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Essays on Love

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Editorial

From the exhortation in the Shema to love the Lord fully with heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:4) to Jesus's call to his disciples to not only love the Lord but to love their neighbors as themselves (Matt 22:39), the command to love permeates Scripture. In fact, throughout history the church has regarded love as the cardinal virtue. Indeed, Jesus goes on to say that "all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (22:40). If love is so central to Christ's mission in the world—and therefore the church's mission—how is this virtue cultivated and highlighted in our current ecclesial structures and activities?

This current volume of the *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* seeks to explore the many ways in which the virtue of love can impact our hearts, our relationships, and our congregations. Robert S. Kinney concedes in his article, "New Testament conceptions of love differ from their classical background which differ from Patristic and medieval and more modern ideas—yet there are remarkable similarities throughout." What consistent truths about the virtue of love can inform our interactions with one another, our theology regarding worship, and our relationships across racial boundaries and polarizing divides?

As usual, the articles in the *BET* originated as papers presented at the Center for Pastor Theologians' annual Fellowship Symposia. The 2021 Symposia were funded by a generous grant from the Templeton Foundation and focused on the virtue of love as part of a three-year cycle in which we are studying virtue formation at the congregational level. We are grateful to the various scholars who served as guest consultants: David Wang, Associate Professor of Psychology at Biola University; Mark McMinn, Professor of Psychology, George Fox University; Richard Beck, Professor and Department Chair of Psychology, Abilene Christian University.

In this volume, the conversation about the virtue of love begins with the Sunday morning service itself. Recognizing the frequent dichotomy set up between the heart and the mind in the context of those services, Gerald Hiestand urges pastors to incorporate a balance between liturgy, cognition, and "spiritual/romantic experience" in order to facilitate the fullness of Christian growth in their congregations. Moving to issues of racial conflict,

Robert S. Kinney explores historical conceptions of love to conclude that a "biblical understanding of friendship, expressed in the Christian virtue of love, is essential to improving discussions of race and ethnicity in this complex moment of our history." Focusing on the struggles pastors face shepherding their flocks in "the Age of Anger," Joel D. Lawrence asserts that helping congregations reshape their common objects of love will in turn reshape their communities to be more effective witnesses to peace. Paul J. Morrison continues the discussion around issues of racial injustice and conflict, arguing that a transformation of the heart through the employment of virtue is the best answer for "lasting societal reformation." Joshua Philpot examines the Old Testament background of the Greatest Commandment to assert that "the injunction of love for God and neighbor is the guiding principle" around which a healthy church is built, helpfully reminding us that "love is a principle of action." Finally, in highlighting the legacy of the Particular Baptist pastor theologian Andrew Fuller, Paul Sanchez points the reader towards Fuller's view of love as the essential virtue for pastoral ministry, arguing that the training of pastors should give more attention to the formation of love as a virtue.

The apostle Paul tells us that "these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). The promise we have is that we will participate in the love of God for all eternity. The heart of the church's mission is to be a community of love, a people whose life together is rooted in love of God and neighbor. In a conflicted world, this mission is vital. We must grow in Spirit-filled love that we might witness to the nature of the Triune God. These articles offer insightful perspectives on how the virtue of love can form the church and focus its mission in the world.

Dr. Joel D. Lawrence
Executive Director
The Center for Pastor Theologians

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GETTING MY PEOPLE TO CHURCH ON TIME: REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORIC LITURGY, EXPERIENTIAL WORSHIP, AND "SPIRITUAL ROMANCE"

GERALD L. HIESTAND[1]

> "What hearts, what number of tongues, shall affirm that they are sufficient to render thanks to Him…that by His birth and suffering for us in the flesh, which He assumed, we might know how much God valued man, and that by that unique sacrifice we might be purified from all our sins, and that, love being shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit, we might, having surmounted all difficulties, come into eternal rest, and the ineffable sweetness of the contemplation of Himself?"
>
> Augustine, *City of God*, 7.31

> "The secret to freedom from enslaving patterns of sin is worship. You need worship. You need great worship. You need weeping worship. You need glorious worship. You need to sense God's greatness and to be moved by it—moved to tears and moved to laughter—moved by who God is and what he has done for you. And this needs to be happening all the time."
>
> Tim Keller

On a typical Sunday morning (pre COVID-19) only about 50 percent of our congregation is in the sanctuary when the service starts. We're up to 80 percent by the time we get to the third song, and about 90 percent have filtered in by the time we get to the announcements immediately following the worship set; the final 10 percent arrive in time for the offertory (just prior to the sermon). The tardiness is sufficiently pronounced that our ushers don't do the headcount until just before the sermon starts. I'm told by my pastoral ministry colleagues that this pattern is similar in their churches.

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[1] Gerald Hiestand is the Senior Pastor at Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, Illinois and serves as the Board Chair of the Center for Pastor Theologians.

Our congregation's lack of attention to punctuality has troubled me. Of course, half of our congregation consists of folks who make it to the service on time because that's the proper thing to do (enneagram 1's, 2's and 6's, no doubt). But we have just as many good, mature folks who simply don't feel especially motivated to be in the pew when the call to worship is given.

I've been asking myself why. It's not because our tardy folks are lazy or love God less. And many of them have little kids, which certainly complicates punctuality. But when you peel back all the layers, the bottom line is that many in our congregation don't feel like they are missing out on much when they arrive late to church. Truthfully, I don't care too much about punctuality. But I do care that so many people in our church seem content to miss out on our time of corporate worship.[2]

Now here's my general pastoral rule: if a small percentage of one's congregation is dropping the ball in some way, that's probably on them. But if half of one's congregation is missing the mark, that might be on you. So rather than chiding and chastising and exhorting our congregation about the godliness of punctuality, I've come up with three strategies that I think we need to do if we want to give our people a better reason to get to church on time: 1) improve our liturgical "flow," 2) balance our left brain "cognitive" view of discipleship with a right brain "experiential" view of discipleship, and 3) increase the "spiritual romance" in our worship leading.

These strategies are particular to my context as pastor of Calvary Memorial Church, a 100-year-old, conservative(ish) independent, non-Pentecostal, and (historically, though no longer meaningfully) dispensational congregation located in Oak Park, Illinois. An additional word of context will be helpful: this essay began as a personal reflection paper on how to improve the spiritual vitality of Calvary's worshiping life, particularly in light of our church's search for a new worship pastor—hence the regular references to Calvary throughout. The jury is out on how effective these strategies will be in shoring up our tardiness. But regardless of the fruit they will bear regarding punctuality, I'm persuaded they are the right way forward for Christian formation. We begin with the first strategy—improving our liturgical flow.

I. IMPROVE OUR LITURGICAL FLOW

Calvary is rooted in the Bible church tradition, which is itself rooted (at least in part) in the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening (1790–1840's). In particular, the Bible churches followed the liturgical structure of the Second Great awakening revivals. The revivals were essentially "two-act" evangelistic rallies. In the first act, corporate singing was used to stir the affections of the people. The times of worship were emotive, rousing, and high impact for those attending. The aim of the singing was to get the attenders spiritually ready to hear and respond to the gospel presentation.

[2] For the purposes of this essay, I am using the term "worship" as shorthand to denote the portion of the Sunday service prior to the sermon and communion—most typically involving corporate singing.

In the second act, the evangelist (typically a very gifted speaker) would preach the gospel and give the altar call.

The revivals of the Second Great Awakening took place just prior to the rise of European theological liberalism in the mid-nineteenth century. As Europe's theological liberalism crashed upon North American shores, the historical mainline traditions in North America (such as the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Episcopalians) began to fracture.[3] In many instances, new "conservative" versions of the mainline traditions were formed. But many local congregations rejected "higher up" ecclesiastical control altogether. These congregations reorganized as independent "Bible" churches, where the focus of ecclesiastical authority was on the Bible, rather than any denominational or episcopal structure. Non-denominationalism was born.

Freedom from ecclesiastical authority also meant freedom to rethink the liturgical structure of Sunday worship. The success of the revivals during the not-so-distant Second Great Awakening offered the Bible churches what seemed to be a better liturgical model than the historical liturgies of the mainline traditions. The Second Great Awakening's emphasis on singing as preparation for preaching, and the Bible church's freedom from historically rooted liturgical structure, resulted in a reframing of the Sunday liturgy along the lines of the Second Great Awakening revivals. The Bible church liturgy, like the early nineteenth-century revivals, consisted of two main "acts"— worship songs in the first half of the service and preaching during the second. For the independent Bible churches, traditional liturgical elements such as corporate confession, prewritten prayers, weekly communion, liturgical vestments, creeds, etc., were all viewed as barnacles of a dead past, merely inauthentic ways of enabling spiritually dead (or nearly dead) congregants to shuffle along spiritually, while yet still feeling religious. Traditional liturgy was a living example of 2 Timothy 3:5; it "had the form of godliness but denied its power."

The net effect of this historical development is that the Bible church tradition left traditional liturgy far behind. This, I believe, has been a mistake. The revivals of the Second Great Awakening were genuinely moving and impacting. But I'm not convinced the "two-act" liturgy of the Second Great Awakening has been—in the long run—a liturgical success for the non-denominational Bible church. My critique is twofold.

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[3] The egalitarian, anti-elitist impulse of post-revolution American evangelicalism also undercut the foundations of traditional ecclesiastical structures. The American Revolution gave rise to a democratic impulse all across the religious landscape. No longer (it was asserted) did the church need learned clergy and scholars to serve their congregations in a priestly role; every person was competent to be his own man or woman before God. This egalitarian spirit helped set the stage for the subsequent rise of non-denominational churches, which rejected higher-up ecclesiastical authority, as well as the rise of "toothless" denominations that functioned as little more than voluntary associations of like-minded independent churches. For more on the democratization of American Christianity, see Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), especially pp. 9–16.

First, and perhaps most relevant to congregational punctuality, a "two-act" liturgy lacks any sense of liturgical *narrative*. In more historic liturgies, a worship service is not conceived of as a preaching event preceded by a worship pep rally (to put it crassly). Historic liturgy contains a narrative structure—from the call to worship, to the confession of sins, to the assurance of forgiveness, to the preaching of the word, to the Lord's table, to the benediction and the sending. The entire service unfolds like the plot of a book or movie. Things happen in a particular order and build off what comes before on the way to a narrative climax at the end of the service. This liturgical narrative is important, I think, for giving people some sense of a starting point.

When we enter into a narrative (say, in a book or a movie) we make a point of beginning at the beginning. There's a reason we don't (cavalierly) arrive twenty minutes late to a movie, or casually start a novel in the middle of the third chapter. We make a point of getting to a movie on time (even if we have kids) because we don't want to miss the important plot elements that are necessary for making sense of the story to come. In the same way, a historical liturgical flow tells a story that starts at the beginning of the service, climaxes toward the end of the service, and ends with a "to be continued" as the people of God are sent out on mission into the world. Arriving during the "assurance of forgiveness" after missing the confession of sins *feels* like one has arrived late.

But in the liturgical "flow" of the Second Great Awakening, there is no clear sense of beginning, and no real sense of being late. There are only two elements to the Sunday liturgy: the opening worship set, followed by the sermon. The first "act" is pretty much the same all throughout. As a consequence, it doesn't feel like one has missed any important plot elements when one arrives late. Whether you come into the service during the first, second, or third song doesn't really make a big difference (especially if you don't care much for singing). You can make sense of the third song, regardless of whether you were there for the first two. It's all just more of the same.[4]

As Calvary moves forward, we need to continue improving the narrative arc to our Sunday service. Over the past few years, we've moved away from "two-act" worship, but there is still room to deepen our liturgical narrative by including weekly communion and more frequent use of the creeds. Additionally, we can strengthen our existing liturgical arc by making more explicit the narrative sequence of our worship—a sequence that moves us from where we are at the beginning of the service, all the way to encountering Jesus at the climactic act of the drama. Everything that happens in

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[4] I am here perhaps being too dismissive of "two-act" revivalist worship. The worship experiences of the Second Great Awakening were enormously impacting, and everyone who has ever attended an evangelical youth conference or camp can attest to the power and authentic value of the "two-act" liturgy. My critique is not that such worship experiences are without value, but that they have been divorced from the narrative flow of a more historically grounded liturgy. As an occasional revival service, they are compelling; as a steady diet they are impoverishing.

each moment of the service should be viewed by our congregation (not just the worship team and ministry staff) as part of a logical narrative chain, where each link is necessary for understanding the preceding and following.

The second reason for moving Calvary toward a more historical liturgy is to help us tap into the theological wealth and experience of the great tradition. (My nudging toward liturgy is not merely a trick to get our folks to church on time.) The anti-liturgical liturgy of the non-denominational tradition has tended to sever non-denominational churches from their historical place within the Great Tradition. I'm against dead traditional liturgical practices as much as any other evangelical pastor; but I don't think traditional liturgical practices need to be dead. There is a wealth of theological and practical richness in the great tradition of catholic Christianity (to include Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy). This is especially true as it relates to anthropology, sexuality, soteriology, and our capacity to read and understand the Bible we evangelicals (so rightly) prioritize.

Traditional liturgy helps remind contemporary Christians that they are indeed part of the broader stream of church history—that the theological wisdom and faithful obedience of the past is *our* history. Just as we look to contemporary evangelical scholars and commentators to help us make biblical and theological sense of the world and our lives, so too we need to look to the great scholars and commentators of the past whose writings and wisdom have endured the test of time. There is no golden age of the church, no infallible past. But time has a way of winnowing the wheat from the chaff. The voices of St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, the Cappadocian fathers, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Julian of Norwich, Luther, and Calvin (and beyond) are the voices we do well to listen to today. Traditional liturgy helps us avoid the hubris of thinking we have no need for the church universal, or that only the evangelical tradition has something to offer evangelical churches. It pushes back against the mistaken idea that we can go it alone with just us and our Bibles. Traditional liturgy helps us remember that we belong to a deep and mighty current—a great river that enfolds the whole world, that transcends culture, language, time, and any one particular church tradition. Liturgy helps neutralize anglo-American exceptionalism and gives us a sense of place and belonging within the "great cloud of witnesses" that surrounds the throne of Jesus.

Calvary needs to continue to prioritize and celebrate the "great tradition" of Christianity—from the patristics to the medievals to the reformers on to the present day. We need to affirm, through our liturgy, that Calvary needs more than Calvary to read the Bible wisely. Not because the *Bible* is insufficient as a text, but because we are insufficient as solo readers. We need the wise and culturally diverse voices of the past to help us read our Bible and to help us understand how to apply it wisely in today's complex world. This is why I have pushed us (gently) in a "lite" Anglican direction over the past year. Anglicanism in north America (as distinct from Episcopalianism) is thoroughly evangelical in doctrine and has a rich tradition of historically rooted liturgy. It, more so than the other Protestant traditions, reaches back into the patristic age and is the most 'catholic' of the Protestant traditions.

I respect the other Protestant traditions but believe that Anglicanism has the most theological depth and historical/global breadth. Calvary is not an Anglican congregation, nor am I trying to turn us into one. But insofar as I believe it is in our best interest to connect with a tradition beyond our own, I have been inviting us to take our cues from the Anglican liturgical tradition.

But as any student of history will tell you, historically rooted liturgy is not a cure-all. The death of the mainline churches in North America is proof of that, which leads to a second strategy that I think Calvary needs to embrace in order to better minister to our congregation in corporate worship: a more right-brained experiential approach to discipleship.

II. A RIGHT-BRAIN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO DISCIPLESHIP

Growing up in the non-Pentecostal Bible Church tradition, my church's primary approach to discipleship was cognitive. Christian maturity was synonymous with biblical expertise (not doctrinal or theological expertise, so much, as biblical expertise).[5] The more likely you were to win at Bible trivia, the more likely you were to be spiritually mature. Underlining, highlighting, notes in the margins—generally, the more scribbles in your Bible, the godlier you were. There was more to Christian maturity, of course, than simply being smart about the Bible. Nevertheless, all the mature people in my church were smart about Bible. I don't recall having a category for a mature Christian who had only a mediocre understanding of the Bible. (To quote Vizzini from *The Princess Bride*: "Inconceivable!")

This cognitive view of discipleship undergirded our view of corporate singing. Congregational singing was important and useful, but useful primarily insofar as it was either a teaching device, or preparation for the sermon (or both). In the first instance, singing truths about God helped us learn about God better. Singing wasn't actually about the experience of singing, as much as it was about helping the congregation learn biblical and doctrinal truth via song (since every schoolteacher knows that things are more easily remembered when put to song). This was an essentially cognitive view of corporate worship; we sang to learn.

In the second instance, our church adopted the approach to corporate singing bequeathed to us by the Second Great Awakening. Like our Second Great Awakening heritage, we sang to "prepare our hearts for the preaching of God's Word"; it was warm-up for the sermon. The sermon, not the warm-up singing, was the main vehicle of discipleship. Thus, our singing functioned like a (at times somewhat under-inspired) pep rally prior to a

[5] "Biblical expertise" is knowledge of the content of the Bible (e.g., the names of the twelve disciples, the order of the Jewish Kings, etc.). "Doctrinal expertise" is knowledge of the core teachings of the Christian faith (e.g., the deity of Christ, the omniscience of God, etc.). "Theological expertise" is the capacity to understand how biblical and doctrinal knowledge should be applied to contemporary life (e.g., addressing sexual ethics, navigating American politics, human cloning, etc.)

football game. We did it as part of our revivalist heritage and likewise out of devotion to the Bible's teaching (which told us that churches should "sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs"). But I don't recall that many of us viewed singing as absolutely essential to Christian discipleship; certainly not essential like the sermon was essential.

Our cognitive view of discipleship, combined with our pep rally view of singing, subtly caused us (or at least me) to view corporate singing as both "emotional" and "unnecessary." It was "emotional" insofar as the main point of singing was to prepare us emotionally for the preaching. And it was "unnecessary" in that the main point of the service was the sermon. You really only needed to sing if you needed preparation. If you weren't much given to emotions or pep rallies, or if the worship wasn't very inspiring, then you could just as easily take it or leave it. Subtly (and ironically) emotional pep rally worship—when paired with a cognitive view of discipleship—communicated that emotions were not really a necessary part of Christian maturity. To put it crassly (and perhaps a bit ungenerously), emotions and singing were milk for the immature who still needed a bit of help preparing for the meat of the sermon.

But the mistake in all of this was the idea that Christian maturity is synonymous with Bible knowledge (or doctrinal or theological knowledge).[6] But this is only half the story. Jesus told us that we must love God with all of our minds, *and* all of our hearts.[7] Authentic Christianity involves both a cognitive knowledge *about* Christ, as well as an experiential knowledge *of* Christ. The New Testament's use of marriage as a metaphor for our relationship with Jesus is instructive here (Ephesians 5:21–32, etc.). Christianity includes both cognitive and experiential knowledge of Jesus, just as a healthy marriage includes both cognitive and experiential knowledge of one's spouse. On the cognitive side, a robust marriage involves knowing basic facts about one's spouse—their name, their family history, their hobbies, their likes and dislikes, etc. Spending the night with a person about

[6] This is James K. A. Smith's argument in *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009). Smith's target is Protestant Christianity, which he claims has been unduly influenced by an intellectual (disembodied) anthropology that can be traced from Plato to Descartes, to Kant, to the present. According to Smith, Protestant Christianity has been too influenced by a rationalist, cognitive anthropology, that has made the Protestant worship service a "heady affair fixated on 'messages' that disseminate Christian ideas and abstract values (easily summarized by PowerPoint slides). The result is a talking-head version of Christianity that is fixated on doctrine and ideas…" *Desiring the Kingdom*, 42. Smith goes on to argue that what we love is more basic to who we are as human beings than what we know. This is a false alternative, in my mind. But I believe Smith is right to critique the lopsidedness of cognitive discipleship.

[7] Were this a paper on discipleship, I would include "strength" as a third major category of discipleship (following the Great Commandment's call to love God with heart, mind, and strength). A focus on "strength" corresponds to spiritual pragmatism—to actions and doing. We are to act out the Christian life, not just believe it and love it. But I leave spiritual pragmatism aside here because our focus is on the worship service. It seems to me that the function of liturgy is to strengthen the *heart* and *mind*, so that we are better prepared for *action* as we are sent out on mission The worship service is not a moment of Christian pragmatism but rather enables it.

whom you know nothing (not even his or her name) is called a one-night stand, not a marriage; you might have loved the experience, but you can't say you're in love with the person. On the other hand, a marriage involves more than simply knowing facts about one's spouse. A loving husband and wife want to do more than know information about each other. They want to *experience* each other. They want to embrace, to touch, to stare into each other's eyes. They want to feel something *about* each other that corresponds to the feeling they have *of* each other. They desire a union of their persons mediated through the union of their bodies—what John Paul II insightfully refers to as the "gift of self."[8]

In the same way, cognitive knowledge *about* God, and experiential knowledge *of* God, are meant to work together toward the common goal of *loving* God.[9] Some of us are more naturally emotive, and we are wired to connect with God through our hearts. And others of us are more naturally cognitive and are more wired to connect with God through our minds. Both are needed, regardless of our natural wiring. Experiential knowledge of God without a cognitive knowledge of God, is like a body without a skeleton—all mushy and unstable. But a cognitive knowledge of God without an experiential knowledge of God is like a skeleton with no body—all rigid and lifeless. A robust view of Christian discipleship requires both. Likewise, a congregation needs both. Too many churches settle for one emphasis or the other. A worship service that prioritizes cognitive preaching as the primary event of the morning impoverishes those in the congregation who are wired up to connect with God via experiential means. Likewise, a worship service that exclusively focuses on experience will impoverish those in the congregation who are wired up to connect with God through cognitive means. And regardless of our proclivity, we all need both.[10] Generally, when a church impoverishes a portion of its congregation, those so impoverished tend to find their way to other churches that more

[8] John Paul II, *Male and Female He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 300.

[9] I suppose if one had to choose between cognition and experience, my money would be on experience. St Irenaeus writes, "It is therefore better…that one should have no knowledge whatever of any one reason why a single thing in creation has been made, but should believe in God, and continue in His love, than that, puffed up through knowledge…he should fall away from that love which is the life of man," *Against Heresies*, 2.26.1. And as St. Paul reminds the Corinthians (and us) in 1 Cor 8:2–3, cognitive knowledge can get in the way of love. "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; But if anyone loves God, he is known by God."

[10] Christian psychologist Curt Thompson argues that an integrated brain is essential to spiritual maturity. As Thompson (and all of neuroscience) shows, the left hemisphere of the brain enables logical thought, cognition, and the ability to process abstract ideas; the right hemisphere of the brain enables us to respond intuitively, emotionally, and experientially. The left hemisphere enables us to know about a person; the right hemisphere enables us to fall in love with that person. Human beings thrive when we live integrated lives—with both hemispheres of the brain working together to help us navigate the world. For more on the right brain/left brain connection, see Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices that Can Transform Your Life* (Carol Stream, IL.: Tyndale, 2010).

naturally "speak their language," until eventually a congregation becomes mono-chromatic in its approach to discipleship.

Like most churches in the Bible church tradition, Calvary has operated over (at least) the last decade with a primarily cognitive view of discipleship; we do not fluently speak the language of experience. This is not to say that we have entirely discounted experience. But we have certainly subordinated experience to learning about the Bible and doctrine (and theology). I am aware of many people who attend Calvary because of the preaching. But I'm not aware of anyone who attends Calvary because of the corporate worship/singing. Again, not that our worship is always sub-par. Occasionally it is moving. But *experiencing* God is not the focus of our Sunday service, nor even the primary focus of our corporate singing. The long-term effect of this lopsidedness is that we have gradually become a congregation full of people who approach God primarily through cognition. "Experiential" Christians have mostly wandered to other congregations. This is not necessarily because they are immature in their faith, but rather because we have not offered them an experiential way to connect with God that is authentic to who they are.

Developing an experiential view of discipleship in our corporate worship will involve at least two moves. First, we will need to put as much effort/resources into our corporate singing as we do into our corporate preaching. Our elder priorities, staffing priorities, budget, resource allocation, and volunteer energy all need to reflect a view of discipleship that respects experience as much as cognition.

Second, we need a worship pastor who embodies (who lives and breathes) an experiential view of discipleship. I am what I am as a preacher, because I am what I am as a person; I can flex a bit to one side or the other, but I can't be something I'm not. The same is true for a worship pastor. We need a worship pastor whose primary approach to discipleship is experiential, even while they genuinely appreciate the cognitive/mind emphasis brought through the sermons. Our preaching is primarily cognitive. I make no apologies there. I believe preaching *should* be primarily cognitive.[11] But when the preaching leadership is primarily cognitive, the worship leadership should be primarily experiential. The combination of experiential worship and cognitive preaching helps provide a well-rounded approach to discipleship.

[11] I think the leading category for preaching should be cognitive. One might think this goes without saying, but not all preaching is cognitive. In the same way that cognitive churches reduce singing to a cognitive moment, experiential churches reduce preaching to an experiential moment. In both instances, the strength of the other side is lost. It seems to me there are three main types of preaching: cognitive, experiential, and pragmatic. In experiential preaching, the preacher is so full of energy and charisma that the event of preaching is just that—an event. People attend the service to experience the preaching, not necessarily to learn from it. In pragmatic preaching, the preacher does not teach the Bible or doctrine or theology, so much as he provides practical advice on how to live into a particular way of life. Very often it seems that a preacher will be strong in two categories, but not all three. A megachurch where I pastored had experiential worship and experiential/pragmatic preaching.

But I anticipate a counter. Suppose (you might say) that rather what's needed is an equal measure of both cognition and experience in both worship and preaching. Instead of putting all the experiential eggs in the singing basket and all the cognitive eggs in the preaching basket, why not do an equal mix in both? My rejoinder is twofold: First, certainly there should be a mix of both experience and cognition in both singing and preaching. A purely non-cognitive song would be…well, humming. And a purely cognitive sermon would be completely inaccessible. I am not arguing for a complete bifurcation but rather an appropriate distribution of emphasis, given the aim of each liturgical moment. Singing should lean strongly toward experience, rather than cognition, while yet honoring cognition. And preaching should lean strongly toward cognition while yet honoring the importance of experience. Perhaps a two-thirds versus one-third split is the best division, respectively. Second, studies have shown that too much experiential emphasis in public speaking actually diminishes the listener's capacity to follow the content of the speech. A study conducted by Cambridge University professor Jochen Menges demonstrated that strongly charismatic speakers, while stirring up strong inward emotions in their listeners, at the same time, tend to cause their listeners to suppress the outward show of those emotions. This emotional suppression "absorbs mental resources, deteriorates cognitive performance, and impairs memory."[12] Menges goes on to point out that the listeners of charismatic speakers, while *feeling* they have deeply absorbed the content of the speech, actually score lower on post-speech comprehension testing, than do the audiences of less charismatic speakers.[13] The point of all of this is that too much "experience" and charisma in a sermon actually works against the aim of the sermon, which is to communicate the cognitive information necessary for loving God. In the same way, too much cognition in a song works against the aim of the song, which is to help the singer emotionally encounter Jesus. Both cognition and experience are needed, but each has its appropriate liturgical place.

