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SINGING
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FAITH



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by Kenneth A. Mathews



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From The Editor

SING ON

“Jesus Loves Me” is the earliest song I remember from my childhood. Growing up as the daughter of a Baptist pastor, my parents sung these words to me at home, and every Sunday it was the invitation song for children to come forward for the children’s sermon.

Perhaps to my father’s dismay, I remember very few of his sermons, but the hymns—they’re printed forever on my memory. “Amazing Grace,” “Just As I Am,” “How Great Thou Art,” “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” “Be Thou My Vision,” are just a few. At various points in my life, these songs have functioned pedagogically, evangelistically, sermonically and therapeutically. And at times when my faith has felt the weakest, I have sung the old hymns as if I were singing myself back to faith.

Today we take for granted congregational and private hymn singing. We have access to print and digital hymn books and hymns on YouTube, iTunes and Spotify. But this wasn’t always the case in church history, and it’s one of the lesser discussed achievements of the Reformation.

Even though Martin Luther did not invent the German hymn, he transformed—better yet, reformed!—the place and singing of hymns in the Sunday worship service and in the home. He championed the writing of new hymns in the vernacular to familiar and singable tunes and rhythms, such as German folk songs, which would make them easier to remember. It’s been suggested that the

success of the Reformation was in large part due to Lutheran doctrine being put to music in the words of the laity.¹

Singing, then, became one of the greatest evangelism tools of the Reformation. Luther put his theology in the mouths of the common people through his hymns. In the preface of his 1524 hymnal, Luther wrote that the purpose of these hymns was “to promote and popularize the Gospel.”²

Luther wrote a third of his hymns within the span of one year, 1523–24.³ Even women participated in the writing of hymns and editing of hymnals. Elisabeth Cruciger wrote a hymn called, “Lord Christ, the Only Son of God,” and Katharina Schütz Zell edited a Bohemian hymn book for the laity in Strasbourg. Katharina wrote in her introduction to the hymnal:

Of all the benefits of the hymns for the Reformers and for Christians since, perhaps one of the greatest gifts of the hymns is comfort at death.

I’ll never forget one September morning in 2018 when Timothy George, Paul House and I drove to the outskirts of Birmingham to visit a friend of Beeson, Frauken Collinson, who was about to die. Frauken was born in Germany in between the two World Wars. Her parents were Christians, and her father was declared a “degenerate artist” during World War II for his religious paintings—many of them destroyed by the Nazis.

During our visit, she was awake but had

• *So now (in response to this*
• *clear call that God makes to*
• *the world) encourage your*
• *children and relatives to sing*
• *godly songs in which they are*
• *exhorted to seek knowledge*
• *of their salvation. And teach*
• *them to know that they do*
• *not serve human beings but*
• *God, when they faithfully (in*
• *the faith) keep house, obey,*
• *cook, wash dishes, wipe up*
• *and tend children, and such*
• *like work that serves human*
• *life and that (while doing this*
• *very work) they can also turn*
• *toward God with the voice of*
• *song.*⁴

¹ See Christopher Boyd Brown’s *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

² Ibid, 9–10.

³ Ulrich Leupold, ed., *Luther’s Works: Liturgy and Hymns*, vol. 53. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 193.



by Kristen Padilla

difficulty speaking and mostly moaned and mumbled. We read Scripture and prayed. Paul then remembered the first few words of a 16th century German hymn, “O Freude über Freud.” As soon as he recited the first words of this hymn to her, Frauchen very softly mouthed the rest of the first verse. She also mouthed the words of another song, David’s song, Psalm 23. She went to be with Jesus a few days later.

As we have been preparing and planning for this issue, I’ve been replaying this memory. Two hymns were so deep within her heart and memory that she was able to recall them at death’s door when she had little strength to say much else.

The final two verses of the hymn which Frauchen sang, translated “O Joy of Joys,” capture so well this reality for the Christian at death:

So, brothers and sisters, sing on—both now and in eternity. As Miriam sang to the Israelites, “Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted” (Ex 15:1). When your faith wavers, when you face trials, when you have no other words, when you need to be reminded of the gospel, when you encounter the grace of God, and when you come to the end of your life, sing again and again about what Jesus Christ has done for you.

.
. And when from death I’m free, I’ll sing on
. And when from death I’m free
. I’ll sing and joyful be
. And through eternity
. I’ll sing on, I’ll sing on.⁵
. .

.
. Rejoice we now therefore
. With songs this Child adore:
. And from thy heart sincerely
. Sing out with gladness clearly,
. With heart and mouth we render
. Due glory, praise, and splendor,
. For on this day we celebrate
. The time of grace from dawn till late.
. .
. O Christ, we sing to Thee,
. Who man didst come to be,
. The serpent’s head to smother,
. And bring us to Thy Father,
. His grace and love renewing,
. Else death were our undoing:
. O, grant us grace to worship Thee
. Both now and in eternity.



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⁴ Katharina Schütz Zell, *Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, Elise McKee ed and trans., (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 95
⁵ “What Wondrous Love Is This”

Speaking to God in Song

by Douglas A. Sweeney

Canon wird Jacob wenne han.
Und Israel sich freuen.
Amen.

Der XLVI. Psalm
Deus noster refugium
et virtus /
etc.

D. Mart. Luther.



Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,
Er hilft uns frey aus aller Not.

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:18-21).

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs have been central to Protestant worship ever since the Reformation. They have always been a part of Christian piety, of course. But during the 16th century, they came to play a much greater role than ever before in history. And during and after the Great Awakening of the 18th century, they were used to animate special seasons of revival and renewal in the churches of most denominations and in most parts of the world.

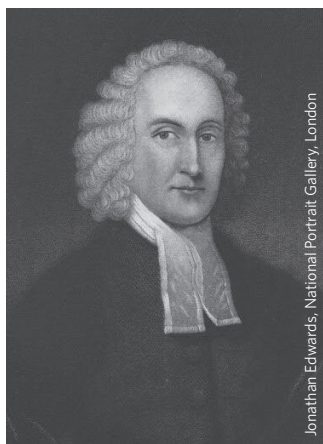
Martin Luther loved to sing. In fact, he sang for his supper as a boarding school student before growing up to champion the singing of hymns in worship. He played the lute as well as the flute. He reformed the Catholic liturgy and penned three dozen hymns, saying “next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.... let this noble, wholesome, and cheerful creation of God be commended.”¹

Some other early Protestants forbade musical instruments and visual art in worship. They instituted what they called the “regulative principle,” which stipulated that anything not taught or found in Scripture should be banned from Christian worship. As a result of this rule, even groups like the Puritans sang the Psalms a cappella and resisted the rise of hymnody for many years to come.

But during the 18th-century revivals, many post-Puritan pastors, such as New England’s Jonathan Edwards, permitted hymn singing—and even taught their people to read music and sing songs in parts. And, during the seasons of revival and renewal that would follow and contribute to the rise of the evangelical movement, hymnody and spiritual songs became a favorite practice of believers everywhere.

In the face of conservative critics who opposed hymn singing in favor of the use of

psalms only during church, Edwards wrote this defense of hymns and spiritual songs in worship:



“I am far from thinking that the Book of Psalms should be thrown by in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian church, to the end of the world: but I know of no obligation we are under to confine ourselves to it. I can find no command or rule of God’s Word, that does any more confine us to the words of the Scripture in our singing, than it does in our praying; we speak to God in both: and I can see no reason why we should limit ourselves to such particular forms of words that we find in the Bible, in speaking to him by way of praise, in meter, and with music, than when we speak to him in prose, by way of prayer and supplication. And ‘tis really needful that we should have some other songs besides the Psalms of David: ‘tis unreasonable to suppose that the Christian church should forever . . . be confined only to the words of the Old Testament, wherein all the greatest and most glorious things of the Gospel . . . are spoken of under a veil, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hid under the name of some type.”²

If a serious post-Puritan like Edwards could say this, the flourishing of hymnody was just a matter of time. Indeed, the rest is church history. Fervent preaching, discipleship, missions and hymnody have proceeded hand in hand ever since the 18th century—drawing on the cultures of believers everywhere, especially those descended from west and central Africa that contributed to spirituals, gospel music and CCM—constituting the staples of revivals and regular worship services across the globe.

In chapel this past spring, we have given our attention to “Art and Beauty in the Bible.” We have explored some of the things that God has shown us in his Word about his beauty, or glory, the beauty of the cosmos and the ways in which he wants us to reflect and cultivate divine beauty in our lives. We have prayed that the Lord would help us all to grow more beautiful by dwelling on his beauty.

One of the fruits of this emphasis has been that our own corporate singing has grown more beautiful. I am nearly brought to tears most Tuesday mornings as our students lead our people in singing songs of praise to our Maker and Redeemer. God has really been glorified in spirit and in truth.

My prayer for this edition of our Beeson magazine is that it, too, will inspire us to magnify the Lord in our singing—and our everyday lives. May the Lord be praised in what follows in these pages and, more importantly, in the beauty of our everyday conduct “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is [our] spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1). ♦



Douglas A. Sweeney is dean of Beeson Divinity School and author of The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement and The Suffering and Victorious Christ: Toward A More Compassionate Christology.

¹ Martin Luther, “Preface to Georg Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae*,” a collection of 52 motets (or “Delightful Symphonies”) published in 1538 by a musician friend and follower, in *Luther’s Works, Volume 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 323-24.

² Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New-England*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 4, The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 406-407. r, “Preface to Georg Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae*,” a collection of 52 motets (or “Delightful Symphonies”) published in 1538 by a musician friend and follower, in *Luther’s Works, Volume 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 323-24.

Worship in the Old Testament

The Musical Drama

by Kenneth A. Mathews

Christian readers have a spiritual intuition about worship in the Old Testament. On the one hand, we immediately recognize that Israel's tabernacle/temple worship is not for the church to practice, but on the other hand we see that traditional Christian worship reflects in many ways the practice and perspective of worship in Israel. What confounds us is the form of worship that Israel practiced. It is strange to us but was common in the ancient Near East. Formal worship at the holy sanctuary required a choreography of a complex drama with moving and interconnecting parts. Daniel Block observes that worship services today may include drama in worship, but in Israel's worship, drama was an act of worship.¹ The choreography by both mystery and imagery, when rightly understood and performed, expressed profound theological thought, and it elicited deep spiritual devotion.



Holy Worship

God demanded holiness in one's character and one's purity in worship. "You (Israel) are to be holy to Me because I, Yahweh, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be Mine" (Lev 20:26). Israel's sacred fellowship with God was an exception among the religions of the ancient Near East. "For what great nation is there that has a god near to it as the LORD our God is to us whenever we call to him? And what great nation has righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law I set before you today?" (Deut 4:7-8). Although the Lord was a national deity, he was also the personal deity of everyone under his lordship, regardless of social class. He was "near" and approachable on a personal basis.

Life as Worship

The national life of "covenant" (a solemn mutual agreement) under God forged the formal relationship between God and his people (Ex 20; 24:7-8). His "Presence" extended to the whole of Israel's camp. "For the LORD your God walks throughout your camp to protect you and deliver your enemies to you; so your encampments must be holy..." (Deut 23:14). Worship then was



a lifestyle, a perpetual awareness that God was present. Since there was no separation between secular and religious authority, such as the Western world makes, all of life was the regulations of covenant.

Worship in Music

The primary features of worship's drama were the worshiper, the worship offering, the worship mediator (priest) and the response of the Lord. Mandatory times, such as sabbath, and places, such as the temple, were vital aspects for conducting acceptable worship. Ceremonial temple worship involved music performed by singers and musicians, accompanying the prayers and praises of compositions (Ps 30:1; 68:1,5,26). Antiphonal singing (Ps 120; 121), liturgy (Ps 136) and dance (Ps 150:4) were performance that created the atmosphere of loud, enthusiastic, creative and skillful praises (Ps 33:1-3). The connection between God's holy presence and sacred music in temple worship was captured in Psalm 22: "But You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel" (v. 3). Songs of thanksgiving and praise were a

¹ Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 271.



daily, even hourly, feature of temple services. There was a range of tone, from confessional lament to praise and thanksgiving. Orchestration included percussion (cymbals and timbres), wind (trumpets, horns, flutes and pipes) and strings (lyres, harps, strings and lutes) (1 Chron 16:37-42; 23:30; Neh 11:23). An example of ritual and music together was the “Songs of Ascents” that pilgrims sang on the way to Jerusalem’s temple at festival assemblies (Ps 120-34; Is 30:29). It was unimaginable to participate in temple services without a prominent musical feature.

