscillations in ways of life and thinking I have already experienced as a Filipino in my mid-thirties. So much has changed, including the philosophy of education, economic and socio-political opportunities, information sources, entertainment options, communication tools, relationship perspectives, and even home atmosphere. The list can go on and new changes are guaranteed to appear. As Peter Berger already predicted, frighteningly, we are living precariously because of changes, present and future.<sup>1</sup>

Whether we dare to admit or not, we fulfill our mission as ministers-theologians in such a time as this. The ensuing admonition, therefore, is for us to be engaged with the trends. In a theological consultation, I attended with fellow Asians this year, the different presenters echoed the same voice: we have to be up-to-date in our knowledge of the current trends in order to be more integral in our theologizing. Although the proposal is noble in intention, I wondered—and still wonder—if the envisioned future of theological integration is mere hallucination. The simple challenge of keeping pace with new developments seems difficult to accomplish. Indeed, how can one man keep pace with all the new discoveries of the natural sciences, advances in technology and robotics, new theories of physics, pressing ethical issues in bioethics, emerging social and political conundrums, and increasing multifarious and often competing ideological voices? Depressingly, knowledge of these things only belongs to the preparation stage, because the real task is the actual integration of these inputs to the process and product of theologizing.

In the light of the relationship between biblical truths and changing trends, we need to avoid two equally appealing options. On the one hand, the

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\* This paper is a response to Dr. Phillip Davis’s installation address, “In Hope of a Graceful Event,” pages 19–26, above.

<sup>1</sup> Berger, *The Precarious Vision: A Sociologist Looks at Social Fictions and Christian Faith* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 1976).

Scylla of theological fundamentalism need to be circumvented. Although it is convenient to fall back to “traditional” modes of theological expressions and jargons, these symbols may not make sense in the light of contemporary vocabulary. People are not convinced by an argument just because someone said this and that in the past. On the other hand, the Charybdis of unbridled pluralism is equally disastrous to the Christian faith. In agreement with the author, the eclipse of tradition is truly lamentable. The new contemporary expressions of faith and spirituality may be so radically new that they appear alien to a majority of older believers. Our historical disconnectedness, as the author points out, uproots us from our previous communities and belongingness. This makes us like orphans in a chaotic world.

Indubitably, and because of the postmodern ethos, recent trends in theological reflection lean more towards pluralism. Like Dr. Phillip Davis, majority of theologians have bought the idea that dialogical-integral theology is the way forward. In an effort to have a distinct voice in the theological area, theologians pick their own dialogue partners. Some choose the natural sciences, some pick the humanities (including philosophy), and majority select culture. They then produce theological books and treatises highlighting their *new* theological proposals using the contributions of their dialogue partners. While there is great merit in this maneuver, we should question the entire dialogical procedure. The issue revolves around the question of who or what is in control. In short, who has the louder voice in the dialogue? Berger is right to assert that any dialogue involves a bargaining process where a sort of “mutual cognitive contamination” takes place.<sup>2</sup> The bargaining process contains a give-and-take relationship: one has to give up some in order to receive some. Berger’s warning is succinct: “The theologian who trades ideas with the modern world... is likely to come out with a poor bargain, that is, he will probably have to give far more than he will get.”<sup>3</sup> While this may not be true in all cases of dialogical-integral theologies, the danger of Bible-pruning lurks. It is not hard for a theologian to let go of his previous doctrinal commitments in order to accommodate insights from science, philosophy, or culture. The wisdom of Berger needs to be heard: “The theologian who sups with *it* will find his spoon getting shorter and shorter—until that last supper in which he is left alone at the table, with no spoon at all and with an empty plate. The devil, one may guess, will by

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<sup>2</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 26–27.

<sup>3</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*, 27.

then have gone away to more interesting company."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to diluted theological content, another possible consequence of dialogical theology is a myriad of parochial theologies that neither have relations with each other nor agree with one another. With many theologies, one might wonder if we also have turned Christianity to several and conflicting Christianities.<sup>5</sup> Because theologians are engaged in dialogue with many voices, their conclusions vary from one another. The irony is that in seeking to be relevant to a particular group, one might find one's proposals completely irrelevant to all other groups. A theologian dialoguing with and employing Filipino culture in his theological cogitation has little (or nothing) to say to a Korean. Moreover, because the *Zeitgeist* changes along with new discoveries in every field of study, seemingly important theological developments today will lose their significance quickly. Transient theologies do not possess lasting relevance. Carefully crafted marketable theologies today are inescapably obsolete tomorrow.

I teach my students that the more original one's doctrine is, the more wrong it probably is. Theology is not undisciplined creativity. It is a scientific process of imagination. One may dialogue with other fields of study but not at the expense of the gospel. Thus, using the importance of events, the theologian must remember that the Christ-event is the controlling center of our reflections. Of course, this goes against post-modernism, which is incredulous to metanarratives. The paradox is that although postmodernity (and modern historicism) is skeptical about a single grand narrative, it seems to admit that the single series of events called the Holocaust brought about such a massive change in the world's way of thinking about justice, social solidarity and consciousness, power, and even religion.<sup>6</sup> This points to the fact that there are narratives or events in history that can have a "butterfly effect." Events are not as isolated as they appear. While it is true that there are events that are of lesser

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<sup>4</sup> Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*, 28.

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Peter C. Phan, ed., *Christianities in Asia* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> This is actually one of the evidences that postmodernity actually is the hyper-extension of modern ideals. With the exemption of Hegel, proponents of historicism that goes back in the early 1800s argued for the abandonment of a universal history in favor of local histories. For modern historicists, local histories (or events) possess their own self-authenticating integrity and unrepeatable particularity. Events in nineteenth-century colonized Philippines had little or no bearing to the intellectual affairs of Europe.

significance, there are events that demand great attention and response. The world has chosen to respond to the Holocaust-event. In fact, to be neutral in relation to the Holocaust-event is considered a bad response. Being detached observers cannot be an option.

As a Christian theologian, the Christ-event is the important event that demands a response. It is the single event around which much of the past, present and future of the world hang. It is the event that permeates many other local events. It is the event that creates more events, transcending geographical situatedness, gender issues, socio-economic differences, and political opinions. This event, however, is still on-going. The role of the theologian is to engage this event in its non-completion while waiting for its climax when Jesus Christ returns. In the meantime, we Christians appreciate the already of the event, contemplate the present of the event, and wait in eager anticipation for the future consummation of the event. We are all “in hope of a graceful event,” but this event is much grander than we think it would be, because it involves the persons of the Triune God.

**“Speaking the Same Language”  
Genesis 11:1–9: The Tower of Babel**

February 21, 2017\*  
Daniel Behr, Ph.D.

If as one people

The story of the Tower of Babel is often interpreted as a story about pride. The growing population of people whose ancestors survived the flood made a tower reaching to the heavens “so that we may make a name for ourselves.” Pride is very clearly a component here, but pride is only mentioned once in the story. Hermeneutics might say: it’s not about Pride; it is about language. Speech is mentioned four times in the story, including the opening narration: “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.” One easy heuristic of speech analysis is to look at how many times something is mentioned in a text.

It’s important to remember that God created with speech, either literally or metaphorically: “And God said, let there be light” (Gen 1:3). And of all God’s creation, only Adam could name things. “He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name” (Gen 2:19). Speech is powerful, and language is the medium of speech. Note that power was abused by Satan, he tempted with words, by challenging the words of God: “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Gen 3:1b).

We can see that language is powerful. And effective communication means making connections with other people, the people we are talking to. The people of Babel made a connection: “They said to each other...” (Gen 11:3). Communication takes place where we connect; studying communication is about finding things in common. It focuses on our connections, similarities, more than our differences.

Speaking the Same Language

God himself observes the power of communication when he says, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing

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\* This paper was presented by Dr. Behr on the occasion of his installation as Associate Professor of Christian Communication at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

they plan to do will be impossible for them” (Gen 11:6). Being able to speak the same language gives us, as a group of people, the power to accomplish our goals. As social creatures, we have needs that cannot be met individually, but we need others to meet them. Communication is integral to that.

The world today is moving closer to a common speech, English. The internet and the global economy have made English the common language of business. Many Asian countries teach English as part of their regular public education. Here at APNTS we teach in English and require students to have a level of proficiency in English. This accrues two benefits. (1) Almost all the works of Christian Literature and Theology have been translated into English. By learning English, Christian scholars have access to the great body of literature. All these have not been translated into Korean, or Mizo, or Tagalog. (2) It allows us to work together for the Kingdom.

Let us say there are two friends who meet here at APNTS, one from Korea and one from Myanmar. The pastor from Myanmar can visit Korea, preach to his friend’s congregation in English, and the Korean pastor can translate into Korean. When the friend visits Myanmar, the pastor can reciprocate, translating from English into Mizo.

But it’s not just about English; there is nothing that favors English over other languages. Just like French, Latin, Spanish, or Greek before it, travel and commerce have spread English around the world. Like those other common tongues, English facilitates making connections easier—business connections and spiritual connections. It makes connections broader and deeper.

Here at APNTS one required course is communication. It is a practical discipline that makes all the study we do here even more effective and beneficial. The most required course in the United States is what we call public speaking.

They have begun to do this

Communication is a creative act. We can put words together in ways that have never been done before. We can sing songs that have never been sung before. We can tell stories that have never been told before. We can poem poems that have never been poemed before. (Did you see what I did there? I made up a new use for a word. I made poem a verb and put it in the past tense.)

In the story in Genesis, they built a tower reaching to the heaven. I think of this very building we are in! It reaches to the heavens. With a common language we have built a global network of Alums: Pastors, missionaries, district

superintendents; all over the Asia-Pacific region, even all over the world, working to build the Kingdom of God.

You do not just leave here with some credits, or a degree, a piece of paper with your name on it. You leave with connections—connections to other people around the world.

Then nothing they plan will be impossible for them. What do we plan to do here at APNTS? We plan to do "impossible" things. Ministry is not just winning the lost in world areas, but connecting us all in the body of Christ. Language allows us to coordinate and strategize. To maximize our strengths and minimize our weakness.