Which leads to my third strategy. In order to foster and nurture a more well-rounded "experiential" approach to discipleship, we will need to increase the "spiritual romance" factor in our corporate worship.

[12] Jochen I. Menges, Martin Kilduff, Sarah Kern, and Heike Bruch, "The awestruck effect: Followers suppress emotion expression in response to charismatic but not individually considerate leadership," in *The Leadership Quarterly* 26 (2015), 627–41. See also Gross, J.J. "Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences" in *Psychophysiology* 39 (2002), 281–291.

[13] See Menges' TED talk, "Awestruck: Surprising Facts about Why We Fall for Charismatic Leaders", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpCnR7BOS0I, accessed on May 13, 2020.

III. INCREASE THE "SPIRITUAL ROMANCE" IN OUR WORSHIP LEADING

Growing up in the Bible church tradition, I recall our times of corporate worship being fine, but not inspiring. The first church where I pastored was much the same. But then I took a job at a large church in the Chicago suburbs. The church had less of a cognitive view of discipleship and more of an experiential view. Even the preaching was primarily experiential. This translated into how the worship service was conducted. The singing was passionate and expressive, and the worship was much more central to the Sunday service. Initially, I loved the worship. It was a welcome and life-giving change from the half-hearted pep rally approach to worship to which I had been accustomed; this was full-throated pep rally worship! But after a while I began to feel like I couldn't keep up with the energy of the worship service. The young worship leader would begin the service by enthusiastically telling us he was "so excited" to be with us; how he was "so pumped up and ready to worship!"; how he was "so on fire and ready to praise the Lord!" and how he hoped we were too. We cheered to assure him of our readiness to worship. All this said over the thumping drums and driving guitar.

There was a lot of energy. But I eventually arrived at a season in my life when I couldn't match it. Looking back, it's hard to know exactly why. No doubt some of it was personal. No doubt some of it was because I was getting older. But I also think I began to feel somewhat spiritually manipulated. I recall speaking with a friend who served on the worship staff. He told me that the stated goal of the worship team each Sunday was to "get the congregation to a place where everyone had their hands raised, eyes closed, and brow furrowed." That seemed about right, from my experience. As though the goal for every service was to get each congregant to a place of spiritual ecstasy. I don't believe the worship pastor had ill motives or manipulative intentions. Just a lot of youthful energy and passion. But all the same, the more I felt like I was expected to generate feelings of excitement and spiritual intensity, the more I felt myself closing down.

Eventually I transitioned out of the church and ended up at Calvary—back into the Bible church tradition. After ten years in a megachurch, it was a relief to step away from the expectations of the megachurch worship culture. But then fast forward ten years to the present. I find myself again longing for a meaningful connection with God during worship. The Bible church tradition is historically weak on experience; the megachurch tradition overdoses on it. How does one stay in the center of the road, without falling into the ditch on either side?

It strikes me that a helpful way forward is to consider the New Testament's typological connection between earthly marriage and heavenly marriage.[14] Understanding the connection helps provide a framework for

[14] This typological reading of marriage is as old as the Church. We see it in Ephesians 5:21–32; it is carried forward from there on into the Christian tradition. See *2 Clement* 14:2; Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, I.60; Thomas, *Summa* III.42.1; Calvin,

bringing together both head and heart in a sustainable way. My thesis in this final section, is that what romance is to sex, worship is to communion/union. I begin with a lengthy (but I think relevant) primer on romance and sex. Bear with me.

A. A Primer on Romance and Sex

At a basic level, romance is a tool of persuasion wielded by the prospective lover to secure the sort of communion enjoyed only by lovers. But not just any kind of intimacy calls for the use of romance. Romance is deployed in pursuit of a *particular* kind of intimacy, namely sexual intimacy. Stated plainly: the *telos* of romance is the bedroom. Yet romance is not merely a means to an end. Indeed, romance is the very beginning of love making. This is why Jane Austen refers to Mr. Darcy's romantic advances toward Elizabeth as "making love" to her. Darcy's romantic advances are ultimately spousal-sexual and are of one piece with "love making" as we understand it today (i.e., sex). In the same way that holding a fine wine in your mouth in order to savor its taste is both a means of consuming the wine and part of the actual experience of consuming it, so too romance is both a means to love making and part of the love making of which it is the means.[15]

Of course, love making is not without its risks, hence the need for romance. Even in healthy relationships, the depth of vulnerability required for sexual intimacy sometimes outstrips the depth of trust a woman has (at any given moment) in the relationship. This is especially true in the early stages of a relationship/courtship. A woman may be sexually attracted to a man, but she might nonetheless suppress this attraction because of the risks involved in sexual intimacy (e.g., emotional risks, physical risks, procreative

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commenting on Ephesians 5:23, states, "Christ has appointed the same relation to exist between a husband and a wife, as between himself and his church," *Commentary on Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 317–18. So too Luther, while denying that types are inherently sacramental, still affirms, "Christ and the church are . . . a great and secret thing which can and ought to be represented in terms of marriage as a kind of outward allegory," *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, trans. A. T. W. Steinhauser (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1970), 223. Jonathan Edwards states explicitly, "[Christ is] united to you by a spiritual union, so close as to be fitly represented by the union of the wife to the husband," "The Excellency of Christ, 1758," in *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, Wilson H. Kimnach, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 186. Many modern evangelical commentators embrace this typological interpretation as well. For particular attention to the connection between sexual romance and spiritual desire, see James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 77; Charles Williams, *He Came Down from Heaven* (1938; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984) and *Outlines of Romantic Theology*, ed. Alice M. Hadfield (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990); also C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), 131–60.

[15] Sex should not be compartmentalized into a sequence of steps that culminate in intercourse, where only the last and final moment of intercourse constitutes sex. Intercourse is the consummation of sex, not the sum total of sex. See my "What Would St. Paul Say about 'Making Out?'" in *Venus and Virtue: Celebrating Sex and Seeking Sanctification* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 106–20.

risks, etc.). Romance is a strategy (ideally of love) deployed by the man to overcome a woman's natural inhibitions.

Romance works in two directions. First romance seeks to elevate a woman's sexual arousal to the point that her motivations for sexual intimacy exceed her natural inhibitions. Second, romance simultaneously seeks to lower the woman's inhibitions by alleviating her fears about any possible negative consequences of sex. Romance is a man's way of communicating relational care, gentleness, genuine concern for a woman's well-being, and of assuring her that she will be safe and taken care of. Romance is a way of saying (through words, gestures and gifts), "You are delightful to me in every way. You can trust me. If you let me in to the most intimate part of yourself, I will affirm you and bring you a unique and powerful blessing. I am here for you today, and I will be here for you tomorrow—whatever comes."[16]

As noted, there is a natural domain in which romance does its best work—namely early in the relationship. There is a legitimate and life-long need for romance in all healthy spousal relationships. But romance is especially useful in the courtship phase of a relationship. This is when feminine inhibitions are most robust and when male assurances are most needed. When two people first meet, they have no shared experience on which to base a relationship; the woman has nothing more than a hunch on which to judge the trustworthiness of the man. Assuming a relationship is desired by both the man and the woman, the initial attraction is mostly limited to sexual attraction. Romance taps into this attraction and amplifies it with a view to creating a sense of relational (even if somewhat superficial) security.

But the heightening effect of romance is not (and was never intended by God to be) limitless. In a healthy marital relationship, the need (and capacity) for intense romance gradually lessens with time; not because the couple is less in love, but because the sexual intensity of the relationship naturally lessens with age. And while the sexual intensity is decreasing to a "normative" state, at the same time a healthy relationship gradually develops deeper avenues of bonding—i.e., having children, enduring and overcoming trials together, sharing joyful experiences, etc. This is not to say that romance completely dies in a healthy marriage. But romance's original ability to heighten sexual tension cannot be sustained throughout the normal life span of a marriage, precisely because sexual tension naturally decreases. I still love holding my wife's hand; but the electric feeling of sexual tension that I felt the first time I held her hand can no longer be replicated, no matter how much romance I pour on. To expect that it can be, or should be, would inevitably lead to disillusionment. Romance at twenty years cannot

[16] The aim of a man's romantic overtures are often, but need not be, manipulative. In the purest instance, a man's desire to be sexually intimate with his beloved is not motivated by selfish interests at the expense of the woman but are motivated by a genuine and "self-giving" love that desires to bring a blessing to the woman. Analogously, Jesus desires to know his church in the full depth of the "one-spirit" relationship (Eph 5:30–32; 1 Cor 6:15–17). This pure and loving desire motivates his spiritual "wooing" of the Church into a posture of relational and spiritual intimacy; if the motivation is love, the wooing (spiritual or sexual) is not manipulative.

be expected to produce the same mind-numbing, tongue-tying, soul-lifting, heart-racing, giddy experiences that it did in the early days of courtship.

The inevitable diminishment of sexual intensity is a reality that our broader culture has not easily learned (nor any culture, really). The overwhelming majority of our culture's music focuses on male/female relationships. And the overwhelming majority of this music focuses on the courtship phase of the relationship, when sexual intensity is at its peak. Listening to our culture's music, one gets the impression that the most significant part of a male/female relationship is its amount of sexual tension. The more sexual tension, the more love. However true this might be early on in a relationship, a relationship's ability to sustain the original level of sexual tension is not an accurate indicator of its health. There is more to marital love than sexual intensity.[17]

This is not a critique of romance or our culture's valorization of new love. There is a genuine beauty to romantic love and sexual desire, and we are right to celebrate it (despite what Origen and much of the Christian-Platonic tradition has said). But we have been wrong to normalize a high degree of sexual intensity as the fixed state of true love. Invariably, sexual intensity must subside and give way to deeper expressions of love. Lovers who fixate on sexual intensity as the *sine qua non* of true love are doomed to be disappointed. Those beguiled by the lie of eroticism's intense perpetuity invariably begin to grow weary of their (now no longer intensely) sexual relationship. Insofar as sexual intensity is most potent in new love, starting over with someone new seemingly provides the best solution to the diminishment of "true love." But this only gets one so far. The Quixotic quest for an intense sexual experience only repeats itself in an endless shuffling of lovers until one is like Sophocles, the old and spent Greek playwright who was "only too glad to be free of all that."[18]

Now, to again quote Plato, "Our story is ended; let us put it to use."

B. Worship as Romance

Here's the first half of my thesis on the connection between romance and worship: what romance is to sexual union, singing is to spiritual union. Just as the primary aim of romance is to heighten sexual desire and lower inhibitions on the way to the sexual union of marriage, so too the primary aim of singing is to heighten spiritual affections and lower inhibitions on the way to spiritual union with Christ. Jonathan Edwards, that seventeenth-century pastor theologian, captures this idea when he writes, "And the duty of singing praises to God seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned, why we

[17] C. S. Lewis helpfully distinguishes between Eros (i.e., romantic love) and Venus (i.e., sexual love), which is a subset of Eros. Eros desires the beloved, while Venus desires sex. It is possible for romantic love to flourish even while sexual love diminishes. See his *The Four Loves, 131–60.*

[18] Plato, *Republic,* Book 1, trans. Francis MacDonald Cornfield (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968).

should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with music, but only, that such is our nature and frame, that these things have a tendency to move our affections."[19] According to Edwards, we sing in church in order to excite and elevate our spiritual passions. Singing is a form of spiritual romance insofar as it heightens our spiritual passions and lowers our innate inhibitions.

Edwards' perspective on singing is in keeping with Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:18–19 about the function of singing in corporate worship. Paul encourages believers to "address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart." Most interestingly, Paul's comments about singing are set in contrast with drunkenness. "Do not get drunk on wine," Paul tells us at the start of verse 18, but instead "be filled with the Holy Spirit." For Paul, singing is the outward expression of being filled with the Spirit.[20] His logic seems to run thus: "Don't get intoxicated on wine; instead get intoxicated by the Spirit. The intoxication of wine leads to debauchery; the intoxication of the Spirit leads to heartfelt rejoicing." The expression "drunk with love" is not for nothing.[21] Romantic love, like alcohol, lowers inhibitions, makes us do crazy things, and reduces our cognitive capacities.[22] There are no doubt times when being drunk with love is just as dangerous as being drunk with wine. But generally, we don't critique the intoxicating effect of love. We see it as beautiful that sexual love motivates us toward acts of charity, kindness, and self-giving, and that, at its peak, it transcends cognitive thought.[23] In

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[19] Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, I.II.9, as quoted in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol 2, Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 115.

[20] Paul uses the participle λαλοῦντες ('addressing') in verse 18, which helps us understand that singing is the outworking/expression/embodiment of being filled with the Spirit.

[21] It turns out there is quite a bit of scientific overlap between the effect of alcohol and the effect of sexual love. See Ian J. Mitchell, Steven M. Gillespie, and Ahmad Abu-Akel, "Similar effects of intranasal oxytocin administration and acute alcohol consumption on socio-cognitions, emotions and behaviour: Implications for the mechanisms of action," in *Neuroscience & Behavior Reviews*, vol. 55, Aug 2015, 98–106. The main point of the research is that both romantic love and alcohol raise a person's level of oxytocin, which suppresses cognition, lowers anxiety and fear, and enhances feelings of empathy and trust. All the sorts of things that heartfelt singing does in corporate worship.

[22] "Can you think of a greater or keener pleasure than sexual pleasure?" [asked Socrates]; "I can't—or a madder one either [Glaucon replied]." Plato, *Republic*, 3.403.

[23] Psychologist Donald Mosher notes that deep sexual arousal involves a trance-like condition and an altered state of consciousness; capacity to remain in touch with the "real world" fades into the background as sexual intensity increases. See his, "Three Dimensions of Depth of Involvement in Human Sexual Response," in *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 16, no. 1, Feb. 1980, 1–42. In the same vein as Mosher, Wheaton College psychologist William Struthers points out that during orgasm, the amygdala (the primary fear center of the brain) shuts down, giving the woman a sense of safety, and the man a sense of invincibility. See his *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 98. The ancient Stoics and Platonists (and many early Christian theologians) were against sexual arousal for precisely all these reasons. For the ancient Greek philosophers, sexual desire was suspect because it impaired cognition and sound thinking. I've heard the same argument used against churches whose worship is "too emotional".

the same way (and keeping with our metaphor), corporate Spirit-filled singing motivates us to acts of charity, kindness, and the offering of ourselves to Jesus, and, at its peak, transcends cognitive thought. We sing from the heart, not primarily the head.

This need not mean that singing/worship is merely a warm-up to something beyond it (i.e., the sermon). In the same way that romance is both a means to making love and part of the love making of which it is the means, so too worship is both a means to union with Christ and itself part of that union. Singing is not merely a pep rally on the way to the real thing. Corporate singing is itself a part of the real thing, because it is in singing that we experience God in unique and powerful ways. C. S. Lewis insightfully remarks, "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation."[24] Jesus wants his people not only to know about him; he wants his people to be one with him. Singing (when done with sincerity and from the heart) is a chief way of enacting our union with him.[25]

In this framework, the worship leader is a priestly romancer, rather than a singing catechizer. Ultimately, the worship leader stands before the people of Christ as a representative of Christ and spiritually romances the congregation to Christ. The worship leader conveys the love and care, the gentle kindness and regard, that Christ has for his people. Through the leadership, presence, and ministry of the worship leader, Christ lowers the inhibitions that stand in the way of true communion between him and his beloved and invites his people into a reaffirmation and re-consummation of their covenantal/baptismal vows.

Likewise, just as the worship leader represents Jesus to the congregation, so too the worship leader stands with the congregation, representing the congregation to Jesus. The worship leader invites the congregation to lovingly respond to Jesus' love, and *embodies* for the people, and on behalf of the people, this loving response. This is done with sensitivity to the needs of the congregation and in step with the leading of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the worship leader is bringing together the spirit of the congregation with the Spirit of Jesus.

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[24] C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1958), 97.

[25] Depending on one's sacramental commitments, it might be more appropriate to say that communion is the ultimate way of enacting our union with Jesus. From a "real presence" sacramental perspective, both singing and preaching would be penultimate means of ushering the congregation in to the worship of Jesus at the table, which is itself the final consummating moment of the worship service. This approach to communion need not cause us to view singing and preaching as mere "warm-ups" for the table; rather both singing and worship are part of the sacramental union that is consummated at the table (just as savoring wine is part of consuming it). The "real presence" sacramental encounter is consummated at the table but begins with the call to worship. Churches that do not sacramentalize the sacraments will invariably sacramentalize something—either the preaching or the singing, or both. In such cases, I believe it is best to sacramentalize the preaching and singing equally, insofar as both are mutually necessary means by which one mystically and spiritually encounters the presence of Jesus.

Spiritually romancing the congregation on behalf of Jesus and embodying the congregational response back to Jesus does not mean that the worship leader has to be especially musically talented or good looking or charismatic. Sticking with our metaphor, genuine sexual romance does not require a man to be good-looking, smooth, and sophisticated (though admittedly, this doesn't hurt). It requires him to be genuine, humble, free in his ability to express love, truly sensitive, attentive to the needs of the beloved, and appropriately self-assured. In short, romance "works" when it freely expresses genuine love. In the same way, spiritual romance "works" when it sincerely and truly expresses the genuine love that Jesus has for his people and enables Jesus' people to respond freely in kind.

At present, Calvary is not strong in this kind of leadership. We already have plenty of cognition in the sermon. We need worship leaders who are able to "romance" the congregation into communion/union with Jesus. We need worship leaders who have a genuine, deep love for Jesus and likewise a genuine, deep love for our congregation, and who are able to romance us to Jesus.

C. The Limits of Spiritual Romance

But the use of romance as a metaphor is a sword that cuts both ways. So, here's the second half of my thesis on spiritual romance: the same sort of natural progression that we see in a healthy marriage likewise happens in our spiritual marriage to Christ. Just as healthy spousal relationships mature beyond the need for intense sexual romance, so too the Christian's healthy relationship with Christ matures beyond the need for intense spiritual romance. The early days of conversion are often white hot and intense. The whole world is awash in new colors never noticed before. Sins drop from us like our souls are made of spiritual Teflon. We can't get enough of the Bible, and every worship service is a deep and profound encounter with Jesus. But then we make the same mistake our culture makes about sexual love. We suppose that this white-hot intensity is the norm. We suppose that we will always feel like this; that our spiritual life will always be so effortless. But such is not the case, as any mature Christian will tell you. The life of the Christian is a journey that moves from conversion to maturity. And over the course of this journey our need for spiritual intensity decreases as we learn to walk in faithful obedience.[26] Like in a healthy marriage, our moments of communion with Christ become less intense but more satisfying.

Churches that fail to recognize the natural life progression of the Christian run the risk of turning the spiritual intensity of conversion into

[26] On this point, I have been much influenced by the "peaks and troughs" metaphor that C. S. Lewis uses in his *Screwtape Letters*. According to evil Uncle Screwtape, God withdraws his hand (like a wise parent) so as to teach his children to walk. Only in troughs do we really learn what true faith is. "Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys." C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2001), 40.

the norm for all Christians (such was the case in Corinth). In the same way that our culture has mistakenly viewed sexual intensity as the ultimate sign of relational "connectedness," so too have many churches mistakenly viewed spiritual intensity as the true sign of spiritual "connectedness." Having bought into this mistake, many worship leaders attempt to use spiritual romance as a means of propping up (what they perceive to be flagging) spiritual intensity. Anything less than spiritual intensity becomes an ominous warning sign that we are slipping away from our "first love." Quick! Grab the matches! We must stoke the coals, relight the fire, and reclaim our conversional passion! And so the worship leader spends more and more effort trying to recapture a spiritual intensity that is only realistically felt at conversion. This invariably ends up feeling manipulative and tiring (for both the worship leader and the congregation), regardless of how sincere the leaders' intentions.

The via media in all of this is to hold together the legitimate place of spiritual romance, without making spiritual intensity the norm for all Christians. Spiritual romance is for all seasons of life; spiritual intensity is not. A church should have a worshiping life that appropriately reflects its maturity, while leaving room for the energy and passion of those in the congregation who are younger in the faith. A church of established believers should not expect to worship in the same way as a congregation of new converts. But neither should a church conduct its liturgy in such a way that new converts feel under- or un-inspired.

Both newer and more mature Christians have much to learn from each other. Returning to the marriage analogy…newly married couples enjoy being around older couples because they see in the older couple a model of marital maturity; and older couples enjoy being around newly married couples because they see in the young couple's love a reminder of the beauty of their own marital love and romance. Both benefit from the presence and life stage of the other. In the same way, a healthy church should span the ages. A younger church will have lots of romance and less wisdom, while an older congregation will have lots of wisdom and less romance. Wisdom without zeal eventually (and quite literally) dies; zeal without wisdom eventually dissipates and is misspent. When both youth and maturity are present in the same congregation, each supplies what the other needs and lacks. These mutually edifying perspectives have application to the worship service.

As an older, more seasoned believer, I love to worship with young people who are worshiping with energy and zeal (just as long as I'm not expected to feel everything they are feeling as intensely and effortlessly as they are feeling it and then judged when I don't!). Their zeal helps to activate my own zeal, which would otherwise be inclined to lie dormant. In the same way, I hope that my depth of life experience and spiritual maturity can help serve as a ballast and guide for those younger in the faith, so that their life of zealous worship stays grounded in the truth of God.

IV. CONCLUSION

There is more to congregational health than punctuality. My heart in all of this is not to make sure that our people merely attend church on time. My heart is that our congregation would see a value in corporate worship because we have indeed made our time of corporate worship valuable. My prayer is that we would be strengthened by the depth of resources available in the Christian tradition and that Calvary would effectively minister to every type of Christian disciple—to both the head and the heart—in a way that would inspire lives of missional strength. A more historic liturgy connects Calvary to the time-tested wisdom and guidance of the church catholic, and a more balanced view of discipleship (to include an experiential view) helps us minister beyond our present cognitive focus. And a romantic view of worship will help raise our spiritual passions and lower the inhibitions that stand in the way of our full surrender and union with Christ.

I am aware that my above vision for worship is not typical. Most traditional liturgical churches do not have a "romantic" approach to corporate singing. And most churches that prioritize the sermon tend to approach corporate singing as a warm-up to the sermon or as a singing catechism. Likewise, most "romantic experiential" churches tend to view (and then reject) both liturgy and cognitive sermons as spiritual libido killers. But all of these divisions are unnecessary. And unbiblical. The fullness of Christian growth takes place in congregations that bring together the time-tested wisdom of the Church's liturgy, the cognitive truth of God, and a spiritual/romantic experience of the Spirit of Jesus that "frees us from enslaving patterns of sin" and ushers the congregation into "the ineffable sweetness" of the contemplation of God.

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NO GREATER LOVE: A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO FRIENDSHIP AND RACE

ROBERT S. KINNEY[1]

> "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
>
> —John 15:13 (KJV)

I. INTRODUCTION

"I have a black friend."[2] Too many (white) people have uttered these words in an effort to seem enlightened, to seem more familiar with people of color than they actually are, and as such, to seem less regressed in their approach to race and racism.[3] Implied in the statement is a defense: "I

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[1] Robert S. Kinney is a priest at Christ Church in Vienna, Austria, and a member of the CPT's St. Peter Fellowship..

[2] I am focusing on white-black ethnic tensions in this essay as they are especially contentious in the public discourse of the United States at this time—centered in, among other things, Christian debates around Critical Race Theory. These debates are certainly reaching beyond the United States and across cultural lines and much of what I write here is just as applicable for the tensions between any two ethnic groups. That is, some of the particulars may work out differently if we are talking about whites and Asians or blacks and Hispanics, but the conclusions should largely remain consistent.

[3] For the purpose of this essay, I will refer to race and ethnicity interchangeably, though this is generally a far more complex issue. Neither term has precise definitions that are universally acknowledged. While I am not an anthropologist, my understanding is that race typically refers to groups of human beings based primarily on physical (phenotypical) characteristics and, to a lesser extent, cultural characteristics, whereas ethnicity tends to refer primarily to a more comprehensive and diverse set of cultural or social characteristics. See Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, Eleventh Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2018), 216-232. Seeing race as primarily biological simplifies the distinction, as biological racial features are subject to genetic inheritance apart from culture being learned (and so different biological races can share a

can't be racist because I have a black friend." Such reasoning raises several issues, one of which is an ontological problem.[4] It often narrows the definition of friendship to merely a form of acquaintance. Yet, inherent in that 'black friend' statement is also an understanding that racial tension and friendship have something to do with each other. If friendship and race are connected, yet friendship is something more than acquaintance, is it not worth exploring this connection a little more deeply? And, recognizing that this phenomenon is widespread, is there something particular about the nature of Christian friendship that is relevant here? Or even more directly, can a deeper understanding of Christian friendship move us beyond this tokenistic line of thinking?

In this essay, *I will suggest that a biblical understanding of friendship, expressed in the Christian virtue of love, is essential to improving discussions of race and ethnicity in this complex moment of our history.*

In order to make this case, we need a contextualized understanding of the Christian concept of love and some of its constituent expressions. We will also need a biblical and historical survey of how it is portrayed in relationship to both friendship and race. In particular, we will look at a few Hebrew Bible and New Testament passages concerning love for others, especially in contexts where multiple social groups are present (across racial and other social divides). We will then set the New Testament concepts in their classical contexts, especially some of the earliest work done on friendship as an ethical virtue. With this background described, we will then consider two applications for Christians to consider. Firstly, however, we must narrow our definition.

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culture). The difficulty arises in that there is a perceived overlap in these concepts—most notably around the cultural assumptions people typically make around the physical trait of skin color (i.e., certain skin colors are associated with certain cultures). From an anthropological point of view, however, most of our discourse on *race* and *racism* in the public square is probably more precisely an issue of ethnicity or general culture than it is strictly racial. Nevertheless, given the current state of discourse, I am using the terms interchangeably and to refer, primarily to cultural differences.

[4] Other problems with this reasoning, but which are beyond the scope of this essay, include: 1) It often assumes uniformity without distinction: 'All black people are the same, so if I'm good with one, I must be good with all.' It often assumes equality without distinction: 'I'm colorblind, there's no difference between black and white. See George Yancey, *Beyond Racial Gridlock, Embracing Mutual Responsibility* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 29-40. For a more academic approach to the issues of color blindness, see Helen A. Neville, Miguel E. Gallardo, and Derald Wing Sue, eds., *The Myth of Racial Colorblindness: Manifestations Dynamics, and Impact* (Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2015), especially pages 3-20. 2) It often assumes a fairly narrow definition of racism: 'Racism happens between individuals, systems cannot be racist.' See Yancey, *Beyond Racial Gridlock*, 20-23. 3) It completely ignores the feelings and wellbeing of the person of color, rendering them a token in a majority white world and ignoring what it may cost them to have friends across racial lines. Thera are, undoubtedly, numerous other problems.

II. WHAT IS LOVE?

Broadly construed, saying anything productive about any virtue in the current landscape of virtue ethics is nearly impossible. As Alistair McIntyre—who helped launch the revival of interest in virtue ethics in the 1980s—noted: "There are just too many different and incompatible conceptions of virtue for there to be any real unity to the concept."[5] Basic definitions are not without disagreement and varying philosophical systems are simply incompatible. Yet, definitions and clarity around philosophical systems and some semblances of conceptual unity are necessary for this discussion to be productive.