Sacred music and periods of spiritual renewal in Israel often occurred together. The entrance of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem under David’s supervision is an example (1 Chron 15:16-22; 16:4-6). Others included the dedication of the temple by Solomon (2 Chron 7), the rebuilding of the post-exilic foundation of the temple (Ezek 3:10-11), and Nehemiah’s dedication of Jerusalem’s walls (Neh 13:27-47). Reformation movements, too, included the return of music in temple service, as in the reforms of Hezekiah (2 Chron 29:25-30) and



Josiah (2 Chron 35:15). But music played a significant role in the worship of Israel long before the golden era of Jerusalem’s temple. For example, “The Song of the Sea” was Moses’ memorial to deliverance from Pharaoh’s armies (Ex 15:1-19; cf. Judg 5).

Christian Fulfilment

Yet, Old Testament worship was not complete unless it had its fullest meaning and realization in the Christian revelation. This is because the nature of Old Testament practices was intrinsically lacking—yes, a compass indicator pointing toward the magnetic north but not the true north itself. Worship anchored in covenant and holy living portended the person and work of Jesus Christ and the spiritual benefits

◀ *Dedication of Solomon's Temple* by David Martin, 1639-1721, courtesy of Pitts Theology Library at Emory University.

we Christians have received. The essentials to acceptable worship in Israel’s covenant relationship with God have not changed, however. We discovered that authentic worship occurred only when it was a person’s heartfelt submission to the Lord, recognizing him as sole Creator and Covenant-Lord. Deuteronomy’s Shema expressed it best: “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deut 6:4-5). The objective was to experience spiritual relationship at both an individual and communal level that only God could achieve on behalf of Israel’s loyal subjects by his sacred presence. This we enjoy now through Jesus and through him exclusively. Adam Johnson comments on the significance of the Old Testament temple and the atonement by Jesus: “This standpoint also offers far more resources to the church for integrating the doctrine of the Holy Spirit within that of the atonement, for it is the Spirit’s indwelling in Christ by which he is the new temple, and it is through the repetition of this fact by the indwelling of the Spirit in believers that they are made to be part of this temple.”² ♦



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This article is an excerpt from Worship, Tradition, and Engagement: Essays in Honor of Timothy George. Used by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers, wipfandstock.com.

² Adam Johnson, “The Temple Framework of the Atonement,” *JETS* 54 (2011), 236.



Christ “Hymn” in Philippians 2:6–11: The Significance of Christology and Ecclesiology for Contemporary

Is Philippians 2:6-11 an early example of a Christian hymn? In this article, Dr. Sydney Park argues that even though it isn't an early hymn, this text provides an important theological framework for contemporary worship.

Philippians 2:6-11, along with 1 Timothy 3:16b and Colossians 1:15-20, has been often earmarked as a New Testament “hymn” in scholarship, and the moniker persists even today among the laity. However, close inspection of the criteria for a “hymn” (e.g. self-standing unit, begins with ὅς/hos “who,” anomalous grammar and unusual vocabulary) proves that none of these standards is a persuasive measure of a hymn in either Old Testament, Septuagint or Greco-Roman literature.¹ While these texts are poetic, there is no extant evidence that any of these texts served as hymns in the nascent church. The New Testament (NT) gives evidence for hymnody (singing of hymns) in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, but no evidence of hymnography (writing of hymns). Still, it is undeniable that these texts are uniquely stylized as inductive for worship. Whether or not they functioned liturgically in the early church, surely they function as a textual apex in their respective epistolary context, especially Philippians 2:6-11, precisely because they exalt God's salvific work through Christ. Thus, it may be entirely permissible to

explore the theological content of Philippians 2:6-11 for personal and/or communal worship. As such, it has constructive implications for effective contemporary worship as it weds Christology (doctrine) with ecclesiology (praxis). True worship is less about personal, individual well-being and emotions—it must necessarily be tethered to God's salvation through Christ and intra-community relations.

Briefly, the main hermeneutical issue of Philippians 2:6-11 debates the rationale behind these verses. Does Paul write these verses to remind the Philippians of the salvation story, as both incarnation (vv. 6-7) and crucifixion (v. 8) are mentioned? Or, does he tell Christ's story to fortify his ethical exhortation in 2:1-5? The mutually exclusive proposition in this debate is spurious as soteriology and/or Christology necessarily have ethical implications. How we are saved should shape how we live without entertaining false concerns about whether humans can actually mirror the Son of God in his acts and effects of his death. Christ himself defines discipleship as one that “takes up the

cross” (Mk 8:34-38; Mt 10:38; Lk 9:23-27; 14:27); his disciples must conform to him, specifically in his self-denial as demonstrated on the cross. Likewise, Peter draws on Christ's ethics on the cross, specifically, his endurance of unjust suffering as a model for suffering slaves (1 Pet 2:1-20)—despite the injustice of slavery, they are inexorably called to “follow in his [foot]steps” (1 Pet 2:21) and endure unjust suffering incurred because of their faith in Christ. The cross is not merely the means by which we are saved but also the pattern of mindset and ethics of the saved. Coherently, Paul presents Christ's saving mindset and his act on the cross to exhort the Philippians to adopt the same ethos and praxis within the worshipping community.

Paul begins with one of the clearest acknowledgements of Christ's pre-incarnate existence in the NT (cf. Col 1:15-17; Jn 1:1-3) in 2:6: Christ was in the form of God and had equality with God. The highest esteem, status and identity as God, as well as equality with God the Father, was Christ's. And while there is a stark contrast that must be maintained between Christ's divine “form” and the

¹ For recent hymnic studies, cf. M.E. Gordley, *New Testament Christological Hymns: Exploring Tests, Contexts, and Significance* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018) as well as my review of this volume in JETS 62/4 (2019), 841-844; S.E. Fowl, “The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of Hymnic Material in Pauline Corpus”, JSNTSup 36 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 31-32.



by M. Sydney Park

subsequent “form” of slave (2:7), the mindset that leads to adoption of such humiliation begins with how Christ interprets his divine identity and equality with God the Father.² The humility of emptying himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming human and obedient even to the humiliation of the cross—all this is properly understood as the most appropriate interpretation of his divine identity and equality with the Father. The most premier status and identity as God can only operate within the Godhead as opportunity for self-emptying and not self-aggrandizement. Thus, the critical points of salvation history, incarnation and crucifixion are not antithetical to Christ’s divine nature and status but coherent effects of that nature.

God the Father’s response to Christ’s mindset and actions in 2:6-8 affirms both as righteous expressions of divine identity: “therefore (διὸ/dio) God has highly exalted him and graced (ἐχαρίσατο/*echarisato*) on him the name that is above every name” (2:9). The Father’s response mirrors the Son’s mindset and actions in that he bestows his own name, which he does not share with any other (cf. Is 42:8), and the worship that is exclusively his own (cf. Is 45:23) is directed to the Son. The Father’s high exaltation

of the Son is the ultimate affirmation of Christ’s divine identity and equality with the Father. Such self-giving of both the Son and the Father does not detract nor diminish their divine identity and status, but rather redounds to full glory of both as all within the created realm genuflect and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (2:11). The testimony of Christ’s divine identity through incarnation and the cross is so perfect that whether or not there is genuine acceptance of God’s saving grace in these events, Christ’s identity as “Lord” cannot be denied even by his enemies. Worship as indicated by bowed knees and confession is entirely fettered on Christ’s divine identity as revealed in his salvific acts, which are unreservedly affirmed by the Father—this and only this is the content of true worship.

Where there is such pure worship of God the Father and the Son, the fellowship of believers reflects the same divine mindset and praxis operative in salvation. Paul begins his exhortation with a series of “ifs,” which may be summarized as: “if you are saved” (2:1). All, regardless of societal status, are to adopt the mindset of Christ as relayed in 2:6-8: “do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others as

those more significant than yourselves” (2:3). It is impossible to worship the Triune God who is wholly self-giving with respect to each other and the world and not reflect the same mindset within the church. To remain self-absorbed and demand dignity rather than assume the humble, indeed, humiliated form of a slave is to have thoroughly misunderstood God’s own very nature and identity and the operative mindset/actions in our salvation. To wit, such selfishness reveals idolatry, worship of self rather than God and un-redemption rather than redemption. The theological and ecclesiological framework of worship in Philippians 2:6-11 may effectively restore contemporary worship to the full glory of the Father and consequently function as testimony to all that indeed “Christ is Lord.” ♦



M. Sydney Park is an associate professor at Beeson Divinity School, where she teaches New Testament and Greek. She is the author of Submission within the Godhead and the Church in the Epistle to the Philippians: An Exegetical and Theological Examination of the Concept of Submission in Philippians 2 and 3.

²While ESV tactfully translates 2:7 as “servant,” the offensive nature of the word should be maintained; the word is δοῦλος (*doulos*) “slave,” not διάκονος (*diakonos*) “servant.” That Christ adopts the form of a slave, rather than that of a king or the elite, functions as affirmation of the oppressed.

Methodist Preaching:

Spoken and Sung

by Michael Pasquarello III

John Wesley (1703-1791), spiritual father of Methodism, believed preaching is generated by the Father's sending of the Son, through whom the Spirit breathes the beauty of holy love into hearers in particular times, places and circumstances.¹ The message of the gospel creates its medium as the character of messengers whose manner of speaking and living renders tangible witness to the Spirit's wisdom and power manifested in the self-giving of Christ.²

Methodist preachers were therefore called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, whose beauty reverberates through one's whole being—the heart, soul, mind and strength—in love with God and the neighbors to whom we speak. John Wesley spoke of God's "design" in raising up the preachers called "Methodists," which was "to reform the nation and in particular, the Church: to spread scriptural holiness over the land." There is an aesthetic dimension, an attractiveness, to the design of scriptural holiness as a form of life which embodies the simple beauty of loving devotion to God and sacrificial service to neighbors, especially the poor.³

Evangelization was, for Wesley, the fruit of a larger purpose: the faithful proclamation and visible enactment of the gospel within the trinitarian economy of justifying and sanctifying grace. Sermons were homiletic expressions of prayerful attentiveness to the canon of Scripture, the Christian tradition and the lives of the saints. Preaching was a public acclamation

of praise for the extravagant love of the Father who, by sending the Son in the power of the Spirit, creates and builds up a holy people who worship and serve a holy God in the world. Personal conversion and social ministry, therefore, were not the end or goal. Rather, these were celebrated as Christian witness to God's mercy which was demonstrated in self-giving love and generated by the Spirit—signs of devotion to God's kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven by participation in the life and ministry of Christ.

The hymns of Charles Wesley (1707-1788), younger brother of John Wesley, are often overlooked as significant means of "poetic proclamation" that both informed and inspired the people called Methodists. It is estimated that Charles Wesley's poems and hymns number around 9,000, as the singing of hymns was a major distinctive to the early Methodist movement of the 18th century. In fact, it is widely believed that Charles' hymns surpassed John's sermons in popularizing Methodist doctrine, life and mission. For this reason, Methodist hymnody has been regarded as a primary source of "practical divinity," a shared way of life that was an expression of the gospel through love for God and love for neighbor, particularly with the poor as proclaimed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. In praising God, Methodist people sang the union of theology and ethics, which ordered their lives toward the "beauty of holiness." Debra Dean Murphy's comments are illuminating:

*Christ draws us into the beauty of the triune God and summons from us outward expressions of what we already are: sharers in the divine nature. For Wesley, love of God and neighbor is the centerpiece of Christian perfection which he clarifies in the following manner, 'By perfection, I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.'*⁴

¹ John Wesley, "An Address to the Clergy," *The Works of John Wesley* 3rd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 485, 499.