Now follow me clearly on this next point. Extension courses in specific cultures, conducted in a specific language are great, excellent, wonderful. Not everyone can learn English at a level that allows them to do graduate work here at APNTS. Our faithful students in Myanmar are connecting with other students in Myanmar and will do "impossible" things in Myanmar. The same is true for other extension classes. Those students will do "impossible" things, amazing things, in their places.

But one of the benefits of a residential institution like APNTS is that we connect with students from all over the world. We communicate in the common tongue of the world. And we will do "impossible" things in the whole world. Nothing we plan to do will be impossible for us.

*"If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."*

Thank you.





## Response to “‘Speaking the Same Language’”\*

Mitchel Modine, Ph.D.

The function of Gen 11:11–19 in the Bible seems unclear. Looking at the content of this brief narrative, a few possibilities present themselves. First, this story appears to explain why the inhabitants of the world speak so many languages. Second, this story appears to criticize overblown human ambitions toward significance and renown. Third, this story contributes to the emerging monotheism which was the principal contribution of Israel to the history of world religions. One could posit many reasons why this story is difficult to understand. Perhaps most significant among these reasons is the fact that the events of this narrative are never again referred to in the remainder of the Bible. This is not the case, by contrast, with the story of Gen 3, which—though not reconsidered elsewhere in the Old Testament—becomes a story of humanity’s fall in the hands of New Testament authors, most especially the Apostle Paul in Rom 5 and 2 Cor 11, among others.

Faced with this sort of situation, the reader is left with at least two options. One may either leave the story as the one-off, perhaps mythological, certainly aetiological account that it seems to be. Alternatively, one may seek some way to connect this story to a larger context. My friend and colleague, Dr. Behr, has taken this second option. The first step is to plumb the depths of the story’s immediate context within the book of Genesis. The word “Babel” occurs in English translations twice, both times only here in Gen 10–11. Genesis 10:8–10 indicates that a certain Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter, ruled over a kingdom comprising “Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar” (Gen 10:10 NRSV). This aligns with some things we know about Babel. “Babel,” in Hebrew, is spelled the same as the more significant location Babylon—to which many of the leading inhabitants of Judah were exiled in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE—and thus the possible line of interpretation that this story is directed at the great city gains a little more credibility.

Dr. Behr, however, does not seem particularly interested in the direction

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\* This paper is a response to Dr. Daniel Behr’s installation address, “‘Speaking the Same Language,’” pages 31–33, above.

that this context takes the reader. Instead, he engages in a reading strategy which falls under the general category of “reading against the text.” Various “against the text” reading strategies have risen and fallen in popularity in Biblical scholarship, particularly over the last 50–60 years among Western interpreters. Asian interpreters have also engaged in these sorts of readings, with perhaps the most popular among Asians being some different forms of liberation theology, which got its start in South America, and post-colonial criticism, which seeks to contextualize texts like the Bible in terms of building a secure and just society after foreign minority ruling populations have ceded control or have been driven out through military means. A general characteristic which seems to unify these post-modern approaches to texts is the attempt to decenter some power whose authority seems to be assumed by the text. By questioning the assumptions that seem to be operating behind and underneath textual witnesses, these approaches uncover alternative ways of living, and in particular alternative ways of understanding justice and the full dignity of people who are otherwise marginalized, if not outright ignored, by the dominant forces/communities ideologically supported by the texts.

These approaches usually succeed or fail in the degree to which they are able to coax new meaning(s) out of the text(s) they examine. This, however, is not an “anything goes” proposition; one cannot make the text say whatever one wants it to say. In other words, while post-modern approaches decenter the notion that there is a universally valid meaning to a given text, to be explored in the intent of the author, or the meaning of the words used, or in the form of the text, or in the selection of various antecedent materials, they do not exclude the question of whether some readings are more valid than others. The principal safeguard against invalid readings is to read in context, a point which Biblical scholarship long ago recognized, even before the development of modern, historical-critical approaches which post-modern strategies have worked to decenter.

Dr. Behr, approaching the text from the standpoint of communication theory, may have unintentionally committed the error of making the text say something it does not. While from the perspective of communication it is doubtless important that parties in an exchange do understand each other, according to the internal logic of Gen 11:1–9, the fact that “they” (the unnamed persons who decide to build the tower) understand each other seems to be the heart of the problem. The attempt to build a tower which reaches into the heavens, whatever this is supposed to mean, offends God. He says that if

they are able to do this, speaking all the same language, “nothing they propose to do will now be impossible for them” (v. 6). So God comes down, confuses their language, and scatters them throughout the earth, so that “they left off building the city” (v. 8). Interestingly, the story does not say that God destroyed the tower.

Dr. Behr suggests that a group of people working at a shared goal can have a greater chance of success at meeting that goal if they understand one another. This is undoubtedly true. In saying so, he reads against the text, trying to find an additional layer of meaning. However, the meaning he thus finds in the text must be judged less valid than others. Other Biblical reference would have helped him make his point better, for example, Paul’s exhortations to the Philippians to set aside divisions among them in the cause of Christ (Phil 2:1). In fact, Paul lists “factions,” the opposite of unity, as one of the works of the flesh in another letter (Gal 5:20). Dr. Behr is correct that the students and faculty of APNTS, working together at a common goal, speaking the same language, may potentially achieve great things. Nevertheless, his argument would have been more convincing if he strengthened its Biblical foundation.



## **Equipping the Saints for Worship**

March 9, 2017\*

Rebecca Davis, M.A.

In a school whose purpose is to raise up leaders for the church and Christian leaders in communities around the world; to train people how to think about Scripture and society; how to read ancient languages in order to correctly interpret God's word; how to preach well; how to teach well; and how to effectively advocate for children in the world, what is my role? What am I doing here, and why does it matter? Why is music and worship important to the purpose of APNTS?

In a theological school, it is easy to focus on reason; on words and ideas. It is not as common to shine a light on the affective aspect of our faith, because it is much harder to pin it down. Because it is affective, it is different from person to person. It deals with emotions, personal experiences, cultural influences, and movement of the spirit within an individual's heart. It is hard to describe, and even harder to quantify. My field, music and worship, sits squarely in the middle of the affective side of our faith. We can describe how to conduct corporate worship in the church, and I try to help my students do that; we can teach better musical technique, which I try to do with the choir; we can even talk about the science behind music, which I have also done. But we cannot describe the exact experience each person has when they engage in corporate worship, or when they participate in a song of praise to God. How, then, can we say when we are doing it right?

My burden and my calling is for the church. Not just for the Wesleyan Church, of which I am a member, but for the Body of Christ in all its forms around the world. Specifically, my burden is to see people's lives changed for the better because of what we, the Church, do. Historically, this is the goal of holiness denominations—not just to save sinners for heaven, but to help people find a relationship with Christ that will transform their lives and will empower them to be agents of transformation in their world.

Our scripture from Ephesians four talks about using the leadership gifts

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\* This paper was presented by Rebecca Davis on March 9, 2017 on the occasion of her installation as Instructor in Music and Worship at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

given by the Spirit to equip the Body of Christ for works of service. I teach worship and music in the church, not only because I enjoy those things, although that is true, but because I believe corporate worship and the music used in corporate worship can be instrumental agents in transformation. I believe there is a need for church leaders to recognize the power of worship and the responsibility we carry for the content of our corporate worship experiences. When we ask our congregations to participate in the worship service, we are literally putting words into their mouths. The ancient Latin formula, *lex orandi, lex credendi* is true. The rule of prayer is the rule of belief. Or, what we speak, we will believe.

Constance Cherry, author of *The Worship Architect*, recalls hearing a student ask Robert Webber, a pioneer in worship renewal, “How do you know if you have worshiped?” His answer was, “You know you have worshiped if you obey God.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, if we are not being transformed to become more Christlike; if we are not becoming more obedient followers as a result of the time we spend in doing what we call worship, then we have not really worshiped. True worship is a response to God’s great acts of salvation in history and in our lives. We may respond in awe, in gratitude, in repentance, and in joy, but if those things do not lead to a change in the way we live our lives, our worship is incomplete.

When I think about bringing a positive change to the church, it seems like a very big task. I will never be the next great evangelist, bringing millions of people to Christ. I will never be the next great Christian singer or songwriter, inspiring people with my music all over the world. What I am is a teacher. In the past, I have informally taught people in churches about worship and music in the church, encouraging their involvement, and helping them to be more effective. The opportunity I have here to teach pastors, teachers and leaders in the church is beyond anything I could have imagined doing. I see my calling as equipping those who will be equipping others. I am an equipper of equippers. Together, we have the ability to bring people into the presence of God so their lives can be transformed, so they in turn can equip others.

There are some things that trouble me about the Church. I am troubled when I see “Christians” who display hatred towards people who are different; people God loves, people for whom Christ died. I am troubled when I see “Christians” who are more concerned about acquiring material things and

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<sup>1</sup> From Constance Cherry’s keynote address at the “Festival on Worship,” College Church, Marion, IN, May 19, 2015.

being comfortable than they are about their relationship with God and about the needs of others. I am deeply troubled to see “Christians” outwardly worshipping God on Sunday, but displaying no evidence of that worship affecting their lives outside the walls of the church. I understand that the church is full of people at all different places in their walk with Christ. What disturbs me is seeing people attend church for years with no apparent change.

The big question is, “Can the way we do corporate worship in the church change these things?” Am I expecting too much from a few songs, a sermon, and a couple of prayers every Sunday? If that is all worship is, then yes, I would be expecting too much from it. But true worship is so much more than that. If that is all we are giving our congregations on Sunday, we are starving them.

You might say, “Worship does not do those things—the sermon is where we teach people about holiness and transformation. The rest of the service is just preliminaries.” It is true, the sermon should be teaching the Word of God to the congregation. But wait, there is more! I love to tell the story of what Phil’s aunt told me. Aunt Margaret has no idea that I have been talking about her all over the world. Some of you may have heard this story because I used it in the Christian Formation class, and I have used it in my Worship and Music class. I even used it when I spoke in Myanmar a couple of weeks ago. Aunt Margaret is now internationally known. What she told me was that, in her almost 80 years of church attendance, she cannot tell me the specifics of any sermon she has ever heard. But she remembers the words to every hymn she sang growing up in church. Now, I am sure she learned things from all those sermons, and some of them even caused her to change her life, and many of them brought her closer to the Lord. But where did she get the theology that has stayed with her? What are the specific words she has repeated and learned? For good or bad, her Christian life has been shaped by the words that have been put into her mouth through the songs she sang with the community of believers.