Defining love—the central concept behind notions of friendship—in the context of an ethical system has specific challenges. Of course, love is a highly prioritized virtue in many ethical and philosophical systems, and so it is addressed regularly and in varying ways across cultures and time.[6] New Testament conceptions of love differ from their classical background which differ from Patristic and medieval and more modern ideas—yet there are remarkable similarities throughout. The expression of love in friendship, as such, is challenging to define with any precision or conceptual unity across time and geography.

Hellenistic definitions of love—given that both classical philosophy's contribution to virtue ethics and the New Testament canon emerge from this time and culture—are a good place to start. Usually, in Attic Greek, there are generally considered to be three primary terms: *ἔρως*, *φιλία*, and *ἀγάπη*. Relationships defined by *ἔρως* are typically characterized by intense desire for the recipient, prompted by the merit or qualities of the object, and include a sexual component. The feelings of *φιλία* would also be produced in response to the merit or qualities of the recipient, and be portrayed as more of an affectionate regard toward friends, family members, and other acquaintances. Most classification systems will identify the concept of friendship specifically with *φιλία*. Explanations of *ἀγάπη*, however, especially in the Christian tradition (drawing form Koine Greek), will specify it as the love God has for his people, the love his people have for him, or the love they have for humankind in general.[7]

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[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 169.

[6] This is certainly true in the Christian faith. As Paul notes in 1 Cor 13:13: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

[7] These broad approaches to *ἔρως*, *φιλία*, and *ἀγάπη*, particularly in seeing how they relate to the objects of love and specifying *φιλία* as the domain of friendship are quite common. For example, see the "friendship" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* This article draws on the definitions of *ἔρως*, *φιλία*, and *ἀγάπη* as found in Henry George Liddell, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 6, 691, and 1,934. Of course, classical literature cannot be so easily reduced to just these three concepts. And The New Testament and Early Christian canon are equally complex. As BDAG indicates and affirms, *ἔρως* and *ἐράω* are not really used in the New Testament, *φιλία*, *φίλος*, and *φιλέω* are used extensively throughout both the classical period and the New Testament, and *ἀγάπη* has little classical background, but a rather rich presence in the New Testament. See

Tempting as it is to locate understandings of love within friendship solely in φιλία and its related terms—as readings of C.S. Lewis often do—the kind of love that undergirds Christian friendship might actually be equally located in the concept of ἀγάπη or *compassionate love* as it is sometimes described.[8] The classical and New Testament backgrounds, as we shall see, are open to as much.

III. HEBREW BIBLE

The New Testament concept of love in the context of friendship will undoubtedly draw from its foundation in the Hebrew Scriptures, a body of literature that paints a picture of love and friendship that transcends socially distinct categories of culture/race by finding its primary expression in the love of one's neighbor.[9] As the concept develops through the canon, it begins to take on the qualities of intimacy and self-sacrifice that are recognizable as love in the sense of close friendship.

A. Exodus and Leviticus: Love and Cultural/Racial Boundaries

In considering the Hebrew Scriptures' concept of love—especially imperatives to do so—a good place to establish background is the legal codes of the Torah. Perhaps the key text concerning love for others is that from Lev 19:18 which eventually becomes the second greatest commandment according to Jesus.[10]

> You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love (אהב or ἀγαπάω) your neighbor (רֵעַ or πλησίος) as yourself: I am the Lord.[11]

It is clear from the second phrase that the Israelites have a moral imperative to love their neighbors. It's not only a matter of their identity,

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Walter Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6–7, 389 and 395, and 1,056-1,059. In addition to ἔρως, φιλία, and ἀγάπη, we might also consider other terms, including στοργή as well as possibly ἐπιθυμία, μανία, φιλαυτία, ξενία, πράγμα, ερωτοτροπία (most often known by its Latin counterpart *ludus*), and others. As with most languages, there is overlap in the definitions of these terms and drawing reliable distinctions is impossible. Definitions shift, semantic ranges widen, and varying contexts create varying uses. Nevertheless, studies of friendship will typically begin with φιλία.

[8] On Lewis, see his chapter on *friendship* in C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: HarperCollins, 1960), 73-115. Here, Lewis argues for an expanded understanding of friendship. Later readings of Lewis, as well as Aristotle (who focuses on *philia*) and Cicero (who focuses on *amicitia*), as one might expect, tend to simplify to the point of oversimplification.

[9] The New Testament understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, of course, was mediated through the Hellenistic culture of the day. For extensive arguments on this, see Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, Volumes 1-2. trans. by J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974).

[10] See Matt 22:35-40, Mark 12:28-31, and Luke 10:25-28. See also John 13:31-35.

[11] Lev 19:18. The Hebrew word for love is as would be expected (אהב) in such a context. I am including the LXX vocabulary here for its correspondence to the New

but a matter of the Lord's identity (concluding with his "I am the Lord" identification).

The two questions that necessarily emerge from this phrase are what it means to love and who exactly the neighbors are.[12] To answer both questions, the context is quite important. Throughout this chapter of Leviticus, the Lord commends to Moses a series of ritual and moral holiness codes, particularly focused on the relations between people from 19:9–18.

The question of what this love looks like, then, might be explained in the content of the other commands in relationship to other people (assuming that neighbors are in view throughout the chapters—an issue to which we must return). The behavior, then, that explains this love includes leaving parts of the harvest for others in need, not stealing or lying, dealing justly, refraining from slander, not taking advantage, not hating, but correcting, and not taking vengeance. Taken together, the picture of love painted here is one of material provision, treating with honesty, and sacrificing one's own rights or advantages for the sake of the other.

The more complex question in this passage is that of the identity of the neighbor. In the LXX, most of these terms are specifically rendered using the term πλησίος—which appears in 19:11, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 18. The Hebrew term translated as neighbor in 19:18 (רֵעַ) is a broad term that can mean neighbor, friend, or simply other (person). For example, the relationship between God and Moses is described using this terminology: "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend…"[13] As such, it is clear that neighbor is someone who is relationally somewhat close. But the Hebrew term is slightly more varied than the Greek translations would indicate. The term is found in 19:13, 16, and 18. In 19:11, 15, and 17, a different term is used (i.e., עָמִית). This is important for two reasons. First, it broadens the semantic range of who might be considered a neighbor in this passage. Secondly, it means the context should be weighed even more highly. Indeed, several other terms for groups of people are included here: the poor (19:10, 15), the alien (19:10), the laborer (19:13), the deaf and blind (19:14), the great (19:15), your people (19:16, 18), and kin (19:17). It would seem, then, that *neighbor* might be a way of talking about all of these groups of people and the command in 19:18 is a summary of the preceding laws in both defining *neighbor* and defining *love*.

If this understanding of neighbor is right, then there are cultural (i.e., racial/ethnic) implications to one of the first terms used. The first set of commands concerning the gathering of the harvest indicates a kind of sacrificial care for the poor and the alien:

> When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to
> the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your

Testament concepts already discussed. All Scripture references are to the NRSV translation unless otherwise noted.

[12] The question of identifying one's neighbor is, of course, famously taken up by Jesus and a scribe and leads to the telling of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37.

[13] Exod 33:11.

> harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien (גֵּר): I am the Lord your God.[14]

The Israelites are to be concerned with the wellbeing of the alien, again as a matter of the Lord's identity as much as their own. This term derives a special significance in the account of one of the most important moments in the history of the people of God: the first Passover. As the meal is described in some detail in Exodus 12, there are a few conspicuous phrases that indicate that the people of God at that time were not limited to merely ethnic Israelites.

> For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, *whether an alien or a native of the land*.[15]
>
> The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. *A mixed crowd also went up with them*, and livestock in great numbers, both flocks and herds.[16]
>
> The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: This is the ordinance for the Passover: *no foreigner shall eat of it, but any slave who has been purchased may eat of it after he has been circumcised*; no bound or hired servant may eat of it.[17]
>
> If an *alien who resides with you* wants to celebrate the Passover to the Lord, all his males shall be circumcised; then he may draw near to celebrate it; *he shall be regarded as a native of the land*. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it; there shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.[18]

In his important work on race in biblical theology, J. Daniel Hays notes an important distinction being made.[19] There are present those who are ethnically not Jewish, but who are nevertheless adherents to the Law to the point of being circumcised. The term used is that of *sojourner* or *alien* (גֵּר), the same as in Lev 19:10. This is in distinction from *foreigners* (נֵכָר) who have not submitted themselves to the Law. In other words, even in this foundational meal, people of varying races are to be treated as equally a part of God's people on the basis of their adherence to the Law, not on the basis of ethnic heritage.

[14] Lev 19:9–10.

[15] Exod 12:19.

[16] Exod 12:37–38.

[17] Exod 12:43–45.

[18] Exod 12:48–49.

[19] J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2003), 69-70.

What's also very important here is that there are, again, two different social groups of varying relational distance. Both *foreigners* and *sojourners* are present and to be cared for, yet there is an essential distinction between them. Those who are likewise submitted to Yahweh are to be seen as much closer relations in terms of the care they are shown, indistinct from (ethnically Jewish) family.

As such, the consistent witness of the Hebrew Scriptures is that the people of God are to treat as their own and to love those who demonstrate a religious adherence to the Word of God regardless of a particular ethnic or racial designation.[20]

B. Wisdom Literature: The Intimacy of Friendship

As one might expect from praxis-oriented literature, several of the Proverbs address friendship as a social institution. Taking what has been, to this point, a communal understanding of love, the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures demonstrates an individually intimate character to friendship in the context of love. For example, Prov 17:17 echoes the language of Lev 19:18.

> A friend (רֵעַ or φίλος) loves (אהב) at all times,
>
> and kinsfolk are born to share adversity.

Where the NRSV translates *friend*, in this context, we find the same Hebrew word as Lev 19:18 (i.e., *neighbor*). Interestingly, the LXX renders the concept as φίλος (singular) rather than πλησίος, an even more love-oriented semantic choice. Likewise, the verb *love* follows Lev 19:18, whereas the LXX shifts the verbal sentiment rather radically to something like "may a friend be always present for you." The concepts are helpfully maintained, but now applied to more individual contexts. The parallel line—"*and kinsfolk are born to share adversity*"—suggests that this is more than mere acquaintance as the parallel term to *friend* becomes *kinsfolk*, literally *brother* (אָח or ἀδελφός). This closeness or relational intimacy in describing friendship is likewise acknowledged in Prov 18:24: "Some friends (רֵעַ) play at friendship but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin (אָח)."[21]

[20] This notion is, of course, supported by the presence of gentiles amongst the faithful in the Hebrew Scriptures, from Jethro to Caleb to Rahab to Ruth to Shamgar and so on. Jesus picks up this distinction between ethnic privilege and adherence to the Word of God (or doing the will of the Father) in Mark 3:31–35.

[21] See also Prov 27:9–10: "Perfume and incense make the heart glad, but the soul is torn by trouble. Do not forsake your friend or the friend of your parent; do not go to the house of your kindred in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is nearby than kindred who are far away."

Beyond shifting the scope to individual and intimate familial relationships, the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible also begins to describe relational activities within friendship. For example:

> Those who withhold kindness from a friend, forsake the fear of the Almighty.[22]
>
> One who forgives an affront fosters friendship, but one who dwells on disputes will alienate a friend.[23]
>
> Those who love a pure heart and are gracious in speech will have the king as a friend.[24]
>
> Make no friends with those given to anger, and do not associate with hotheads.[25]
>
> Well-meant are the wounds a friend inflicts, but profuse are the kisses of an enemy.[26]

The substance of friendship is, once again, focused on the other in its posture. It goes beyond the *friendliness* of mere acquaintance to demanding kindness at the risk of offending God, forgiveness, and even well-intentioned critique—all while also being beneficial in this life for the one showing such love.[27]

C. David and Jonathan: An Example of Friendship and Love

Drawing together the broader focus on love (ἀγαπάω) that we have seen in the Torah and the intimacy of friendship we have seen in the Wisdom Literature, we must also briefly consider where these concepts merge in, perhaps, the most celebrated of friendships in the Hebrew Bible: David and Jonathan.[28] Much of what we know of their friendship is found in 1 Samuel 20. There we find two men who treat each other as family, intimately,

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[22] Job 6:14.

[23] Prov 17:9.

[24] Prov 22:11.

[25] Prov 22:24.

[26] Prov 27:5–6.

[27] While Proverbs certainly promotes a focus on others, it is worth noting that this posture is not wholly altruistic. As practical wisdom, the advice is fundamentally still meant to give an advantage to the one enacting the advice. That is, there is meant to be a practical benefit to the one showing love to the other, even if it is not stated explicitly in the particular proverbial statement.

[28] There may also be a dimension of diversity built into this friendship as well. David, notably, had a gentile great grandmother, Ruth the Moabite (see Ruth 4:13–22). He also grew up a shepherd, in the fields outside of Bethlehem. Jonathan, of course, was the son of the first King of Israel, Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin. Perhaps these differences are significant. Perhaps not.

even to the point of formalizing their mutual affection in a covenant. The language used in the LXX is that of ἀγαπάω.

> Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life.[29]

Jonathan's love was demonstrated in incredible self-sacrifice. At the narrative climax of the chapter, Saul screams at Jonathan: "For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established."[30] Jonathan's love for David, as Saul makes clear, is at the expense of eventually taking the throne of the kingdom of Israel. And when Jonathan defended David in that moment, Saul famously hurled his spear at him. Jonathan kept his promise to warn David and continued to support him, despite the personal cost.[31]

D. Summary of Hebrew Bible Definitions

As we have seen, the Hebrew Scriptures describe friendship in intimate, familial terms, and can be characterized by virtuous relational activities, including the notion of significant personal self-sacrifice intrinsic to friendship. Likewise, such friendships are built on broad commands to love one another that, importantly, seem to transcend socially distinct categories of race or ethnicity.

IV. NEW TESTAMENT

There are, indeed, numerous places one could turn to understand concepts of friendship and love in the New Testament, especially if looking at the fullness of the concepts as expressed in several different words.[32] Any study of love in the New Testament is necessarily incomplete because of the frequency of the use of these word groups. For the purpose of this essay, we will focus on those passages in which friendship language is explicitly noted and the uses of ἀγάπη are clearly in reference to human relationships.

A. Love as Directed Toward Friends in John 15:13

The language of friendship and love appear together quite prominently in the Gospel of John in the midst of Jesus's discourse in the upper room (John 13–17). Here, we begin to see the fundamental character of love in the context of friendship from the mouth of Jesus.

> This is my commandment, that you love (ἀγαπάω) one another as I have loved (ἀγαπάω) you. No one has greater love (ἀγάπη)

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29 1 Sam 20:17.

30 1 Sam 20:31a.

31 In 1 Sam 23:15–18, Jonathan strengthened David, and they make a new covenant, even while David remained on the run from Saul.

32 The verb ἀγαπάω is used 143 times in the New Testament. The noun ἀγάπη is used 116 times. Additionally, the verb φιλέω is used 25 times, the noun φίλος is used 29 times, and various other forms of both are used several times.

> than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (φίλος). You are my friends (φίλος) if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends (φίλος), because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love (ἀγαπάω) one another.[33]

Much could be said about Jesus's understanding of *ἀγάπη* from these verses. Jesus brings some definition here to what that friendship is—it is more than a functional relationship (master to servant). It involves the sharing of knowledge, and it is a relationship of choice.[34] But the love expressed in these verses by Jesus for his friends—and demonstrated in just these terms in chapter 19, giving his life for them—is clearly one of self-sacrifice for a close companion.[35] Indeed, it is the essential quality for their friendship. Indeed, it is not until self-sacrificial *ἀγάπη* is in the picture that Jesus begins to consider the disciples friends rather than servants (v.15). Indeed, this took time to develop. Within that statement we find a sense of progression. It is likewise expressed in the phrase: "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing."[36] Jesus clearly indicates that there is a previous relationship with the disciples, one that certainly would be appropriately described as somewhat intimate. He had been traveling with some of them for multiple years at this point. Yet, it is not until the discourse in the upper room that Jesus reveals fully his plans, deepening their knowledge of him through self-disclosure. At this point, now that they are prepared to understand his plan to die and rise again and return to the Father (a major theme throughout the discourse), he can call them friends (φίλος).

Beyond that defining moment, it is also being commended to them for their mutual relationships. Twice in the space of six verses, Jesus tells them to love one another. This notion of the mutuality of love having pervaded friendships is introduced earlier in the discourse (John 13:34–35) and then reinforced later in the discourse where an equivalent statement about the love between God and Christ and the disciples is made using a different verb: " for the Father himself loves (φιλέω) you, because you have loved (φιλέω) me and have believed that I came from God."[37] There is clearly

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[33] John 15:12-17.

[34] The is presented as unidirectional in this case, though that may be the unique character of the friendship being between the disciples and Jesus Christ himself (i.e., humans with the divine Son of God).

[35] John helpfully connects the beginning of this discourse (in the setting before the meal) with the crucifixion itself. See John 13:1: "Having loved (ἀγαπάω) his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end (τέλος)." John 19:31: "When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished (τελέω).' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

[36] John 15:15.

[37] John 16:27.

substantial overlap, here in John's Gospel, in the concepts of *ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω* and *φιλέω*.

We must not read too much into the specifics as this is a single instance from which to extrapolate an obviously unique relationship. Nevertheless, within it we can see at least two levels of acquaintance, the more intimate of which is termed *friendship* and which, in Jesus's words, includes selfless sacrifice even to the point of death.

B. Love as Selfless Sacrifice Generally in the Pauline Epistles

For Paul, the key characteristic of *ἀγάπη* also seems to be selfless sacrifice. Indeed, his use of the term as something expressed by God the Father or Jesus Christ is often referenced in connection to the ultimate example of selfless sacrifice, Jesus's death on a cross for the sake of others:

> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved (*ἀγαπητός*) children, and live in love (*ἀγάπη*), as Christ loved (*ἀγαπάω*) us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.[38]

> But God proves his love (*ἀγάπη*) for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.[39]

> And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved (*ἀγαπάω*) me and gave himself for me.[40]

In each case, God's or Christ's love for their people is expressed in the gospel itself, the death of Christ "giving God's righteousness to those who believe."[41] When Paul commends the concept to the recipients of his letters—suggesting that they also express love within the context of human relationships—it carries the same sense of selfless sacrifice on behalf of others.

> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he

[38] Eph 5:1-2.

[39] Rom 5:8.

[40] Gal 2:20b.

[41] See Rom 3:21–26. The nature of the selflessness of Christ is likewise demonstrated in Heb 12:2: "…looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God."

> humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.[42]

> Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love (ἀγάπῃ).[43]

> For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.[44]

In all three of these cases, those showing love are expected to voluntarily restrict themselves, to willingly give up their rights for the sake of others as an expression of that love. Whether it is the sacrifice of dietary freedoms or voluntarily taking on cultic laws to placate the consciences of weaker brothers, selflessness is a key aspect of demonstrating love. Paul picks up this notion of sacrificing one's rights rather pointedly in 1 Corinthians 9:

> For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.[45]

While these verses lack a specific reference to *love*, it is quite clear that the self-sacrificial deference articulated in the Romans and Galatians passages above finds expansion here. In these verses, Paul declares a commitment not just to diversity and hospitality in broad terms, but to gospel-centered, self-sacrificial accommodation. The immediate context of the passage shows that Paul is demonstrating his posture of deference, his adaptation to the people for the sake of their salvation. The discussion of idol meat in chapter 8 almost certainly fell along ethnic dividing lines.[46] At

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[42] Phil 2:3–8.

[43] Rom 14:13–15.

[44] Gal 5:13.

[45] 1 Cor 9:19–23.

[46] The cultural division certainly includes religious, not merely ethnic or racial division. Paul spent most of chapter 8 discussing food that had been sacrificed to *pagan* idols. Some Christian converts viewed the idols as meaningless non-deities and so felt free to eat the meat that had been sacrificed. It was no different than non-sacrificed meats. Others felt the

the time, Christianity was comprised of Jewish converts (those, including Paul, who grew up with the Jewish ethnic heritage, including its Mosaic Law) and gentile converts (non-Jews who came to the faith). In fact, one of the biggest debates in the New Testament itself is whether gentile converts have to convert to Jewish practices as well (see Acts 15:1–35 or Gal 2:11–21 in addition to 1 Corinthians 9). This discussion of idol meat, then, fell along Jew-gentile racial lines and also explains why Paul talks about becoming one "under the law" and one "outside the law." Those are not just theological distinctions, but distinctions that fall along ethnic or racial lines.

Paul's response, then, is striking. It suggests that merely tolerating diversity in a superficial way is insufficient. He took the serious step of adapting. He *became* one "under the law." He *became* one "outside the law." He maintained his own personal views (or cultural expressions) to be sure. That much is clear in chapter 8. Yet, he adapted.[47] He moved across these ethnic boundaries. In his letters in general, Paul is clear that the Jew-gentile distinction is comparatively insignificant (see especially Eph 2:11—3:13). God shows no partiality when it comes to race. But Paul goes a step further here in arguing that he became like the others. He embodied both groups. This was more than mere acknowledgment. This was careful study and adaptation so that he was at home among them and they with him. Where a diversity of God's people exists, they should not just embrace each other, but embrace each other's cultures. Paul concludes: "*I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some.*" Paul is ready to assume a posture of deference for the salvation of any—for the sake of the gospel. Surrendering rights working across racial or ethnic lines are his philosophy of ministry to do this very thing.

C. Love as Selflessness in 1 Corinthians 13

Returning to the concept of love, one of the more well-known parts of the Pauline corpus to explore dimensions of and, perhaps, define ἀγάπη in detail, is the famed love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13. Here, we get an extensive description of *love*, but in a particular context—a section of the letter beginning in chapter 12 in which Paul is addressing a question that the Corinthians had written to him about spiritual gifts—that is, spiritual maturity (see the use of πνευματικός in 12:1). Starting in 12:4, Paul notes that there are a variety of gifts (χάρισμα), and this variety is necessary. This necessary variety should never cause them to be divided (which they had

meat had been contaminated by the pagan ritual and so would be defiling themselves to eat from it. The whole discussion revolves around the question of having a weak conscience (8:7–13 especially) and so it is no accident that Paul says "to the weak, I became weak, so that I might win the weak" in 9:22.

[47] Importantly, though, this is not theological universalism. The whole purpose of adaptation was that "some might be saved" (9:22–23) by means of the gospel. Paul was not tolerating diversity on the essentials of the faith—but he was willing to set aside the Law for it.

been, apparently across social and socio-economic lines).[48] They should never feel inferior or ashamed about having certain spiritual gifts. But, neither should they feel superior. In the last verse of chapter 12, he promises to show "a still more excellent way."[49] Paul begins by addressing the absence of love in the first few verses of the next chapter.

> If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.[50]

We see that Paul is still on the subject of spiritual gifts. He mentions tongues, prophetic powers, knowledge or understanding, and faith—each of which appeared in his list of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12:8–11. To this list, he adds self-sacrifice in 13:3. And to each, he adds the requirement of love (ἀγάπη). It is the inclusion of love that is the difference between spiritual maturity (πνευματικός) and mere giftedness (χάρισμα). Indeed, they had clearly been shown to have the gifts. At the beginning of the letter, in 1 Cor 1:7, Paul notes that they are "not lacking in any spiritual gift (χάρισμα)." Yet, when it comes to their maturity, they are severely lacking. His argument a little later in the letter makes this abundantly clear:

> And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people (πνευματικός), but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready…[51]

Paul references an example of this immaturity in his description of their selfish behavior at the Communion table (see especially 1 Cor 11:17–22). Again, the difference between maturity and mere giftedness is love. But, interestingly, he has not yet defined love. In chapter, 13, he finally begins exploring it by making the case spiritual gifts without love are annoying (like noisy gongs and cymbals), worthless, and produce no gains. At this point, the argument is fairly logical if the goal is to merely elevate the necessity of love. But the real rebuke of the Corinthians for the lack of love comes with the robust definition in the next few verses.

> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in

[48] 1 Cor 11:17–34.

[49] 1 Cor 12:31: "But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way."

[50] 1 Cor 13:1-3.

[51] 1 Cor 3:1–2.

> the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.[52]

There are two simultaneous arguments here. The first is a positive definition of love as patient, kind, trusting, hopeful, and enduring. The second argument is a definition of what love is not. It is not envious, boasting, arrogant, rude, insistent on its own way, irritable, or resentful. Of course, Paul has already mentioned some of these negative ideas earlier in the letter. Love is not rude—see 1 Cor 7:35. Love does not insist on its own way—see 1 Cor 10:24: Love is not arrogant—see 1 Cor 4:6, 4:18-19, and especially 5:2. In each case, the Corinthians are found to be lacking in love. Yet, Paul does not leave it there. He concludes by pushing them toward an aspiration.

> Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.[53]

Paul envisions a time when spiritual gifts will fall away. They will become unnecessary. Faith will not be required because Christians will be in the presence of Jesus Christ himself. Knowledge will not be necessary. Tongues will cease as God's people will be singing in unison of the glory of God for eternity.[54] Prophecy will be finished as eternity will have arrived. But even then, how humans act toward one another, the love they show to one another, will still matter—primarily because it is more than an ethical virtue, but an eschatological actuality.[55] Love will persist beyond the return of Jesus Christ. And yet, there is hope for the Corinthians that they may begin to practice love.

Paul uses metaphors to demonstrate his hope that the Corinthians may practice love. The first is the idea that he used to be a child and so behaved like a child, but then he grew up. It's an especially poignant metaphor because, remember, he had already introduced the concept back in 1 Cor 3:1, when he called them spiritual infants. He is saying that they can be on a path of growing up—and they might just grow up someday. They might

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[52] 1 Cor 13:4–7.

[53] 1 Cor 13:8–13.

[54] See Rev 5:13.

[55] N.T. Wright captures the sentiment well: "Love, agape, is not so much a virtue to be worked at, though it is surely that as well as the ultimate bridge, in terms of human character, from present Christian living into the future kingdom. Many things do not last; love does." N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God, Volume 3* (London: SPCK, 2003), 296.

put behind them the childish ways of thinking they know everything and putting down others. This is Paul's version of virtue formation concerning love. Likewise, when Christ returns, all gifts will cease to be important. Yet, selfless love for one another will persist. "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."[56] Chapter 14 concludes the discussion of spiritual gifts, urging the Corinthians to especially pursue love by pursuing prophesying as it is a gift that can serve each: "Pursue love (ἀγάπη) and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy."[57]

In 1 Corinthians 13, then, ἀγάπη is necessarily something to be expressed (through the use of spiritual gifts in this case) for the benefit of the church in Corinth—a selfless commitment to unity in a church full of people that were struggling to put each other ahead of themselves—and particularly across social lines—and given the previously discussed context of 1 Corinthians 9, probably across racial and ethnic lines. Love expressed in these relationships is necessary for the functioning of the whole community and so must be obtained in a process that, metaphorically, looks like growing up.