² See the informative account in David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 53-85.

³ See the extensive treatment of the Christian plain style of speaking and spiritual beauty in Peter Auski, *Christian Plain Style: The Evolution of a Spiritual Ideal* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill - Queen's University Press, 1995), 309-10.

⁴ Debra Dean Murphy, *Happiness, Health, and Beauty: The Christian Life in Everyday Terms, With Questions for Consideration* by Andrew Kinsey (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 84.

Because the church has no outward beauty in itself, it is important to remember the means of grace, particularly the intimate connection of the works of piety and mercy, which participate in the humility and holiness of Christ. Wesley saw these as necessary to sanctification, the working out of full salvation which is a form of spiritual and moral beauty. For example, as a work of mercy, ministering to the poor is not merely a matter of moral obligation, economic problem solving or social activism. God has

so made this ministry to have a unifying, even “beautiful,” effect among those who experience the joy of mutual giving and receiving that partakes of Christ’s goodness. A hymn by Charles Wesley conveys the significance of welcoming the poor as Christ’s beloved: • • • • •

*The poor, as Jesus’ bosom - friends,
The poor he makes his latest care,
To all his successors commends,
And wills us on our hands to bear:
The poor our dearest care we make,
Aspiring to superior bliss,
And cherish for their Saviour’s sake,
And love them with a love like his.⁵*

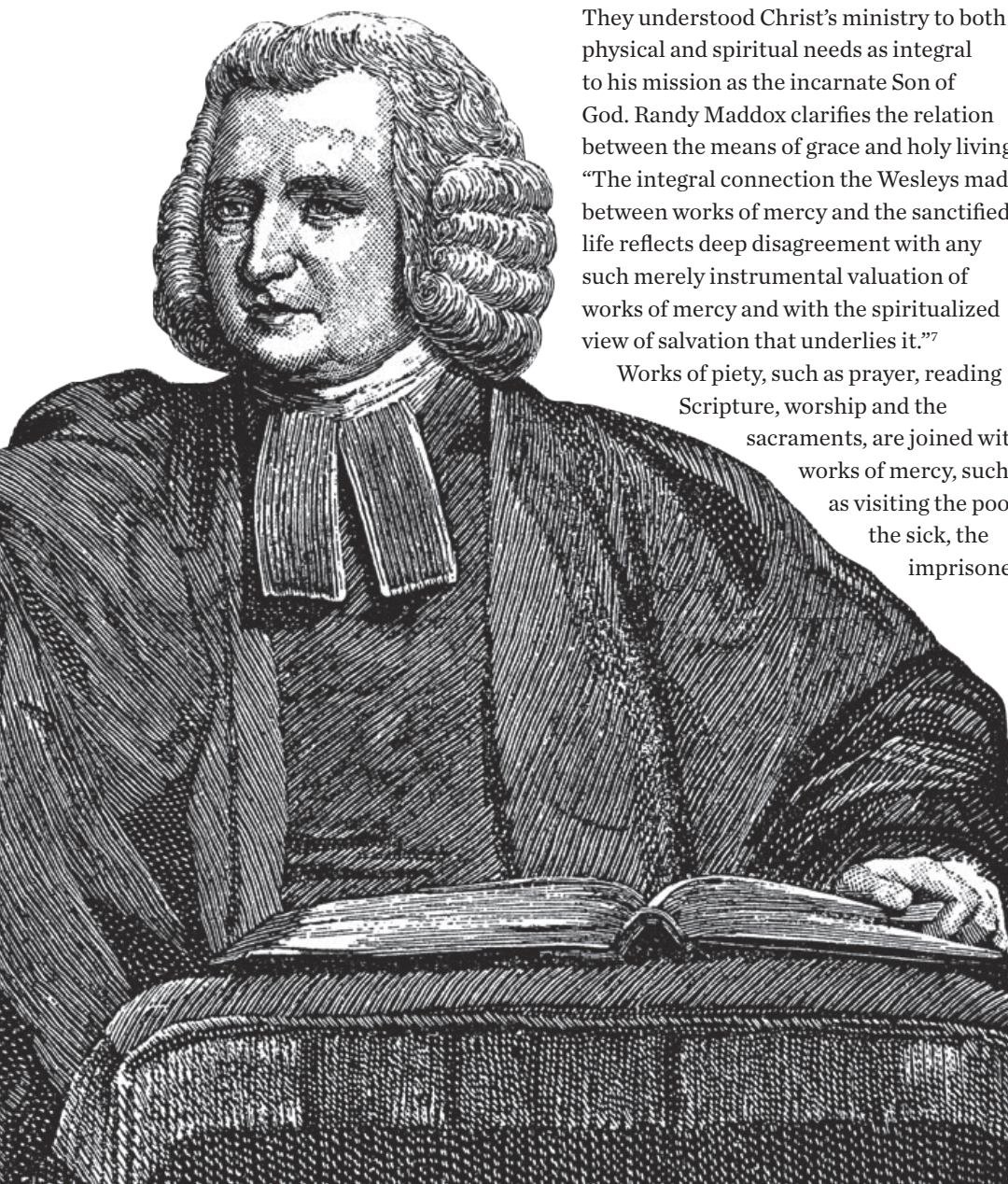
The poor are intimately connected to Christ and therefore central to the gospel and the fruit of holy living. Moreover, for early Methodists, the gospel was a message spoken and heard by quite humble people.⁶ They understood Christ’s ministry to both physical and spiritual needs as integral to his mission as the incarnate Son of God. Randy Maddox clarifies the relation between the means of grace and holy living: “The integral connection the Wesleys made between works of mercy and the sanctified life reflects deep disagreement with any such merely instrumental valuation of works of mercy and with the spiritualized view of salvation that underlies it.”⁷

Works of piety, such as prayer, reading Scripture, worship and the sacraments, are joined with works of mercy, such as visiting the poor, the sick, the imprisoned

and ministering to widows and orphans. Wesley viewed works of mercy as means of grace that contribute to nurturing virtue and piety through encounters of mutual love and service. Loving the poor and needy, then, has a formative rather than merely functional effect—as a means of meeting Christ by participating in his love that both gives and receives with others.⁸

Charles Wesley gives beautiful expression to this in poetic form:

*Thus fit us, Savior, for heav’n,
as with gladness we restore
all that God has freely giv’n
to his deputies, the poor.
God has chosen the simple poor
as the followers of his Son,
rich in faith, of glory sure,
they shall win the heav’nly crown.⁹*



⁵ Cited in Campbell, “The Image of Christ in the Poor: On the Medieval Roots of the Wesleys’ Ministry with the Poor,” 51.

⁶ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 85.

⁷ Randy Maddox, “Visit the Poor”: John Wesley, the Poor, and the Sanctification of Believers,” *The Poor and the People Called Methodists 1729-1999* ed. Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 68.

⁸ Maddox, “Visit the Poor”: John Wesley, the Poor, and the Sanctification of Believers,” 69-76.

⁹ Charles Wesley, “Ambitious, covetous, vain,” *Help Us to Help Each Other: Hymns for Life and Ministry with the Poor*, ed. ST Kimbrough, Jr. Music Editor, Carlton R. Young (Madison, NJ: The Charles Wesley Society, 2010), 22-3.

Selfless love for God and the poor directs our attention to the image of God in Christ, which is central for proclaiming and living the gospel. Because the poor are recipients and images of Christ's humble love, they occupy a central place in the sanctification of our minds and the knowledge of the God whom we confess in him. Therefore, Christians trust and serve God by following the pattern of Christ's humility and holiness. It is important to remember that self-denial for the sake of recognizing and serving the poor as objects of God's perfect love was central for Jesus in his ministry of proclaiming and enacting God's reign. A hymn by Charles Wesley calls upon God to pour out an abundance of the Spirit's transforming love which is received in the giving of one's self to others.

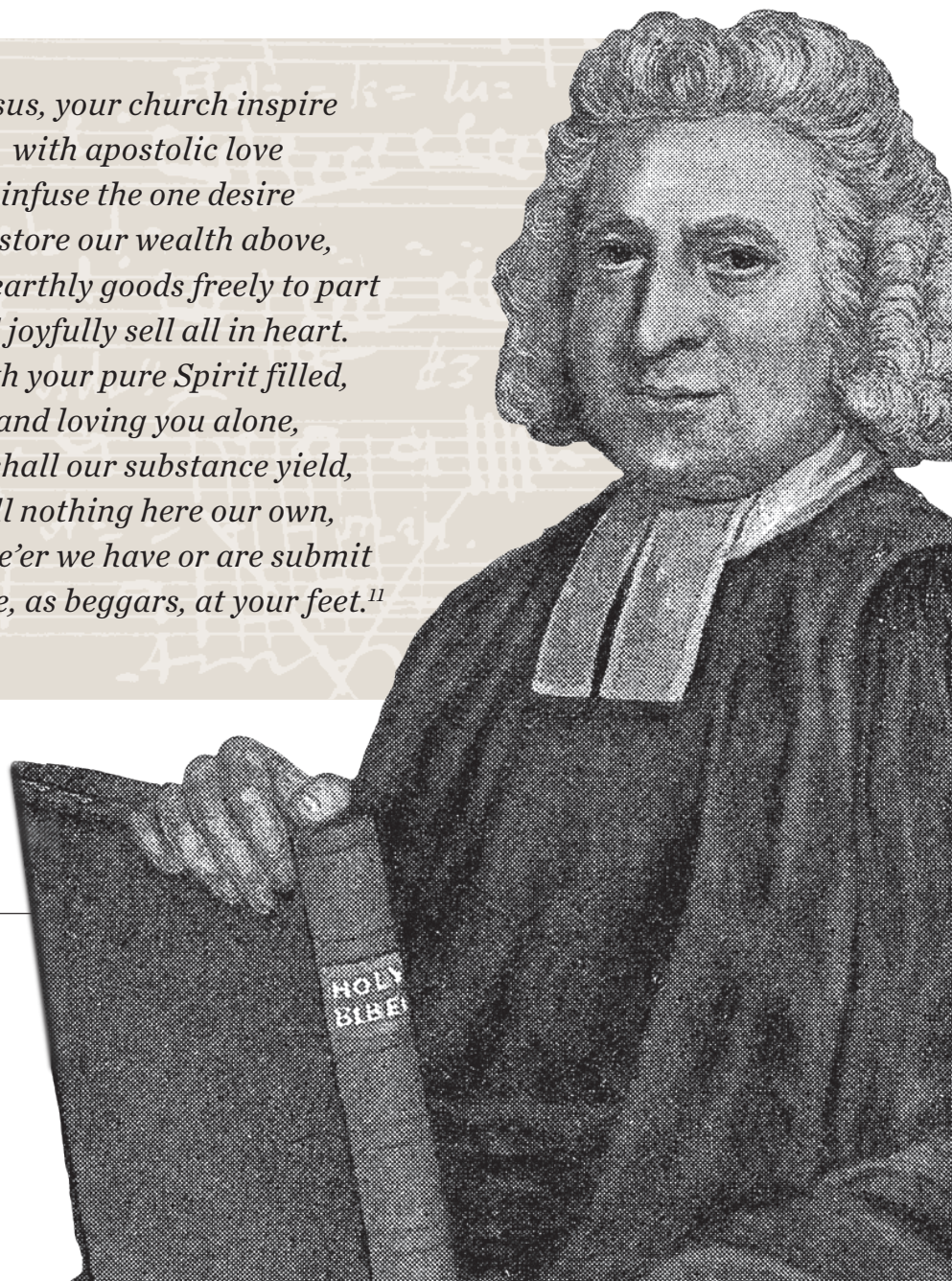
*Come, thou holy God and true! Come,
and my whole heart renew; take me now and
possess me whole, form the Savior in my soul:
In my heart thy name reveal. Stamp me
with the Spirit's seal, change my nature into thine,
in me thy whole image shine.
Love immense, and unconfined, Love to
all of humankind.*

The hymns of Charles Wesley make clear that Christian faith entails glad receptivity to the immensity and humility of God's self-giving love in Christ. The Holy Spirit conforms us to Christ's moral excellence with his gifts, virtues and fruit by which we mature in faith, advance in hope and radiate "a beauty, a love, a, holiness."¹⁰ Wesley hymns the truth of God's Spirit, who illumines Christian people with the mind of Christ.