When people with dementia and Alzheimer’s can no longer remember their spouse or their children, and can no longer speak, they can often sing every word of the songs they grew up with. For Christians, at this point in time, it is the hymns they remember. They cannot quote sermons or even scripture. Something about music goes past the synapses in the brain and creates memory in places not affected by the damage caused by dementia. Think about that. What will the young people growing up in our churches today be

singing when they can no longer speak? I do not mean to say that we only need to sing the old hymns because they teach good theology. There are some old songs that taught bad theology. There are new songs that are very deep and teach good messages. We just need to be careful about what we choose. And when we find good songs, we need to sing them often enough for people to remember them. We need to put true words into their mouths.

I have another story of a long-time church member. When my husband was the minister of music at a Wesleyan church in the U.S., we sang the hymn “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go.” It says,

It may not be on the mountain’s height, Or over the stormy sea;  
 It may not be at the battle’s front my Lord will have need of me.  
 But if by a still, small voice He calls to paths that I do not know,  
 I’ll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine, “I’ll go where You want  
 me to go.”  
 I’ll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,  
 Over Mountain, or plain, or sea.  
 I’ll say what You want me to say, dear Lord.  
 I’ll be what You want me to be.<sup>2</sup>

This lady, who had been a faithful church member all her life, told us that she would not sing that song, because she was not willing to do what it said. She would not sing a song that was a lie for her. While I appreciated her honesty, it bothered me that she could be in the church for such a long time and not be willing to follow God’s calling, whatever it might be. I wonder what she did when they sang “I Surrender All” or “Take My Life and Let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.” She was a good Wesleyan—she believed in sanctification. And yet, somehow, over all those years in church, her life was not transformed enough to include full surrender to God’s will.

Her story brings up another point. Although it is our responsibility as leaders to offer a worship experience in the church that has the potential to transform the worshipers, the worshipers have a responsibility as well. There is a saying in English, “You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.” We can design and lead worship services that take people into the very presence of God, but it is up to them to allow the Holy Spirit to change them. The Spirit will not change us without our permission. All we can do as leaders is offer them a means of grace. John Wesley defines “means of grace” as “out-

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<sup>2</sup> Bible, Ken, ed., *Sing to the Lord*, (Lillenas: Kansas City, MO, 1993), 438.



ward signs, words or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end: to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to people preventing, justifying or sanctifying grace.”<sup>3</sup>

Corporate worship in the church is a channel through which God can convey grace. For the means of grace to be effective, the worshipers must submit themselves to it. But if we want them to submit themselves to it, it better be something worth submitting to.

It is my contention that teaching pastors and church leaders to plan and lead a worship service well is as important as teaching them to preach well, or to teach well. Not all of you who study at APNTS will be pastors, but the very fact that you have come to study at a seminary will make you leaders in your churches. You will have influence, and you may be thrust into leadership roles you did not expect. A good understanding of the place and importance of corporate worship in the body of Christ is important for leaders, whose job, according to Paul in Ephesians 4, is to “equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” If we, as those with gifts of leadership in various capacities, are to help our people attain the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ,” we must give them every opportunity to do so. And one of those opportunities is worshipping together as the body of Christ. We must take the responsibility seriously, and not squander the opportunity. By taking on these roles, we are the servants of the Church. Yes, we serve God, but we do so by serving his people; by giving them all the tools they need to grow in Christ.

Obviously, this morning I cannot describe the entire scope of how to do worship properly in the church. The truth is, there are many ways to do it properly. There are as many ways as there are individuals planning and leading worship services in local communities of believers situated in cultures and sub-cultures around the world. The important thing is to invite worshipers to participate in a conversation with God that (1) is theologically grounded in scripture, telling God’s story; 2) is a response to the revelation of God in history and in our lives, 3) turns our eyes toward Him instead of ourselves, and 4) gives us His vision for the world around us. These things will only happen when those who plan and lead worship do them intentionally, understanding the reasons behind what they are doing. Doing worship the way we have al-

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<sup>3</sup> John Wesley, Sermon 16, “The Means of Grace,” 11.1. Quoted from Constance Cherry’s address at the “Festival on Worship.”

ways done it because that is the way we have always done it is not good enough. Changing the way we worship for the sake of change is not good enough, either. We need to understand why we include certain things and exclude others.

I do not want to leave this message completely in the realm of theory, even though my purpose this morning is not to teach you how to lead worship. But I would like to offer a few general pointers that may be helpful. If our worship is going to be transformational, it will take some work and it will require time for prayer, planning, and practice.

How do we insure that what we offer in worship is good? The first thing to do before any planning, is to pray. Prayer is essential. I hope you remember this more than anything else, and not just about leading worship. When you plan to write a sermon; when you plan to teach a class or a seminar; when you plan to write a paper or an article for a journal—whatever you plan to do for the Kingdom—PRAY! Everything else is secondary. We want the Holy Spirit to inspire us. The truth is, whether we plan one service at a time, or if we plan a whole year of services, the Holy Spirit can be at work in our planning. The Spirit is not limited to working on Sunday morning. Our preparation should be Spirit-infused and led. When I plan a worship service, I often pray about it for a week before deciding anything.

Second, plan ahead. We are generally good at planning which songs we will sing, but what about everything else? What will you pray about in the service? What will you say between songs? What will you do other than singing that invites the congregation to participate? Which scriptures will you use? How much scripture will be read? Who will read it? How early will you give it to them to practice? How will you handle the offering? Can you think of any creative ideas that will inspire the church? How many people will be involved in leading the service? When will you get them together? These things do not sound very spiritual, but they are necessary if we want to provide an experience that will open an avenue of conversation between God and his people.

Finally, practice. Not just the music. Practice what will be spoken. Practice actions that will also speak to people. Practice practical things like running a PowerPoint presentation or running the sound system. The people who do those things should not be learning how to do it on Sunday morning during the service. Keep your purpose in mind while you are practicing: we are here to equip the people of God for works of service. We are servants of the church, and we need to do the work to become the best servants possible. When the

people running the sound system practice, it is not so they will be noticed. In fact, it is the opposite. When everything works as it should, no one even notices the sound system. The same goes for every other aspect of worship. The leaders' job is to focus attention on God and glorify Him, not themselves. If everything is well-planned and well-executed, the mechanics of what is happening will not detract from the message.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit takes over a worship service without our permission. If that happens, it will not matter if things are not as smooth as we planned. But we cannot presume that He will take over to rescue us when we failed to prepare.

Going back to my opening question, "What am I doing here, and why does it matter?"

As you study to prepare for ministry or to become more effective at the ministry you already have, you should know this: You have no idea where God will take you when you say, "I will go where you want me to go." I never would have imagined myself teaching in a seminary. But now I find it to be one of the most fulfilling things I have ever done. When I imagine students in my class pastoring churches, teaching young leaders, evangelizing people who need to know God's love, and all the various other things that you do and will do, it gives me great joy to think that maybe, just maybe, something I said will be helpful to you. Maybe the fact that I went to the ends of the earth will mean that someone can be more effective in equipping God's people for works of service somewhere in the world where I will never go. I can only pray and believe that God wants to use even me, and even the seemingly unimportant subject I teach, to be an agent of transformation in the lives of His people. I am here because God brought me here, and it matters because you matter, and the people your lives will touch matter. I am here to equip the equippers.



## Response to “Equipping the Saints for Worship”\*

Nativity A. Petallar, Th.D.

“I don’t want to be a pastor,” proclaimed my daughter when she was about eight years old.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because I don’t want to preach!”

Nowadays my daughter is ten years old. She does *not* preach all right, but she sings with the children’s worship team in our church, not realizing that she is actually preaching—proclaiming the good news—through a different mode of communication, i.e., music. While reflecting on Davis’s inaugural address, I came to the hypothesis that like my daughter, the writer did not want to be “the next great evangelist, bringing millions of people to Christ,” but in the real sense of the word—as a teacher, “an equipper of equippers,” she could indeed bring millions of people to Christ. That message rang clear to me as I mulled over the general tone of her inaugural address.

At the outset, my initial reaction to the address was: there is no doubt, Becky Davis, professional songwriter; music professor; and Wesleyan clergy is so compatible with the life and ministry of the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS)! Her opening statement, “Why is music and worship important to the purpose of APNTS?” begs the hearers to delve into the world and power of music as it relates to the existence of APNTS as a theological institution seeking to train women and men for Christlike leadership and excellence in ministries. This query governed her whole inauguration speech. Davis battled with several notions ranging from music (as both science and applied discipline), worship (personal and corporate), church department, domains of learning, history, theology, hermeneutics, homiletics, leadership, practical Christian education, and global missions—all in one inauguration address. After listening to the speech, I, for one am convinced that music and worship is eternally linked to our existence as souls reaching out to an all-together beautiful God.

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\* This paper is a response to Rebecca Davis’s installation address, “Equipping the Saints for Worship,” pages 39–45, above.