D. The Selfish Exertion of Privilege in Galatians 2 and 1 Corinthians 6

While we have seen what the New Testament suggests love can be—selfless sacrifice on behalf of another, especially a friend—it is worth a brief detour to consider what love is not—to see love by contrast. Interestingly, it also progresses (though in a different direction) and is expressed in the interactions of a small closely related social group (like a church). Paul's description of what love is not (1 Cor 13:4–7) has already been discussed. It is not boastful, arrogant, rude, insistent, irritable, resentful, or rejoicing in wrongdoing. Yet, there are even more subtle and less active forms of an acute lack of love that should be considered—particularly around Paul's notion of 'insisting on its own way' from 1 Cor 13:5. In Galatians 2, to consider an example of this, Paul recounts his interactions with Peter at Antioch.

> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a

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[56] 1 Cor 13:13.

[57] 1 Cor 14:1.

> Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"[58]

The situation is not complex. Peter, just after his experiences with Cornelius (Acts 10) was presented with a question from circumcised believers as to why he would dine with Gentiles (Acts 11:3). In chapter 11, Peter explains in elaborate detail exactly what had happened in chapter 10—the content of his dream, the conversion of Cornelius and his household, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit amongst these Gentiles. The story is also told a third time in Acts 15, where Peter holds the position that Gentiles should not be required to abide by Jewish legal restrictions, arguing:

> And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.[59]

Notice his argument: it's not just a matter of requiring something that the gospel does not require; it's a matter of hypocritically requiring something that they, themselves, cannot bear. This concept becomes the substance of the rebuke Peter received from Paul according to Gal 2:11–14.[60] That is, Peter had stood up for gospel impartiality across ethnic and racial lines in Acts 15 but had slipped into refraining from eating with Gentiles by the events of Gal 2:1–10. Paul argued that this sort of separation over a cultural issue was contrary to the gospel and, because he had previously dined with Gentiles, this reversion was hypocritical.[61] Given the relatively low stakes of dinnertime decorum, it would have been easy to pass this over. Yet, separation at table fellowship has been shown consistently to lead to a tiered social hierarchy. From the dispute over food distribution amongst Hellenists and Hebrews in Acts 6:1–6 to the division of the church along

[58] Gal 2:11–14.

[59] Acts 15:8-11.

[60] I take the position here that Acts 15 and Gal 2:1–10 are relaying the same set of incidents from slightly different perspectives. This is, of course, not without debate as many commentators argue for a correspondence between Acts 11:27–30 and Gal 2:1–10. See, for example, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 138–139. The case that Gal 2:1–10 corresponds to Acts 15 has been made by Mark Goodacre on his blog: Mark Goodacre, *The Jerusalem Council: Gal. 2.1–10 = Acts 15*, September 26, 2006. See https://ntweblog.blogspot.com/2006/09/jerusalem-council-gal-21-10-acts-15.html. F.F. Bruce argues for a hybrid position. See F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians,* NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 128. As my primary interest here is the incident in Antioch, it is simply worth noting that in both Acts 15 and Galatians 2, Paul leaves Jerusalem for Antioch and has some sort of departure of vision with Barnabas.

[61] It is important to note here that the addressed distinction between Jews and Gentiles is cultural. But not every place in the New Testament which discusses Jew and Gentile distinctions is merely cultural. It is a logical fallacy to reduce discussions of some other passages to cultural distinction when salvation historical concerns may be in view.

class lines in 1 Cor 11:17–22, the social impact of Peter's dining decision is to create the very partiality against which he had argued. We might see it as the exertion of a kind of ethnic or racial privilege—an almost unthinking, seemingly inconsequential assertion of his status as a Jew in a society that was struggling to see cultural impartiality amongst Jews and Gentiles.

Another example of this kind of exertion of privilege is argued against by Paul in 1 Cor 6:1–8. Here, the dispute is not cultural, but legal. Paul rebukes the Corinthians for taking each other to civil courts to litigate disagreements. It is their right to do so, though Paul makes a strong case that it is not in their best interest as a witness of the gospel. He concludes his argument with an important statement:

> In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—and believers at that.[62]

While he does not use the language of *love* in this chapter—possibly because of where he is rhetorically working toward in chapter 13—he clearly outlines the key feature of it: selfless sacrifice. He argues that the exertion of rights (or of privilege) is not the ideal. But willingly being defrauded or wronged for the sake of the other (or giving up rights or privileges) was essential to their spiritual maturity and gospel witness. One cannot help but wonder if Paul had Jesus Christ in mind as his example, one who ironically submitted himself to the civil courts of the Gentiles to be wronged and defrauded for the sake of his beloved people.

E. Summary of New Testament Definitions

While the New Testament has much to say about *ἀγάπη*, we can see that it certainly involves selfless sacrifice, even to the point of sacrificing one's life. It is demonstrated by God and Jesus Christ to their people or friends and also commended to them for the benefit of one another. Such love is to be practiced within the church and is characteristic of both broad relationships and particularly close relationships (such as friendships). It likewise extends beyond racial and ethnic lines of division. Finally, the selfless part of this *ἀγάπη* is in contrast to the exertion of rights or privileges that in some way harm another.

V. GRECO-ROMAN CONTEXT

The New Testament pictures of love and friendship, along with their backgrounds from the Hebrew Scriptures, as we have seen, include a few distinct elements: a familial kind of intimacy (beyond mere acquaintance), selfless and sacrificial interaction, and something of an intentionality to traverse ethnic or racial boundaries. The New Testament, likewise, establishes important reasoning behind the imperatives to love, especially within

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[62] 1 Cor 6:7–8.

the context of Christian relationships (or friendships). We will turn now to the Greco-Roman social context of these New Testament concepts to see if we can further describe friendship as a virtuous pursuit.[63]

As before, we need to establish that ἀγάπη is a relevant term to discussions of friendship. The major difficulty in sorting out this background, like that of New Testament Greek, is linguistic complexity. In the Classical Period, love was typically talked about using a variety of terms in addition to ἀγάπη. While ἀγάπη is certainly present in classical drama, philosophy, and literature, the emphasis on it as a distinct kind of love seems to be somewhat later than the Classical Period. The classical antecedents tend to focus on the ἔρως and φιλία word groups.[64] Yet, there is an important connection between the concept of friendship and the virtue of ἀγάπη. Most notably, Aristotle, in his tract on friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is quite happy to intersperse uses of the verb ἀγαπάω to describe the relationship between friends.[65] Nevertheless, it will be helpful to consider love and friendship more widely.

A. PLATO'S *SYMPOSIUM*

The first major treatise on love from the Classical Period, and which remains influential even today, is Plato's Symposium. In it, Plato focuses on ἔρως, though in terms of both the more recent understanding of erotic love as well as selfless, sacrificial love.[66] That is, in Plato, ἔρως transcends the merely physical and, among other things, points people to the eternal form of love itself. We begin to see glimpses of this toward the beginning of the dialogue in a speech from Eryximachus:

> So you can see how extremely powerful Love (ἔρως) fundamentally is, in all his manifestations; it's not going too far to say that he is omnipotent. But it is the Love (ἔρως) whose fulfillment lies in virtuous, restrained, and moral behaviour from both gods and men who has the greatest power and is the source of all our happiness. It is he who makes it possible for us to interact on good terms with one another and with our divine masters.[67]

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[63] It is important to note here that some would suggest limiting ourselves to first-century Roman culture on the basis of proximity to the composition of the New Testament. However, given the widespread use of Greek in the Alexandrian Empire (the forerunner of the Roman Empire) and that Roman culture was self-consciously influenced by Greek literature, history, art, philosophy, rhetoric, and culture, to limit is to ignore. As such, the classical background necessarily remains fairly broad in its scope, including classical Greek literature to the 5th century BCE.

[64] For example, Plato seems to collapse the definitions of ἔρως, ἐπιθυμία, and φιλία at one point in an early dialogue. See Plato, *Lysis*, 221b.

[65] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156a, 1165b, 1167b, etc.

[66] Plato also appears to be comfortable using ἀγαπάω interchangeably. See Plato, *Symposium*, 180b.

[67] Plato, *Symposium*, 188d. See Plato, *Symposium*, trans. R. Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 23–24.

In his speech on love, Eryximachus extends love beyond that of a close interpersonal relationship (i.e., a lover), but to a wider array of interpersonal relationships and even into the abstract. In this part of his speech, he advocates for a virtuous expression of love, moral in its outlook, and befitting both divine and human relationships. This notion is picked up later when Socrates discusses something of a progression in relationships:

> You should use the things of this world as rungs in a ladder. You start by loving one attractive body and step up to two; from there you move on to physical beauty in general, from there to the beauty of people's activities, from there to the beauty of intellectual endeavours, and from there you ascend to that final intellectual endeavour, which is no more and no less than the study of that beauty, so that you finally recognize true beauty.[68]

Speaking as the priestess Diotima of Mantinea, Socrates outlines what has become known as the 'ladder of love.' The progression here, though, is important. To fully experience love (ἔρως) in the fullest metaphysical sense, a person begins with the beauty of a body, a single individual. Expressing affection—if we are to take the previous statements on the virtue of love as indicators, including selfless sacrifice—for an individual, this love then expands to two bodies. From there, one can abstract to love of people in general and, then, to the love of beauty itself. This is a roadmap of moving from expressing genuine, relational love of a person to the love of wider groups. This progression is significant when it comes to the Christian notion of expressing love—recognizing a progression from deep relationships with certain individuals to groups to ideas themselves—not unlike the tiered progressions we saw in both Leviticus and John 15.

B. ARISTOTLE'S *RHETORIC* AND *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

The classical expression of this kind of progression of loving relationships is subsequently seen in Aristotle's understanding of love (which he terms φίλιος—related to the verb φιλέω—but encompasses a wider variety of close relationships than the translation friendship implies).[69] While his most extensive discussion on the topic is found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, we shall begin with a definition from his *Rhetoric*:

> Let *loving* (φιλέω), then, be defined as wishing for anyone the things which we believe to be good, for his sake but not for our

[68] Plato, *Symposium*, 211c. See Plato, *Symposium*, 55.

[69] Scholarship on the precise nature of friendship in the Classical Period is divided over the presence of emotional aspects in the concept. Some argue that it is a matter of duty, like familial relationships, and so carries very little in the way of affective qualities. David Konstan, however, has argued extensively that φιλία is primarily an affective bond. See David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). He subsequently has argued that this quality of φιλία is expressed, then, within the emotion of love. See David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 170–176.

> own, and procuring them for him as far as lies in our power. A *friend* (φῖλος) is one who *loves* and is *loved* in return, and those who think their relationship is of this character consider themselves *friends*. This being granted, it necessarily follows that he is a *friend* who shares our joy in good fortune and our sorrow in affliction, for our own sake and not for any other reason. For all men rejoice when what they desire comes to pass and are pained when the contrary happens, so that pain and pleasure are indications of their wish. And those are *friends* who have the same ideas of good and bad, and *love* and hate the same persons, since they necessarily wish the same things; wherefore one who wishes for another what he wishes for himself seems to be the other's *friend*.[70]

Aristotle's definition of φιλέω here is one that focuses not only selfless sacrificial elements ("for his sake but not for our own"), but also the mutuality of sharing a similar worldview and goals. David Konstan summarizes the concept this way:

> Returning to the definition of loving or to *philein*, it is clear that it represents an altruistic or generous sentiment in regard to another (wishing the good for that person's sake) that includes the desire or intention to provide the other with what she or he values. No other conditions for loving are specified: nothing is said, for example, about duty or obligation. As far as the performance of services is concerned, loving just consists in the uncoerced wish to provide them. Here, then, there is no tension between the sentiment of love and the requirement or even the demand that one help others in achieving the goods to which they aspire.[71]

This understanding of φιλέω from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, of course, coheres well with the biblical understanding of close relationships (or friendships) based on intimacy (with Christ or each other), willingness to sacrifice, and adherence to the same religious convictions from a selfless disposition.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle's great treatise on the practical application of virtue—how one must live in order to live well—Aristotle expands his discussion of the virtue of φιλέω considerably.[72] This is especially important to this essay because Aristotle does not include other forms of *love* in his list of virtues. Rather, he treats love (φιλέω) in the context of close relationships:

> The perfect form of *love* (φιλία) is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue. For these friends wish each alike the other's good in respect of their goodness, and they are good in themselves; but it is those who wish the good of their

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[70] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1380b-1381a (Freese, LCL). Each italicized word is a form of φιλία or one of the related verbs.

[71] Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 175–176.

[72] See David Konstan's discussion of this topic in Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 67-78.

> friends for their friends' sake who are friends in the fullest sense, since they love each other for themselves and not accidentally.[73]

Again, Aristotle affirms the selfless character of love. This much is likewise seen in his earlier example of a mother loving a child, demonstrated in provision of resources for success even when the return of love is not possible.[74] What is especially important here is that Aristotle suggests the basis for the friendship is the moral character (*ethos*) of the other—their goodness, loved for themselves—and not some practical end or utility (which is itself fleeting). He continues: "Hence the friendship of these lasts as long as they continue to be good; and virtue is a permanent quality."[75] Indeed, regard for the other's moral character or virtue—not the virtue itself, but the expression of the virtue in that person—is the primary aspect of the loving bond between them. This love of the virtue expressed in the other is expressed most fully in the deepest relationships.

C. Cicero's *De Amicitia*

Cicero, at least early in his life, followed Aristotle's definition of friendship.[76] But as he neared the end of his life, he composed a work dedicated to describing friendship, commonly called *De Amicitia* (on friendship).[77] In it, he defines friendship in terms of intimacy at first, and then directly connects it to virtue itself:

> For friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection, and I am inclined to think that, with the exception of wisdom, no better thing has been given to man by the immortal gods. . . Again, there are those who place the "chief good" in virtue and that is really a noble view; but this very virtue is the parent and preserver of friendship, and without virtue, friendship cannot exist at all.[78]

Cicero sees friendship as a gift of the gods, a divine blessing characterized by affinity in all things human and divine—not unlike the kind of loving relationships envisioned in the Torah that were built upon an affinity in adhering to the Word/Law of God. Cicero continues in his description to praise the many social advantages of friendship:

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73 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b (Rackham, LCL). I have substituted love for Rackham's translation of φιλία as friendship in order to avoid the inherent limitation of this concept to friendship in the modern sense.

74 See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1159a.

75 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1156b (Rackham, LCL).

76 Cicero, *De Inventione*, 2.166. "Friendship is a desire to do good to someone simply for the benefit of the person whom one loves, with a requital of the feeling on his part" (Hubbell, LCL). See also Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 130.

77 In the Loeb series, it is called *Laelius de Amicitia* and it is sometimes called simply the *Laelius* as it is named for Gaius Laelius, a statesman in the Middle Roman Republic, chosen by Cicero as the primary character of the dialogue.

78 Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 6 (Falconer, LCL).

> Therefore, among men like those just mentioned, friendship offers advantages almost beyond my power to describe. In the first place, how can life be what Ennius calls "the life worth living," if it does not repose on the mutual goodwill of a friend? What is sweeter than to have someone with whom you may dare discuss anything as if you were communing with yourself? How could your enjoyment in times of prosperity be so great if you did not have someone whose joy in them would be equal to your own? Adversity would indeed be hard to bear, without him to whom the burden would be heavier even than to yourself. . . For friendship adds a brighter radiance to prosperity and lessens the burden of adversity by dividing and sharing it.[79]

In enumerating benefits, Cicero focuses on unity of mind that comes from shared experience. He begins with relational vulnerability in sharing the fulness of one's thoughts. In very practical terms, he notes the true joy of sharing prosperity and relief that comes from sharing the burden of hardship from within intimate friendship. And a little later, he notes that the orientation of a relationship with a friend is far more significant than that with a passing acquaintance, for it is directed at hope. "Seeing that friendship includes very many and very great advantages, it undoubtedly excels all other things in this respect, that it projects the bright ray of hope into the future, and does not suffer the spirit to grow faint or to fall."[80] Friendship is not valuable in the immediate; it promises its advantages for the future. It is not surprising, then, that Cicero goes on to focus on the connection between this kind of intimate friendship and political allegiance.

While Cicero does not explicitly address friendship across ethnic or social lines at this point, it is worth noting that focus on shared experiences and open discussion (more so than commonly held traits or desires) and his focus on the hopeful orientation of friendship do not require racial or ethnic homogeny. Indeed, one might argue that the richness of shared experience will be deepened with some kind of cultural diversity in the mix. Nevertheless, particularly as it leads toward political allegiance, the most core convictions or beliefs should be held in common.

D. SUMMARY OF CLASSICAL BACKGROUND

The classical background of the concepts of friendship and love affirms our New Testament understanding through precedence and enrich our understanding. In particular, the descriptions of *love* (ἔρως and φιλία) anticipate the New Testament's understanding of love (ἀγάπη). The antecedence for Christian conceptions of love as selflessly sacrificial on behalf of close others certainly has widespread attestation from those works focused on the nature of love (ἔρως) from Plato and friendship-love (φιλία) from Aristotle. We see further that there is a progression to loving relationships from mere

[79] Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 6 (Falconer, LCL).

[80] Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 7 (Falconer, LCL).

attraction to deeply sacrificial investment in the abstract—from superficial desire to a profound affection for virtue in the other. The selfless aspects of the relationship correspondingly progress and remain so out of a shared hope. These notions seem, then, to correspond to the biblical version of love that is based on a mutual sharing of religious ideals and convictions (i.e., shared experiences in Cicero) and adherence to the Christian faith and submission to God. Yet, there is a fundamental difference that is worth noting at this stage. The Christian notion of friendship-love transcends racial and ethnic boundaries (see the Hebrew Scriptures' background as well as specifically Paul's understanding of selflessness in 1 Cor 9:19–23) in a way that it does not for Aristotle or Cicero. The Classical background still operates with rigid boundaries between men and women, owners and slaves, and the various ethnicities. Christian love, however, attempts to upend these categories through selfless love.

VII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: TWO SUGGESTIONS

Given what we have seen in the biblical foreground and classical background, I would suggest that there are some important implications for ecclesial life to be drawn from this study. The key observations we must consider center around an expanded, yet specific definition of Christian love (ἀγάπη) expressed in friendship as selfless (or other-focused), sacrificial, (including the surrendering of privileges or rights), familial in its orientation, and centered on affinities that transcend ethnicity or culture. Additionally, we have seen that there a progression to such loving relationships in which Christian love is expressed more fully for close friends (rather than strangers).

The current practical difficulty in these conclusions is centered in the last two. The world around us is tearing itself apart over some of these very issues—especially that of various forms of prejudice on the basis of culture and ethnicity. In particular, Christians within the woke movements and those friendly to Critical Race Theory are lining up against Christians in the anti-woke movements positioned against the conclusions being drawn by Critical Race Theory.[81] This division paints a picture of our Christian faith that is rather unlike the Christian expression of love that we have

[81] At this point, it is worth noting that there is significant debate around the existence of structural or systemic racism. Critical Race Theory, for example, is concerned with "the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious." Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Third Edition (New York, NYU Press: 2017), 3. That is, CRT is fundamentally concerned with showing where and how structural racism works. Yet, others suggest that systems cannot be racist, only individuals can. See Yancey, Beyond Racial Gridlock, 20–23. While mediating between the two sides of this debate is well beyond the scope of this paper, I would think that Christians with a robust view of the fall and human sinfulness should, at least, be open to the possibility that human institutions (like governments and culture) would be subject to structural deficiencies like racism and prejudicial ethnocentrism.

seen in the New Testament. As Christians, we have an opportunity and, perhaps, an obligation to find a productive way forward in these battles, if not for our own benefit, for the benefit of the witness of the Church. And as such, I will make two suggestions based on this study.

A. Sacrifice Privilege to Establish Relationships Across Racial and Ethnic Boundaries

I propose that it is essential for Christians to establish relationships specifically across ethnic and cultural boundaries when possible.[82] This may seem counterintuitive or at odds with the conclusion drawn above, that love is expressed on the basis of affinity rather than cultural designations. Nevertheless, combined with the model of tiered relationships, it might be a worthwhile starting point. For the deeper affinity-based friendships to begin, the pool of acquaintances must be widened. A Christian, then, might go out of his or her way to make acquaintance with people who are not like them, who do not think like them, who do not look like them, and who do not share their cultural background.

Establishing such relationships will require two important commitments: 1) observing and suspending privilege, and 2) a commitment to some form of selfless humility—both critical parts of the definition of Christian love that we have observed.

In practical terms, the first is a matter of becoming aware of one's unconscious privileges. This can be done to some extent through readings and a kind of abstract introspection. However, simply spending time with others of different cultures and making the effort (selflessly) to learn about and appreciate other cultures will help us appreciate what liberties we take and what privileges we might have. It is important to note this works both ways across ethnic boundaries. We cannot pretend that cultural differences do not exist, but rather, we must actively accommodate one another, tolerating ignorance and committing to mutual education. And in seeing these different directions of accommodation, it might become clearer where prejudice and partiality (in need of the gospel) reside in our society.

This kind of accommodation is particularly important in churches. As a white minister, I may, out of theological conviction, want people from other cultures or ethnic groups to join my church. But am I willing to think through my church service, my programs, the way my church does its ministerial work from the perspective of those others? Are my liturgies largely unchanged from hundreds of years ago? Are my hymns primarily from the Victorian era, a time where composers and lyricists represented a

[82] Forming relationships across ethnic and cultural boundaries, or across so-called racial boundaries, should not, however, be confused with partiality. While framed often in economic terms, the biblical tradition is quite clear that impartiality is to be maintained both ways, neither favoring the majority culture nor favoring the minority culture. In the Hebrew Scriptures, see Exod 23:1-2, Lev 19:15, Deut 1:17, and Isa 11:4. In the New Testament, consider how Mark shows Jesus addressing equally Jairus's daughter (a child of a wealthy Jewish leader), a woman with a medical issue, and a Gentile man—all together in chapter 5. See also Luke 20:21.

majority white culture? How do people from other cultures experience these things? What accommodations are we making to help them feel at home? Where is the search for unspoken privilege in our activities and services? Where is the selfless sacrifice on our part? Even if I decide to maintain certain traditions, is it not worth having conversations with people about how they experience my church from their cultural perspective?

In practical terms, the second commitment is far simpler. Given Christ's example in the cross and Paul's understanding of accommodation in ministry in passages like 1 Cor 9:19–23, Christians simply need to be willing to selflessly sacrifice for others. We must assume the real costs and take the first step. I should talk to someone I would not otherwise engage. I should go to places I would not otherwise visit. I should be willing to watch movies that come from and represent cultures not my own and read books about things I might not otherwise engage. I must keep learning. I must take the first step so that a real friendship has the chance to form. When I appreciate other cultures on their own terms, I might have a chance at forming an organic relationship that is truly Christian in its character and nearly familial in its expression. Yet, while I maintain that one must hold these theological convictions (as I have argued throughout this essay), people of other cultures are not my theology projects. Having my theological conviction precede my action may look like a concession in how I go about making friends. Truly being accommodating, however, will give me substantive, intimate, unforced friendships.

B. Develop Deep Friendships from Within Those Relationships that Can Progress

If we have begun to develop relationships across cultural and ethnic boundaries, I propose that we can and should begin to demonstrate true love within those friendships. But, and this is important, this will not be the course for all relationships. Ethnicity as the basis of forming a general relationship can be possibly useful. As the basis of a close relationships or deep friendship, however, ethnicity is wholly inadequate. As we saw repeatedly throughout the Scriptural arguments, particularly in the Torah, as well as in Aristotle, mutuality on or affinity to something else, a higher set of convictions, is necessary. As Christians, our common faith and ideals must be at the heart of those friendships—akin to Aristotle arguing that it is not the love of the virtue nor the love of utility, but the love of the virtue expressed in the other person, that is the basis of deep friendship. And so, from within acquaintances of other races and ethnicities, we must find true friends with whom we share the most essential Christian convictions. And then, we must invest deeply, selflessly, and sacrificially in those close relationships.

Given the hierarchy and progressions of relationships already identified in the biblical and classical texts, such close friendship should, then, have an effect on one's love for the wider group. That is, love for a close other, as it deepens to the love of the abstract within them, can be extrapolated

to the other, the stranger, and then humanity in general. Or in personal terms, the more I love truly close friends (with whom I share the greatest of affinities but not necessarily an ethnicity or culture), the more I should show compassion to other acquaintances of that other ethnicity or culture (with whom I share fewer affinities), and the more I should desire the wellbeing of all people.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Returning to where we began, I commend to you this argument: *a biblical understanding of friendship, expressed in the Christian virtue of love, is essential to improving discussions of race and ethnicity in this complex moment of our history*. Seeing the news the last few years has only increased my fear that the current debates about racial injustice in the United States will not be quelled by political means. While I would think any Christian should support the right to protest, the freedom of speech, and the abolition of any remaining systemic injustice—as well as the need to protect religious freedoms and question, or even resist, the totalizing conclusions and world views promoted by progressive secular approaches to race and ethnicity—I fundamentally believe that a Christian understanding of gospel-driven love (and its social expression in friendship) is our best chance at making progress in this fracturing debate on race and ethnicity. Indeed, genuine and deep relationships that transcend racial and ethnic boundaries are not just a good starting point for Christians, but perhaps the only useful starting point. The empathy that comes with true friendship, as it is biblically defined, is essential.

This essay began with a simple phrase: "I have a black friend." If we only ever mean by that a superficial acquaintance that I am using tokenistically, defensively, or self-promotionally, then we will not only subvert progress in the matters of ethnicity and race, but we will also miss out on the fullness of Christian love and friendship as advocated for in the Scriptures. So, make a black friend. Make a white friend. Make friends across cultural boundaries and then, if the deeper friendship emerges, love those friends as Christ loved his.

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PASTORING IN THE AGE OF ANGER

DR. JOEL D. LAWRENCE[1]

I. THE AGE OF ANGER

In his important book, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*, Pankaj Mishra recounts the meeting between Timothy McVeigh, who in 1995 ignited a bomb outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, and Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 attack of the World Trade Center, the precursor to the attacks of 9/11. These two men, raised in different countries, in different religions, and with different political ideologies motivating their terrorist acts, found themselves in adjacent cells at the Supermax prison near Florence, Colorado. In the time that they were neighbors, the two formed an unlikely relationship and found that, in spite of their enormously different life experiences, they had a deep connection. In fact, after McVeigh was put to death, Yousef commented, "I never have [known] anyone in my life who has so similar a personality to my own as his."[2]

Mishra calls their meeting "the most illuminating coincidence of our time."[3] But what is it that their relationship illuminates? According to Mishra, this story sheds light on the defining feature of the early twenty-first century: we are living in the age of anger, a time of seething rage that is not isolated to one segment of society or to one region of the world but has spread throughout the world and infected every level of society. What connects McVeigh and Yousef, in spite of all of their differences, is a deep anger at the state of the world, an anger that creates a desire to strike out against the people and structures that are the object of their ire and are, in their mind, the cause of their alienation.

Mishra's book explores the historical movement over the past three hundred years that has brought us to the age of anger and argues that "the unprecedented political, economic, and social disorder that accompanied the rise of the industrial capitalist economy in nineteenth-century Europe, and led to world wars, totalitarian regimes, and genocide in the first half

[1] Joel Lawrence is the Executive Director of the Center for Pastor Theologians, Oak Park, Illinois. He lives in St Paul, Minnesota.

[2] Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), 285.