*Jesus, your church inspire
with apostolic love
infuse the one desire
to store our wealth above,
with earthly goods freely to part
and joyfully sell all in heart.
With your pure Spirit filled,
and loving you alone,
we shall our substance yield,
call nothing here our own,
whate'er we have or are submit
and lie, as beggars, at your feet.¹¹*



Michael Pasquarello III is Methodist chair of Divinity, director of the Doctor of Ministry program and director of the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute at Beeson Divinity School. He is the author of *Dietrich: Bonhoeffer and the Theology of a Preaching Life*.



¹⁰ Eugene H. Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Gracewing, 1992), 21.

¹¹ "Which of the Christians now" in *Help Us to Help Each Other*, 31.

P. 11: "Portrait of Rev. Charles Wesley" by Rev. James W. Lee, 1849-191, courtesy of Pitts Theology Library.

P. 12: "Portrait of Rev. Charles Wesley" by E. C. Kenyon, courtesy of Pitts Theology Library.

The Role of Hymns in African American Tradition, Preaching

by Kristen Padilla

Beeson alumnus Tyshawn Gardner (M.Div. '14) has served as pastor of Plum Grove Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, for 19 years and has recently been named associate professor of Biblical and Religious Studies and director of the Preministerial Scholars program at Samford University. He is also the author of two forthcoming books, *Sacred Anthropology: Prophetic Radicalism for Pulpit and Pew* (Fortress Press, September 2022) and *Social Crisis Preaching: Biblical Proclamation for Pulpit and Pew* (B&H, 2023). Gardner earned his Ph.D. in Christian Preaching from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

KP What role do hymns play in the African American tradition, specifically as it relates to preaching?

TG In the African American Church tradition, hymns are partners with preaching in the spiritual formation of the local body of Christ. Hymns set the emotional and spiritual tone for preaching. Hymns have also aided preachers in mining hope from the mountains of despair faced by a people beset by social, political and economic disenfranchisement. In the African American Church, traditionally, hymns have been inseparable from the preaching experience, joining church members and ministers in the empowering experience of worship.



KP What significant role did hymns and spirituals play during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s?

TG Hymns reminded those fighting for civil rights that their cause was anchored in a freedom-giving and justice-loving God, even though the wait for justice and equality seemed long. Hymns had a way of sowing hope in the soul of the lay hymnologist. Long after the preaching moment was concluded, hymns stirred hope in hearts of the people as they sang in kitchens, jails, factories, fields and as they marched in the streets. Hymns like, “We Shall Overcome,” became the theme song of the movement.

KP How can preachers incorporate hymnology into their preaching today?

TG Preachers can insert a line of a hymn into the sermon for an effective and positive response. A sermon about the grace of God in salvation can include a line from “Amazing Grace.” Perfectly placed, the insertion of a hymn in the sermon can illuminate a sacred biblical truth. African American preachers

have sung hymns before, during and/or after the sermon. Preachers can follow that practice today. Moreover, preachers can ask the musicians and the believers in the pews to join in singing hymns before or after the preaching moment.

KP What are some of the most important African American hymns and spirituals and why? What do they have to teach us?

TG Hymns like, “Shine on Me” and “Pass Me Not,” were sung to remind the believer that God does not forget those who are in despair. “Father, I Stretch My Hand to Thee” and “Amazing Grace,” a notable hymn in most any Christian tradition, bear a soulful and emotional distinction in the African American Church that is born from the testimony of a people who believe the Bible’s testimony about God and Jesus Christ. The most impactful hymns in the African American Church are those hymns that communicate the unique cultural experience of African Americans and that are sung in the *pathos* and spiritual fervency of a hopeful

people who believed that God is faithful to the downtrodden and oppressed. Spirituals like, “Oh, Freedom,” with the lyrics: “oh freedom, freedom over me, before I’ll be a slave, I’ll be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free,” communicated correctly that God’s ultimate will is freedom and liberation and that slavery was not the intention of God, but rather the result of a fallen world. Other spirituals like, “Wade in the Water,” contained hidden messages for slaves and communicated God’s aid in the plans of escape from slavery: “wade in the water children, God’s gonna trouble the water.” “Ezekiel Saw the Wheel” is a spiritual that testified to the awesome power of God and the surety of his Word, while the spiritual “Steal Away to Jesus” and “Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child,” articulated the realities of the sufferings of this present world and faith in the joys of the world awaiting. Hymns and spirituals teach us of the faithfulness of God in human suffering and pain. Likewise, hymns and spirituals instruct us that melody in the heart of the believer is balm to the suffering soul that waits upon the sure promises of God.

KP How have hymns shaped you and your preaching?

TG I love hymns. They have kept me grounded amid the strong winds of pluralism and post modernity. They call me and my church back to the most important and essential truths in the Word of God. ♦

“Take and Eat”

A Hymn by and

by Kristen Padilla

Jess Leslie is a current Master of Divinity student and has been leading worship for more than 16 years. She is passionate about writing songs for the church, and her hope after graduation is to minister within a local church. Below is an interview with Leslie about writing hymns as well as the lyrics to an original hymn she co-wrote with Drew Kearney, worship pastor at Mountain Brook Community Church in Birmingham, Alabama, called, “Take and Eat.”

KP Why do you feel called to write hymns? What do you enjoy about writing hymns?

JL Psalm 96:1 gives the command to “sing to the Lord a new song,” so in a very straightforward sense, writing new songs for the people of God to sing is obedience. For the first 10 to 15 years of my leading worship, I wrote songs casually and privately; in other words, I wrote when I felt inspired in some way, and I rarely had the courage to share the songs with others. Several years ago, however, I went through a worship and discipleship school called 10,000 Fathers and Mothers. It was there that I received a theology of songwriting, and it was then that I sensed God affirming that whether five or 5,000 people ever hear a song that I may write, it is an offering that he is calling me to lay before him. What I most enjoy about songwriting is doing it collaboratively. We need the ministries and giftings of one another, and I am always both challenged and encouraged when I have spent time writing alongside brothers and sisters.

KP Why is it good for the church to have new hymns?

JL On one hand, there really is nothing new under the sun (Eccles 1:9). On the other hand, the Lord has given us the instruction to sing new songs both to him and to one another (Ps 96:1, Eph 5:19). Moreover, we have examples in Scripture (like David, Mary and Moses) that model for us what it looks like to bring glory to the Lord in a fresh way, both lyrically and melodically. There is also something really special about a household of faith singing songs together that have been birthed from within its community.

KP What is your philosophy or approach to writing new hymns for congregational worship?

JL First, the song needs to be scriptural. If the themes of the song cannot be supported by what the Lord has given us in his Word, then it’s probably not suited for use in congregational worship. Second, the song needs to be singable. If the melody is difficult to follow or if the lyrics are complicated or obscure, then it’s probably not suited for use in congregational worship. Lastly, the song needs to be beautiful. If it is poetically and sonically lifeless, then it’s probably not suited for use in congregational worship.

KP As a worship minister, what is your approach to teaching the congregation new hymns?

JL Simply and practically, I usually offer a 30 to 90 second teaching that introduces the song itself, while also weaving it into that particular moment of the liturgy. I also try to avoid introducing a new song on one Sunday without also incorporating it into the following Sunday. The repetition helps us not only with the basic task of learning the song, but it also expands our time to sink into the truths of the song.

KP What led you to write “Take and Eat”?

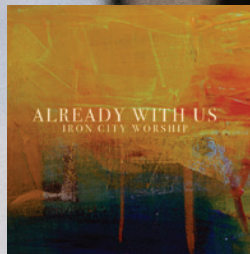
JL Long ago I heard a sermon that connected the theme of “taking and eating” in the Garden of Eden to “taking and eating” in the upper room. I scribbled down other ideas from Scripture that touched on this theme, and then I pitched the framework

of the song to my friend Drew Kearney. Drew is a dear brother, a faithful pastor and a gifted songwriter. We worked together to write the rest of the song.

KP This hymn is very Christocentric. What does this hymn communicate about Jesus?

JL My highest hope for the song is that through it we would look to the ways of Jesus and be reminded that he is the exact imprint of the Father’s nature (Heb 1). By God’s grace, the more we recall the ways that the Father loves and pursues us, the more alive we become in Christ—for his glory, for our flourishing and for the good of the world around us. ♦

Interview with Jess Leslie



"Take and Eat"

By Jess Leslie and Drew Kearney

Verse 1

There is goodness in the garden
God is breathing out his glory
Where the river sings the story
Of the beauty he has shared with us
There's a serpent in the garden
And he's chasing down creation
He is twisting every craving
With the fruit of fear and he says

Chorus

"Take, take and eat"
Three little words that turned
The whole world upside down

Verse 2

There is silence at the table
They recount the ages past
Over centuries of wandering
And longing for the Lamb of God
There is sadness in the Savior
He cries to tell of what's to come
He pours a cup of wine
And as he breaks the bread he says

Verse 3

There's forgiveness by the fire
Blazing on the shoreline
They can't deny the Lord's alive
Their hearts reviving with the rising Son
Messiah murdered on the mountain
Now he feasts within their midst
The one who passed away is alive
And now he's passing plates and he says

Bridge

The banquet doors are swinging wide
The Bread of Heaven is alive
The grave it howls of hunger pains
The Bread of Heaven breathes again



SCAN AND
LISTEN

“SO AMAZING”

How God Called Me to Preach, Rap and Reach the Youth by DeVonta Anderson

Hip-hop itself is not a genre I like as much as it is a culture that I grew up in and a lens through which I see the world. I am hip-hop.

My mother loved children, but she was unable to have any of her own. Instead, she decided to start a foster home. I was the first child she adopted, and for the first seven years of my life I experienced many things that come with running a foster home. When I was 7 years old, my mother finalized the adoption of my other siblings, and her expectation was for each of us to have stability and to operate as a “normal” family. Sadly, that reality was crushed when her husband and our father left and started another family. My mother was disabled and thus unable to work. Our father did not pay child support, leaving us struggling as a family until my six siblings and I reached adulthood.

But my mother was a woman of faith, and she faithfully took us to church.

God called me to preach at the age of 7. But, because I grew up in a culture of moralistic therapeutic deism, in a very traditional church background, I was subconsciously taught that you could not be authentically hip-hop and a devout Christian.

I noticed at a young age that I did not listen to music the way my siblings or my peers did. I learned that although they liked or loved songs because of how it sounded or how it made them feel, I was more interested in how the songs were made and how different sounds were brought together to influence people. I often found that I would get excited about things in songs that others did not even hear or notice. It was the smallest as well as the most intricate of things



that helped ignite my passion for music.

Although I knew God was calling me to preach throughout my preteen years, I did not answer the call because I did not believe that God could use someone who was unapologetically hip-hop. Growing up, there were many teachers at the school I attended who recognized my potential. However, it wasn't until I was 16 that I had a student band teacher, who, like many of my other teachers before, saw within me a natural leader. He introduced me to Lecrae's 2006 album, “After the Music Stops.” I was amazed because for the first time I saw a person who was authentically hip-hop but also a devout Christian who was involved in a biblical community of accountability, very well educated in theology and a positive

role model to youth of all backgrounds. I also learned that day, while listening to his album, that he owned a record label full of rappers who were just as passionate about the gospel as he was and as I desired to be. I spent the rest of that evening searching every artist on his label. I knew, while listening to each artist, that God could indeed use someone like me. That day I gave my life to Christ, accepted my call to preach and started rapping a few months afterwards.

At this point in my career, I have performed for around 40,000 people. Unbeknownst to many who have heard my music, I write all the lyrics of my songs including the songs that have pop, R&B, soul, gospel and contemporary Christian music influences. I pride myself in being a songwriter who also happens to be an extremely versatile rapper and not just a rapper who loves writing songs.