I want to respond to three crucial “refrains” that resonate in the paper. The first is, there was a pressing conviction to the ever-powerful impact of music and worship not just to the academe and ministry but also fundamentally as part of the core of our humanity. How do we measure the affective side to music and worship? Generally, we are aware of the three domains of learning and are conscious that both cognitive and psychomotor could be quantified. But how can we measure the affective side to learning? In the postmodern times, it seems that everything can be measured. Social science tries to measure love using what they call the Sternberg’s theory of love; Goff, Goddard, Pointer and Jackson’s “Measures of Expressions of Love” (2007); and Chapman’s classes of expressions of love (*The Five Love Languages*, 1995) among others. Hope can be measured using the “Adult Dispositional Hope Scale” (Snyder 1995) for instance. And faith, too, can be measured, e.g., using the Faith Matters Survey (Harvard University and University of Notre Dame 2011). One could be almost sure that these social science approaches to the aesthetics in life are not exact and precise measurements of the qualitative substance of our existence. Davis writes, “In a theological school, it’s easy to focus on reason; on words and ideas. It’s not as common to shine a light on the affective aspect of our faith, because it’s much harder to pin it down. Because it’s affective... it deals with emotions, personal experiences, cultural influences, and movement of the spirit within an individual’s heart. It’s hard to describe, and even harder to quantify.” Davis then states that her field, which is music and worship, “sits squarely in the middle of the affective side of our faith.” Simply put, an inaugural speech is the first speech someone gives when starting an important new job (*Cambridge Dictionary*, n.d.). Right there and then I concur with Davis how integral music and worship is to faith development. One of the things that is worth noting in the address is the writer’s discussion on the impact of music in one’s brain. Davis alludes to music’s ability to go “past the synapses in the brain creating memory in places not affected by the damage caused by dementia.” This could have implications to Christian education of youth and adults as well as to holistic child development.

Second, there was the clear connection between the goal of holiness denominations (with APNTS as a theological institution in the Wesleyan tradition serving the Church) and the writer’s calling and vocation. Davis is unequivocal and unapologetic of her calling as a Wesleyan clergy and seminary professor. She declares, “My burden and my calling is for the church.” The address beautifully hinges on Apostle Paul’s message on the leadership gifts

found in Ephesians 4. This particular chapter talks about the unity and maturity in the Body of Christ with special mention on spiritual gifts—for works of service, which also relates to the core of APNTS’s mission and vision. Davis, in particular, focuses on the “need for church leaders to recognize the power of worship and the responsibility we carry for the content of our corporate worship experiences.” She uses the ancient Latin formula, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, meaning, “the rule of prayer is the rule of belief, or, what we speak, we will believe.” This is such a weighty responsibility not just for preachers but also for worship leaders, “prompters” of people as they worship the “Audience of One.”

Finally, the third refrain that resonates in the address is something that was personally transformational for me. There was the “inner conviction,” permit me to call it a “slap to my face,” when the writer talked about haphazard planning in worship. I was especially rebuked on this point. You see, I am part of worship planning in my local church, and more often than not, I confess that there are times in this ministry, when the “process” of planning worship is not well executed, not optimal, not smooth, maybe not at all fitting to this Great God we worship. Davis rescued me from this abyss of not coming up with a “well-planned, well-executed” process so that the “mechanics of what’s happening won’t detract from the message” by providing three helpful and practical P’s: prayer, planning, and practice. Davis was so successful in expounding on these three aspects. The explanation was succinct, clear, to the point, without the pretense of being uselessly dogmatic, but based on her pure conviction, professional experience and years of learning.

Becky Davis is undoubtedly a blessing to APNTS. Just like my then eight-year-old daughter who was scared to death of becoming a pastor but is ministering to the Church in a different way, Davis’s unique contribution to APNTS is evident. Davis’s fervor in leading the APNTS’ community to genuine music and worship, her being that exudes unadulterated devotion to God through music and worship and her commitment to the ideals of APNTS is beyond dispute. In a world where there is too much hype on worship, her inaugural address is a beacon that summons us back to the heart of worship—giving God what He rightfully deserves.

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## **I'll Have a Cheeseburger with No Cheese, Please**

March 21, 2017\*

Lynn D. Shmidt, D.Miss.

“In the early 1700’s a young German Lutheran named Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg worked as a pioneer missionary in South India, [among the Tamil people]. Before trying to communicate the Gospel, he set out to master the Tamil language, to understand the Hindu religious beliefs and to study the culture. He wrote a long and masterly manuscript for his mission executives” (Whiteman 1985, 3–4). However, at that time in history, most European mission senders considered the knowledge of other religions and cultures to be irrelevant, or even blasphemous. Consequently, “they shelved [his report] and rebuked him for wasting his time. He had been set to preach the Gospel!” (Whiteman 1985, 3).

Some missionaries today may continue to hold onto some form of this understanding, thinking that only good will and the love of God are needed to be effective witnesses to those of other cultures. Learning the local language or understanding the indigenous culture are nice if we can do it but not essential for ministry.

However, I maintain that because missiology is a discipline that values a thorough understanding of language and culture, the study of missiology is not just an option for the cross-cultural minister. Discipleship and ministry are impossible without it. Trying to make disciples using only theological and biblical understanding without anthropological and cultural discernment is like ordering a cheeseburger with no cheese. You cannot do it!

Those who are called by God to share Jesus Christ with people (any people) must realize that witnessing always occurs within a cultural context. Just as cheese is integral to a cheeseburger, cultural knowledge is essential for all discipleship and ministry.

In this installation message, I intend to address three ideas associated with the place of missiology within academia. (1) The hamburger—the place of missiology as a theological discipline. (2) Cheese—the place of evangelism as

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\* This paper was presented by Dr. Shmidt on the occasion of his installation as Assistant Professor of Missions at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

the heart of missiology. (3) Pickle—the place of missiology in theological education. I will not draw out the cheeseburger analogy any further.

### Missiology as a Theological Discipline

Missiology is a relatively new discipline that arose from the need of the church for serious reflection on its mission. It is informative to recognize that theology and mission have always been closely interconnected. Theology grew in the early days of the first century church as a result of its missional outreach. And as the church spread rapidly into new areas and new cultures, debates sprang up naturally to give clarity to this new doctrine of God and Christianity. It is not surprising then that the discipline of missiology would turn back to theology as it searches for an academic home. It should feel most comfortable within the discipline of theology. It has been suggested by James Scherer in 1987 and reiterated by Ross Langmead that because “missiology engages with all of the theological questions that are relevant to God’s mission and the mission of the church,” missiology is properly placed as part of theology (Langmead 2013, 67–69).

I like the term “Intercultural Theology” to argue for the place of missiology within theological studies. I do not know the origin of the term but I first saw it applied to missiology in an article in *Christianity Today* (Paas 2016, 37–54). To me the idea of intercultural theology captures the idea that the church within each culture becomes a theologizing church to give voice to its own specific concepts of self, God, society, and the environment. In this brief chart, I am raising several questions that arise in every culture that need to be investigated through biblical and cultural contextual lenses.

<b>Self</b>	Where did I come from? What happens to me after I die? Do all people have a spirit/soul? Where are the spirits of our departed loved ones?
<b>God and the spiritual realm</b>	Who is God and where is he? Does God know about me or care about me? Does God control the world? What power and control do the spirits have?
<b>Society</b>	What is my ethnic identity? Who are we as a group? What is my responsibility to those within my group? Outside my group?

	Who are the “others” of the world?
<b>Environment</b>	Is there a creator of this world? What is my relationship to creation? What is God’s or the gods’ relationship to creation?

### Universal Questions

As an evangelical believer and missionary, I trust the Bible is true and I hold strong theological convictions (especially from the teaching of John Wesley). However, I must be careful not to equate the two even though our theology is rooted in our study of the Bible. Here is the distinction. The Bible is God’s revelation to humankind. Although we translate it into many languages, its principles and truth remain. On the other hand, theology is our systematic interpretation at a historical point in time (in a particular cultural context) to give a clear explanation of the truths of the Bible. Paul Hiebert, a respected US missiologist, describes theology as that point of contact between the Biblical revelation of God and a specific cultural context. It is the divine revelation understood in human contextual terms (Hiebert 1985, 197–198). He goes on to suggest that all human theologies are flawed because of human sinfulness and all theologies are only “partial understandings of Theology as God sees it” (198). Therefore, in order to develop good theology, we need careful exegesis of the Bible and a careful exegesis of our cultural and historical contexts as well.

We may argue that missiology has a place in theology, but not all theologians accept that because missiology has at times been seen only as a practical “how-to” approach to cross-cultural training for missionaries rather than a rigorous theological study of the Bible. I believe this dispute has grown because of the inter-disciplinary nature of missiology. It calls on the insights of the behavioral sciences, especially drawing from the studies of sociology, communications, and anthropology. Every academic discipline has dialogue partners among the other disciplines. For example, theology talks to philosophy. Biblical studies talks to linguistics, hermeneutics and archeology. Pastoral studies has a host of conversation partners in psychology, sociology, counseling, and others. Likewise, missiology talks to anthropology and sociology in order to understand culture, context, and behavior. It talks to linguistics and communications theory to prepare for translating scripture and sharing the faith among diverse peoples. It sometime has serious discussions with politics, economics, law, and ecology because of its strong commitment to justice, peace, and creation. Missiology often holds discussions with other faiths in

religious studies. Finally, because missiology is often searching for practical solutions rather than concepts only, it talks openly with community development, education, international aid, agriculture, aviation, and health sciences. Missiology has many partners and is often on the lookout for others with whom it can participate to move the world toward more abundant life in God.

Missiology could also legitimately be placed within the area of applied anthropology. Anthropology is a vast study of people past and present, and it is divided into several areas such as archeology, forensics, linguistics, physical anthropology, and cultural/social anthropology. Each area encourages a field of study that applies some of the methods and theories of anthropology to the analysis and solution of practical problems. Thus, the term “applied anthropology” is used, and missiology is accurately associated with applied cultural anthropology. This suggests that the models and methods of anthropology can aid Christians and the church in its mission.

Thinking of missiology as an applied cultural anthropology implies that one aspect of mission is to become involved in communities for the purpose of solving practical problems of the society. Missiology, as an applied cultural anthropology, would embrace ministry to the poor, healing of the broken, restoration of the oppressed, and attending to all of the felt needs of people in a society. Most importantly, missiology assists the church to address the real need of each person, to be restored to relationship with God, and for this reason it should be firmly founded on theology. (This idea is discussed more in the following section.)

#### Missiology Has Evangelism as Its Heart

A very insightful article was written by Samuel Hugh Moffett, a former missionary to China and Korea, and published in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Moffett 2009, 598–600). In the article, he argues that there was a time when Christians believed that evangelism was the only priority in mission, but they were wrong. He looks at the historical swing the other way in which many churches took up the cause of social justice and said that it is the top priority. They were also wrong. By trying to minister only to worldly needs, some nearly lost their distinction as the church.