[3] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 284.

of the twentieth century, is now affecting much vaster regions and bigger populations."[4] Tracing the history of the West, and its relationship to the rest of the world, Mishra argues that the framework of our day can be found in the historical patterns that have plagued the West and now are at work throughout the globe. He makes the startling statement that "forces more complex than in the previous two great wars are at work" in our time.[5] His book traces the ideological connections from Voltaire to Trump, connections that are illuminated by the kinship between McVeigh and Yousef, a kinship that has at its core a common experience of dislocation and alienation that breeds what Nietzsche calls *ressentiment*.

As pastors, we are called to lead our flocks through the age of anger, to lead them to resist conformity to the forces at work in our world that are creating this age. To do so, it is critical to understand the dynamics that are creating the age of anger and to counter these dynamics with faithful preaching and discipleship of our flocks. Only by doing so can we be used by the Lord to form our people into a community of peace in a time of rage. It will come as no surprise to any of us that the anger of our era has made its way into the church. Perhaps you, like me, have witnessed this anger within your congregation as members of your flock battle it out on social media, and as people you have known to be gentle, loving followers of Jesus turn on each other with angry rants over mask mandates and political candidates. As pastors, it is important for us to understand the dynamics that are at work globally in order to understand how these are playing out locally, including in our local church fellowship. As pastors, we must ask: How do we shepherd our flock in this volatile time? How can we lead our congregation to grow to maturity in Christ, to be representatives of God's peaceful rule, and to resist being conformed to the patterns of our angry age? How can we counter the anger of our age that is flooding the church?

The purpose of this essay is to encourage pastors to lead in this challenging time. To do so, I will describe, at a thematic level, Mishra's argument about how we have come to inhabit the age of anger and then reflect on what it means to pastor in the age of anger. I will conclude the essay with reflections on the need for pastors to reshape our congregational common objects of love, that we might be formed as communities whose hearts are not dedicated to the promises of human ideologies that have created the age of anger, but rather are being formed by the promises of the gospel that lead us to be a people who are shaped to be witness to the peace of God in a world of anger.

II. WHY SO ANGRY?

According to Mishra, the widespread anger that has come to mark our age is rooted in the complex story of the rise and spread of modern liberalism, which is fundamentally a vision of being human that makes comprehensive promises about how to improve the human condition and

[4] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 10.
[5] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 10.

achieve human flourishing.[6] Mishra argues that the promise of modern liberalism is "the universal commercial society of self-interested individuals that was originally advocated in the eighteenth century by such Enlightenment thinkers as Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Voltaire, and Kant."[7] Modern liberalism makes promises of equality, economic well-being, and autonomous control over our own lives. However, it turns out that these promises are not easily deliverable to the vast majority of humanity, leading Mishra to ask, "Can the triumphant axioms of individual autonomy and interest-seeking, formulated, sanctified, and promoted by a privileged minority, work for the majority in a crowded and inter-dependent world?"[8] For Mishra, the answer is no, and it is in this answer that we will find the key to understanding the anger of our times.

He goes on to say that the great success of western liberalism is that it has captured the imagination of billions of people, becoming the dominant ideology of the late modern world.[9] On this he writes, "Indeed, we live today in a vast homogenous world market, in which human beings are programmed to maximize their self-interest and aspire to the same things, regardless of their difference of cultural background and individual temperament."[10] The dominance of modern liberalism, and the market that accompanies it, has spread throughout the world, bringing with it a vision of human thriving that includes promises of freedom, prosperity, and equality. Throughout the twentieth century, as the post-war world was established and global communication grew, billions of people heard the promises of modern liberalism and its vision of human thriving through autonomy and self-determination. As "a whole new universe of possibilities about how human beings could act in and shape history" spread across the earth, more and more people seized on the possibilities, and so more and more people could be disenchanted with the failure of bringing those possibilities into reality.[11]

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[6] By modern liberalism, I am not referring to the liberalism of the Liberal to Conservative policy spectrum in partisan politics. Rather, I am referring to the political philosophy that undergirds that policy spectrum.

[7] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 7.

[8] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 7.

[9] This dominance is famously declared by Francis Fukuyama. Fukuyama, writing in the days of the collapse of the Soviet Union, declares that humanity has reached the apex of our political thinking with the development of liberalism and the vanquishing of communism as an ideological competitor. While Fukuyama's thesis has often been misunderstood as saying that history has somehow ceased or that liberalism will reign unimpeded in the world, his argument is more nuanced than this. For Fukuyama, the declaration of the end of history is the declaration that humanity will not develop a better political philosophy than liberalism, but not that there won't be others that challenge liberalism. What he advocates is in alignment with Mishra's thesis, namely that western liberalism has become the dominant philosophy in the late modern world, one whose dominance has spread throughout the globe and created a vision for human life in the twenty-first century. See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

[10] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 7.

[11] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 51.

Mishra asserts that the age of anger is rooted in the gap between the promise of what the universal commercial society of self-interested individuals would accomplish and what, in fact, has been delivered to the vast majority of humans living in the world today. According to Mishra, "More and more people feel the gap between the profligate promises of individual freedom and sovereignty, and the incapacity of their political and economic organizations to realize them."[12] Anger festers in this gap as millions of humans despair of the great difference between what has been promised and what is experienced. In this gap *ressentiment* grows.

Ressentiment is a concept explored by Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morality*.[13] Nietzsche's discussion of *ressentiment* is found in his famous analysis of the victory of the slave morality.[14] For Nietzsche, the victory of slave morality is the great tragedy of human history due to its dampening of the human spirit and human development. Rather than a victory of the aristocratic morality, which would celebrate human strength, the slave morality, exemplified by the call of Jesus for humans to surrender, forms humans to be weak. But this call to be weak reveals a deep contradiction in the human soul: we long to be strong, we long to have control, and so the call to surrender that is embodied in the Christian ethic has been, according to Nietzsche, a destructive force within history, as it destroys the human soul and leaves it filled with *ressentiment*, a deep-seeded sense of jealousy, weakness, and a longing for power. For Nietzsche, the tragedy of the slave morality is that it creates *ressentiment*, a sense of indignity and disgrace in the human soul, "a whole tremulous realm of subterraneous revenge, inexhaustible and insatiable in outbursts."[15] *Ressentiment*, though connected to the feeling of resentment, goes beyond it. Resentment is an emotional response to a momentary slight or indignation. It is the response to injustice that a person feels or a jealousy that is felt in response to a particular circumstance of another person's success. But, as an emotion, resentment fades as the indignation is either addressed or recedes into the background and so no longer has control over the person who felt slighted. But *ressentiment* goes deeper. It is a way of being formed, a settled attitude that becomes a state of being in an individual or in a group. *Ressentiment* is the formation of the human soul whose life has been dominated by a sense of losing and of being oppressed. It becomes that condition of a person whose life is driven by a deep indignation at the real and perceived inequalities of life.

Mishra, taking up this theme of *ressentiment*, is less concerned with Nietzsche's particular project of moving humanity "beyond good and evil," but instead utilizes the notion of *ressentiment* in the twenty-first century to describe the forces working on our world today. For Mishra, *ressentiment* forms in the gap between promise and reality because the gap creates the

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12 Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 51.

13 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morality* (London: Penguin Classics, 2013).

14 See *The Genealogy of Morality*, 25.

15 Quoted in Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 9.

conditions in which this interminable sense of dislocation, estrangement, and alienation do their formative work on a human soul—and on a human society. *Ressentiment* grows in people who view themselves as "wholly dispensable in a society where economic growth enriched only a minority and democracy appeared to be a game rigged by the powerful."[16] As history has progressed through the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, with the rise of global communications and commerce, the spread of western ideology via the growth of multinational corporations, and the exporting of entertainment, the sense of *ressentiment* has spread. First identified as a force burning in the souls of a few revolutionaries seeking to overturn the authoritarian monarchies of the late nineteenth century, *ressentiment* has now become a global phenomenon, and technology has created more and more opportunity for the spread of the western liberal vision of humanity, the accompanying mimetic desire[17] that shapes the human heart, and the *ressentiment* that takes root in broad segments of society whose mimetic desires have not been satisfied.

III. EVERYONE IS LOSING

As we have seen, Mishra has argued that *ressentiment* has become endemic across the globe and at all levels of society as a palpable sense of loss has taken hold across wide segments of the population, fueling anger, violence, and social media rants, revealing a perception of standing on unstable ground as "they" win but "we" lose. This notion of others winning while we are losing brings us to Mishra's conclusion about the driving dynamic of our age: in the early twenty-first century, in a way that has never been the case in human history, *everyone* feels like they are losing.

This widespread sense of loss is inevitable once *ressentiment* has taken root in society. *Ressentiment* operates in our soul by shaping the way we see others and interpret the world around us. The formation of *ressentiment* in our souls and in our society means that we must find those who are responsible for our losing. "They" are the winners who are causing our losing, who are standing between us and the promises of self-determination and success that we have been given, and so "they" are threatening us. This creates a societal blame game in which everyone feels like losers and blames others for their loss. But the problem is that the others are people who themselves feel like they are losing and are themselves filled with *ressentiment* at others who are perceived to be winning.

We see this dynamic at work in American society today. White, midwestern working-class people, who have lost the security that came with steady employment, pensions, stable towns, and unions, blame the liberal elites, who, in the mind of these workers, are the "winners" who are stealing the promises of prosperity and security. At the same time, liberal coastal elites feel that they are losing the promise of liberal democracy to Red State Republicans, who, in the mind of the elites, insist on denying the freedoms

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[16] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 10.

[17] I will explore the notion of mimetic desire below.

of others by imposing their dated morality on society, so standing in the way of individual liberty. African Americans, who have had the experience of being losers in the promise of liberal democracy for centuries, blame the structures of America that favor historically white, privileged people, a stance that causes a reaction from working-class whites who don't feel privileged in any way precisely because they themselves feel like losers, as noted above. *Ressentiment* creates a vicious cycle of blame and a desire for protection from losing that individuals and groups feel today, fueling the passions around a political culture that feels like a zero-sum game in which the future of "our" society is at stake. Everyone feels like they are losing. Everyone blames others. *Everyone* is angry.

Here, Mishra makes an important observation: much of the literature on the anger that is animating our world locates this anger in human difference, in the fact that diverse groups have different values, values that are in conflict with one another and are causing the rage that is consuming our age. Hence, the solution is in diversity training, by which people are guided in coming to understand their own biases and to understand the viewpoints of others in order that these differences might be bridged and society find common ground. But Mishra rejects this interpretation. For him, the pervasive *ressentiment* of our age arises, not because of our difference, but because of our similarity. The spread of modern liberalism has formed humanity to desire the same things, to have a shared vision of "the good life." It is because of this common vision that *ressentiment* festers so broadly. Mishra writes, "We come closer to understanding *ressentiment* today when we recognize that it arises out of an intensely competitive human desire for convergence and resemblance rather than religious, cultural, theological, and ideological difference."[18] In other words, the age of anger is so widespread because billions of humans have the same basic vision of the good life, but only a few are perceived to have achieved it. "They" are privileged over against "us" in the quest for and attainment of the promises we have all been given but have not achieved.

As such, Mishra stresses the connection between *ressentiment* and mimetic desire. Mimetic desire describes that the way that our hearts are shaped by the longing to have what others have, a notion made famous by René Girard, but which Nietzsche had already identified in his time.[19] This mimetic desire shapes a world in which "people [are] desiring and trying to possess the same objects."[20] In making this connection, Mishra highlights that "*ressentiment* [is] the defining feature of a world where mimetic desire . . . endlessly proliferates, and where the modern promise of equality collides with massive disparities of power, education, status, and

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[18] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 50.

[19] See especially René Gerard, "Generative Scapegoating," in Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly, ed., *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 122.

[20] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 73.

property ownership."[21] Mimetic desire is the dominant mode of formation in the modern world as the very few who have received the promises of modern liberalism shape the tastes and desires of massive numbers of people whose hearts long for what they have. These forces, which have been present throughout history, now have a global ecosystem in which they can thrive through communications technology, social media, education, and commercialization. *Ressentiment*, and the mimetic desire that accompanies it, are not new to human history, but have spread across the globe in ways never previously possible, creating dynamics that have seeded our age with such anger.

To use a phrase that Mishra doesn't use but that is apropos to his analysis and will bridge us to our reflections on pastoring in the age of anger, modern liberalism creates a set of "common objects of love" and shapes humans to set their hearts on those objects. The clashes that we are experiencing in our world are so widespread and the anger so endemic, not because humanity has competing common objects of love, but because liberalism has successfully shaped the human heart to have the same common objects. Thus, unquenched mimetic desire breeds *ressentiment*, from which flows the anger of our time.

IV. COMMON OBJECTS OF LOVE

As noted in my introduction, the age of anger has not stopped at the church door. Social media has become the site of many a battle between Christian soldiers who are marching as to war against each other. As pastors, we are called to shepherd our flocks in these difficult days, to grasp how our people, and our own souls, are shaped by the forces that have created the age of anger. We are called to be intentional in our pastoral work to preach and to disciple so that our congregations might be freed from the dynamics of the age of anger. It is critical to understand the degree to which our congregants have been formed by promises that do not arise from the gospel and to determine the degree to which this formation is shaping them to be participants in the age of anger. Is the anger of our age infecting our congregations because the people entrusted to our care feel like they are losing and are afraid of that loss? Have our churches been formed by the age of anger because we have bought into the promises of the modern world, promises that are at odds with the call to follow Jesus?

To explore this, I want to interact with Oliver O'Donovan's book *Common Objects of Love*.[22] In this book, O'Donovan engages with the question of how commitments of love form a community. O'Donovan borrowed this notion from Augustine,[23] who defined a people as "a gathered multitude of rational beings united by agreeing to share the things they love."[24] As such, a people becomes a "we," a community of shared

[21] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 31.

[22] Oliver O'Donovan, *Common Objects of Love* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2001).

[23] Augustine adapted it from Cicero.

[24] O'Donovan, *Common Objects*, 25.

purpose, by agreeing to love certain common objects that shape the way this community understands the world and their place in the world. The common objects of love take on a value of "transcendental representation," a phrase that O'Donovan borrows from the historian Erich Voegelin and uses to discuss the representational value of the things that a society holds in common. For instance, O'Donovan writes, "What is holy in ancient Israel—the Sabbath, the temple, the land—at once organizes and structures the people as a political society and discloses the universal divine purpose for the world."[25] The common objects of love are the "representative objects, representative persons, representative histories, and representative ideas [that] constitute the central core of the society's common way of seeing the world and living in it."[26]

In O'Donovan's description of common objects of love, we find a connection between a community's tradition and its identity. No community can long endure without tradition. Tradition is what provides continuity with the commitments of the society and is the process through which the common objects are passed on through time, forming the necessary foundation for the continuance of a society. For O'Donovan, "the essential thing about tradition is that it creates social continuity."[27] Without a recognized and agreed-upon tradition, it is impossible for a community to have shape, to have a sense of what makes us "us." From this, it is clear that the common objects of love, having identified the transcendental representatives that shape the tradition, also form the shared identity of a community. O'Donovan observes that "common objects of love generate common self-understanding."[28] Who are "we"? What unites us as a social community? The common objects of love perform this function and set social groupings apart from one another. These objects are language, practices, moral customs, symbols, a shared historical narrative. All of these, along with myriad other things and ideas, give a community its identity and so its understanding of itself and its place in the world. In the same way that Sabbath, the temple, and land are shared objects for Israel that organize her life together and shape her understanding of her place in the world, so it is with all societies whose identity is formed around the complex interplay between representative objects and tradition.

I believe that O'Donovan's vision of the common objects of love gives us insight into pastoring in the age of anger, as we bring his understanding of the shaping of a societal identity into conversation with Mishra's narrative of the genesis and growth of the age of anger. As we have seen, Mishra has argued that the age of anger has arisen as a result of the promises that modern liberalism has made and so grows in the gap that has been created between promises and reality. As pastors, shepherding our people in the age of anger places us in a critical interpretive position. As church congregations

[25] O'Donovan, *Common Objects*, 31.
[26] O'Donovan, *Common Objects*, 32.
[27] O'Donovan, *Common Objects*, 32.
[28] O'Donovan, *Common Objects*, 28.

are divided by politics, as this division creates anger in our congregations and toward other followers of Christ, as the political affiliation of others becomes a way of deciphering another person's salvation ("you can't be a follower of Christ and vote for ___"), we must do the hard pastoral work of engaging with this anger, explicating for our congregations where it comes from and what we must do to be freed from it and so be formed as communities of love rather than anger.

Mishra's analysis of the age of anger, and O'Donovan's conception of common objects of love, give us a plan for the pastoral work we are called to do in this time.[29] As pastors, it is vital that we make clear to our congregation the common objects of love that we as followers of Jesus are called to share. Additionally, we must clarify that the promises that we have received as followers of Christ are not the same promises that the world around us has received. The ideals that Mishra highlights as the prominent ideals of modern liberalism, the common objects of love that have spread across the globe—objects such as autonomy and self-determination—are not coequal with the common objects of love that the church is called to share. They are, in fact, are often contradictory to the call to follow Christ. As such, the common objects of modern liberalism have created a vision of what to expect from life that is at odds with the vision contained in the common objects of Christianity which form the church into a society that is called to live among, but not be conformed to, the broader society. O'Donovan's assertion that "community…arise[s] out of the love of good things, things that are agreed upon as the common objects we agree to share," forces us to the vitally important pastoral work of communal identity formation, a work that will call us to counter the existing communal identity formation, and the promises therein, fueling the age of anger.

To follow Jesus is not to be given the promise of individual freedom and autonomy. Christ doesn't promise us a greater degree of control over our lives, but instead promises us the loss of control as we are called to lay down our lives for Him. Because of this, the church is called to embody the contrast between the promises that have created the age of anger and the call to follow Jesus. Modern liberalism tells us that we will flourish as self-interested, autonomous individuals who have entered into a social contract in order to protect our self-interest and exercise our independent rule over our lives. It declares that human freedom lies in pursuing our own self-determined ends. The gospel's vision of humanity declares something else, that we are created to be a self-surrendered, dependent community who live under the rule of YHWH, who has covenanted with us to guide, protect, and provide for us. It declares that human freedom lies in being

[29] The lectures that became the basis for O'Donovan's book, the Stob Lectures at Calvin College, were written during the time of the 9/11 attacks. Mishra states that these attacks were the main wake-up call to the Western world that there was an anger that was growing and was now no longer "out there," contained in failed states, but was an anger that would have repercussions on and in the seemingly secure and advanced Western societies. Timothy McVeigh could be viewed as an outlier, but following 9/11, the societal distress that has grown since that time has become undeniable, even as politicians continue to deny it.

dependent on YHWH as he reigns as Lord of our lives. These two visions of what it means to be human reveal different common objects of love. As the church, the common objects of love that shape our identity puts us at odds with the affections, desires, and strivings of modern liberalism.

When the church is freed from the common objects of love that are desired by the society to which we are sent as ambassadors, we will also be freed from the *ressentiment* that has arisen throughout our world and is rooted in a sense of dislocation from the world's common objects and the mimetic desire to attain those objects. As the church, we are called to be strangers and aliens, which means that we are called to be estranged from the world's common objects of love. As such, our calling is to be dislocated, to be alienated. But, contrary to the alienation fueling the age of anger, our alienation does not create anger in us, but rather forms in us the joy of being free from the desires of the world that we might be free to truly love the world. It is only as those who don't share the common objects of love of the world that we can truly be formed as those who love the world. For Mishra, the mimetic desire created by modern liberalism creates the *ressentiment* that powers the age of anger; as followers of Jesus, it is our difference that makes us able to love the world, to be formed as those who are freed by our love for Christ, who is our Common Object. The church's status as dislocated operates in the opposite direction of the world's sense of dislocation. The world, shaped by shared common objects of love, creates a competition for those objects and a deep anger at the inability to attain them. The church, however, formed by our common love for Christ, is alienated from the mimetic desire of the age of anger and so free to pursue reconciliation with and for the world out of a genuine love for the world.

V. A BRIEF CONCLUSION

As pastors, it is our calling to shepherd our congregations through the age of anger. To do so, we must courageously expound for our people the forces that are shaping them, the passions of our age that demand their heart and that have the potential for sowing greater anger and discord in our congregations. We must disciple our people to direct their hearts toward our Common Object of Love, toward Christ Jesus, who forms us as a community and gives us our true identity. And we must call our people to embrace the promises that He has given them. These promises are not those of autonomy, self-determination, or prosperity, but rather are promises of true life that come through surrender and suffering. As we do this, may ours be communities that are freed from the passions of the age of anger and are filled with the Spirit of love, through whom we can bear witness to the peace of Christ that rules in our hearts.

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RACE AND VIRTUE: THE VIRTUOUS MEAN AS VEHICLE FOR THE INTEGRATED CHURCH

PAUL J. MORRISON[1]

Gone are the days of legal slavery and segregation in the United States, and as a result, many—even within the church—believe racism followed suit. However, this sentiment, carried predominately by white evangelicals unable to recognize the struggles of their brothers and sisters in the minority, is primarily due to an ignorance surrounding the reality of their fight.[2] Further, there is difficulty in the conversation towards progress as "evangelicals have a tendency to define problems in simple terms and look for simple solutions" and the race conversation is anything but simple.[3] The answer can neither be found in pretending that it is not needed or in dismissing the desired results as unattainable.

This paper will argue that the best answer for lasting societal reformation regarding the issue of race and racial prejudice must begin in the heart of the individual.[4] To that end, this paper will explore the implementation of virtue. Beginning with the idea's historical roots as an independent philosophy to a more Christocentric expression, the paper will move to an address of virtue's ability to effect change, then more specifically to its application to the racial divide and conclude with the development of two key virtues for lasting change.

Before moving on, it seems appropriate to first give the scope and definition of this conversation. First, the topic at large in discussion will be referred to as a conversation, issue, divide, or concern, all of which should be viewed interchangeably as reflects the varying language among a number of authors within the field. Secondly, while the broad category spoken of

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[1] Paul J. Morrison is Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Provost at Emmaus Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as Theologian in Residence at City Church in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

[2] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Kindle Location 429.

[3] J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 18.

[4] This is not to say that it is an issue of individualism alone as there must be an address of systemic injustice and corporate culpability. That said, for these to take lasting effect and for individuals to work within and against broken systems, there must be a foundational integration in the heart of the individual. This foundation will be explored herein.

here is referred to primarily as race and ethnicity,[5] specific address will be given to prejudices within the social framework. Mentions of prejudice should be seen as racially specific but not limited to admitted or overt racism alone. Finally, while there are a great number of ways to approach and understand the topic of virtue, this paper is written from an ecumenical Christian perspective and will interpret all things accordingly.[6]

I. A HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF VIRTUE

This world is fractured. The effects of sin can be traced into every facet of life in the separation from what is good and true. In the same sense, issues of the modern social construction of race are magnified by a similar degree of separation, or apartness, in which the further from truth one moves, the further towards pain and death they are found. It would be terribly dangerous for any Christian to believe that they have arrived at the virtuous life. Christ has indeed justified those who have taken hold of his promise, but the work of final sanctification is a slow one. The believer who polishes the mirror of their life to better reflect the virtue of God does so each day, from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18). This act of holiness works two effects—it puts off the "glittering vices" of the world and puts on the eternal virtues of Christ.[7] In order to gain a proper understanding of virtue, it is best to understand its historical foundation. This history can be traced from ancient Greek philosophers, through the church fathers, and into modernity. While the term virtue may be ambiguously large at times, the usage in this paper will be understood through the following development.

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[5] Used here interchangeably to mean a "socially defined manner of identifying and categorizing individuals into groups on the basis of actual or perceived differences . . . [the] basis for defining similarities and differences, and subsequently establishing collective group identities [being a combination of] physical/biological traits and social/cultural traits." Justin D. García, Ph.D., "Ethnicity," *Salem Press Encyclopedia* (Pasadena: Salem, 2014).

[6] Ecumenical, as it is intended here, is the expression of these virtues in any number of Christian traditions, broadly considered with a humble orthodoxy. The present writer's perspective comes through general principles of autonomy and cooperation in the Southern Baptist Convention, which may bear itself in remote specificities, but the application of these virtues can and will be found in much wider circles of Evangelicalism and the Christian tradition, at large. As a point of interest, varied traditions have strengths and weaknesses in both the ability to make sweeping changes (more consistent with high church traditions) and to embody the more unique realities of an immediate community (more consistent with low church traditions).

[7] "Glittering vices" from the Latin Phrase "*Virtutes paganorum splendida vitia*," often wrongly attributed to Augustine, expresses the worldly standards of virtue which are at odds with those revealed by God. See Søren Kierkegaard, Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, and Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks: Volume 11: Part 1, Loose Papers, 1830–1843* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019,: 564–565.

A. VIRTUE IN ANTIQUITY

It was nearly four hundred years before Christ when Plato first introduced the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance,[8] but it was his student Aristotle who developed a fuller understanding of what virtue is at its core. The goal of these philosophers was a complete life—namely for Aristotle this was the magnanimous man's life as "the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best and the exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life."[9] Aristotle posited that every good virtue that man could be or attain lies between two vices as a golden mean.[10] In essence, both the virtue in deficiency and in excess are a detriment to the character of the virtuous man. Hauerwas and Pinches explain that,

> The doctrine of the mean serves to introduce us to the important ideas that virtues are not extremes, that there are extremes on *both* sides of a virtue which we must avoid, and that virtues govern appetites which must be felt "at the right times, with reference to the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, which is both intermediate and best."[11]

Taking the virtue of courage for example, Aristotle explained that a deficiency of courage is the obvious vice of cowardice, which is useless when courage is needed. However, an excess of that same principle is also detrimental as the man with an abundance of courage becomes rashly foolhardy, which could be just as much or even more dangerous than cowardice. The final principle is referred to as the Aristotelian mean, the virtuous mean, or the golden mean and will be considered here in this paper.

Whether a vice is deficient or excessive, two things typically bring it closer to the mean: awareness and action.[12] Action is obvious since the more often and rightly the virtue is practiced, the more it will exist. This is the base idea of virtue theory expressed in habit.[13] But on the same token, the virtuous

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[8] Plato, "The Republic," in *A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues*, ed. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2012), book IV, line 428a, page 381.

[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre dame Press, 1984), 149.

[10] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell, IA: Peripatetic Press, 1984), 26–29.

[11] Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 21. Though a departure from the purposes of this paper, the reader may note that the extremes described here may be rightly applied well beyond these conversations as a danger to rightly measure and avoid.

[12] Others may divide this task further, such as Porter et al.'s use of purgation, illumination, and union in the Relational Spirituality model, but the emphases of cognitive and active remain the same. See Steven L. Porter, Steven J. Sandage, David C. Wang, and Peter C. Hill, "Measuring the Spiritual, Character, and Moral Formation of Seminarians: In Search of a Meta-Theory of Spiritual Change," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 12, no. 1 (2019): 16.

[13] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, 27.

path can only be willfully taken if it is seen, and in order for it to be seen, it must first be illumined. This is the difference between habituation and internalization. Virtues are formed and honed through disciplined habits. Seldom, if ever, does a person stumble into virtue. Rather, the virtuous must acquaint themselves with truth before committing themselves to its beauty.