Many do not believe that gospel/Christian rap can be used for the glory of God. I often find myself being judged for something that I am passionate about. They do not understand that there are so many people, mostly children, who go to church regularly who believe that praise and worship music is boring. There are many people who listen solely to rap/hip-hop. Even more so, there are people who have absolutely no desire to listen to gospel/Christian music and have closed their ears to anything pertaining to praise and worship music. Gospel rap, Christian rap, and “holy hip-hop” are tactical tools that can be used to get the gospel to people whose ears are either not inclined or completely shut off to praise and worship music.

Gospel/Christian rap can be used as a precursor to worship or a tool to rejuvenate and revive worship in the hearts of those who



DeVonta Anderson welcomes a young person to church on a Sunday morning in April 2022.

already have knowledge of God. Gospel rap can be used as a precursor to worship for youth who believe that church and worship music are boring. It can be something for them to like and enjoy while keeping them close to the oracles of God until they grow in their understanding of true worship and mature into a faith-based relationship with God. It can also be used as a tool to break away from tradition, create excitement or simply do something new within our faith-based community. For example, at the church where I serve as pastor, we recently started doing what we call “Fab Five Sunday.” Every fifth Sunday, instead of doing a traditional worship service, I do a concert for the congregation, and I preach in between songs. This idea has brought so much excitement to our church, and it has blessed each of us simply because it is an opportunity to do something new and fresh. It keeps some of our youth, who have told me church is boring, close to the church, and it gives them something to be excited about. As a result, their excitement excites our seasoned saints.

As a rapper, educator, mentor and young pastor who is extremely popular among children of all ages in the districts I serve, whether in my denomination or the school system, it amazes me just how much many of these children look up to me. Thus, I wrote the song, “So Amazing,” as a reminder to myself and to the children I have the privilege of serving that I am not a superstar, but I serve a God who created the stars out of nothing and it is in him whom we should put all our trust. ♦

SO AMAZING

Chorus

Just for a minute
Can I be honest, I’m nothing special
I’m in the hands of the potter
A work in progress, I am his vessel
I’m just a vessel, I’m nothing special, Nada I’m zero on each level (Repeat this line)
I’m not a superstar, I’m not the one you want
I’m not the one you need, Get your eyes off of me, put your eyes on the King

Verse 1

I’m on a new level, buy me a new shovel
Bury the old me, it’s time to shine like a new Bezel
I’m shining that light that is in me
It is the only good in me
I promise the old me you don’t want to know
Because he comes from bad folk just check out the history
They came from low levels
Literally came from the dirt
Heard from the serpent they the first
To become sinners, exiled and cursed
I’m just as bad, matter a fact
I might be worse should have been in a hearse
But thank God for his Spirit it gave me a burst
No credit to me it was His work

(Repeat Chorus)

Verse 2

Get your eyes off of me and please put your eyes on the King
He is my everything yes I mean everything he is the reason I sing
I have no reason to brag because I did not do anything
I promise he is the only good in me it’s not what it seems it’s the Spirit who cleaned [me]
He’s what you see all that I have my car and my clothes are all gifts from the King
He is a beast he made the stars and galaxies and re-creation of me
So get your eyes off of me should not be on me
Should be on the one who made what you see
He is so holy and I am so dirty
I am the servant and He is the King

DeVonta Anderson (M.Div. ’19) is senior pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. Church in Adamsville, Alabama.

Kenneth Mathews Retires After 33 Years as Professor of Old Testament

by Kristen Padilla

Originally from Dallas, Texas, Kenneth Mathews was hired in 1989 to teach Old Testament at what was then a brand-new divinity school on the campus of Samford University. Thirty-three years later, Mathews retired from Beeson Divinity School at the end of the spring 2022 semester. His book, *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll* (co-authored with David Noel Freedman), was the first full study of the Leviticus Dead Sea Scroll. He is the author of *Genesis 1–11:26* and *Genesis 11:27–50:26* in the New American Commentary series (as well as associate general editor of that series), *Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People* in the *Preaching the Word* series, *Joshua* in the *Teach the Text Commentary* series, and *The Post-Racial Church* (co-authored with Beeson faculty member M. Sydney Park). He translated the book of Leviticus for The New Living Translation and is associate editor of the Old Testament for the new *Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary* series published by Lexham Press. Mathews is married to Dea, and they have two children, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



KP Why Beeson? Why did you take a chance on a brand-new divinity school?

KM At a time when universities did not start divinity schools, the founding of a new divinity school on a historically Baptist university campus was an exciting venture. Also, the feature of an interdenominational school committed to historic evangelicalism took on the guise of an “experiment” in theological education for training ministers in pastoral service.

I did not have the zeal for teaching in a large seminary and supervising Ph.D. students. I wanted to share my life and teaching with those who were called to pastoral ministry in the diverse settings of church ministries. When I read the curriculum with its commitment to biblical studies and preaching, I thought I could contribute to both areas: mentoring and teaching students in interpreting Holy Scripture with the goal of preaching. Also, as someone from outside Alabama, I soon realized that Beeson had a special opportunity to minister to students across racial and gender lines.

KP Why did you stay all these years at Beeson?

KM There was no better place to develop personally and professionally. At Dr. George’s wise leadership, we experienced a community of scholarship and worship. He

emphasized personal relationships among faculty, staff and students. The faculty quickly grew in number, and they were highly competent scholars who shared in the mission of Beeson and in my mission too—to love and nourish the church. Also, our students are terrific.

KP How has Beeson changed and how has it remained the same in your 30+ years?

KM Once we left our “swaddling clothes” behind, we entered the growing pains of adolescence. Inevitably, a growing institution requires more organizational formality and sets goals for future development. We enjoyed our graduating classes making their marks in ministry both near and afar. Through faculty publications and graduates’ effectiveness in church ministry, the school’s reputation grew among churches and ministry candidates. We are on the brink of expanding our ministry into new arenas. The most recent is the certificate in Wesleyan Studies.

How has Beeson stayed the same? Passionate commitment to the hallmarks of the Christian faith, zeal for missions, a praying and worshipping life together and building enduring friendships.

KP In what ways have you grown as a scholar and a person during your time at Beeson?

KM At Beeson you would have to work hard to avoid growing! Samford and Beeson provide excellent resources, which foster professional development. Faculty colleagues, by their own scholarly and pastoral activities, stir one another to do the work of research, writing and serving churches. My personal growth can also be attributed to my students, who are themselves growing in their spiritual lives, and I love growing with them, step-by-step. Mentor groups, especially, gave windows into the lives of our students, including their challenges and victories. Many answers to prayers occurred.

Beeson faculty in 1989, L to R: Ken Mathews, Richard Wells, Timothy George, Bill Stencil and Frank Thielman.



Too often overlooked is the staff’s mature faith, hard work and model example of humble service. Through the decades, some of my most cherished prayer partners have been staff members. They are “pros” at serving the Lord’s people with enthusiasm, a good dose of patience and an abundance of forgiveness. I have no doubt that students have chosen Beeson as the right fit for them because of the personal one-on-one attention they received from their first encounters with our staff members in the trenches. I know from personal experience that visitors from Samford’s personnel and visitors from outside the school have commented that the ethos of Beeson is a welcomed peace to the soul. Beeson is different, and may it always be in this way.

KP Do you have a favorite memory during your time at Beeson? If so, what is it?

KM I started teaching in July of 1989 as the school was beginning its second year. Dr. George and I—I think it was July or soon after I settled in—went to Mr. Beeson’s home. He was a warm man but also a businessman who wanted to hear what was happening and where Dr. George was taking us. He was a sterling example of taking the long view when praying “thy kingdom come.” He invested in education because he rightly understood that this was essential in equipping future generations of Christian leadership. Every person who has been or will be touched by the divinity school has benefitted from Mr. Beeson’s selfless generosity.

KP If you could go back in time and tell your younger self something that you know now that you didn’t understand then, what would it be? What advice would you give young scholars?

KM In too much of my teaching career I was teaching subjects. Now, I want to be teaching beloved students!

KP What words of wisdom would you give our alumni?

KM This is true for every Christian, but, especially, I remind ministers to take care of their souls, spending time with the Lord day by day. It’s okay to be busy, just don’t be in a hurry. ♦

Send Dr. Mathews a note at kamathew@samford.edu.



Beeson Divinity School Names Jonathan Linebaugh Anglican Chair of Divinity, Director of the Institute of Anglican Studies

by Kristen Padilla

University of Cambridge professor and respected New Testament scholar Jonathan Linebaugh has been named Beeson Divinity School's next Anglican Chair of Divinity and director of its Institute of Anglican Studies beginning fall 2022.

Linebaugh is a world-renowned New Testament scholar, specializing in the contexts, theology and history of reading the apostle Paul's letters. He serves on the editorial advisory board for the Library of Pauline Studies and is a member of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, an international society for New Testament scholars. He is the author or editor of five books, including most recently *The Word of the Cross: Reading Paul* (Eerdmans). Linebaugh also has written numerous journal articles and essays, focusing especially on the New Testament as well as the history and theology of the Reformation. As Anglican Chair, he will teach courses in Anglican theology and worship and in New Testament.

"My family and I are thrilled to be coming to Beeson," Linebaugh said. "There is a deep match between Beeson's mission and my academic and pastoral vocation to educate and prepare ministers who will proclaim what the Book of Common Prayer calls the 'comfortable words.'"

"There is also an exciting resonance between the identity of Beeson and the ethos of Anglicanism: Beeson is confessional, evangelical, reformational and interdenominational; Anglicanism is rooted in the scriptural canon, the ancient creeds,



“My family and I are thrilled to be coming to Beeson. There is a deep match between Beeson’s mission and my academic and pastoral vocation to educate and prepare ministers.”

Jonathan Linebaugh

a Reformation confession and pattern of worship, and is a diverse, global and growing communion,” he added. “I look forward to learning with the entire Beeson community, especially our Anglican students, and I hope that through the Institute of Anglican Studies, Beeson can be a resource for a wide range of Anglicans locally, nationally and throughout the global Anglican Communion.”

As director of the Institute of Anglican Studies, Linebaugh will develop and lead a co-curricular program for mentoring Master of Divinity (M.Div.) students who are pursuing the Certificate of Anglican Studies; plan and coordinate programs and events to enrich Anglican students’ preparation for ministry; cultivate and strengthen Beeson Divinity’s relations with Anglican congregations,

dioceses and bishops; help students connect with ministry opportunities and internships in Anglican churches; advise and assist Anglican graduating students in their search for ministry positions; and plan and coordinate programs and events to enhance the faith and service of Anglican clergy and laity.

Linebaugh, who was ordained in The Episcopal Church in 2008, has had an extensive preaching and education ministry in churches throughout the worldwide Anglican communion, especially in England and North America. He also serves on the Council of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Examination in Theology/Lambeth Research Degrees in Theology and on the Board of Trustees for Ridley Hall, an evangelical, theological college (equivalent to a seminary) in the Church of England. Once in Birmingham, he and his family hope to join an Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) congregation.

While at the University of Cambridge, Linebaugh supervised and examined Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) candidates, taught at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, served as degree committee secretary and was a fellow of Jesus College. In 2018, he was nominated for the Pilkington Prize, which is awarded annually to Cambridge professors recognized for teaching with excellence. Prior to Cambridge, he was an associate professor of New Testament at Knox Theological Seminary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he also directed the Doctor of Ministry program in the History, Doctrine and Worship of the English Reformation.

“Dr. Linebaugh’s commitment to the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ, ecumenism, and in-person, theological education makes him a great fit at Beeson,” Dean Douglas A. Sweeney said. “We look forward to welcoming students who want to train for ministry under his care.”

Linebaugh holds a Ph.D. from University of Durham in the United Kingdom, an M.Div. from Trinity School for Ministry in Pennsylvania and a B.S. from Messiah College in Pennsylvania. He is married to Megan, and they have three children: Liam, Callie and Anna. ♦

Founder of Daymark Pastoral Counseling Named Beeson Divinity School's Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling

by Kristen Padilla

Samford University's Beeson Divinity School has named Gordon Bals associate professor of pastoral care and counseling. Bals, who is the founder of Daymark Pastoral Counseling in Birmingham, will begin in this new role in fall 2022.