Today, most people see evangelism and social justice issues as practical, working partners. Moffet declares that evangelism should be perceived as the “leading partner” in mission, or a “first among equals” (2009, 599). His suggestion brings together the vertical and horizontal relationships of the Great

Commandment. The first is to love God with all of one's being (the vertical relationship), and the second is to love our neighbor (the horizontal relationship). The priority in mission is clear that to improve the human condition one must first have a relationship to God. But the second "is like it" and is also indispensable to mission. "Our evangelists sometimes seem to be calling us to accept the King without His kingdom; while our prophets, just as narrow in their own way, seem to be trying to build the kingdom without the saving King" (Moffett 2009, 599). The first priority of the church is to proclaim the gospel, but not at the expense of Christian actions and compassionate ministry. Missiology advocates the Kingdom of God and the announcement of a future kingdom where things are as God wants them to be. It also advocates a Kingdom of God and an invitation to enter that kingdom now by faith through repentance.

#### Theological Education as Missiological

Bernhard Ott suggests that theology and missiology depend on each other. If God is a missionary God, then the whole of theology ought to be about this sending God. He says, "The first task of theology is to make sense of the whole of life by reference to God. The second task of theology is to be an agent of transformation, so that the whole of life may reflect God's intention" (Ott 2001, 84). Understanding God's revelation leads one naturally to seeking to participate in it.

The traditional structure of theology is to first divide it into three theoretical parts. They are Biblical studies, church history, and systematic theology. The fourth division of theology is practical theology and is structured by various church-related ministries. Missiology is one of these practical theology subjects, and consequently we see mission in the church as just one of its many ministries. What we need to ask is, How do we overcome the split between the theory and the practice of theology that is implied in this division? Can theological education be experienced more as a process of transformation that does not position practical matters as only applications of the "weightier" theological subjects? A critique of some theological education is that if the "heavy" conceptual subjects become the central sources of education, how is a student led to engage actively in the arena of the world of diverse contexts, life stories, and experiences of the poor, the uneducated, and the marginalized?

In an article entitled "What is Missiology" the author, Ross Langmead, suggests but does not give outright support to the idea that a missiological

approach to theological education will help reduce the divide between concept and practice. (Langmead 2013). We may think through a line of reasoning like this: The Bible teaches that knowing God means worshipping and obeying God. To know involves relating to and doing what is known. Knowing affects the mind, and also the heart and the will. A complete reference to this approach to theological education can be found in *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Banks 1999). If learning is bound by classrooms and excludes the experience of church, work, home, and social spaces, then educated elites are formed who value fragmented knowledge and critical inquiry over integration of knowledge and praxis, an application of that knowledge. Theological education should be perceived as more than just a preparation for mission; it should be missional itself.

What might a missional theological education look like? I think it looks a lot like education at APNTS, but I would also caution us to continually evaluate our epistemology, our philosophies of teaching and of learning. A missiological framework for education helps to reconnect the theoretical with the practical. It might mean expanding our reach into new areas or possibly offering programs that build the church by opening to students who are outside of the normal Western-regulated educational system. Experienced teachers make themselves available to those with less practical experience. Education would be centered around service to others and would provide numerous opportunities for experiential learning. It might also require a residential break from the normal educational environment to promote prolonged internships or supervised ministries. Professors need to be enlisted with a mentoring mindset who share their lives as well as their knowledge with their students. Professors should be actively engaged in ministry and able to invite their students into their ministry context to prepare students in much the same way as Jesus prepared his disciples for a time when he would no longer be with them.

Missiologically based theological education is an effort to integrate faith and life by creating more field-based education where we share our own mission commitments with our students. Teachers are active in mission and are ready to mentor and guide their students by sharing their own ministries, as well as by teaching theology.

### Conclusion

There are many reasons for missiology's place in academia and in the church,

but the most important reason is a theological one. The Incarnation is the model for cross-cultural ministry, and this is where missiology becomes invaluable to the church and its mission. (The concept of Incarnation as mission is detailed in the Luzbetak Lecture on Mission and Culture by Darrell Whiteman on May 5, 2003, titled “Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection.”) The theology of Jesus becoming human is deep and mysterious, but clearly God decided to come, not in a general way but in a specific way to become a first century Jew. Have you ever thought about the implications of Jesus being a human Jew? He did not eat pork, as taught by the Torah. He spoke Aramaic with a Galilean accent. He did not know about germ theory as the cause of disease, because it was not discovered until 1865 by Louis Pasteur. He was thoroughly immersed in the Greco-Roman and Hebrew culture of Israel at that time in history. Philippians 2:6–8 says,

He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross (Good News Translation).

We learn something very great about God through the Incarnation. God has used humans throughout history to work out his plan of salvation. He uses people like you and me to tell the blessed story of the cross to people of other cultures. And even when it came time to make known his supreme Revelation, God chose an imperfect culture with all of its limitations to reveal Christ. Someone once said, “Jesus is God spelled out in language humans can understand.” That language is the language of human culture. The mystery of the Incarnation teaches us that God takes both humanity and culture seriously.

The Incarnation also becomes our model for ministry. Just as Jesus entered into Jewish culture, we must be willing to enter other cultures to serve the people. We must be willing to “learn their language, adapt our lifestyle to theirs, to understand their worldview and religious values, and to laugh and weep with them” (Whiteman 2003, 31). This is where the insights drawn from missiology, as an applied anthropology, speaks loudly to mission. They are summed up in this poem by Lao Tsu, an ancient Chinese philosopher and the founder of Taoism,

Go to the people  
Live among them  
Learn from them

Love them  
 Start with what they know  
 Build on what they have

This is mission in the model of the Incarnation and to carry it out we need the insights of missiology, the mindset of Christ, and the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit.

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## **Response to “I’ll Have a Cheeseburger with No Cheese, Please”\***

Darin H. Land, Ph.D.

Dr. Lynn Shmidt opens his address by recounting the cautionary tale of one Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682–1719). Shmidt tells how Ziegenbalg studied the culture and beliefs of the people among whom he ministered—but received a severe reprimand and censure of his published work on his findings.

I am reminded of the example of another pioneering missionary, the famous Dr. David Livingstone (1813–1873), who lived about 100 years after Ziegenbalg. Like Ziegenbalg, Livingstone deemed it necessary to undertake considerable pre-work before proceeding to the work of evangelism. Indeed, he seems to have viewed his role as that of explorer, finding ways to open the “Dark Continent” to future evangelistic efforts. His Great Journey of 1852–1856 and Zambezi Expedition of 1856–1864 had the express purpose of providing missionaries unhindered access to the unreached peoples of that continent by finding navigable waterways to reach the African interior.

Moreover, Livingstone proclaimed a message of “Christianity and Commerce,” saying that the goals of Christianity and commerce required similar agendas and ought to work hand-in-hand. He says,

Sending the Gospel to the heathen must, if this view be correct, include much more than is implied in the usual picture of a missionary, namely, a man going about with a Bible under his arm. The promotion of commerce ought to be specially attended to, as this, more speedily than any thing else, demolishes that sense of isolation which heathenism engenders, and makes the tribes feel themselves mutually dependent on, and mutually beneficial to each other. With a view to this, the missionaries at Kuruman got permission from the government for a trader to reside at the station, and a considerable trade has been the result; the trader himself has become rich enough to retire with a competence. Those laws which still prevent free commercial intercourse among the civilized nations seem to be nothing else but the remains of our own heathenism. My observations on this subject make me extremely desirous to promote the preparation of the raw materials of European manufactures in Africa, for by that means we may not only put a

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\* This paper is a response to Lynn Shmidt’s installation address, “I’ll Have a Cheeseburger with No Cheese, Please,” pages 51–58, above.

stop to the slave-trade, but introduce the negro family into the body corporate of nations, no one member of which can suffer without the others suffering with it. Success in this, in both Eastern and Western Africa, would lead, in the course of time, to a much larger diffusion of the blessings of civilization than efforts exclusively spiritual and educational confined to any one small tribe. These, however, it would of course be extremely desirable to carry on at the same time at large central and healthy stations, for neither civilization nor Christianity can be promoted alone. In fact, they are inseparable.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, both Livingstone and Ziegenbalg apparently shared a common understanding—albeit with widely divergent strategies—that preparatory work was integral to the task of spreading the Gospel. However, whereas Ziegenbalg received a stern reprimand for his work to understand the people among whom he ministered, Livingstone was widely praised for his efforts—despite the fact that he gained only a single, subsequently apostatizing convert.<sup>2</sup> The different response the two missionaries received for their efforts is striking, to say the least.

Whether this difference is the result of changing missiological mores or merely of different personal and geographical circumstances (Great Britain for Livingstone and Germany for Ziegenbalg) would be an interesting topic of inquiry—but it need not detain us here. Suffice it to say that there is a tension in missionary work between (a) presenting the Gospel with minimal effort toward understanding the religious perspectives of those being served versus (b) taking time to understand those perspectives deeply prior to any presentation of the Gospel.

This tension can be traced to divergent views of the place of non-Christian religions within a Christian worldview. Those who would eschew the kind of prior work undertaken by Ziegenbalg and Livingstone view non-Christian religions as irrelevant for evangelism, at best; as demonic opposition to evangelism, at worst. Those taking the opposite perspective may regard non-Christian religions as means of prevenient grace, cultivating an awareness of

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<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London, J. Murray, 1857; reprint, Project Gutenberg, 2013), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1039/1039-h/1039-h.htm>. Accessed December 14, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted, however, that debate persists as to whether Livingstone's lone convert, a chief of the Bakwain (BaKwena) tribe in Bechuanaland (Botswana), remained a faithful Christian. See, for example, Anthony Nutting, *Scramble for Africa* (London: Constable and Company, 1970), 137.

and longing for the Transcendent that prepare adherents for receptivity to the Gospel.

A similar tension can also be observed in the field of culture. Some may view non-Christian cultures as stumbling blocks to the Gospel, while others may find *praeparatio evangelica* therein. In a recent work entitled *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures*, authors Georges and Baker take the latter view.<sup>3</sup> They communicate convincingly that people enculturated in honor-shame societies can best appreciate the Gospel when the Biblical story is presented through a lens of honor-shame inherent in the text itself.