B. Virtue in the Church

While Plato and Aristotle each were able to observe truth in the world, their minds were still unable to grasp the fullness of revelation and truth that came with Christ. Salvation brings with it a regeneration of the mind and an understanding that can only be given by the Holy Spirit. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."[14] The Spirit's role can never be reduced to convicting, leading, or calling alone but must be seen in every component of his manifested power. As Bernhard Anderson notes, "the Holy is not just power—the awesome power manifest in the storm, 'earthquake, wind, and fire,' but is power manifest in relationship with people, saving power and ethical concern."[15] This ethical concern is developed into a distinctly Christian virtue through Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas.[16] True scholars and arguably the two most famous pastor theologians in history, Augustine and Aquinas recognized the cardinal virtues raised but added to them in the theological virtues seen in 1 Corinthians 13: faith, hope, and love. Peter Kreeft notes this addition as necessary because, "Without the supernatural virtues, the natural virtues fail."[17]

The addition of the theological virtues, with the Christian understanding of inner transformation, reveals the full meaning of a virtue ethic system. Dallas Willard explains that "the effort to change our behavior *without* inner transformation is precisely what we see in the current shallowness of Western Christianity that is so widely lamented and in the notorious failures of Christian leaders."[18] In the same way that ignorance or surrender to the difficulties of the task sell the issue short, so do faulty systems and empty rhetoric. Alasdair MacIntyre offers his classic definition stating that, "a virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which

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[14] All Scripture quoted will be in the New American Standard Bible translation unless otherwise noted.

[15] Bernhard W. Anderson, C*ontours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 48.

[16] Augustine, *The Writings Against the Manicheans and Against the Donatists*, trans. Philip Schaff (New York: C. Scribners, 1901), ch. 15, par. 25. Clarified further by Aquinas, in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. John A. Oesterle (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947), Q. 62, Art. 1–3.

[17] Peter Kreeft, B*ack to Virtue: Traditional Moral Wisdom for Modern Moral Confusion* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), 72.

[18] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 79.

tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods."[19] This definition expresses the concept of ethical being better than most. Virtue ethics is an ethic of character.[20] The weakness of this definition is that it fails to offer the source of virtue. For Plato, virtue finds its fullness in the world of the forms.[21] For the Christian, however, the fullness of virtue is found in the character of God. This ethic could be bound up in the echo of Leviticus 19:2, as God declares, "Be holy, for I am holy." This call to holiness is the content of morality. Man is called to express and reflect the holiness and character of God. T. B. Maston explains that

> God's ultimate ideal or will for us is our holiness or sanctification. . . Sanctification involves separation from the evils of the world to a dedication to God. . . The ultimate goal of the Christian's life, which is a glorious one, is that he shall awake at the end of life's journey in the likeness of the resurrected Christ.[22]

Concerning the aforementioned virtues then, it is insufficient to be just only as man conceives justice. Holiness requires that true justice reflect the justice of God (2 Chr 19:7). This connection to the source of God is the case for all virtue. The virtuous is only such to the degree it reflects the fullness of God's character.

II. VIRTUE AS A SOCIETAL ALLEVIATION

Having established a basic understanding of virtue, the question is now raised of the efficacy of a change in individuals towards a change in culture. Many would argue that legislating morality is the most effective approach to quick societal change as in the case of desegregation.[23] This is a necessary component of wider applied virtue, but with the issue of underlying prejudices there are no hard and fast solutions. Even as legislation is a key part of ensuring justice, lasting change must begin concentrically from the individual since "culture is what *we* make of the world. Culture is, first of all, the name for our relentless, restless human effort to take the world as

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[19] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 191.

[20] It should be noted at this point that ascription to the virtuous described here does not necessitate ascription to the wider Virtue Ethics as a moral system or framework. Those holding to traditional Natural Law Theory, Divine Command Theory, or other systems consistent with the Christian faith ranging the deontological-teleological spectrum, are each able to affirm the fruit here expressed in either the act's innate goodness or produced benefit. Only systems which would cling to "glittering vices," such as Cultural Relativism or Ethical Egoism, would here be excluded. As a point of transparency, the present writer holds to Deontological Virtue Ethics. See Mark Liederbach, and Alvin L. Reid, *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009).

[21] Plato, "Phaedo," in *A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues*, ed. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2012), 102a, page 138.

[22] T. B. Maston, *God's Will and Your Life* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1964), 48-49.

[23] See Olatunde C. A. Johnson, "Legislating Racial Fairness in Criminal Justice," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 39, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 233.

it's given to us and make something else."[24] This change and creation is not of words alone but requires action and growth. Kreeft describes culture as sliding towards a precipice from which it cannot recover, and the only solution is seen in actionable virtue as simply "crying 'progress' as we die will not raise us from death."[25]

Concentric change as actionable virtue on the other hand offers a restoration first on an individual level and then builds to social groups at large. This is particularly necessary within the conversation of race, as race is a socially constructed grouping much like culture itself. Richard Niebuhr in his famous work, *Christ and Culture*, defines culture as "the 'artificial, secondary environment' which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values."[26] Within this definition, the individual holds the potential to influence nearly every part of what culture is as a whole by what they choose to sustain or dismiss.

The elevation of virtue in the life of the individual becomes increasingly effective as that individual models virtue winsomely and inspires others to do the same. This is especially important as internal, or private, virtue is not sufficient in itself. Private virtue must express itself publicly. And public virtue must be held privately. There is no room in the faith for Machiavelli's Prince shirking private virtue or Aristotle's coward fleeing it publicly.[27] The virtue envisioned here calls for consistency internally and externally within the individual, who is then positioned for cultural impact. While many would see this as a fault of the approach, in light of more expedient pragmatisms, it carries a particular strength within the church. The church carries a distinct ability to influence and shape thinking and to confront the vices of sin behind the authority of Christ revealed in Scripture.[28] Sin is to blame for all social woes and is the single enemy of virtue leading each person away from holiness and the complete life. It is easy to tie sins together and attempt to trace lines of influence or gateways, but in the end, it is a comprehensive nature which is to blame. In short, "Sin survives, takes root, and hangs on. This is part of what it means to say that human beings are all sinners. But social sins, in particular, survive, take root, and hang on because people benefit from those sins—often without being willing or able to notice either that they are sinning or that they are benefitting."[29] Racism, partiality, and prejudice persist as some of these beneficial pains and require special attention.

[24] Andy Crouch, *Culture Making* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 23. Emphasis added.

[25] Kreeft, *Back to Virtue*, 56.

[26] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, expanded edition (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2001), 32.

[27] Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas More, and Martin Luther, *The Prince* (New York, NY: Collier, 1963); Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, 48.

[28] John Holder, "The Issue of Race," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 49, no. 2, (1992): 45.

[29] Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 15.

III. VIRTUE WITHIN THE RACE ISSUE

The race issue carries great weight in both the internal integrity of the faith and the public witness of the church. The American church has largely failed to maintain either. "[In] reality the church set the pace, established the pattern, and provided for segregation in this country. For this the church must bow its head in shame."[30] This does not mean the issue is without hope as there has been progress in the United States in moving away from slavery, to segregation, and then through the Civil Rights Movement, not to mention the great turns and repentance in the many who confronted the hatred of their hearts.[31] While the church has not always had a majority on the right side of history in this area in various traditions and denominations, there have always been resolute voices standing on the truths of Scripture recognizing that "if Christians do not attempt honestly to apply the Christian spirit and Christian principles to race relations, how can they expect others to respect their Christian claims or to hear and accept the message they proclaim?"[32]

With obvious ties to the ministry of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament to unity in the church, it almost seems odd that division would still characterize groups of people within the same context and language. In fact, some have posited that the divide Jesus overcame was even more stark than what exists today in most places where racism is prevalent. J. Daniel Hays recognizes this saying that "the distinction between [Jews and Samaritans] was one of the most apparent in the world of Christ as 'the mainstream Jews of the New Testament era felt both a religious and racial superiority to the Samaritans.'"[33] However rich the Biblical material may be to explore in a demonstration of the equality present among all peoples, there is much to be said from a Biblical perspective of the inner man regarding the move forward, and virtue ethics can be the vehicle for this progress.[34]

The portrait of virtue here is more than just the characteristics of the person of God, such as his roles as creator, ruler, or father. Instead, this is the discussion of the ideals in which each of these characteristics find root. If virtue is to be applied to the race discussion, it must be determined which virtues are the most relevant. A case could be made for each as courage is

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30 Gerald L. Thomas, "Achieving Racial Reconciliation in the Twenty-First Century: The Real Test for the Christian Church," *Review & Expositor* 108, no. 4 (September 1, 2011): 561. See also Jemar Tisby, *Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism* (S.l.: Zondervan, 2020).

31 Curtis W. Freeman, "'Never Had I Been So Blind': W. A. Criswell's 'Change' on Racial Segregation," *The Journal of Southern Religion* 10, (2007): 1-12.

32 T. B. Maston, *The Bible and Race* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1959), 95.

33 Hays, *From Every People and Nation*, 146.

34 While the details of a Biblical Theology of Race would be beneficial for one unfamiliar with the details of this paper, this paper will first assume an understanding of Biblical personhood and then argue only for virtue ethics as actionable steps towards racial reconciliation and integration within the church. For more works on a theology of race please see Maston, Hays, or other bibliographical sources.

required for many to discuss, and wisdom would be an obvious requirement regarding any subsequent actions to that discussion. And surely others have their place, but it seems that two virtues in particular rise to the forefront and in their implementation, others can be satiated as well. These virtues are that of love and justice. The Cardinal Virtues, from the Latin *cardo* (hinge), imply that subsequent virtues hinge upon the first. In the discussion of race, justice and love become these cardinals, as the implementation of these virtues causes subsequent virtues to be assuaged. Before these can each be explored however there is one last facet of this conversation which cannot be afforded to be assumed: apartness.

IV. APARTNESS

Apartness is the basic idea that most of the prejudices of this world, conscious or otherwise, are due in part to an ignorance of separation. Essentially, there is no concern for a struggle that is not understood or experienced, and empathy is raised when there is a personal concern. This leads to a social indifference, not as a "total absence of feeling, positive or negative, but simply an unusually low degree of feeling, usually negative."[35] An emotional apathy of sorts casts aside any that does not look or struggle in the same way. Apartness can be seen in nearly every vice in the conversation of race and is paramount for understanding the fullness of conversation.

Apartness today exists in part because of the climates that introduced it, namely in slavery and segregation in the United States. This is of course heightened in a post-civil rights era culture, but it is nothing new as it seems that,

> instinctively we tend to gravitate toward people and cultures most like us. That is a safe place. But the moral choice, the one that shows the character of Christ, who resides in us, is to act out our 'go ye therefore' edict and open ourselves up to a diversity of cultures in order to reach them with the gospel and fellowship with them as our brothers and sisters.[36]

Many that have crossed these lines or are standing against oppression of others do so because of a personal relationship with someone different than themselves. Whether it be growing up in a sport together or serving alongside another person in either the military or workforce, the realization of equality rarely finds its footing from intellectual discovery in a Bible study or lecture but rather from the everyday life away from apartness. As Porter et al. explain, "Encounters with diversity or alterity (experiences of otherness) can also prompt deconstruction of prior understandings and intensified seeking, which is crucial for growth in intercultural competence."[37] To

[35] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 33.

[36] Tracey M. Lewis-Giggetts, *The Integrated Church: Authentic Multicultural Ministry* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2011), 85.

[37] Steven L. Porter, et al. "Measuring the Spiritual, Character, and Moral Formation of Seminarians," 17.

this end, the most effective thing for the implementation of the following virtues and life at large moving forward in an increasingly diverse society is to bridge the gap of apartness, intentionally and relationally.

V. JUSTICE'S PLACE

In order to bridge apartness, one must first build a framework for this bridge in a development and understanding of the virtue of justice since "the concept of reconciliation is empty of content unless it is built upon the sturdy foundation of justice."[38] As each virtue lies between vices of deficiency and excess, justice is no exception.[39] While either could be referred to simply as injustice more detail can be given toward a fuller understanding. Most often, when justice is considered, it is accompanied with some payment of that justice. Simply calling attention to an injustice does not appease the demands of justice. Justice is the due reward for any action, positive or negative. Whether that be right payment for a task preformed or right punishment for a crime committed, justice is concerned with what is rightly due.

A. VICE OF DEFICIENCY[40]

The first injustice is in a deficiency of justice which could here be more specifically called disregard. This is the most common reality of injustice and with it comes a recognition of some person or action going unseen or unpunished. The more apparent the slight, the greater the injustice seems. Unjudged disregard is a result of one of three causes; a double standard based on the person accused, an ignorance or apathy towards justice being done, or a delight in injustice and corruption. While the third cause is infrequent, the first two run rampant and often together. A double standard can be seen financially, in social classes, and notably to this discussion, racially. There is no shortage of statistics for a racial double-standard in drug prosecution based on the color of the accused's skin as more Whites go unjudged or unprosecuted than any other people group, even when there are the same number of those culpable.[41] Further, when partnered with an

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[38] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 396.

[39] As a point of interest, it is unclear "exactly how Aristotle understands this arrangement, or the nature of the vices of excess and defect which this particular justice is to counteract." The vices of deficiency and excess then in this case have been extrapolated accordingly. Mark LeBar and Michael Slote, "Justice as a Virtue," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016): 1.

[40] The vices considered here and in relation to love, represent those most pertinent to the issue of race. Admittedly, it is possible that there are other expressions of these vices along the spectrum in greater deficiencies or excesses of each virtue when examined more broadly or in relation to other specific issues.

[41] Anthony Bradley, Black and Tired: Essays on Race, Politics, Culture, and International Development. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011, 1. Further anecdotal evidence can be seen in cultural pictures of disregard. At the time of this writing, disregard has been recently seen in the delayed or absent arrests in the cases of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others.

apathy towards justice caused by apartness or the difficulty involved in resolution, the unjudged touches the race issue closely.

B. Vice of Excess

The second injustice is in an excess of justice. This is not truly an abundance of justice as there cannot be in reality an excess of something that has been satisfied in the sense of a debt paid, but rather the excess here is an abundance of principle distorted by terminology. Excessive injustice inflates the results or payment of justice in either punishment or reward, which could here be more specifically called tyranny or, more commonly, oppression. The alternative to a deficiency of justice in non-minorities uncharged with drug possession can be transversely seen in an excess of punishment in the sentencing of minorities for the same crimes as their majority-culture counterparts.[42]

Excessive punishment is often rooted in prejudices spurred on by apartness. This is a tragic distortion of the hatred that lies in the hearts of men: "A merely political abolition of slavery, desirable as it obviously is, would destroy only slavery's flower, not its root in the human heart, the desire to enslave, and that root would grow new flowers of evil."[43] Awareness here is driven into the heart of the individual. The sad reality is that many who deem themselves progressives regarding race, harbor prejudices and judgments they rarely think about on a surface level in stereotypes and presuppositions of people they have never met. The move to virtue is an attack of the inclination to be judge and jury and to go beyond what is right to what is vindictive. When change begins within the individual heart, the community can then be affected for good.

C. The Golden Mean

Once awareness moves both vices towards the golden mean of justice, much must be done to sustain it. This is as much a task of the state (Rom 13) as it is a task of the church:

> God's work in the world consists of more than churchy accomplishments like baptisms and filled sanctuaries. It consists of more peace, more justice, more reconciliation, more deliverance—through the church whenever the church makes itself available, through others when we are not available, or when we stand opposed.[44]

The golden mean is one that seeks justice wherever it is absent. This is the continuance of acting justly. In private affairs, there is a call for right dealing and practice and publicly there is a call for justice in every school,

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[42] Bradley, *Black and Tired*, 12. See also, Anthony B. Bradley, *Ending Overcriminalization and Mass Incarceration: Hope from Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[43] Kreeft, *Back to Virtue*, 150-151.

[44] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 19.

courtroom, and political office. It is to point out deficiencies of justice and excesses of punishment, to create accountability among the likeminded, and to persuade the obstinate. As Paul writes, "Now we pray to God that you do nothing wrong—not that we may appear to pass the test, but that you may do what is right," (2 Cor 13:7). Justice for the issue of race is a concern against injustices made because of race. These can be seen in everything from base prejudices and discrimination which lead to apartness, to more overt forms of systemic injustices.[45] The goal then of implementing justice is to be just in character, to call for justice, and to move towards a just society.

VI. Love's Place

Justice alone is insufficient, in part because it is not a uniquely Christian virtue. In addition to Plato and Aristotle's original lists, justice is recognized as a universal duty of governing authorities in Romans 13. Faith in the Triune God is not a requisite for justice to be handed down by those whom God has given the sword. In fact, often it is those from whom justice is expected who are the ones who implement it in great excess or deficiency. But those that abuse the authority given to them by God will stand in judgment before him. Love on the other hand, is a unique expression of Christian virtue insofar as it is tied to a relational knowledge of God (1 John 4). This is the difference between common and special grace. Justice reflects the common nature and standard of all men. Love reflects that unique picture of the nature of God revealed in Christ. Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

> A rational ethic seeks to bring the needs of others into equal consideration with those of the self. The religious ethic, (the Christian ethic more particularly, though not solely) insists that the needs of the neighbor shall be met, without a careful computation of relative needs. This emphasis upon love is another fruit of the religious sense of the absolute. On the one hand religion absolutises the sentiment of benevolence and makes it the norm and ideal of the moral life. On the other hand, it gives transcendent and absolute worth to the life of the neighbor and thus encourages sympathy toward him. Love meets the needs of the neighbor, without carefully weighing and comparing his needs with those of the self. It is therefore ethically purer than the justice which is prompted by reason.[46]

The virtue of love is one referred to in a number of ways, the most applicable here being compassion. For Aquinas, it was his overarching *caritas*;[47] for

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[45] See Bradley, *Black and Tired*.

[46] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Legacy Reprints, 2017), 57.

[47] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 65, 4. It should further be noted that Aquinas did not present caritas as necessarily lying between two vices. This is likely for the same reason Aristotle does not give explicit vices for justice, as it is the ultimate virtue in each of their minds. See John A. Hardon, S. J. "Meaning of Virtue in Thomas Aquinas," *Great Catholic Books Newsletter*, volume II, number 1 (1995): 1.

others it is simply a facet of love. But the case remains that compassion is one of the greatest characteristically Christian virtues.[48] Compassion is the recognition, empathy, and regard for the lost and other believers as persons made in the image of God. Said another way, "Agápao love is . . . moral love, meaning to do the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons."[49] Love is the fullness of life in Christ and the greatest hope for the issue of race.

A. Vice of Deficiency

The first vice of love is in a deficiency of compassion which could here be more specifically called apathy. Racial apathy is often a result of apartness, and awareness here must be in a cultural awareness rather than ignorance. Immersive behavior is greater than any classroom, and this modern life is rich with the opportunity to hear from wide perspectives. Scripture shows the diversity and beauty of all that are in Christ, as Paul draws the Ephesians to the unity of the body, "the point is not merely that all Christians are equal [or the same for that matter]; rather, the point is that all Christians have been joined."[50] This is where compassion counters the status quo of apathy. There exists in Christ a regard for the full body, not just hands for other hands or feet for other feet, but fullness and diversity joined. Awareness of apathy calls for the individual to step out of their circle of comfort and into the shoes of others through empathetic action. This is in conversation, relationship, repentance when necessary, and intentional engagement with people of different backgrounds, especially in the immediate community.

B. Vice of Excess

The second vice is in an excess of the principle which could here be more specifically called paternalism. Paternalism is an overstepping of compassion which goes to shelter and infantilize the receiving party to a detriment of their independence and responsibility. It is an excess of compassion which actually undercuts compassion's desired result of the recipient's wellbeing. Paternalism is the great fear of many seeking an excuse not to show compassion as the recipient might be enabled by this new kindness or take advantage of supposed nice men and women who do not know any better. An overstep of this fear justifies a continuance of apathetic prejudices and cripples progress. That being said, this vice remains a reality for the tenderhearted, but is nonetheless a vice. Overstepping compassion to become savior of the marginalized does more harm than good.[51]

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48 Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues*, 69.

49 Dirk Van Dierendonck, and Kathleen Patterson, "Compassionate Love as a Cornerstone of Servant Leadership: An Integration of Previous Theorizing and Research," *Journal of Business Ethics* 128, no. 1 (2015): 121.

50 Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 151.

51 See, for example, critiques on such works as Robin DiAngelo's New York Times best-seller, *White Fragility*. John McWhorter, "The Dehumanizing Condescension of White Fragility," *The Atlantic*, July 15, 2020. https://amp.theatlantic.com/amp/article/614146/.

Awareness here is to see the bounds of compassion in fraternalism, namely that the recipient never be stripped of their personhood. Compassion is not charity in that it would pity the inferior. It is to recognize the deficiencies of the self and its egoism and reach out to value a brother or sister as an equal. Pity and paternalism in the issue of race offer no good to the marginalized. Showing concern and walking alongside the marginalized is a different thing entirely, one that moves ever closer to that virtuous mean. The action of moving towards a better understanding and embodiment of compassion then is fraternal service. This is to say that the movement shifts from providing a need or service for a child to joining an existent work alongside a brother or sister.

C. The Golden Mean

Where justice can have a propensity of being cold, compassion's goal is warmth. The virtue of love is not an academic exercise or charity in the sense of building self-worth through service. Rather, it is concerned with walking alongside one another and loving as Christ. This is the command to bear one another's burdens. After all, "Christians must be those who are capable of sharing their suffering with others."[52] The chief exemplar of this virtue is of course the person of Christ, who, time and time again, had compassion on those he encountered. Jesus's great illustration on compassion was within the bounds of prejudices and race. Describing the Jewish traveler beaten and robbed, Jesus says of his rescuer, "But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion," (Luke 10:33). This story demonstrates the deficiency of compassion in those who passed the man by and yet avoids the opposite pole of excess since the man's compassion was selfless, comprising actions borne out of care for his neighbor regardless of the division between them. Virtuous love, over against apathetic or paternalistic love, seeks to embody the love of Christ. This is a love that, in part, sacrifices self in order to seek the good of another.

VII. ADDRESSING APARTNESS

Expanding on this virtuous love as the unique and most effective response to racial prejudice and pain, it would be most helpful to offer not only movement for the individual to address the vices of their own heart, but also the outworking of social effect. Kierkegaard writes that "as Christianity's glad proclamation is contained in the doctrine about man's kinship with God, so its task is man's likeness to God. But God is love; therefore, we can resemble God only in loving."[53] As the image bearers reflect the person of Christ in their awareness and action, they move in the formation of the virtuous. They embody the moral action of Christ,

[52] Hauerwas and Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues*, 50.

[53] Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, ed. by Edna H. Hong and Howard V. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 74.

empowered by the Spirit of Christ, to become more like the person of Christ. This is revealed both in the individual heart and character as well as the social expressions in which the person resides.

In the church, the virtuous believer is a voice of justice and an embodiment of love. As the virtuous gather together, there is a corporate nature of lament and repentance to vicious expressions of injustice and apathy. Ecclesial leadership does well to foster the tone of that lament through the rebuke of false ideologies and ethics as well as to promote the unity and godliness of that which is consistent with the virtues of justice and love evidenced in the faith.[54] As each believer then moves into the spheres of their influence, be that the academy or factory, political office or service industry—any and every arena of life and work—the salt and light of the kingdom loses neither its flavor nor its brightness. This movement is caused by and typified in the person of Christ, who integrates every tribe, nation, and tongue into a single body through his own sacrificial love. In participation in Christ's virtue, the individual and the church are enabled to root out racial prejudice in their hearts and pasts and work towards the ideal of the integrated church.

The embodiment of the Christlike virtues of justice and love work to emphatically narrow the gap of apartness. The two must work together. As John Perkins writes, "Justice and love are intimately tied together . . . We cannot have true justice unless it is motivated by love, just as God's greatest act of justice, sending Jesus to die for us, was motivated by love."[55] To embody justice in its virtuous mean is to demonstrate to the church and to the world that the gospel of Christ is a transformative force that gives full satisfaction of what is due. To embody love in its virtuous mean is to demonstrate the great well of forgiveness and compassion that reconditions affections and regard to love as Christ loves. Apartness is not an eternal state, but it need not be a temporal state either.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Racial tension is not an issue that will be solved by the mere passing of time. It is rooted in prejudice and sin and will persist in this world, but it does not have to persist in the individual or in the church. Virtue offers an answer to apartness and strain through justice and compassion. These virtues must be found between their respective vices of disregard, oppression, apathy, and paternalism. Christ is the example of perfect justice and perfect compassion and is the picture for virtue in the individual as he seeks to change the culture concentrically. The key lies in an awareness of apartness and vices and living out the virtues seen in the character of God. Only then can there be a lasting answer to the issue of race in the heart of the believer, the church, and society.

[54] See Mark Vroegop, and Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *Weep with Me: How Lament Opens a Door for Racial Reconciliation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020).

[55] John Perkins, *Dream with Me: Race, Love, and the Struggle We Must Win* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2017), 30.

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"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE": THE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND OF THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF THE LAW

JOSHUA PHILPOT[1]

I. INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 22:34–40, a lawyer approaches Jesus to ask which is the greatest commandment of the law (cf. Mark 12:28–34). While the initial proposition seems innocent, the context reveals that it likely stems from a desire to entrap Jesus in his own words. It may also stem from a rabbinical tradition that gave certain commands more weight than others,[2] namely the moral commands of the law.[3] Jesus responds by citing two Old Testament (OT) texts, first the *Shema* in Deut 6:5, "You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Jesus deems this command "the great first commandment." He follows up by mentioning a second command that is "like it," from Lev 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."[4]

[1] Joshua Philpot is the Pastor for Worship and Administration at Founders Baptist Church, Spring, TX, and adjunct professor at Houston Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

[2] Watts notes that the scribe's question reflects a long tradition in Judaism that sought to encapsulate the Torah, found in key parts of Deuteronomy (6:4–5; 10:12–22; 30:1–10) and the prophets (e.g. Mic 6:8; also Isa 66:2; Jer 22:3; Zech 8:16–17; Pss 15; 24), and later rabbinical instruction (*Mek. Exod.* 15:26; *b. Ber.* 63a; *b. Sabb.* 31a; *b. Mak.* 23b; *Tanh Deut.* 5:10). Watts, "Mark" in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 216.

[3] "As elsewhere, it is interesting to observe that Jesus does not formally distinguish the moral from the civil or ceremonial law." Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 81.

[4] In a parallel passage in Luke 10, a lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus responds with a question about the lawyer's hermeneutics: "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" (Luke 10:26) The clear implication is that Jesus regards the teaching of the law as providing a sufficient answer to such a question. Unlike Matt 22 and Mark 12, here it is the lawyer, not Jesus, who responds by combining the double-love command in Deut 6:5 with Lev 19:18. While likely different stories altogether, Hays rightly observes that "Luke's telling of the story has the effect of emphasizing that Jesus brings no new revelation; rather, Jesus simply reinforces what Israel's teachers of the law already knew well." In other words, in the tradition of the prophets, Jesus is simply summoning the religious leaders of the people to obey the law already given to them. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 209.