A board-certified pastoral counselor, Bals started Daymark in 1997. He previously worked as an adolescent and family counselor and as an assistant pastor at Shades Valley Community Church in Birmingham. In addition to his counseling, Bals leads training workshops for pastors and congregational leaders and various enrichment and training events for local churches.

Since 2013, Bals has been teaching courses in pastoral care and counseling, marriage and family counseling, and sexuality and pastoral care at Beeson Divinity as an adjunct instructor.

"We are excited to have Gordon Bals joining us in a full-time capacity at Beeson Divinity School," Thomas L. Fuller, Beeson's associate dean, said. "Dr. Bals has been such a blessing to our students, both inside and outside the classroom. He brings a wealth of experience to this work, ranging from local church ministry to private counseling practice to teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels."

Fuller says the impact he will have on Beeson's students will be essential to their education and future endeavors.

"Gordon has a passion for seeing students shaped deeply by God's grace, grounded firmly in God's Word and equipped well to serve God's people," Fuller said. "He models so well what we strive to do at Beeson: to prepare men and women for faithful ministry by coming alongside them in intensely personal ways in worship, in discipleship and in their studies."

With the addition of Bals to the faculty, Beeson Divinity looks forward to providing students with a broader range of learning opportunities in pastoral care and counseling. As the school seeks to prepare pastors, chaplains, Christian counselors and other ministry leaders, Bals will play a key role in helping Beeson Divinity strengthen its existing programs and develop new programs to meet the needs of the church and the world.

"I am overjoyed at this opportunity and excited to focus my energy on teaching, training and mentoring students to provide theologically-informed pastoral care and counseling."

Gordon Bals

Bals is the author of *Grace from Head to Heart: Experiencing God's Kindness in a Fallen World* and *Common Ground: Discovering God's Redemption in Your Marriage*. He is affiliated with the Christian Association for Psychological Studies and the American Association of Christian Counselors. Bals holds an Ed.D. in Pastoral Community Counseling from University of Sarasota, an M.A. in Biblical Counseling from Colorado Christian University and a B.S. from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Gordon is married to Dawn, and they have three daughters. ♦



Beeson Divinity School Faculty, Alumni Edit New ESV Concise Study Bible

By Caroline Carmichael and Kristen Padilla

Crossway's ESV Concise Study Bible, which has a strong Beeson Divinity School connection, released on Oct. 7, 2021. The purpose of the new publication is to offer the strengths of the much larger ESV Study Bible in a more accessible, understandable and relatable form to a broader readership.

Comprising the committee of editors were Beeson Divinity faculty members, Paul R. House and Frank Thielman; Heather House, Paul's wife and veteran editor; and Beeson alumni, Grant Taylor (M.Div. '08) and former associate dean, and Ethan (M.Div. '18) and Kadie Smith (M.Div. '18), who are married.

Paul House, who like Thielman, is a member of the Translation Oversight Committee for the English Standard Version (ESV), assembled the ESV Concise Study Bible editorial team in 2018 at Crossway's request. Both Paul House and Crossway recognized a need for a study Bible that was smaller, less commentary-like, and more translatable and easily understood by readers across the world.

To achieve this, the committee reduced the study notes published in the ESV Student Study Bible by 30%. While many charts and maps were adopted or adapted from prior Crossway publications, new introductory articles were written for each book of the Bible and study notes were reduced, revised or replaced for critical precision.

To assist with the project, a focus group

“It was an incredible gift and humbling experience to work alongside world-renowned scholars like Paul House and Frank Thielman. I truly believe Beeson is a special place where theological charity is paired with unmatched love for God's Word. I was honored to be a part of a team that gets to share that with the world.”

Ethan Smith

was formed and overseen by another alumnus, Matthew Swale (M.Div. '14), Bible instructor or at Cornerstone High School in Birmingham, Alabama, who provided revisional feedback from high schoolers' use of the ESV Student Study Bible in his classroom throughout the 2017-18 academic year.

“Men and women come to Beeson because of world-class scholars like Dr. House, and it forever shapes our interaction with God's Word,” Swale said. “The ESV Concise Study Bible represents a commitment by the likes of Dr. House and Crossway to make first-rate biblical scholarship accessible to others, too, so that their interaction with God's Word can

be strengthened also.”

The ESV Concise Study Bible features more than 12,000 study notes, brand-new introductions, a glossary, maps, clarifications of key terms and phrases, explanations of important people, places and connections between biblical passages and cultural insights aiding readers' interpretation of the biblical texts.

For example, a note compares a Corinthian woman's head covering to a modern woman's wedding ring. Timothy and Titus are described as veteran missionaries, and other biblical figures, such as the prophets, are made more real through similar, relatable descriptions, according to Paul House. He credits Kadie Smith, who wrote many of the book introductions, with insisting on vivid descriptions of Bible characters.

This new product also meets another goal—it is easily translatable.

“I always thought ESV would have most of its impact abroad, not here,” Paul House said. “What I'm most excited about is the Spanish edition, which will be part of missions in South America. I think the study Bible will help a lot of people here, but you really write books to teach people you'll never meet.”

Nonetheless, Paul House said he does expect to use the new ESV Concise Study Bible among those he does know—Beeson people. First-year Beeson students might find the study Bible listed in their Old Testament Theology syllabus.

“I'll probably replace the big ESV Study Bible with the ESV Concise Study Bible,” he said. “New students meet a similar demographic. I think I'll at least try it once.”

Paul House said he mostly enjoyed working with all the committee members not only because of his personal connection to them but also because “they are good Christian people.” Additionally, all the editors are proficient in both biblical Hebrew and Greek, which he said is rare to find among editing teams and a noteworthy contribution to the ESV Concise Study Bible. ♦

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Son Creates Scholarship to Honor the Memory, Kindness of His Mother

by Kristen Padilla

Most people do not know the name Dolores Nation.

But for those at NorthPark Baptist Church (formerly called Roebuck Park Baptist Church) in Trussville, Alabama, who received handwritten letters from her at significant moments in their lives, Dolores Nation is remembered as a person of compassion.

“Dolores Nation had a compassionate heart and was someone who was for the underdog, for the hurting and the mourning, for those celebrating the birth of a child,” said her son Philip Nation, vice president and publisher of Thomas Nelson Bibles of HarperCollins Publishers. “No matter what moment of change or crisis they were in, she just wanted the everyday person around her to be able to see the compassion of Christ.”

On Oct. 30, 2004, Dolores died from complications of her battle with lung cancer several years earlier. Now her son, who received his Bachelor of Arts from Samford University in 1991 and a Master of Divinity from Beeson Divinity School in 1994, says the time is right to honor her memory by establishing a student scholarship in her name.

The Dolores Emanuel Nation Endowed Scholarship will be used to provide financial support for Southern Baptist students preparing for ministry to attend Beeson Divinity School. Nation hopes that by naming this scholarship for his mother, future recipients of the scholarship will always keep in mind the person in the pew to whom they will be ministering.

“Theology is never an ethereal idea you’re just handing to people,” Nation said. “The people to whom you are handing the big ideas of Scripture—the massive idea of the glory of God and the mission of God in the world—just had their first baby and they’re exhausted. You’re ministering to single parents. You’re ministering to people that just lost a loved one.”

Nation said Beeson set him on a course that saved his ministry before it ever started by combining



scholarship with spiritual formation.

“What I inherited as a trust from Beeson, I want to make sure gets passed on to another generation of students, so that as they come here to learn about the glory of God, that they do so understanding that they are being prepared for the mission of God in the world,” he said.

“Dolores Nation was a person of compassion who cared deeply for people and who later on in her life needed the compassion poured back out on herself during her own illnesses that she endured,” Nation said. “This scholarship represents her legacy of compassion.” ♦



**Scan to contribute
to the Dolores Emanuel
Nation Endowed Scholarship**

life & grace

New Endowment Honors Brief Life of Zoe Karis Walker, Helps Ensure Permanency for Center for Women in Ministry by Grace Thornton

Zoe Karis Walker may have only lived a short time on this Earth, but her legacy will live on through a new endowed fund for the Center for Women in Ministry at Beeson Divinity School.

A recent \$25,000 gift from an anonymous donor created The Zoe Karis Walker Endowed Fund for the Center for Women in Ministry at Beeson Divinity School. The gift honors the daughter of Beeson alumna Hayden Walker (M.Div. '13) and her husband, Cody (B.S.N. '11, M.S.N. '14). Zoe died soon after her birth on June 24, 2016, from Osteogenesis Imperfecta Type II, a brittle bone disease that did not allow her rib cage to grow large enough to support lung function.

“What an honor that Zoe Karis Walker’s name will live on through Beeson’s Center for Women in Ministry,” Kristen Padilla, director of the center said. “This endowment in her name will enable the center to further equip and encourage other women to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel, like Zoe and her mother, Hayden.”

Hayden, who formerly served as minister to students at Mountain Brook Baptist Church while in Birmingham and now resides in Arkansas, regularly teaches and preaches the Word. She received the James Earl Massey Student Preaching Award when she was a student at Beeson and has worked with the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute since its inception.

Five years into their marriage, the Walkers began asking God to expand their family. Zoe was the answer to that prayer, and they also prayed that she would be an evangelist.

Then, a routine second trimester anatomy scan showed signs of her fatal genetic disorder.

The couple was crushed—they grieved the reality that they wouldn’t get to see their daughter grow up. But they say they feel like Zoe is accomplishing the role they prayed she would have, as God has continued to use her life to bring grace to others who hear her story.

Padilla said that shines through in Zoe’s name.

“Cody and Hayden Walker named their daughter Zoe Karis, which in Greek means ‘life’ and ‘grace,’ respectively, as a witness to the Lord Jesus who of his love and grace for us has conquered death,” she said. “It’s only fitting, then, that this endowment would not only honor Zoe Karis but moreover remind us of the reason for which we are equipping women for gospel ministry.”

The center strives to equip women in that way by offering encouragement and resources to build them up as they follow God’s calling on their lives. Since its founding in early 2021, the center has received generous gifts that have allowed it to host a variety of networking and professional development events and a conference. It also has started a library of resources for women in ministry, financially supported mentoring for Beeson and Samford students, offered book clubs, assisted female students with travel expenses for conferences, and is planning a spiritual retreat for summer 2022.

The \$25,000 gift to the fund in Zoe’s name is a big step toward permanency for the center, Padilla said.



“We could not be more excited about this legacy gift,” Beeson Dean Douglas A. Sweeney said. “Hayden Walker is a beloved Beeson alumna, and this is a very special way to honor little Zoe’s life.” ♦

LISTEN



Listen to Hayden Walker share about Zoe Karis on the Beeson podcast.

READ



Read Hayden Walker's blog about Zoe Karis.

GIVE



Give to the Zoe Karis Walker Endowed Fund.



2 0 2 1 B E E S O N D I V I N I T Y



1. James Spencer, Cort Gatliff and Elizabeth Spencer share conversation before the Alumni Banquet.
2. Ben Telfair reads Scripture during the Saturday morning worship service.
3. Amy Hirsch, Hayden Walker and Melanie Vanlaningham pose for a photo during the conference.

4. Dean Doug Sweeney presents the Alumnus of the Year award to Eddie Gibson, who is with his wife, Charlesetta, during the Alumni Banquet.
5. Dean Doug Sweeney gives updates from Beeson Divinity School during the Alumni Banquet.

6. Elizabeth Spencer, James Spencer, Amos Williams, Chauncey McGlathery and Armstead Herndon pose for a photo.
7. Donald Guthrie teaches on resiliency in ministry during a plenary session on Friday of the Alumni Conference.