In light of the complex issues surrounding missiological study of religion and culture, it seems likely that neither Ziegenbalg's detractors nor Livingstone's hagiographing fans were entirely justified in their polarized verdicts. The proclamation of the Gospel is indeed of utmost importance, but the hard work of preparation for authentic, effective communication of the Gospel is likewise indispensable. All the more, therefore, do we today need people like Dr. Lynn Shmidt to remind the Church of its irrevocable commission of evangelism and simultaneously to equip the Church and its missionaries with the theological and sociological resources to undertake this work with the most winsome of methods.

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<sup>3</sup> Jayson Georges and Mark D. Baker, *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016). See my forthcoming review in *Journal of Asian Mission*.



## A God of Immeasurably More

March 27, 2017\*

Bruce E. Oldham, Ed.D.

Dr. Daniel Copp, Education Commissioner and Global Clergy Development Director; Dr. Mark Louw, Regional Director of Asia-Pacific; Dr. John Moore, Regional Education Coordinator; Rev. Kafoa Maurer, APNTS Board of Trustees chair; honored representatives from our local community, our national and international educational partners, and sister denominations; Nazarene district superintendents and leaders; local pastors; esteemed alumni; distinguished faculty, faithful staff, and much-loved students; and each of you, our special guests:

I begin by expressing my sincere thanks to all of you who have gathered here today for this special occasion in the life of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. We've come to celebrate the goodness of God for the educational mission accomplished through APNTS from its beginning until now—to His glory—and His provision for the work yet to come. To Global Missions and the International Board of Education of the Church of the Nazarene, we are indebted for your dedication and commitment to the seminary and the region that makes a day like this possible. To so many of you who have invested your hopes, your dreams, and your lives so that this school can shine as a “city on a hill,” and to former presidents, Drs. Owens, Fairbanks, Nielson, Fukue, Im, and one who is present, Dr. Floyd Cunningham, who have led us, we are indeed grateful. To my family who is here with me, son and daughter, my wife Peggy who takes on this great adventure with me and has fallen in love with our students, I renew my unending devotion to you.

There is an old Filipino proverb that states, “*Kung may tinanim, may aanihin.*” or “**If you plant, you will harvest.**” It's a simple adage but so true on many levels. It does not impose an action, but rather says *If*—“If you plant.” It's up to you. But “if” you plant, you will inevitably harvest *something*, most likely according to your labor but also on the conditions you face. The principle of taking action to accomplish a desired outcome—in this case, determin-

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\* This paper was presented by Dr. Oldham on the occasion of his inauguration as the seventh president of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

ing what, where and when to plant, tilling the soil, scattering the seed, responding to conditions faced, and then trusting the God of the harvest—will produce a result in due time.

In 1977, Dr. Donald Owens, pioneer Nazarene missionary to Korea where he had started a Bible Training School that later became Korea Nazarene University, faced the “If” principle again when the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene approved the establishment of a graduate seminary for the Asia-Pacific region and elected Owens as its founding president. What *could be* had been carefully studied and prayerfully considered. What to plant had been determined, but where and when? According Dr. Floyd Cunningham, writing on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of APNTS, Dr. Owens and then World Missions Director Jerald Johnson visited the Philippines to find a site for the Seminar and chose the Children's Garden Orphanage—the former name itself indicating the preparation of a harvest—in Taytay, Rizal, outside of the capital city of Manila, as the “where”. Dr. Cunningham wrote that Dr. Owens was instrumental in convincing church leadership that the urban setting of Manila, a cosmopolitan setting with an international airport, was the right place to begin planting what they prayed would become a graduate center of academic and spiritual training for men and women from all parts of Asia.

Though the following year was targeted for the “when” to begin classes, God’s timing for the seeds sown led them instead to begin on this site with seminars and extension classes of Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City for the first few years. As with the parable of the sower, rocks and thorns threatened when a move to Baguio was urged by some leaders, yet Dr. Owens insisted that the seminary should remain in an urban location near the “masses,” and that it not become an extension campus of the US seminary but develop an indigenous faculty who could contextualize Wesleyan theology to the Asian context. So, in 1983, the seminary was officially affirmed as an autonomous graduate school of theology, ground was broken for a two-story administration building that would later be named Owens Hall, approval from the Philippine government was received to offer degrees ranging from Bachelor of Theology to Master of Divinity to Doctor of Ministry, and on November 14, 1983 the first classes were held. It was appropriate that Dr. Owens would choose the school’s motto of “Bridging Cultures for Christ,” and the school hymn, “In Christ There is No East or West” as acknowledgement of his dedication to planting a truly global seminary in the garden known as Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

In one of his chapel addresses, Dr. Owens reflected on those early days of “planting” in this critical mission area that experts had deemed the “10-40 window,” where 55 of the least evangelized countries with more than 4.9 billion unreached people were located with only 10% of the global missionary force and where public evangelism was extremely difficult or impossible because of governmental restrictions (Missions Mobilizer 2017). He stated, “I applaud Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in positioning this institution at the very heart of what a Sovereign Lord is doing in the world.” Owens continued,

The urgent task of bringing the gospel to the lost of earth must be undergirded by the careful academic study of why He is doing it, where He is doing it, and how He is doing it. While God moves in mysterious ways to fulfill His love for mankind by mission, it is still incumbent upon the church to understand all we can (2005, 1).

The planting so carefully done to establish a seminary in such a strategic location—the only Christian county in Asia—with a people group who possessed a grasp of the English language needed so that students from around the world could share in a common learning language, would not have been accomplished merely by human efforts. Our Wesleyan holiness theology and practice and our church’s commitment to education had beckoned also to consider the “world as my parish... that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it... my duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation” (Wesley 1979, 1:201). It now stands that for such a time as this, when Asia and beyond are desperate for local pastors and tent-makers to invade the space that traditional missionaries can no longer fill, that there is a seminary that has already planted and cultivated for a field to be harvested. “The cross-cultural setting for a global view of theological education meets here,” said Dr. Owens, “at the crossroads of east, west, north, and south.” In Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. On Ortigas Avenue Extension, Kaytikling Circle, in the garden that has become Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. His promise to us remains: that “the one who calls us is faithful, and He will do it” (1 Thess 5:24).

There is a second Filipino proverb that goes like this: “*Matibay ang walis, palibhasa’y magkabigkis*” which translated into English means: “**A broom is sturdy because its strands are tightly bound.**” How true that is for people as well as brooms: people gain strength by standing together. Ecclesiastes 4 echoes the same element of truth: “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls down, one can help the other

up. Though one may be overpowered; two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

In November, we celebrated our 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary at APNTS. Throughout those years, there have been crises of finances, lack of resources, an insufficient number of personnel for necessary tasks, occasions of low student enrollment, and heavy winds, both literally and figuratively. But the tight strands gathered around this campus, from around the world and close to home, have kept us together, sustained through Christ’s strength as we carry out our mission of raising leaders to reach the world for Christ. What are those strands that have bound us together?

**The first strand is dedicated faculty.** When APNTS was established, church leaders were concerned that godly professors holding doctoral degrees might not be willing to teach in a seminary away from their home country, whether within the region (Korea, Japan, Australia) or across the globe (Great Britain, Canada, the US). However, since its inception, APNTS has been recognized for academic excellence and a place where talented and godly professors train dedicated students who make effective pastors, effective missionaries, creative leaders in children’s and youth ministries and in cutting-edge urban initiatives. We must do move to provide funding for faculty development, research and publishing, and recruitment of new faculty who can join us in this great effort of advancing our holiness mission through quality education.

As the work of the Church of the Nazarene has flourished in the Philippines, APNTS graduates have served on the front lines of church planting and personal and public evangelism, a tribute to professors whose courses and character stressed the biblical intimacy of faith and works, the essential partnership of knowing and doing. In many cases professors have modeled good teaching in such a way that their students have chosen in turn to give their lives to teaching others. Alongside over 200 alumni now serving as pastors and missionaries, over 100 alumni have listed their present vocation as educators and administrators, with others in the process of doing additional academic work, and are investing themselves in schools, Bible colleges, and here at APNTS, as faculty members, administrators, and college presidents, as well as pastors and church leaders, continuing the multiplication process to God’s glory.

In 2 Timothy 1, Paul issued a challenge as only a great mentor can, admonishing young Timothy to continue to spread the gospel as his own minis-



try was ending. He urged Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God,” to maintain the “pattern of teaching” that he had been shown through Paul, and to “guard the good deposit entrusted to him.” The mystery of God’s plan to spread his kingdom lies in the simplicity, yet complexity, of leadership multiplication through teaching, training, and mentoring, pouring our lives as Paul said like a “drink offering” into others, and passing the torch to those who go beyond our reach of influence. Those who respond in obedience to go into all the world and make disciples find that evangelism and education, baptizing and teaching, go hand in hand in fulfilling the Great Commission.

I must also applaud our seminary staff members who work hard and give much to the successful operation and growth of our campus. I see them every day with computers and hammers, driving and directing, chairing meetings and cleaning in hard places, and I thank God for them. Their smiles and devotion are contagious! As our vision and our vision proclaim, APNTS faculty and staff continue to play a crucial role in advancing God’s kingdom throughout Asia, the Pacific, and the world.

**The second strand is our passionate students.** Former president Dr. John Nielson stated in his 1990 inaugural address,

Our lay people are becoming more highly educated and have higher expectations of their pastors and leaders. Such times demand that our best and brightest young men and women must hear and accept God’s call to ministry and that the church must offer them the best possible education (2004, 21).

Nielson continued that these young men and women:

Must be persons of strong character. They must transmit our holiness heritage to a new generation. They must know the Word of God well enough, and think clearly enough that they can face the new and unanticipated challenges of tomorrow with courage, creating new approaches to ministry and yet remaining faithful and true to the heritage that has been entrusted to them (2004, 21).

Since classes began in November, 1983, 472 graduates responded to their calling by completing an APNTS degree program, walking across the platform at commencement to enter ministry in 24 countries for 39 different denominations, 65% of whom serve the Church of the Nazarene.