The emphasis on love for both God and neighbor would not have been lost on the lawyer as the chief moral aspect of the law. Exhortations for humans to love God with their whole being are found throughout Deuteronomy, although less frequent in the rest of the Old Testament (Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 30:6, 16; Josh 22:5; 23:11; Ps 31:23). Descriptions of human love for God is relatively rare outside of the Psalms (1 Kgs 3:3; Pss 5:11; 18:1; 91:14; 116:1; Isa 56:6).

But what are we to make of Jesus' unique conclusion in Matt 22:40, found neither in Mark nor Luke? "On these two commandments *depend* all the Law and the Prophets" (emphasis added). Surely the Law and Prophets cannot be reduced to Beatles-esque simplicity—"all you need is love/love is all you need"—brilliant as that song may be. Nor can the phrase be explained by a word study of κρέμαται, which is not necessarily a technical term. It simply means "to hang" or "suspend from."

The uniqueness is perhaps found in how expansive Jesus's conclusion is. It is not just that particular laws and prophecies can be explained in terms of the double-love command, but that "*all* the Law and the Prophets" are "suspended" from these two pillars.[5] In other words, all the other commandments in the law *hang on them* like a door on its hinges. As such, Jesus does nothing less than propose a particular hermeneutical lens through which one might understand the Old Testament, one in which the injunction of love for God and neighbor becomes the guiding principle. According to Hays, these two commandments "are not merely the greatest or most important, the ones at the top of the list; rather, they have a systemic, structural, and hermeneutical role."[6]

In what follows, I want to explore how the OT might lead to Jesus's conclusion. Is it really a novel idea, or is the emphasis on love as the greatest commandment found in the OT? Is it explicit or implied? I intend to show in three texts that from the incipient stage of Israelite history the law demands a heart relationship with God above all other demands, which is characterized by acts of love and loyal devotion to God as a response to his loving kindness toward his people. Jesus's emphasis on love as the greatest commandment, therefore, is simply in keeping with this tradition.

Quite obviously, Deut 6:4–9 is central to this discussion, and by extension Lev 19:18. But in the interest of brevity I will focus here on what Jesus emphasized as the greatest of all commandments.[7] The three orations in

[5] The reference to the "Law" here is likely broad, encompassing the entire Pentateuch. Likewise, his reference to the "Prophets" (cf. Luke 24:44, "Prophets and Psalms") may be expansive, encompassing both the Former Prophets (Joshua–Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Jeremiah–The Twelve). The phrase ὁ νόμος...καὶ οἱ προφῆται thus refers to the whole Hebrew Bible, just as in 2 Kgs 17:13; Neh 9:26; Zech 7:12; Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; Rom 3:21. Also see BDAG, 678 for instances where νόμος alone likely refers to the Hebrew Bible in its entirety: Matt 5:18; Luke 10:26; 16:17; John 7:49; 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; Rom 3:19; 1 Cor 14:21.

[6] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 123.

[7] Ideally, the second command should receive equal weight to the first, thus I would envision a second article tracing the injunction to love one's neighbor in biblical theology. Key

Deuteronomy are the natural starting place since the bases, motivations, and priorities of the law are evident in its very structure.[8]

II. THE MOSAIC PRIORITIES OF THE LAW

What Jesus taught in Matt 22 as the greatest of commandments accords with statements elsewhere establishing the priority of some laws over others. In Matt 9:13, for example, Jesus exhorts his audience to "go and learn" what Hos 6:6 actually means: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."[9] Luke 11:42 describes it as "justice and the love of God." While these statements are not intended to displace Israel's formal, external religion, they nonetheless stress a certain weight ascribed to some commands over others. In Old Testament contexts such as Deuteronomy, the core instruction for holy living requires more than just another duty.

There are three programmatic texts that strongly urge love for God as a response to his gracious election and salvation, which is preceded by repentance (circumcision of the heart) and obedience: Deut 6:4–9, 10:12–11:1, and 30:1–10. These three texts help establish the comparative priority of "love" within the law.[10]

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to that discussion is the Lukan citation (10:25–28), where the emphasis seems to be more on the second command than the first. The definition of one's "neighbor" is illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which immediately follows (10:29–37). "The appearance of the Samaritan instead of a lay Judean is therefore striking, and this directly challenges the Jewish interpretation of the 'neighbor' of Lev. 19:18." See Pao and Schnabel, "Luke" in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 321–22.

[8] The designation "law" can be used to describe the entire Pentateuch per footnote 4 above, but when *Torah* (תורה [tōwrâ]) in used in an objective sense it often refers to the book of Deuteronomy specifically, such as in the prologue in Deut 1:5, "Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this *law* (i.e. תורה [tōwrâ])." While Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 84–85, maintains that the Pentateuch was not referred to as Torah until the second century B.C., Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church: And its Background in Early Judaism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1985), 63–104, argues that the biblical writers began referring to it this way much earlier (e.g. Deut 17:18; 28:61; 29:20[21]; 30:10; 31:9, 24; Josh 1:7, 8; 8:31ff; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 22:8; 23:25; 2 Chr 23:18; 30:16; Ezr 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1–2).

[9] In Hos 6:6, "mercy" is the translation of חסד (ḥesed), or steadfast/loyal love.

[10] The prophets follow suit in preaching the core requirement of heart devotion rather than ritual observance, although these texts largely echo the substance of Moses's orations in Deuteronomy. E.g. 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11–17; 43:22–24; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21–24; Mic 6:6–8; cf. Prov 15:8; 21:27; 28:9. Fesko writes, "All OT revelation subsequent to the Pentateuch is built on themes and concepts found within the first five books of the Bible. This means, then, that one finds a hermeneutical relationship between the Pentateuch and the rest of the OT, one that is exhibited in the intra-canonical interpretation of the OT." J.V. Fesko, "On the Antiquity of Biblical Theology," in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*, ed. by Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 443–77.

A. DEUTERONOMY 6:4–9

When the Israelites see God's glory at Sinai and hear his voice,[11] the first statement of the law is not "Thou shalt not," but "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Exod 20:1, 12). The same pattern is repeated numerous times in the holiness legislation in Leviticus: "Be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy," "I am Yahweh who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God," and "I am Yahweh."[12] It is a fundamental fact of the law that it stems from a proper relationship to the God who delivered the Israelites at the Red Sea, and provides the basis for both the statutes and obligations that follow.

The opening chapters of Deuteronomy emphasize this point as Moses narrates Israel's stubbornness in the wilderness, not exactly an unwillingness to *accept* the Sinai covenant, but rather a perverse attitude in their provocation of God. Their departure from Sinai and later rebellion in refusing to enter the land are recounted by Moses in excruciating detail (Deut 1), and the main admonition is that the Israelites had forgotten God's salvific acts in both Egypt and the wilderness on their behalf (1:30–33; 2–3). Thus, Moses seasons these events with an element of warning: the wilderness generation was stubborn in the past, so this new generation—on the brink of entering Canaan—must learn to submit and trust in God's gracious provisions (Deut 4), for indeed, it is God who saved them in the first place (4:20, 32–40).[13]

Up until Deuteronomy 6:4–5, "fear Yahweh"—which means something like deeply felt respect—has been the main exhortation, which leads to blessing (Lev 19:14, 32; 25:17; Deut 4:10; 6:2).[14] But a shift occurs in Deuteronomy 6:4 with the *Shema* (שְׁמַע [šᵉmaʿ], "Hear!"), and the imperatives that follow in 6:5–9. In the OT, few texts are more pregnant with significance and meaning than the *Shema*, which is like the pledge of allegiance for the Israelites: "Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one!"[15]

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[11] Deut 4:11–12 and 5:24–27 imply that it is the voice of God at Sinai, not the fire, that brought the fear of God on all the people, which led to the establishing of Moses's mediatorial role (cf. Exod 20:18–21).

[12] Lev 11:44; 18:2, 4, 6, 21, 30; 19:3, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36; 20:7, 24; 21:12, 15, 23; 22:2, 8, 16, 30, 31, 22, 43; 24:22; 25:17, 38, 55; 26:1, 13, 44.

[13] Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 192. See also Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 126: "Throughout his addresses Moses refers to details not to be forgotten, reinforcing the impression created here that Israel's memory is not simply to involve abstract notions about God, but his specific acts in history on their behalf."

[14] יהוה(yhwh) + ירא (yārēʾ) has a wide range of meaning, though it is most common to interpret it in a subjective, non-rational sense, meaning reverential awe and respect to God. Most exhortations to "fear Yahweh" fall along these lines (e.g. in Deut, see 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12–13, 20; 13:4[5]; 14:23; 17:19; 28:58; 31:12–13). However, the construct phrase "the fear of Yahweh" always has an objective, rational sense and with varied foci (e.g. Ps 19:9; Prov 9:10).

[15] The *Shema* became foundational in Jewish communities for liturgy and prayer (see 1 Tim 2:1–7). Aside from Jesus's quotation in Matt 22 and Mark 12, the *Shema* is also the basis for understanding unity in God (1 Cor 8:4–6). In the OT, Joshua repeats the core imperatives of Deut 6:5–9 in Josh 22:5, but Josiah is the only person who imbibes it: "Before

However, Moses's concern here is not monotheism, strictly speaking, but that the Israelites declare their complete and unrivaled devotion to Yahweh.[16] This point is clear in what follows. Four traits, or attitudes, are necessary for faithful covenant living:

Figure 1

Deuteronomic Phrase	Text
Love Yahweh with heart, soul, strength	6:5 (4:29)
Fear Yahweh	6:13 (5:29)
Serve Yahweh	6:13
Keep Yahweh's commands	6:17
Purpose: *for your good*	6:24

Deuteronomy 6, we should remember, follows on the heels of the Ten Commandments in the previous chapter. It is, therefore, a theological exposition of that text.[17] And, as Moses writes, the primary expression of loyalty to the Ten Commandments, and by extension the God of Sinai, is "love," the central command.[18] "You shall love Yahweh your God" (Deut 6:5) is the first expression in the OT of commitment to Yahweh in such terms. Yahweh has promised steadfast love and faithfulness to those who love him and keep his commands (cf. Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10). But in light of Israel's difficulty in keeping the covenant (Deut 1:34–46; 9:1–10:11), and God's gracious and merciful

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him there was no king like him, who turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him" (2 Kgs 23:25).

[16] Since Deut 6:4 is a verbless clause, there is some debate on translation and therefore interpretation. Moberly's summary is helpful: "On…the argument that 6:4 is *either* about an exclusive relationship between YHWH and Israel (with other gods recognized) *or* about the nature of YHWH as 'one' (with other gods denied) is misleading and offers a false alternative. If YHWH is 'one' in the sense of 'the one and only,' then it means that He is such that the people of Israel must be exclusive in their faithfulness and allegiance to Him. This construal does not deny the possible reality, in some sense, of 'other gods'; indeed, such a denial would be odd in the context of Deuteronomy, given its repeated warnings against going after 'other gods.' Nonetheless, the point is that, whatever 'other gods' there may be, such 'other gods' should be of no existential interest to Israel, but rather are to be displaced, rejected, and disregarded, since Israel's focus is to be on YHWH alone." R. W. L. Moberly, *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 20.

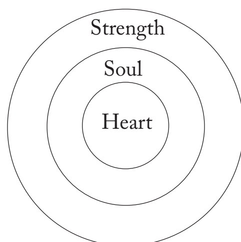
[17] "The substance of the verses that follow continues from the Decalogue address, having at its heart the primary command to be loyal to Yahweh alone. Its extension from this into obedience to all commands of Yahweh reflects the logic of the Decalogue discourse," J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 139.

[18] On Deut 6:5 as the language of covenant loyalty, see William L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1963): 77–87.

pardon (Deut 4:29–31), the covenantal people are now commanded to reciprocate Yahweh's covenantal love.[19]

The commitment expressed in love is expanded with a triad of qualifiers demonstrating that one's love for God requires full-bodied and complete devotion: "with all your *heart*, and with all your *soul*, and with all your *strength*" (Deut 6:5). Block has shown that these dimensions of covenantal commitment proceed from the inside out.[20] The three Hebrew words can be represented visually in three concentric circles beginning with the inner being (the heart), and extending outwardly to the whole person (the soul), ending with all available resources (strength):[21]

Figure 2



We conclude from Deut 6:4–5 that true love for God arises from the heart and permeates all of life. Indeed, the following verse makes the whole teaching explicit: the commandments are to be "upon your heart." Wholehearted love for God is a transforming force, as it were, rooted in the innermost place of one's being—the heart: mind, emotions, and will (6:6). Further, love for God is expressed by faithfulness in every context of life, beginning with the family (6:7), and extending to the public spaces (6:8–9). In other words, "a genuine heart relationship was God's own prerequisite to obeying his laws."[22] The influence of the Shema in Israelite history confirms the centrality of heart devotion in Israelite religion—exemplified by love for Yahweh.

B. DEUTERONOMY 10:12–11:1

If Deut 6:4–5 forms the initial basis of a right theological understanding of the law's priority—love—then Deut 10:12–11:1 articulates the proper response for maintaining a relationship with God, especially against the probability of ongoing rebellion.

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[19] Of course, "And you shall love Yahweh your God" in Deut 6:5 presupposes "those who love me" in Exod 20:6 and Deut 5:10.

[20] Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 184.

[21] Adapted from Block, *Deuteronomy*, 183.

[22] Kaiser, "The Weightier and Lighter Matters of the Law," 182.

Deuteronomy 10:12–22 is often considered one unit,[23] but the question proposed in 10:12 is not fully resolved until 11:1, "*Therefore* you shall love Yahweh your God." The opening "And now" in 10:12 indicates a transition from the historical reminiscence articulated in 9:1–10:11, where Moses recounts the stubbornness of Israel's past as illustrated in their rebelliousness at Sinai/Horeb (9:7–21), and the renewal of the covenant as Yahweh's answer to his prayer.

Moses then raises a question on the practical implications of the renewed covenant: "What does Yahweh your God require from you?"[24] As with Deut 6:4–9, five requirements are necessary: fear, walking in Yahweh's ways, love, service, and keeping Yahweh's law. These terms are already familiar in Deuteronomy as noted above:

Figure 3

Deuteronomic Phrase	Text
Fear Yahweh	10:12 (5:29; 6:13)
Walk in Yahweh's ways	10:12 (5:33)
Love Yahweh with heart and soul	10:12 (4:29; 6:5)
Serve Yahweh	10:12 (6:13)
Keep Yahweh's commands	10:13 (6:17)
Purpose*: for your good*	10:13 (6:24)

This table indicates that Moses is recalling previous commands to present a unified picture. Being identified with Yahweh means total commitment and trust. Indeed, it is "for your good" to be aligned with Yahweh in such a way (10:13), the one who "set his heart"[25] to love the Israelites and their offspring (10:15), "you above all peoples." The covenantal people, therefore, must reciprocate Yahweh's covenantal love, the central command. In light of Israel's difficulty in keeping the covenant (9:1–10:11), they are reminded that covenantal obedience requires more than simply ethnic identity, formal correctness, or ceremonial exactness.

Chief among the exhortations that follow is 10:16: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart."[26] This is a new phrase in the Pentateuch,

[23] The unit is bracketed by the temporal marker, עַתָּה (ʿaṯâ, vv. 12, 22).

[24] Cf. similar language in Mic 6:8, "And what does Yahweh seek (require) from you, but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Though the exact terms of Yahweh's requirements are different in Mic 6:8, there is still much in common, and the language is familiarly deuteronomic.

[25] Both here and in Deut 7:7 the verb, "to set his heart," is connected to the election of Israel. Cf. Ray Carlton Jones, "Deuteronomy 10:12–22," *Interpretation* 46, no. 3 (1992): 282.

[26] מול (mwl) certainly has an imperatival nuance in Deut 10:16, though it stands as a wəqatal perfect 2mp, "You should circumcise" (וּמַלְתֶּם אֵת עָרְלַת לְבַבְכֶם [ûmaltem ʾēṯ ʿorlaṯ l^{e}ḇaḇḵem]). Whereas Leviticus 26:41 has the noun construction, לְבָבָם הֶעָרֵל (l^{e}ḇāḇom heʿārēl), "an uncircumcised heart," Deuteronomy 10:16 is the first instance of מול (mwl) as

and essential here to establish the centrality of heart religion as the core principle of the law. Israel practiced circumcision as the full removal of the foreskin of the male sexual organ (Gen 17). Here a different "organ," so to speak, is to be circumcised—the "heart" (לֵבָב [lēḇoḇ]) which must mean something like "repent" coupled with the parallel clause in the second line, "and be no longer stubborn" (10:16b). Wolff states that the לֵב/לֵבָב (lēḇ/lēḇoḇ) word group is "the most important . . . in the vocabulary of Old Testament anthropology."[27] Only rarely do these two terms refer to the human organ that pumps blood, which is significant.[28] In the majority of texts, rational and intellectual functions are ascribed to the heart, that is, everything a modern person would attribute to the brain—power of perception, reason, understanding, insight, consciousness, memory, knowledge, reflection, judgment, sense of direction, and discernment. These terms together comprise the core meaning of לֵב (lēḇ) and לֵבָב (lēḇoḇ).[29] The word group means least of all "emotions," a common contemporary attribute of the heart, though this idea is assumed in some contexts. Rather, that which is associated with the human will is most prominent: its plan, decisions and intentions, the consciousness, and sincerely devoted obedience.[30] Thus, "the essential characteristic that, broadly speaking, dominates the concept is that the heart is called to reason, and especially to hear the word of God."[31]

Among the demands of 10:12–22, the circumcision of the heart is noteworthy in that there is an attempt to give fresh significance to an old custom by means of spiritual reinterpretation.[32] Although the ritual must be carried out in the flesh, the core meaning of the rite is not merely external. Indeed, how might one know that an Israelite is circumcised? He must look not to the flesh but to the heart—his mind, emotions, and will.

By theologizing the rite of circumcision, Moses is likely stressing the inner reality of the covenant God made with Israel, a reality that is explained in terms of the character of the people. Israel is circumcised in the flesh—consecrated for service to Yahweh alone—but uncircumcised, as it were, in the heart. Their tendency to lust, idol worship, and debauchery

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the main verb and עָרְלָה (ʿorlâ) in construct with a noun other than בָּשָׂר ([ḇāśor] cf. Gen 17:11, 13, 14).

[27] Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 40. The most common form is לֵב (lēḇ), which occurs 598 times in the Old Testament, whereas לֵבָב (lēbob) occurs 252 times.

[28] Out of more than 800 occurrences of "heart" in the Old Testament, it is interesting that only five refer to the anatomical heart—1 Sam 25:37; 2 Sam 17:14; 2 Kgs 9:24; Hos 13:8; Jer 4:19. See Wolff, 41–42.

[29] Wolff, 51.

[30] Wolff, 55.

[31] Wolff, 55.

[32] When in conjunction with circumcision/uncircumcision—the concern of Deuteronomy 10:16— לֵבָב/לֵב (lēḇ/lēḇoḇ) always appropriates the understanding to a metaphorical sense. The מול-לֵבָב (mwl-lēḇoḇ) construction appears only in Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6, and Jeremiah 4:4, while the עָרֵל-לֵבָב (ʿārēl-lēḇoḇ) construction appears in Leviticus 26:41 and Ezek 44:7, 9. None of these texts concern physical circumcision, but rather the heart as the nucleus of the character and will.

is evidenced in their history. In Deut 9:1–10:11, Israel's character is presented negatively through the recollection of a series of events aimed at emphasizing their sin. The Moab generation, however, must mind the sins of their fathers and no longer stiffen their necks (10:16b).[33] Their desire, no doubt, is to remain in the covenant with Yahweh and to have offspring. So through Moses's preaching they are imbued with a stricter requirement—to mind the heart by repenting of past sin and love Yahweh above all else. The reason/motivation for the command to circumcise the heart is given in 10:17b: Yahweh is sovereign, powerful, and impartial (i.e. he takes no bribe). Therefore, the command to circumcise is not primarily about identity as an Israelite. That is secondary. The command to circumcise is primarily about identity before Yahweh, their sovereign king.[34]

Moses concludes this section with a synthesis in 11:1 in which the central command of Deut 10:12–11:1 is the same as Deut 6:4–9: loving Yahweh is supreme. The metaphorical circumcision "of the heart" is the way in which Israelites show unqualified devotion to Yahweh, being mindful of past faults, repenting of those faults, and fully devoting oneself to Yahweh. In sum, this passage presents a unified picture. The true "sign" of being in Yahweh's covenant is not merely external (through rites like circumcision) but primarily internal, that is, full commitment of devotion and love to Yahweh and his Torah from the heart.

C. DEUTERONOMY 30:1–10

Along with Deut 6:4–9 and 10:12–11:1, heart devotion as the core aspect of the law figures into a passage on covenant reaffirmation in Deut 30:1–10. This text presupposes the lengthy curses in chapters 26–28 and the covenant renewal in chapter 29. Its structure follows a series of conditional statements bracketed by the particle כִּי (ḵiy),[35] highlighting the conditions for

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[33] English translations conceal the pun in this phrase. The previous generation was constantly referred to as a "stiff-necked people" (Exod 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6; 31:2). A new generation is reminded not to "stiffen your necks," but to walk in the love of Yahweh by means of circumcision of the heart. Cf. Beth LaNeel Tanner, "Deuteronomy 10:12–22," *Interpretation* 55, no. 1 (2001): 62.

[34] The truth about God's sovereignty, power, and impartiality brings about a parallel command in 10:19a, to "love the sojourner" in the land. The grounds for this love is gratitude to Yahweh for his mercy on the Israelites when they were "sojourners" in Egypt (10:19b). This command in relation to the injunction to love neighbor in Matt 22 should be explored in more detail. McConville, Deuteronomy, 201.

[35] McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 424, argues that the structure represents a chiasm:

A Protasis (30:1–2)
B Main apodosis (30:3–7)
C Central exhortation (30:8)
B' Apodosis (30:9)
A' Protasis (30:10)

A few other scholars have noted this chiasmus: Paul A. Barker, *The Triumph of Grace in Deuteronomy: Faithless Israel, Faithful Yahweh in Deuteronomy*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Miltin Keynes, ENG: Paternoster, 2004), 166; Timothy A. Lenchak, *Choose Life!: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Deuteronomy 28, 69–30, 20*, Analecta Biblica

Israel's restoration in terms of repentance formulas.[36] In order for forgiveness to be offered after Israel sins, three responses are necessary in 30:1–2:

(1) to be mindful of the blessings and curses of chapter 26–28

(2) to turn to Yahweh (שׁוּב [šûḇ])

(3) to listen to his voice (שְׁמַע [šeāmaʿ])

Only then will Yahweh return their fortunes and have compassion on them; that is, he will offer forgiveness. The emphasis on שׁוּב (šûḇ) and שְׁמַע (šeāmaʿ) in these verses is notable, which recalls the *Shema* in Deut 6.[37] The same words also appear twice in 30:10: Yahweh will make the Israelites prosperous (1) if they hear/obey his voice (כִּי תִשְׁמַע [kî ṯišmaʿ]), and (2) if they turn to him (כִּי תָשׁוּב [kî ṯāšûḇ]).[38] The intensity of each conditional statement in both 30:1–2, 10 is highlighted with the language of Deut 6:5: "with all your heart and soul."

The context, therefore, reveals that the unit as a whole is about repentance, with results listed 30:4–9. If the Israelites repent from sin and obey Yahweh's voice he will,

(1) bring them back from great distances (30:4)

(2) allow them to repossess the land and become more prosperous than ever (30:5)

(3) radically change their character by means of circumcision of the heart (30:6a)

The focus on the heart in verses 1–2 and 10 is, therefore, central to the main thrust of 30:1–10. As argued above, לֵב/לֵבָב (lēḇ/lēḇoḇ) most likely means the mind and the will, which here is transformed by means of repentance (שׁוּב [šûḇ]) and obedience (שְׁמַע [šeāmaʿ]). This idea is manifested in 30:6b. With a circumcised heart, Israel would possess the ability "to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul." The purpose is given at the end of the sentence: "so that you might live." In the instance in Deuteronomy 30:6, however, it is not only "your heart" that is in view—that

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129 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993), 178. Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, WBC vol. 6B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 735–37. Although some have v. 6 as the center, there seems to be a clear syntactical break in v. 8 with the emphatic וְאַתָּה (weʾattâ), which follows a series of unbroken wəqatal verbs in vv. 5–7. This would suggest that v. 8 is central and not v. 6.

36 The clauses in v. 1, 10 could certainly be temporal, "when," but the line between a conditional and a temporal seems vague in this instance. In context both ideas are understandable syntactically, and the shift in v. 4 seems naturally to be the apodosis. Therefore, I am calling this a conditional clause instead of a temporal one, understanding the כִּי (ḵiy) as "if" and introducing the protasis in vv. 1–2 and 10.

37 A. Rofe, "The Covenant in the Land of Moab (Dt 28,69–30,20): Historico-Literary, Comparative, and Form-Critical Considerations," in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt Und Botschaft*, ed. Norbert Lohfink, BETL 68 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985), 311.

38 With the accusative קוֹל (qôl), שְׁמַע (šeāma) most likely means to hearken or obey. Cf. s. v. "שְׁמַע," Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), vol 4, 1572.

is, an Israelite's heart—but also "the heart of your offspring." Like the verses that follow the *Shema*, this directive has a pedagogical function, and thus follows the main gist of the book as a whole (cf. 6:7, 20–25).

Most importantly, the emphasis in 30:6 is that "*Yahweh your God* will circumcise your heart," whereas in 10:16 the command was for the Israelites to circumcise their own hearts. The shift here reflects a prophetic perspective, as Moses envisages the failure of Israel to keep the covenant as an accomplished fact.[39] Yahweh's promise to act (30:6) is underscored by the call to repent (10:16).

This instance of circumcision in Deuteronomy is similar to 10:16 in that spiritual circumcision is highlighted instead of circumcision as external identification. Ethnic identity is primarily about internal realities, that is, whether one is repenting of past sin and living in obedience to Yahweh's law. These ideas are requirements for ongoing faithfulness and form the very core of covenantal commitment (cf. Deut 6:4–5).[40]

III. CONCLUSION

In sum, if we consider the substance of Deut 30 as a peroration, then combined with Deut 6:4–9 and 10:12–11:1, these texts offer a certain thematic closure to the book as a whole, which is thus: the religion of the heart—encapsulated in the injunction to love Yahweh—stresses the priority not of love over law (or one system over another) but love within the law.[41] What are the distinctive features of love in Deuteronomy? Four things:

(1) It is a love that can be commanded.

(2) It is a love intimately related to fear and reverence.

(3) It is a love reflected in repentance (circumcision of the heart)

(4) It is a love that must be expressed by loyalty, devotion, service, and obedience to the demands of the law.[42]

These features make "love" the greatest commandment of the law according to Jesus, both in one's disposition to God and to neighbor. Even the lawyer who brought up this topic with Jesus seemed to agree (e.g. Mark 12:32, "You are right, Teacher."), which means it is not a novel idea. It is not "trust" or "fear" or "obey," although those things naturally follow from love; rather, it is love in the covenantal sense. Why? Two reasons.

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[39] McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 427.