A L U M N I C O N F E R E N C E



8. Gerald Bray, Ryan Linkous and Ryan Martin pose for a photo.

9. David Parks, A.K. Lama, Asangla Lama, Renee Pitts and Brian Pitts pose for a photo.

10. Alumni Banquet attendees watch entertainment by Gladys Improv Group.

11. Renee and Brian Pitts lead worship for the Saturday morning worship service of the Alumni Conference.

12. Harry L. White Jr. preaches during the worship service on Thursday evening of the Alumni Conference.

Longtime Minister Bob Hutto Named Beeson Divinity School Alumnus of the Year

by Kristen Padilla

Bob Hutto, M.Div. '95, ended up at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School "by accident."



In 1990, Hutto was preaching at Fairfield Highlands Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama, when he wanted to go deeper in his knowledge of New Testament Greek. The day he began researching course options, he happened to meet then-New Testament professor, Jerry Batson, who told him about Beeson. Shortly thereafter, Hutto applied and was accepted.

During his second year as a Master of Divinity student, Hutto accepted the call to serve as minister of Oak Mountain Church of Christ in Pelham, where he served while he finished his degree.

Thirty years later, Hutto is still serving Oak Mountain Church of Christ and is still using lessons he learned at Beeson in his ministry.

"I couldn't have asked for a better experience," he said.

An 'Awakening'

"As I look back over my life, it seems that God was shaping me to be a minister of the gospel from early on," Hutto said.

The son of a minister, Hutto learned about preaching and longevity in ministry from his father, who served churches for more than 50 years. He said that the local church was the focal point of their home.

But as a teenager and young adult, Hutto didn't think a preaching ministry was the vocational path for him—until one day when he had an "awakening."

"I began to see what opportunities the Lord had set before me and to evaluate the abilities he had given me," Hutto said. "I realized that I needed to use them to advance the cause of Christ as best I could."

Now more than 40 years later, Hutto is still faithfully preaching the Word of God.

Pillar of the Church

At Beeson, Hutto found great value in the interdenominational character of the school, in which theological differences and differences in the interpretation of Scripture were to be expected.

"If we were to agree in everything, we would likely not be thinking for ourselves," Hutto said. "I was always treated with great respect."

Four professors in particular had the greatest impact on him: Gerald Bray, Ken Mathews, Frank Thielman and Richard Wells.

"They stimulated in me the desire to do my best," Hutto said. "The tools I acquired at Beeson have made me a better student of God's Word and as a result a better teacher of it."

Bray praised Hutto's faithfulness to one place for 30 years.

"He is an excellent preacher and

teacher and one who is frequently seen in the Samford library, where he often prepares his sermons,” he said. “He is also a humble man with no pretensions, having turned down teaching posts in Florida in order to stay with his congregation.”

Bray continued: “Bob is the sort of person that is unremarkable to the outside world, and yet models everything that we would wish a Beeson alumnus to be. In short, he is a pillar of the church whom most people would never notice but whose place is key in the building up of the people of God.”

Longevity in Ministry

Hutto gave three reasons why he has managed to stay at one church for so long: his wife, his relationship to his congregation and his commitment to preach Scripture.

Cherri, Hutto’s wife of 41 years, “understands the work of the preacher, and her commitment, support and help have been invaluable through the years,” he said. They have two adult children, who are both married.

Hutto also believes that his congregation sees him as one of them.

“Perhaps I’m the one who does most of the preaching and teaching, but I’m no different than anyone else. So, we’re all in this together and have a mutually beneficial relationship.”

Finally, he is committed to preaching the Word of God. “If I were to draw

attention to myself, people would quickly grow tired of it. But the Word of God is always new and fresh.”

And it’s this commitment that drives Hutto to diligently study and prepare for each sermon. “Dr. Mathews said to me one day, ‘The call to preach is a call to study.’ Those words have stayed with me through the years.”

Best of Beeson

Hutto will receive the Alumnus of the Year award at Beeson’s second annual Alumni Conference, Nov. 7-8.

“It is an honor to give this year’s Alumnus of the Year award to Pastor Bob Hutto,” said Douglas Sweeney, dean of Beeson. “Our prayer is that our graduates will be faithful ministers of the gospel for the long haul. In this way, Bob is a living answer to this prayer and represents the best of Beeson.”

When Sweeney called Hutto to let him know of this award, he was hesitant to accept it at first. But he finally accepted the award only after he hoped it might encourage others “to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word.”

“I’m not an academic; I haven’t written any books or established any charitable foundations,” Hutto said. “I’m simply a gospel preacher. My goal is to use the gifts the Lord has given me to help some people get to heaven. May all we do in word and deed be to the praise of the glory of his grace.” ♦



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ALUMNI UPDATES

1992

Clay Hallmark (M.Div., '92) was elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. He also serves as the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Lexington, Tennessee.

1995

Todd Bates (M.Div., '95) became the dean of Texas Baptist College. Todd and his wife, Cathy, live in Ft. Worth, Texas.

1996

Richard Anderson (M.Div., '96) earned his Ph.D. in leadership from the University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Kentucky. Richard is married to Faith.

1997

David King (M.Div., '97) published the book, *Your Old Testament Sermon Needs to Get Saved* in May 2021 (Moody). David is the pastor of Concord Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He is married to Natalie, and they have three children.

1998

Cecelia Walker (M.Div., '98) was elected to Samford's Board of Trustees. Cecelia also earned a D.Min. from the Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse School of Religion in Atlanta, Georgia. Cecelia and her husband, Roy, live in Birmingham, Alabama.

1999

Randall Pressnell (D.Min., '99) became the harvest field team leader on the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board in May 2020. Randall is married to Debbi.

2000

In Aug. 2021, **David Watson** (M.Div., '00; D.Min., '14) began serving as the executive pastor at Double Oak Community Church in Birmingham, Alabama. David is married to Holly, and they have two children.

2001

Andy Byers (M.Div., '01) began a new position as tutor in New Testament at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, in Aug. 2021. Andy is married to Miranda, and they have four children.

In Aug. 2020, **Mark Flores** (M.Div., '01) became chief of chaplain service for the Central Virginia Veterans Affairs Health Care System. Mark is married to Julie, and they have two children.

Matthew Madison (M.Div., '01) became a command chaplain with the U.S. Army in Huntsville, Alabama. Matthew is married to Janet, and they have two children.

Kerry Ray (M.Div., '01) became the director of publishing at YM360. Kerry is married to Stefanie, and they live in Birmingham, Alabama, with their two children.

2002

In June 2019, **Don Boshell** (M.Div., '02) retired from the United Methodist Church after serving 11 years in ministry. Don is married to Becky, and they have one daughter, Leah Taber.

Jeff (M.Div., '02) and **Anna Gissing** (M.T.S., '03) both accepted new positions. Jeff is the acquisitions director for Bibles at Tyndale Publishers and Anna became a senior acquisitions editor at Baker Academic. Jeff and Anna have two children and live in Wheaton, Illinois.

In March 2021, **Kevin Thompson** (M.Div., '02) released a new book titled, *Fearless Families: Building Brave Homes in an Uncertain World* (David C. Cook Publishing). He also accepted a new position as the married life pastor at Bayside Church. Kevin is married to Jenny, and they live in Roseville, California, with their two children.

Patricia Outlaw (D.Min., '02) and **Christson Adedoyin** (M.A.T.S., '21) were both contributors to the Barna research report, *Trends in the Black Church*.

2004

Dave Nelson (M.Div., '04) became the director of Baylor University Press in Jan. 2022. Dave is married to Dacia, and they have three children.

2005

In Nov. 2021, **JR Harris** (M.Div., '05) accepted a new position as deputy commandant with the Air Force Chaplain Corps College.

In July 2021, **Jeremy Maxfield** (M.T.S., '05) became the director of content at Mariners Church and the Rooted Network.

2006

Connie Happell (M.Div., '06) was called to serve as pastor of Edgewood Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Georgia. Connie is married to Eric, and they have two children.

In May 2021, **Joshua Knierim** (M.Div., '06) was called to be the pastor of The Church at Old Town in Helena, Alabama. Joshua is married to Jenn, and they have two children.



Keith Ray (M.Div., '06; D.Min., '19) became the senior pastor at Carrville Baptist Church in Tallassee, Alabama. Keith is married to Rebecca, and they have two sons.

2007

Gregory Smith (M.Div., '07) became the associate pastor at St. Mark UMC Northport in July 2019. Gregory is married to Helen, and they have one daughter, Megan.

Wayne Splawn (M.Div., '07; D.Min., '17) was called to be the senior minister of Mountain Brook Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Wayne is married to **Mary** (M.Div., '06), who also serves at Mountain Brook Baptist Church as the minister of connections.

2008

Nathan White (M.Div., '08) became an associate dean at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School in 2020. Nathan is married to Caroline, and they have three children. They attend Church of the Apostles in Columbia, South Carolina.

2009

Mary Moss (D.Min., '09) received the Chancellor's Legacy Award from Wayland Baptist Theological Seminary and published a new book, *Preach Moss: When She Heard the Call*. Mary is married to Carl, and she serves as pastor of St. Alma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Shawn Shannon (D.Min., '09) became the minister of spiritual formation at Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. Prior to her role at Tallowood Baptist, Shawn served as a college minister on university campuses for 40 years.

2010

Noel Forlini Burt (M.Div., '10) published a new book titled, *Encounters in the Dark: Identity Formation in the Jacob Story* (SBL Press). Noel is married to **Spike** (M.Div., '09).

Blake Dempsey (D.Min., '10) became the senior pastor of Brookwood Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Blake and his wife, Marisa, have three children.

James Drake (M.Div., '10) was appointed to serve on the Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council for the state of Florida. He was also selected for American Ninja Warrior (Season 14). James is married to Heidi, and they have four children.



2011

Aaron Ashlock (M.Div., '11) completed his Ph.D. in Christian Ethics at B. H. Carroll Theological Institute and is now serving as the senior pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Aubrey, Texas. Aaron is married to Diana, and they have one son, Baylor.

In Aug. 2021, **Ashley Chesnut** (M.Div., '11) published a book titled, *It's Not Just You: Freeing Women to Talk about Sexual Sin and Fight It Well* (B&H Books). Ashley serves as the associate young adult minister at The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama.

Hope Gray (M.T.S., '11) was selected for the 2021-2022 American Medical Informatics Association's (AMIA) Leadership and Education Award (LEAD) Fund Scholarship. Hope has one child and attends Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Jason McConnell (D.Min., '11) released a new book titled, *Beholding Beauty: Worshiping God through the Arts* (Wipf & Stock).

2012

Andrew Johnson (M.Div., '12) became the student pastor of First Baptist Church in Forney, Texas. Andrew is married to Marchelee, and they have three children.

2013

In May 2021, **Doug Barnwell** (M.Div., '13) became the discipleship pastor at Fellowship Bible Church in Jackson, Tennessee. Doug is married to Julie, and they have two daughters.

In Oct. 2021, **Josh Deeter** (M.Div., '13) became the lead pastor at First Church of God in Tallmadge, Ohio. Josh is married to Emily, and they have three children.

Christy (M.Div., '13) and **Cris** (M.Div., '18) **Harper** both accepted new roles. Christy became a campus minister at the North Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), and Cris became lead pastor at Bethel Community Church. They live in Edmonton, Canada, and have two children, Ruth and Gabe.

2014

Jason Cook (M.Div., '14) became the senior pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Roswell, Georgia, in April 2021. Jason is married to Courtney, and they have three children.

In Oct. 2021, **Clayton Hornback** (M.Div., '14) married **Sarah (Howard) Hornback** (M.A.T.S., '21). Clayton and Sarah live in Birmingham, Alabama.



Jon Meads (M.Div., '14) became the family minister at Hope Community Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in July 2021. Jon is married to Claire, and they have two children.

Chase McClain (M.Div., '14) became the senior pastor at Riverchase Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in July 2021. Chase is married to Alyxis, and they have two children.

James Sutton (M.Div., '14) accepted a new position as the director of SpeakFirst with Impact America. James is married to Marie, and they have one child.



Demetrea Williams (M.Div., '14) became board certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains. Demetrea serves as a clinical chaplain at Princeton Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama. She is married to **Matthew** (M.Div., '15).