The commitment and dedication of our students to become all that God has called them to be is never taken lightly. Administrators, faculty, and staff are constantly aware that many who walk through these halls often do so while experiencing personal and financial hardship and sacrifice. Many have left

behind family and close friends to answer God's call to prepare here, and He continues to bring them and provide for them out of His goodness, mercy, and faithfulness. Yet we still hear of those from various parts of Asia who long to come here to study, who hope to someday have sufficient financial resources to attend APNTS. Our commitment to these potential students challenges us to do more to provide scholarship support to enable their enrollment. We also are working hard to develop off-site programs, taking the APNTS experience out to these students so that they can achieve their goal of graduate level training for ministry opportunities that lie ahead.

**The third strand of our strength together comes from our support network.** We are blessed with global, regional, and district leaders, and the local pastors and congregations who resource regularly, counsel wisely, promote proudly, give generously, and pray fervently for APNTS. Encouragement from our Global Ministry Center in Kansas and our regional office in Singapore comes frequently in words and actions. Our six field strategy coordinators in Asia-Pacific met with me before I left the USA to give guidance and insight, and continue to do so today. We appreciate sharing campus space and hearts for ministry with the Asia-Pacific Resource Center and World Mission Communications, and the global call center for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, where many of our students are gaining valuable experience through internship and special projects.

Nazarene district superintendents in the Philippines have warmly welcomed me as I have travelled to assemblies and district events to interact with Nazarenes here. I chose to visit the Korea district in December as my first trip outside of Manila in recognition of their faithful partnership on so many projects over the years, and was received so warmly by DS Kim and his staff, by pastors and lay leaders in the three churches in which I was privileged to preach that week, and by our friends at Korea Nazarene University. Thank you so much for coming today. Making contact on behalf of the seminary with Nazarenes across the region will be the most important thing I do as president, and I am eager to be invited to do so at every opportunity.

When the land we stand on today was purchased by the Church of the Nazarene in 1978, there were eight local Churches of the Nazarene in Metro Manila with 450 members. Today, the Metro Manila district is made up of 61 organized churches and several new church plants, with over 5,400 members and still growing. Ten other districts with excellent leadership minister across this island nation. APNTS has benefitted greatly from our host country, from

their financial and prayer support to internship and ministry opportunities available to our students, faculty, and staff.

Our relationship with sister denominations, the Wesleyan and Free Methodist Churches, is strong, giving us over 56 graduates many outstanding faculty over the years. Our partnerships with area churches of all denominations and independent churches—Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Assembly of God, dare I even start to make a list!—are so vital to what we do and students from these churches have flourished and contributed much at APNTS.

**The fourth strand is the valuable alliance we have with our local community entities, academic organizations, and government agencies.** We work closely with our city leaders and many wonderful businesses in this local area, who provide needed resources and believe in what we are doing. We also have Asia Theological Association General Secretary and Dean of the Asia Graduate School of Theology in the Philippines, Dr. Theresa Lua in attendance today; thank you for your presence and support. We are grateful for our partnership for Asia Graduate School of Theology, the consortium of eight seminaries in the Philippines, led by Dean Dr. Azriel Azarcon, that has partnered with us to produce three excellent doctoral programs and our first doctoral graduate in 2016, with more to come. We also work closely with CHED, the Commission on Higher Education for the Philippines, and are grateful for their leadership that benefits all educational providers across this nation. We could not survive and thrive without each of you.

**Finally, the fifth and most important strand that binds us together comes from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, who has given us our common purpose.** APNTS has been planted here to prepare men and women, within our Wesleyan tradition, for Christ-like leadership and excellence in ministries, to equip each new generation of leaders to disseminate the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia, the Pacific and the world. In doing so, our aim is to “bridge cultures for Christ.” We strive to do so through living within the context of community, daily interacting with and praying for each other, committed staff, faculty and students, as we teach, train, and live out the holiness lifestyle. We share meals together at casual moments in residence halls, at times of mutual support and accountability through Koinonia groups that meet in faculty homes twice each month, and through spiritual discussions that take place in the dining hall. We shared sacred moments of worship in chapel services twice a week, with participation in choir and praise teams, by joining personal prayer groups, and throughout area churches on Sunday

and in weekly special events. We develop friendships through basketball and volleyball games, student body (SBO) events, and service projects. We become more aware and involved in personal needs as love and support each other's families, and societal needs by ministering to the awesome children living on the outskirts of our campus in the Rowenas community.

But these good things are not goals in themselves; our "shared purpose," is not simply for a "tightly bound" community to form. Our purpose is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia, the Pacific and the world, and to bridging cultures for Christ! The focus is never inward, but always outward, reaching the hopeless, the helpless, the searching, the lost. The addition of PhD programs, expansion of academic offerings into areas of holistic child development, social justice, and transformational care, have been added to our ministry program offerings as vital training for today's students to fulfil the mission of the God in a needy world.

Former president Dr. Im, Seung-An in his inaugural address declared that, The fundamental causes of the crises in the 21<sup>st</sup> century come... from... disregarding the inner value of love and from the lack of practice to love our neighbors. Without love, therefore, even the religious ministry of evangelism would be fruitless.... APNTS needs to provide students with the opportunity to participate in compassionate ministry for people in need.... Not only [in] classrooms and libraries but [in] streets and societies... to learn how to become capable ministers able to solve [today's] problems (2015, 52, 54).

Dr. Im argues that the ministry of evangelism (the Great Commission) and compassionate ministry (the Great Commandment) are not two separate values, but one united together (2015, 54).

Our theological mentor John Wesley, wrote, "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness" (Wesley 1979, 14:321). The purpose that binds us together is preparing to meet Jesus in the streets of India, Myanmar, Korea, China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines, and beyond. Where He is already at work and calling us to join Him. Through Christ's power at work within us, and only by that power, we accomplish this purpose so that, as Paul stated in Ephesians 4:13, "The body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

The third and final Filipino proverb I would like to share with you today is: *Ang hindi lumingon sa pinanggalingan, hindi makakarating sa paro-*

**roonan**, or “A person who does not remember where he came from will never reach his destination.” As we gather in this historic moment, it has been important to reflect on our beginnings, to remember where we have been so that we may embrace all that is good in what God has done among us. Yet all of this must ultimately lead to a vision and conversation about where we go from here today, into the future as individuals and as an institution.

How do we best move forward as a seminary into the tomorrows that lie ahead? What are the goals and aspirations that will drive us as we continue our mission of educating pastors and servant leaders who will minister to those who need God’s transformational grace; to the young believer who needs to be disciple and mentored so that he or she can do the same with others; to the poor and needy in need of food, shelter, and love; to the outcast who needs to belong; and to the neglected and abused children of our world, our region, and this nation, so vulnerable and in need of redeemers?

Examining *why* what we will do what we do in the future is as important as the question of *what* we do. When I attended Trevecca Nazarene University for my undergraduate degree in religion, one of my most revered professors was Dr. Mildred Wynkoop. Dr. Wynkoop was one of the foremost theologians in the Church of the Nazarene, and represented the power of female women in leadership that anchored the Nazarene movement in its early days and is now receiving renewed and deserved emphasis in our denomination. Dr. Floyd Cunningham, writing about the educational preparation of ministers in Asia, recounted that Dr. Wynkoop was chosen by the Church of the Nazarene to spearhead and reorganize the educational work in Japan in the early 1960’s. Her work resulted in the establishment of a theological seminary in that country. She contended that the “why” for Nazarene educational institutions in America was to build on the foundation of evangelism already established in that country, which, in her words, “had to be supported by educational muscles and bone” (Cunningham 1996, 20). Her analysis was that though evangelical preaching characterized the early days of the church, “evangelism must be defined broadly to include ‘the tedious rebuilding of the foundations of thinking,’ so that both strong character and a strong church might be built” (Cunningham 1996, 20). Her foresight, and that of many other church leaders, helped establish the long tradition of the church educating young Nazarene (and those from sister denominations) for not only bringing the lost to Jesus, but for becoming part of a well-rounded body of Christ—with strong muscles and bones of theological and ecclesiastical perspectives. Only by exploring

together the great truths of the Word of God and the writings of godly men and women testifying of the wonders of His love and grace, through in-depth study, would a strong church arise.

The powers of darkness are too strong for us to be weak. Muscles must be exercised and bones must be kept strong to withstand the arrows of the enemy. Not only must strong sound minds be developed through the Word but willing hearts must be nurtured and capable hands and feet trained and disciplined to carry and contextualize that Word into our neighborhoods, burrows, and barangays. Where better to get head, heart, and hand training at a Nazarene seminary! Our second president, Dr. E. Lebron Fairbanks, in his 1985 his inaugural address, emphasized the pivotal role of seminary community and the engagement of its graduates into the world stated that,

The basic thrust of the curriculum is *integration* between the Word and the world, study and involvement, theology and ministry, the seminary and society, the seminary and the churches. In all its programs, therefore, the seminary seeks to integrate effectively personal development, spiritual growth, theological sensitivity, cultural awareness, social consciousness and practical skills (2004, 16).

And it is still true today.

As president, I affirm our commitment to sound theological education of our students, the stringent requirement of professional research and writing through masters' theses and doctoral dissertations, that we continue to serve as a "hub" of graduate learning for Asia-Pacific. However, I also firmly believe that our future calls us to develop ministry practice that can be taken to the people in a variety of countries and contexts by graduates who leave to serve as pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders. I stand behind and will lead the Board of Trustees' direction to establish **additional off-site centers** to bring contextualized graduate coursework to those that long for increased formal educational training but are unable to move to Manila and reside on the main campus. To do that, we must partner with our field and district leaders and other educational institutions across the region to locate and deploy doctorally-trained adjunct faculty who live in these nations and are willing to become part of the APNTS team, to find accessible and accommodating locations, and to raise funds to finance this challenge of extension education. Together, bound in supportive strands of our mission and purpose, we can do it.

While reaching outward to new location, we must not neglect our main campus here. Research confirms that the primary ingredient in attracting new students to any educational institution is a **quality student experience**. What

happens and what is provided in the classroom, in the library, in the chapel, in the dining hall, in the residential areas, and in the love and respect received from faculty, staff, and administrators; how they are encouraged, supported, and cared for academically, spiritually, socially, and financially; will determine whether students will stay to become graduates and whether they will recommend APNTS to prospective students from their churches, their communities, and from their families. The strength of the main campus will be the foundation for strength in off-site centers and extension courses. We must approach growth as a “both-and” proposition, as God guides us and resources are given.

Dr. Paul Fukue, the fifth president of APTNS, shared in his inaugural address that,

The real problems of the world are getting increasingly complex and the Christian ministers of today and tomorrow have to be ready to deal with tough issues of the world today.... To meet the challenge of our world today, our theological education cannot be satisfied except by putting our **roots** deep in the biblical, historical, systematic and practical theologies along with auxiliary disciplines (2004, 33).

Strong roots must grow deeply for nourishment and growth, and must also spread outward for stability and strength. Our challenge in the years ahead is to increase the availability and quality of an APNTS degree wherever those who are called may find themselves, whether they can attend the main campus or focus their studies at an APNTS center in another land.

I end this address with a brief personal note of gratitude to the Global Church of the Nazarene, the APNTS Board of Trustees, to my family, and to God for allowing me this opportunity to serve. This was not an assignment that a 17-year-old young man from the small town of Gallatin, Tennessee, USA could have ever imagined as possible when Christ took over the throne of my heart in a youth revival service in 1974. I have tried to respond as the Lord has led through the years, and I firmly believe that He has ordained my days here on this campus, however long they may be. I have learned greatly from many of you in the months I’ve been on campus, and my prayer is that you have been able to see my love for you and for this campus growing as we live, work, and minister together. I believe that there are even greater days ahead in fulfilling the goals and accomplishing our mission of equipping and training leaders, as we remain faithful to God’s calling.

**The passage of scripture** that has shaped my life over the years has been Ephesians 3:14–21. Paul began this text on his knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. My surname is

Oldham, coming from a father who was tragically killed before my birth and who I never knew. On that Saturday night when I gave my heart to this Heavenly Father, he began to re-form my identity as His child. Through the riches of His glory, He gave me strength; by dwelling in my heart through faith, He gave me love; in getting to know Him, my inheritance is to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. What a blessing! But the greatest hope follows in verses 20–21: “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!”

Immeasurably **more**—think of it! No matter what our dreams, our hopes, our vision is, God can do more than we dare ask or think, according to His power at work within us. Now, let us begin. by faith in His promise and provision, acknowledging that all we do and He does in and through us, is for His glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Amen!

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## **Response to “A God of Immeasurably More”\***

Floyd T. Cunningham, Ph.D.

We give thanks to God every time we remember the faithfulness and vision of the leaders that he has brought to APNTS. God’s choice of Bruce Oldham as president of APNTS demonstrates the care that God has for APNTS.

God prepared Dr. Oldham splendidly well for this particular place and time in the 34-year history of APNTS. He began his ministry as a pastor and maintains the heart of a pastor, possessing tender care toward the community that God has given him. Before coming to APNTS, for more than twenty years Dr. Oldham served in administrative positions in Nazarene higher education. He was Director of Admissions and Student Recruitment, Executive Assistant to the President for Church Relations, and, finally, Vice-President for Enrollment Management at Mount Vernon Nazarene University, all the while teaching Christian education. During this time, for six years, 1995–2001, Dr. Oldham led as President of Nazarene Youth International. This global assignment exposed him to the Church of the Nazarene around the world. In 2005, he earned a Doctor of Education, concentrating in Higher Education Leadership, at Vanderbilt University (ranked among the top five graduate schools in this professional discipline). Following service at Mount Vernon, for two years Dr. Oldham served as Dean of the School of Christian Ministry and Formation at MidAmerica Nazarene University. Then he resumed pastoral ministry as Senior Associate Pastor of the historic Nashville, Tennessee, First Church of the Nazarene. Dr. Oldham brings to APNTS successful models for structuring and organizing the school for its maximum efficiency and best use of resources in order to achieve its mission.

With keen sensitivity to his new setting in the Philippines, Dr. Oldham anchored his inaugural address around three key Filipino proverbs: “If you plant, you will harvest,” “A broom is sturdy because its strands are tightly bound,” and “A person who does not remember where he came from will never reach his destination.”

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\* This paper is a response to Dr. Bruce Oldham’s inauguration address, “A God of Immeasurably More,” pages 63–75, above.

He spoke of the original vision of APNTS, as it was conceived in the minds of church leaders and established by first president, Donald Owens. Clearly Dr. Oldham has caught the same vision of APNTS serving the region—and the world—fulfilling God’s great commission in its own way as a graduate school in the Wesleyan tradition. As Dr. Oldham observes, this part of the world is “desperate for local pastors and tent-makers to invade the space that traditional missionaries can no longer fill,” and APNTS is a seminary “already planted and cultivated for a field to be harvested.”<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Oldham expressed the strong “strands” that bind together APNTS. These include (1) a dedicated faculty, which has produced effective graduates scattered around the world; (2) passionate students; (3) a support network that includes the Global Mission of the Church of the Nazarene, local leaders, and like-minded denominations; (4) partnerships with various agencies, including theological associations; and, especially, (5) Christ Jesus himself, who represents the very purpose of APNTS.

Dr. Oldham has looked to the past history of APNTS in order to understand it well, in order to lead it into the future. He alludes to the thoughts of his teacher, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, that evangelism must build upon the foundations of thought in order for the church to be strong. Indeed, APNTS, like other Nazarene schools, seeks the integration of the heart with the head as well as the “Word” with the “world,” as former President LeBron Fairbanks said. Dr. Oldham affirmed it this way, that APNTS must be both research- and ministry-oriented and continue “to serve as a ‘hub’ of graduate learning for Asia-Pacific.”<sup>2</sup> As a “hub” APNTS offers off-site graduate programs (“spokes,” as Nazarene educator Robert Woodruff put it) for the region. Dr. Oldham expressed the necessity of strengthening both the “hub” and the “spokes.” On the basis of his many years of experience in education, Dr. Oldham understands the importance of a “quality student experience,” and that means the total, holistic life of the seminary.

Strengthening the hub is a major challenge facing Dr. Oldham in the days ahead, as he has discovered. Balancing all of the factors that make for a “quality student experience” includes not only the quality faculty that God has brought to APNTS and the spiritual life of the school, but also the upkeep of

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce O. Oldham, “A God of Immeasurably More,” above, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Oldham, 72.

physical structures, including dormitories and other facilities. Dr. Oldham expressed his commitment to the expansion and development of both the central campus, with its student body, and the off-site classes.

Dr. Oldham has caught the vision, mission, and purpose of APNTS. He is the right person, with all of the background and skills, drive and determination to develop strategic initiatives that will lead APNTS not just somehow but triumphantly into the next decades. The Christian faith is always "personally given" and Christian leaders lead from the heart. Dr. Oldham possesses a heart that is molded by his own personal experiences, and these give to all of his other gifts the graces of compassion and passion for the mission that God has given him. God has been faithful to APNTS across the years and has brought to the fore men and women used by him for facets and phases of the work that he had to accomplish at APNTS. Now, through Dr. Oldham, God is carrying APNTS on toward its "immeasurably more" future.



## **Call for Papers**

*The Mediator* provides a forum for dialogue about theological issues related to ministry in Asian and Pacific contexts. In keeping with this purpose, the editorial committee seeks quality papers related to Bible, theology, missions, evangelism, and church growth. Also welcome are reviews of publications, including books and music. Contact the editor for more information.

## **Guidelines for Submission**

1. Please submit all proposed articles to the editor (dland@apnts.edu.ph) in electronic form (Microsoft Word is preferable). Please put “Mediator Submission” in the subject line.
2. Articles must be written in standard international English.
3. Authors must provide complete bibliographical information either in citations or in a bibliography at the end. Citation style may be either parenthetical or footnote style, but must be consistent within each article. If used, format as footnotes rather than endnotes. Use shortened form for subsequent citations rather than *Ibid*.
4. Articles must conform to the latest edition of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*.
5. Papers may be of any length, although authors may be asked to condense longer papers.
6. A list of non-standard abbreviations should be provided.

## **Information**

### **Mission**

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, a graduate school in the Wesleyan tradition, prepares men and women for Christ-like leadership and excellence in ministries.

### **Vision**

Bridging cultures for Christ, APNTS equips each new generation of leaders to disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia, the Pacific, and the world.

### **Strategic Objectives**

1. Provide solid biblical, historical, and theological foundations and encourage lifelong learning.
2. Demonstrate the power, spiritual formation, and transformation possible within a multi-cultural community of committed believers.
3. Create a dynamic environment that reinforces spiritual gifts and graces, and the call to ministry.
4. Challenge to reach across ethnicity, culture, gender, class and geographical region for the sake of the Gospel.

The seminary exists to prepare men and women for ministry in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world by developing personal and professional attitudes and skills for analytical reflection upon Christian faith and life, and competencies in the practice of ministry. Since its founding in 1983, APNTS has trained men and women for a wide range of vocations. Today, over 350 graduates serve as pastors, teachers, Bible college presidents, missionaries, and various other church and para-church workers.





# *The Mediator*

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

## **Degrees and Programs**

APNTS offers the following academic courses:

- **Master of Divinity (90 units)**
- **Master of Arts in Religious Education (48 units)**
- **Master of Arts in Christian Communication (48 units)**
- **Master of Science in Theology (48 units)**
- **Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development (60 units)**

English is the language of instruction in the classrooms. Students must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the APNTS English Proficiency Exam to register. A score of 500 is required for the M.Div., 510 for the M.S.T. (Pastoral Ministry) degree and 550 for the M.A., M.S.T. (Biblical Studies, Faith and History, Intercultural Studies), and Ph.D. degrees.

## **Faculty**

The well-qualified teaching staff upholds a high level of education. Adjunct and visiting professors from both within and outside the Asia-Pacific region help expand students' worldviews.

## **Accreditation**

APNTS is accredited by the Philippines Association of Bible & Theological Schools (PABATS), Asia Theological Association (ATA), and the Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (ATESEA), and is recognized by the Philippines Commission for Higher Education (CHED).

## **Contact**

For further information or for an application, please write to the address below:

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