2017

John Bacon (M.Div., '17) became the director of religious education at St. Matthew's Catholic Parish in July 2021. John is married to Lauren, and they live in Kalispell, Montana, with their four children.

2018

Brad Baxter (M.Div., '18) accepted a new job as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Loxley, Alabama. Brad is married to Krista.

In Feb. 2021, **Mike Perry** (M.Div., '18) became the pastor of New Covenant Presbyterian Church in Selma, Alabama. Mike is married to Melanie, and they have three children.

Jules (M.A.T.S., '18) and **Kyle Thompson** (M.Div., '19) both accepted new jobs with Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries in Greenwood, South Carolina. Kyle is the digital marketing specialist, and Jules is the director of volunteer services.

ALUMNI UPDATES

2019

Andrew (M.Div., '19) and **Anna Russell** (M.Div., '19) recently transitioned into new positions. Andrew became the assistant pastor for families and youth at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Anna became the events coordinator for Beeson Divinity School and was ordained as a deacon with the Anglican Church in North America.



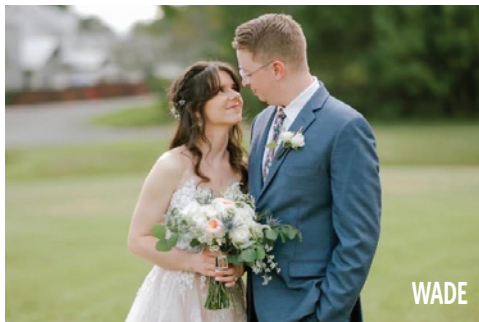
Zac Reno (D.Min., '19) became pastor of Enon Baptist Church in Morris, Alabama. Zac is married to Kimberly, and they have three children.

2020

In June 2021, **Aubrey Johnston** (M.Div., '20) began serving as the associate minister to students at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

James Spencer (M.Div., '20) became minister to youth and families at Lisbon Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Georgia, in March 2021. James is married to Elizabeth.

In October 2021, **Zach Wade** (M.Div., '20) married Lacy Smith in Springville, Alabama.



Amber Warren (M.Div., '20) accepted a new job as the general editor at YM360. Amber is married to **Tripp** (M.Div., '21).

2021

Treasure Colinger (M.A.T.S., '21) became a chaplain at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital. Treasure has three children: Kaitlyn, Christian and Caleb.

Abby Gatliff (M.Div., '21) became the assistant minister for student and family discipleship at South Highland Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. She is married to **Cort** (M.Div., '20), and they have two children.

Garrett Greer (M.Div., '21) married Gracie Groves in March 2021. Garrett also became the minister to students and groups at Cross Creek Church in Hoover, Alabama.

Ethan McVay (M.Div., '21) became resident to students and families at First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama, in Aug. 2021. Ethan is married to Caroline.

Jason Varnadore (M.Div., '21) recently began serving as pastor of St. David's Anglican Church in Cheraw, South Carolina. Jason is married to Jenna, and they have two children.

In Memoriam

Grace McWhorter (M.Div., '93) passed away on March 3, 2021.

Terry Beaird (M.Div., '97) passed away on Dec. 22, 2020.

Todd Evans (D.Min., '97) passed away on April 7, 2022.

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Baby Updates

2005

Laura (M.T.S., '05) and **David** (M.Div., '06) **Faulkner** celebrated the birth of their daughter, Cora Elizabeth, in Oct. 2020. David also became the rector at Saint Cyprian's Episcopal Church and School in Lufkin, Texas in Feb. 2022. **1**

2006

In Feb. 2019, **Andrea Woolley** (M.Div., '06) and her husband, Matthew Dyer, celebrated the birth of their daughter, Lillian. Andrea serves as the minister of spiritual formation, families and communities at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

2009

Chase (M.Div., '09) and Amy **Kuhn** celebrated the birth of their fourth child, Marigold, in 2020.

2010

Timmy Ray (M.A.T.S., '10) and his wife, Maggie Bea, celebrated the birth of their fourth child, Samuel Beeson Ray, in Oct. 2021. Timmy serves as the worship pastor of Woodward Ave Baptist Church in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. **2**

2012

Rebecca Poe Hays (M.Div., '12) and **Joshua Hays** (M.Div., '12) celebrated the birth of their daughter, Mary Brandon, in 2019. Rebecca is an assistant professor of Christian Scriptures at Baylor University, and Joshua serves as the associate pastor of discipleship at First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas.

2013

Austin (M.Div., '13) and Christine **Baker** celebrated the birth of their third child, Aiden, in Oct. 2021. Austin became the lead pastor of Immanuel Church in Birmingham, Alabama in Feb. 2022. **3**

2014

Hunter (M.Div., '14) and Elizabeth **Twitty** celebrated the birth of their third child, William, in Sept. 2021. Hunter serves as the assistant pastor at Third Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. **4**

Joseph (M.Div., '14) and Piper **Weaver** celebrated the birth of their second daughter,

Naomi, in Aug. 2020. Naomi was also welcomed by her older sister, Eliza.

2015

Ryan (M.Div., '15) and Aubrey **Martin** celebrated the birth of their second child, Hezekiah, in Aug. 2020. Hezekiah has one older brother, Micah.

2016

Griffin Gullede (M.Div., '16) and his wife, Rachel, celebrated the birth of their daughter, Rosemary, in June 2021. Griffin became the pastor of Madison Baptist Church in Madison, Georgia, and received the John Leland Religious Liberty Award for his advocacy for the Uyghur people.

Matthew (M.Div., '16) and Sarah **Neely** welcomed the birth of their daughter, Marigold Eleanor Neely, on Feb. 7, 2021, and she went to be with Jesus on Aug. 22, 2021.

2017

Blake Harris (M.Div., '17) and his wife, Danielle, celebrated the birth of their son, Shephard, in Feb. 2021. Blake serves as the assistant pastor at Altadena Valley Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. ⁵

Mark (M.Div., '17) and Abby **Jessup** celebrated the birth of their second child, Piper. Mark serves as the pastor of Knollwood Presbyterian Church in Sylacauga, Alabama. ⁶

Palmer (M.Div., '17) and Hayley **Kennedy** celebrated the birth of their son, Patrick, in Feb. 2021. Palmer also accepted a new position as head chaplain and religion department chair at Porter-Gaud School in Charleston, South Carolina.

2018

Jacob (M.Div., '18) and Lindsey **Catlett** celebrated the birth of their daughter, Catherine, in Oct. 2021. They also have one son, Rodney. ⁷

Taylor (M.Div., '18) and Sydni **Colton** celebrated the birth of their first child, Titus, in Jan. 2020.

Julie (M.Div., '18) and **Connor** (M.Div., '19) **Donavan** celebrated the birth of their second child, Abigail, in Aug. 2021. Connor also became the pastor of Hollinger's Island Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama.

Kadie (M.Div., '18) and **Ethan** (M.Div., '18) **Smith** celebrated the birth of their first child, Adelaide Hodges, in Sept. 2021. ⁸

2019

Bryan (M.Div., '19) and Kayli **Alderman** celebrated the birth of their second child, Louie, in April 2021. The Aldermans also have one son, Eli, and live in Chelsea, Alabama, where Bryan is the serve pastor at Liberty Baptist Church. ⁹

Taylor (M.Div., '19) and Ashley **Brazil** celebrated the birth of their son, David, in June 2021. ¹⁰

2020

Matt Allison (M.Div., '20) and his wife, Elizabeth, celebrated the birth of their first child, Asher, in July 2021. ¹¹

Kyle (M.Div., '20) and Caroline **Sullivan** celebrated the birth of their second child, John Austin, in Dec. 2021. Their firstborn, Asher, was born in 2020. ¹²

Samantha (M.Div., '20) and Dustin **Wiley** celebrated the birth of their third child, Serenity, in Sept. 2021. ¹³

2021

Ben (M.Div., '21) and Janie **Williams** celebrated the birth of their daughter, Olive, in March 2021. Ben also became the curate for church planting at All Saints Anglican Church in Jackson, Tennessee. Ben and Janie have five children. ¹⁴



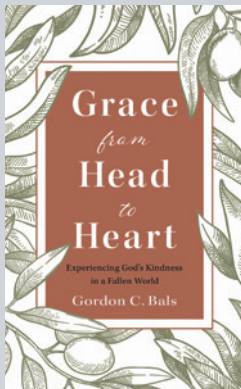


Samford University

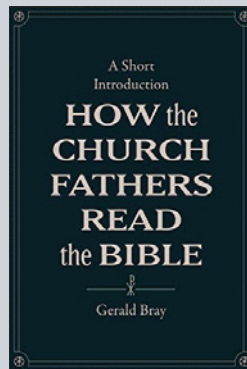
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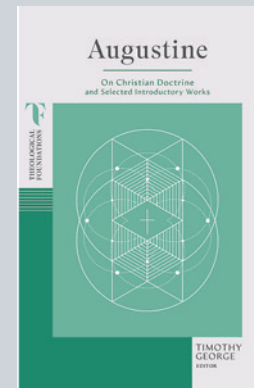
FACULTY **BOOKSHELF** 2021-22



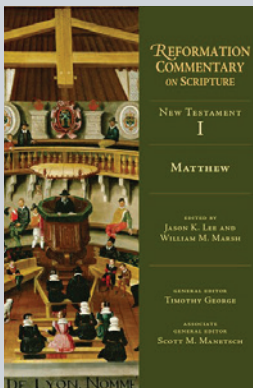
Grace from Head to Heart: Experiencing God's Kindness in a Fallen World
Gordon C. Bals
(Daymark Press, January 2022)



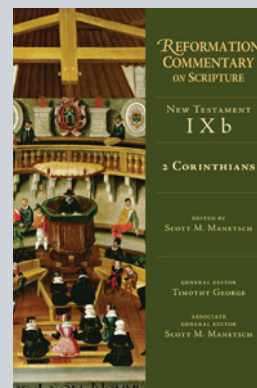
A Short Introduction: How the Church Fathers Read the Bible
Gerald Bray
(Lexham Press, April 2022)



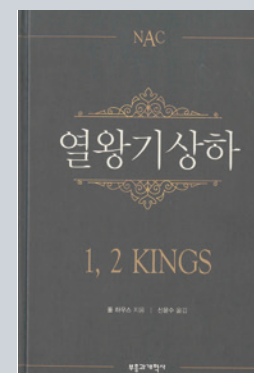
Augustine: On Christian Doctrine and Selected Introductory Works
Timothy George
(B&H Publishing, September 2022)



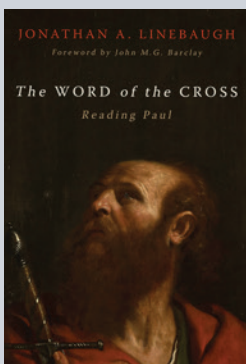
Matthew (Reformation Commentary of Scripture)
Timothy George, General Editor
(IVP Academic, November 2021)



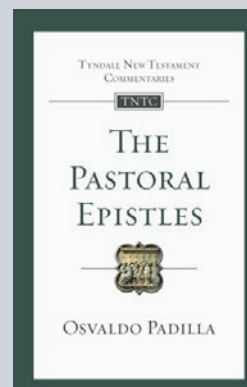
2 Corinthians (Reformation Commentary of Scripture)
Timothy George, General Editor
(IVP Academic, May 2022)



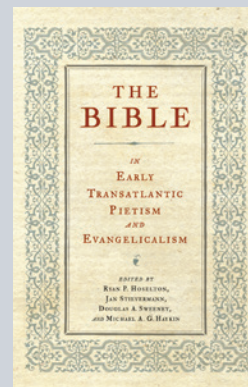
1, 2 Kings (Korean Translation) (The New American Commentary)
Paul House
(B&H Publishing, 2021)



The Word of the Cross: Reading Paul
Jonathan Linebaugh
(Eerdmans, March 2022)



The Pastoral Epistles (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)
Osvaldo Padilla
(IVP Academic, September 2022)



The Bible in Early Transatlantic Pietism and Evangelicalism
Douglas A. Sweeney, Co-editor
(Penn State University Press, August 2022)