[40] Gerhard von Rad notes, "Our text can no longer be called an exhortation; it contains no admonitions, but, with regard to Israel's future, simply affirmative propositions, that is, it is clothed altogether in the style of prophetic predictions." Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 183. Cf. also Eugene Merrill, Deuteronomy, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 389.

[41] D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *Matthew & Mark*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E Garland, Revised, vol. 9, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 524.

[42] Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," 78.

First, because "love" in Deuteronomy 6, 10, and 30 (and in the Bible generally) is more than mere emotion. Love is a principle of action. When the Israelites uttered the *Shema*, they were declaring their complete, undivided, and unqualified devotion to Yahweh. Further, when the Israelites were tempted to sin against Yahweh by giving themselves over to other gods, the *Shema* provided a constant reminder to devote themselves to Yahweh alone. That is the biblical notion of love: not a pleasant disposition, but a covenantal commitment. The biblical ideal is perfectly illustrated in marriage because the bind between husband and wife is not demonstrated by romantic passion, but actions rooted in covenant that seek the well-being of the spouse, even when sacrifice is required.

Second, while the fear of Yahweh remains a central command throughout the OT (e.g. Prov 1:7; Eccl 12:13), "love" captures the essence of what fear actually means. It is not fear of the unknown, nor fear of Yahweh's power, although that's certainly true in one sense (e.g. Ps 119:120). But fear in the covenantal sense is the awe-inspiring, motivating love for God that leads to obedience and a life of blessing (Deut 6:1–3). Without fear, there is no sense of respect of God for his gracious salvation, nor gratitude for making his presence known and living to tell the tale (Deut 5:24). What Moses has in mind with fear defined by love is not obeisance, but obedience. It is not worry, but worship. It is not fleeing from the presence of Yahweh, but drawing near to him, and longing to do his will.[43]

Moreover, the saints are those who "love Yahweh" and "hate evil" (Ps 97:10). David says, "I love you, O Yahweh, my strength" (Ps 18:1). Solomon "loved Yahweh, walking in the statutes of David his father" (1 Kgs 3:3). The author of Psalm 116 says, "I love Yahweh, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy" (Ps 116:1). The command for all people is "Love Yahweh, all you his saints" (Ps 31:23).

Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that he came to fulfill the law, not reinterpret it (Matt 5:17). And love is the fulfillment of the law. Christian love in the NT, therefore, is the same as its counterpart in the Old. It is the hallmark of what it means to be disciples of Christ (John 13:34–35), involving reverential acts of submission and obedience to his commandments as worship: "If you love me," Jesus says, "you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).[44]

[43] Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary, Volume 1: The Five Books of Moses* (New York, Norton: 2019), 439.

[44] Wesley extolls the intimate relationship between law and gospel: "On the one hand, the law continually makes way for, and points us to the gospel; on the other, the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law." Quoted in William M. Arnett, "John Wesley and the Law," *The Asbury Seminarian* 35, no. 4 (1980): 26.

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"TO LOVE THE SOULS OF THE PEOPLE": ANDREW FULLER AND THE VIRTUE OF LOVE IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

PAUL SANCHEZ[1]

Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) is best known as the theologian behind William Carey (1761–1834) and the English Particular Baptists' Baptist Missionary Society, which was a catalyst for the emergence of modern missions in the late eighteenth century.[2] A noteworthy figure in the larger evangelical renewal movement of the era, Fuller made a case for evangelical Calvinism in 1785 when he published *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which was a formidable challenge to the Hyper-Calvinism that by his time had consumed the Particular Baptists.[3] Against the Hyper-Calvinists, who were reluctant to offer the gospel to unbelievers, Fuller contended that Christians were under orders to extend the gospel freely to all people, even if the elect alone would be saved. He agreed that salvation was the prerogative of God alone, but he argued that the Scriptures were equally clear regarding the church's duty to offer the gospel indiscriminately, especially to those who had never heard it. This theology inspired William Carey and others to venture to distant lands driven by a sense of boldness and expectation that resembled that of the apostolic age.

But this was only a part of Fuller's legacy. Fuller was the pastor of the Baptist church in Soham in Cambridgeshire from 1775 to 1782, before accepting a call to the Baptist church in Kettering in Northamptonshire, where he served until his death in 1815. Although he had no formal theological training, Fuller exhibited remarkable intellectual energy and theological acumen. With the pastorate as his base of operations, he engaged in theological dialogue and debate on a host of topics, many of which are preserved in his substantial corpus.[4] Fuller found fellowship and inspira-

[1] Paul Sanchez is the lead pastor of Starnes Cove Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina.

[2] Andrew Fuller had no relation to Charles E. Fuller, the founder of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

[3] For sources on the rise of evangelicalism in England, see David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990) and Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003).

[4] For the most complete edition of his works, see Andrew Fuller, *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* Vol. 1–3 (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988). All references to works by Fuller, unless otherwise noted, are found in this volume. A new critical edition

tion for his theological work within an informal network of theologically inclined pastors who became his closest friends, including Robert Hall, Sr. (1728–1791), John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825), and John Sutcliff (1752–1814). It was in this environment that Fuller became one of the leading theologians of the Baptist tradition, and an outstanding model of the pastor-theologian.

Endeavoring to look more closely at Fuller's pastoral ministry and the theology behind it, a striking theme emerges in his pastoral theology. I will argue that Fuller regarded love as the essential virtue for pastoral ministry. Intellect, rhetorical ability, and other gifts were valuable, but love was supreme. It was the key to faithful and fruitful ministry. Excellence in ministry could be judged by how well one has loved his church and cultivated love within it. A number of scholars have devoted attention to Fuller's pastoral theology in recent years. In *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, Keith Grant argued that Fuller's pastoral theology was characterized by a careful balance of head and heart in a way that was "neither sentimental pietism nor a rationalistic Calvinism but a thoughtful, 'affectionate' faith in Christ."[5] Nigel Wheeler has produced an impressive study of Fuller's pastoral theology by focusing on his ordination sermons. Wheeler underscored Fuller's emphasis upon personal spirituality as the means and measure of one's effectiveness as a pastor.[6] Paul Brewster highlighted Fuller's rich spirituality as he focused on Fuller's work as a quintessential pastor-theologian.[7] Following Wheeler's approach, I have focused my research on Fuller's ordination sermons. In this impressive collection of sermons, we find a theological mentor who urged pastors to pursue love as the preeminent virtue for pastors and the churches they serve. In a day when pastors are experiencing an identity crisis, Fuller offers a vision of ministry that is as unexpected as it is inspirational.

Fuller's ordination sermons provide a collective expression of his pastoral theology. The occasion of pastoral ordination allowed Fuller the opportunity to distill his advice to new pastors in the form of a single sermon for the formation of ministers and the churches they would lead. Thirty-one of these sermons survive.[8] Although they offer a range of insights and exhortations, love emerges as the central idea that draws together

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of his works is currently underway through the work of the Andrew Fuller Center at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Working with the publisher Walter de Gruyter of Berlin, Germany, three of seventeen volumes are currently available.

[5] Keith Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2013).

[6] Nigel D. Wheeler, "Eminent Usefulness and Eminent Spirituality: Andrew Fuller's (1754–1815) Pastoral Theology in his Ordination Sermons" (PhD dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2009). For the newly published version, see Nigel Wheeler, *The Pastoral Priorities of 18th Century Baptists: An Examination of Andrew Fuller's Ordination Sermons* (Petersborough, ON: H&E, 2021).

[7] Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010).

[8] The collection of Fuller's ordination sermons is the largest of any eighteenth-century Baptist. For more of this collection, see Wheeler, "Eminent Usefulness and Eminent Spirituality," 167–68. Keith Grant also provides helpful analysis as well as background on

his pastoral theology and his vision for the church. Today as theologians give fresh attention to virtue formation with the help of biblical scholars, philosophers, and psychologists, historical figures like Andrew Fuller provide yet another angle from which to consider relevant questions for reflection. Fuller's rich spirituality and his emphasis upon love, arguably the greatest of Christian virtues, offers fertile ground for reflection and deeper exploration. What is the essence of pastoral ministry? How does one judge excellence in pastoral ministry? And given Fuller's emphasis, what does love look like in the context of the local church? Fuller's ordination sermons provide surprisingly rich answers to these questions.

Fuller's sermons are filled with the language of "love" and "affections." Terms like these and the emphasis behind them reveal the religion of the heart that animated eighteenth-century evangelicals. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) had a notable influence in spreading this spirituality, including among the English Particular Baptists. Michael Haykin called Edwards Fuller's "chief theological mentor after the Scriptures," and an Edwardsean spirituality of love is evident throughout Fuller's corpus.[9] Keith Grant has noted Fuller's characteristic use of the "vocabulary of the heart," frequently employing terms like "affectionate," "passions," "love," "zeal," and "feeling."[10] Douglas Sweeney defined Edwards's use of the affections as "the matrix of desires, inclinations and aspirations that ground a person's moral life."[11] This definition could likewise be applied to Fuller, including his pastoral theology. Even without the precise language and emphases of virtue theory, Fuller's emphasis on love as a somewhat more abstract idea has the potential to provide insight as theologians show renewed attention to the Christian virtue of love. His contribution seems all the more relevant for pastor-theologians when considering his concentration on love specifically within the context of pastoral ministry and the life of the local church.

In his role as mentor to pastors, Fuller put love forward a central telos for pastors. The pastor's love applied first to God, and secondly to the people who were entrusted to him by the great over-shepherd. This love is characterized by humility and servanthood, and it moves toward a bond of union between the hearts of the shepherd and the sheep. It pursues the flourishing of the ones loved, especially in their ecclesial and religious life. Fuller contended that without love the pastor could be little more

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pastoral ordination among eighteenth-century Particular Baptists. See Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal,* 58–65.

9 Michael Haykin, ed. *The Armies of the Lamb: The Spirituality of Andrew Fuller* (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2001), 27. For Edwards's spirituality of love, see Ronald Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012). For Edwards's influence on Fuller and the Particular Baptists, see Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012). For Fuller's Edwardsean spirituality, see Nathan A. Finn, "Andrew Fuller's Edwardsean Spirituality" in *The Pure Flame of Devotion*, edited by G. Stephen Weaver, Jr. and Ian Hugh Clary (Kitchener, ON: Joshua Press, 2013), 383–404.

10 Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal*, 9.

11 Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 119.

than a hireling, but with love pastors and their congregations could find a unique sense of joy, as a form of internal good that proceeds from virtue. Embracing love together, the local church walked a path toward flourishing as the body of Christ.

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE IN PREACHING

Andrew Fuller placed preaching at the center of pastoral ministry.[12] In this way he followed the long tradition of the Particular Baptists who prioritized the ministry of the word.[13] In an ordination sermon based on 1 Corinthians 3:9, Fuller contended that pastors labored in the name of Christ, which implied both the high nature of the calling and the privilege that preaching represented. Christ called pastors to labor tirelessly in "word and doctrine" in service to the church.[14] But Fuller also argued that love should guide and undergird all pastoral preaching. By cultivating love in their preaching, pastors would empower their message and bless their hearers.

The aspiration toward love was first based in Christ's expectation that his under-shepherds would love the sheep that he entrusted to them.[15] Beyond the basic question of faithfulness, Fuller argued that a ministry without genuine love would be unfruitful. Christ, the over-shepherd, modeled a love beyond parallel when he laid down his life for his sheep. With this mind, pastors must remember that the people entrusted to them were among the sheep for whom Christ died. Fuller argued that ministers should love the sheep on account of their love for Christ: "[Christ] would not trust [his sheep] with one who did not love him. One who did not love him, a hireling, would starve them, or poison them, and flee in a time of danger, John x. 12. Give him the fleece, the flock may care for themselves. But if we love Christ, we shall love his people for his sake."[16] Furthermore, "It is by this a good shepherd is distinguished from a hireling."[17] A pastor who loved his sheep would be bold in the ministry of the word, like the young David who risked his life to protect the flock.[18] The preacher should first

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[12] See the collection of letters that instruct young ministers in the "great and solemn trust" of preaching, Fuller, Letters I–V in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* 1:712–27. For a secondary source on Fuller's preaching, see Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal*.

[13] For a comprehensive resource on the Particular Baptists, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *The British Particular Baptists*, Vol. 1–3 (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998). For a work that gives helpful background on Particular Baptist ecclesiology, see James M. Renihan, *Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists, 1675–1705* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008).

[14] Fuller, "Ministers Fellow Laborers with God," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:491–92.

[15] Fuller, "Pastors Required to Feed the Flock of Christ" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller,* 1:477.

[16] Fuller, "Pastors Required," 1:477–78.

[17] Fuller, "Pastors Required," 1:478.

[18] Fuller, "Pastors Required," 1:478. Fuller envisioned more than preaching as he developed this argument, but preaching seemed to be central to his point.

love Christ, but then also love Christ's people as the Lord's appointed under-shepherd. A pastor who does anything less could only be a hireling.

Love is more than a feeling, but Fuller contended that a minister must himself feel the message that he preached. On this point, Keith Grant noted Fuller's emphasis on "the important place of feelings, the heart, and emotional responses to the gospel."[19] This heartfelt or affectionate preaching would inspire and enlighten its hearers. In an ordination sermon based on John 5:35, Fuller gave two central objectives for Christian preaching: "*enlightening of the minds*, and *affecting the hearts of the people*."[20] For one to attain this, he must himself be stirred by the word of God, having an affected heart and an enlightened mind. Fuller encouraged, "And if you would enlighten others, you must be a 'shining light' yourself. And if you would affect others, you yourself must feel; your own heart must 'burn' with holy ardour."[21] Fuller called these objectives "spiritual light" and "holy love" and considered them to be essential to preaching. Before doctrine is preached, it must also be felt with a holy love. Along with the knowledge necessary for proclamation, one must personally know and love the God about whom he preached. One must be "intimately acquainted with Christ" if he would invite sinners to know him.[22]

A spirit of love should be evident in one's preaching. As the preacher felt the message, he likewise appealed to the "passions" of the people. Because God created humanity with the capacity to love, the preacher rightly gave careful consideration to this in the formation of his people. However, recognizing that men and women's passions are naturally bent away from God because of sin, the preacher helps reorient human love. The pastor "presents to our view 'a crown'—to our love of pleasure; and informs us that 'in [Christ's] presence there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.'"[23] As the preacher declared the truth of the gospel, it was not a truth of the mind only, but a truth to be felt and embraced. To the newly minted pastor, Fuller stressed that the preacher should not expect a response from his hearers that he himself had not experienced: "You will need, also, my brother, a heart *warmed* with Divine things, or you will never be 'a burning and shining light.'"[24] This began in the pastor's study and was carried with him into the pulpit. For Fuller, this was more than zeal, which alone "will not do."[25] Without love, preaching will tend to be weak and off target. He asked rhetorically, "How can we preach against sin, without feeling a holy indignation against it? It is this that will cause us, while we denounce sin, to weep over the sinner." A bare acknowledgement

[19] Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal*, 99.

[20] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge and Love Necessary for the Ministry," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:478–79. Italics are original.

[21] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:479.

[22] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:480.

[23] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:480.

[24] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:480. Italics are original.

[25] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:480.

of sin fell short. Fuller declared unequivocally, "O! if we ever do any good in our work, it must be the effect of love to God and love to men—love to the souls of men, while we detest, and expose and denounce their sins." Fuller pointed to the Apostle Paul as an exemplar of this holy love in the ministry. Paul's letters displayed the virtue of love to which every minister of the word should aspire.

Fuller contended that the very nature of the gospel called for love from the preacher. Fuller made this point in an ordination sermon based on Colossians 4:3–4, where he said, "*The gospel is a message of love, and therefore it ought to be preached with great affection*."[26] If a someone preached the gospel without love, he undermined his message because the gospel itself was a message of love. He warned, "To preach these things with an unfeeling heart is not to preach 'as we ought' to preach."[27] The solution to a loveless gospel message was to cultivate "the affectionate."[28] Contrived expressions of emotion would avail nothing. The goal was sincerity of heart and a spirit of compassion. Fuller held up Christ as a source inspiration: "Christ wept over sinners, and so should we."[29] By looking to Christ, and by fellowship with him, one could cultivate this same love. Furthermore, a faithful preacher will love those to whom he preaches when he recognized the weight of his message and the pending day when everyone will stand before a holy God. If ministerial faithfulness required love, then pastoral development should give significant attention to the formation of this essential virtue.

Fuller emphasized that both the matter and manner of preaching needed careful consideration. He did so in an ordination sermon based on 1 Thessalonians 2:7–8, a text about which Fuller said, "I know of nothing more impressive on the subject of the Christian ministry than this whole chapter."[30] In terms of content, the preacher's message should not only reveal sin, but also offer the remedy in Jesus Christ. Far from suggesting a simplistic message, Fuller urged the pastor to preach with depth of doctrine. However, Fuller regretted that so many failed to give attention to the manner of preaching, which was crucially important in its own right. The preacher should impart his own soul to the hearers. He should preach "faithfully, firmly, earnestly, affectionately."[31] Furthermore, "Manner is a means of conveying truth. A cold manner disgraces important truth."[32] Fuller pointed pastors to the apostles who modeled a passionate manner of preaching. Christian ministers should likewise preach with holy affection

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[26] Fuller, "The Nature of the Gospel, and the Manner in which it Ought to be Preached," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:496. Italics are original.

[27] Fuller, "The Nature of the Gospel," 1:496.

[28] Fuller, "The Nature of the Gospel," 1:496.

[29] Fuller, "The Nature of the Gospel," 1:496.

[30] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern of a Minister for the Salvation of His Hearers," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:508–10.

[31] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:510.

[32] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:510.

and with a love that does justice to the gravity of their work for souls who will perish without Christ.[33]

When Fuller prioritized love, it was never at the expense of truth. Fuller perceived of love as being bound with truth. He alluded to this when he said, "The truth is a system of *love* and *goodness*—an overflow of Divine blessedness."[34] Love of God and his people called for dedication to truth. Fuller admonished, "Still your faithfulness must be tempered with love. There is such a thing as unfeeling fidelity—and preaching *at* people, rather than *to* them."[35] He pointed to Christ as the perfect example. Jesus rebuked hypocrites, wept over sinners, and he also declared a gospel of forgiveness.[36] Keith Grant well summarized Fuller's point: "Fuller recognized the important place of feelings, the heart, and emotional responses to the gospel, but this emphasis upon the affections did not displace, but rather arose from, thoughtful preaching and reasoned hearing."[37] Fuller made a similar emphasis when he preached a sermon titled "Holding Fast the Gospel," based on 2 Timothy 1:13.[38] He declared that the preacher must be faithful to the content of the gospel when he preached, but without love it might become "a bigoted and blind attachment to doctrines, which will be of no use, even if they be true."[39] The preacher needed both faith and love, both fidelity to the truth and a heart that is warm to God and humanity. Fuller summarized his point when he said, "The union of genuine orthodoxy and affection constitutes true religion."[40] As a virtue, then, love was not separated from truthfulness or courage, but without love the others might fall on deaf ears.

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE IN MEMBER CARE

Preaching was central, but the stewardship of shepherding also called for more personal ministry to God's people. Andrew Fuller enjoined ministers to pursue pastoral care with the same aspiration toward love that characterized faithful preaching. If love began in the pulpit, it extended far beyond, into members' homes, in private prayer, counseling, visiting the sick, and comforting the grieving. A loving pastor gave of himself to serve members with humility and gentleness.[41] In one ordination sermon, Fuller challenged pastors to be "unostentatious; gentle and affectionate; disinterested; and

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33 Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:510.

34 Fuller, "Churches Walking in the Truth the Joy of Ministers," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:529–30.

35 Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements of the Christian Minister" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:499. Italics are original.

36 Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements," 1:499.

37 Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal*, 99.

38 Fuller, "Holding Fast the Gospel," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller,* 1:547–49.

39 Fuller, "Holding Fast," 1:548.

40 Fuller, "Holding Fast," 1:549.

41 Fuller, "Pastors Required," 1:477–478.

consistent in their deportment, not only among unbelievers, where even hypocrites will preserve appearances, but also among the people of their charge."[42] Fuller pointed to Christ's example, who "endured all things for the elect's sake; and so shall we, if we be of his mind."[43] Seeking to inspire pastors with Christ's example, Fuller declared, "If we be true ministers of Christ, *we shall love the souls of men as he loved them*."[44]

Fuller considered visitation to be a vital task for pastoral ministry.[45] He stated it plainly on one occasion: "A considerable part of the pastoral office consists in visiting the people, especially the afflicted."[46] As he emphasized what he considered to be two key objectives for Christian ministry—"*enlightening the minds* and *affecting the hearts* of the people"—he applied these also to "the more private duty of visiting the people."[47] Fuller offered the Apostle Paul's example of ministering "from house to house," as referenced in Acts 20:20. As pastors did this, they should exhibit the same "shining" and "burning" as in the pulpit, demonstrating spiritual insight, passion, and love . This more personalized shepherding allowed for a deeper level of application of the word than is typically possible in the pulpit. Fuller also highlighted the unique benefit of pastoral visitation that allowed the pastor to hear from his sheep: "[Members] will be able to impart their feelings freely and unreservedly; and you will be able to administer the appropriate counsel to much better purpose than you possibly could from the pulpit, and with greater particularity than would be becoming in a public address."[48] The minister who demonstrated this sort of love could provide a deeper level of encouragement, as well as reproof, than would ever be possible otherwise.[49] Nigel Wheeler argued that it fostered an "openness of communication" and "if a pastor's people knew he loved them and truly wished their best for eternity, Fuller believed he could say almost anything to them without their being offended."[50] In this intimate setting, the pastor fostered a bond with his people, and cultivated the virtue that Fuller believed to be at the heart of ministry. Excellence in ministry required nothing less.

Fuller, however, warned of the risks related to pastoral visitation. He cautioned one aspiring pastor accordingly: "Love your brethren, and be familiar with them; not, however with that kind of familiarity which breeds disrespect, by which some have degraded themselves in the eyes of the people

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[42] Fuller, "The Reward of a Faithful Minister" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:542.

[43] Fuller, "The Reward," 1:543.

[44] Fuller, "The Reward," 1:543. Italics are original.

[45] For the secondary sources on this, see Wheeler, "Eminent Usefulness and Eminent Spirituality," 197–99, and Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, 120–29.

[46] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.

[47] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:478–81.

[48] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.

[49] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.

[50] Wheeler, "Eminent Spirituality and Eminent Usefulness," 198.

and invited the opposition of the contentious part of them."[51] The pastor should visit regularly, but briefly, thoughtfully, and purposefully. Even with those whom he visited frequently, he should take care to conduct himself as a pastor, not merely a casual visitor. Gossip was also a liability, Fuller warned: "Pastoral visits should not degenerate into religious gossiping—a practice in which some have indulged to the disgrace of religion."[52] Casual and thoughtless questions about other members easily degraded into gossip and slander. Fuller noted how easily this gave opportunity to the Devil: "Satan promptly furnishes a subject where there is such a dearth; and hence gossiping has generally produced tales of slander, and practices which have proved a scandal to the Christian name!"[53] Fuller also warned about the less obvious but equally serious risk of idleness: "I trust, my brother, you know the preciousness of time too well to squander it away in idle visits. And yet, visiting is an essential part of your work, that you may become acquainted with the circumstances, the spiritual necessities of your people."[54] The potential risks should not be a discouragement against a robust visitation ministry, but a wise pastor should guard himself as he ministered to the people.

Although he did not use the language of virtue, Fuller envisioned pastoral love as a way of being. In his sphere of influence, he charged pastors to aspire to have a gentle and affectionate spirit toward their people. In every aspect of ministry, love was the telos, but in no case was this more important than in pastoral rebuke. Perhaps often taking place during pastoral visitation, Fuller cautioned, "If you are compelled to reprove, beware that your reproof be conveyed, not in ill temper, but in love; not to gratify self, but to do your brother good."[55] He held up humility as an indispensable part of love, which would lead ministers to give careful thought to their own motives and manner of expression.[56]

In an ordination sermon based on 1 Thessalonians 2:7–8, Fuller placed love at the fore of pastoral qualifications. He defined it as the "affectionate concern after their salvation" and called it "one of the most important qualifications for the ministry."[57] He explained why love was a sine qua non even among other qualifications or giftings: "This qualification is that without which the greatest gifts, natural and acquired, are nothing as to real usefulness."[58] Love, for example, was more vital than intellect: "Genius may amuse, but 'love edifieth.' A strong mind and a brilliant imagination

[51] Andrew Fuller, "Letter to a Young Minister in Prospect of Ordination" in Appendix 4, Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal*, 132–133.

[52] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.

[53] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.

[54] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.

[55] Fuller, "Ministers and Churches Exhorted to Serve One Another in Love" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:545.

[56] Fuller, "The Reward," 1:542.

[57] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern of a Minister for the Salvation of His Hearers" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:508.

[58] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:508.

may excite their admiration, but this will attract the hearts of the people. Look at the men who have been the most honoured [in ministry]; and you will find that they are not the brightest geniuses, but the humble and affectionate."[59] Fuller illustrated his point with the Apostle Paul, who deeply loved his countrymen and yearned for their salvation. The Apostle John also modeled selfless love. Fuller cited 3 John 4, which illuminated John's joy for his spiritual children in their obedience to the truth. John considered them "the brightest jewels in his future crown."[60] No one, however, embodied this love more perfectly than Jesus himself.[61] Christ's example had the power to stir the hearts of ministers as they pursued this genuine love in their care for the flock.

As important as it was, Fuller warned that visitation ministry could be difficult. The pastor who challenged a wayward brother or sister knew how taxing it could be, especially when the pastor genuinely loved the sheep. Fuller counseled ministers to be prepared in heart for the member who might resist correction: "But if a minister tell the truth, there is a great danger of his being counted an enemy, and treated as such. Faithful reproof, therefore, must be self-denying work."[62] Love meant selflessness and longsuffering, as well as the love of truth. Fuller admonished, "The grand secret, I think to render this part of our work as easy as possible, is to *love the souls of the people*, and to do everything from pure good-will, and with a view to their advantage—'speaking the truth in love.'"[63] In a letter to a young minister Fuller simplified his point even further: "The great secret of ruling a church is to convince them that you love them, and say and do everything for their good."[64] If love was the chief virtue for pastors, member care was one of the chief ways to demonstrate the pastor's love to the people.

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE SHARED

Although Fuller's ordination sermons were addressed first to the new minister, these messages also afforded him the opportunity to address the church as well. Beginning with the pastor's love for the church, Fuller also envisioned a reciprocal love that flowed from the people and back to the pastor. In an ordination sermon based on Matthew 25:21, Fuller acknowledged the difficulty of pastoral ministry, but if the pastor could gain the hearts of his people, his ministry could become a labor of love.

Fuller exhorted minsters to strive for the love of their people with the recognition that their success in ministry depended upon it. Fuller said plainly, "You could never expect to do them good unless you were interested

[59] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:508.
[60] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:509.
[61] Fuller, "Affectionate Concern," 1:509.
[62] Fuller, "Ministers Fellow," 1:492.
[63] Fuller, "Ministers Fellow," 1:492–493. Italics are mine.
[64] Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal*, 132.

in their affections."[65] A pastor's effort to win the hearts of the people began by applying love to every area of the ministry. Fuller pointed out that some ministers struggled to disciple their people simply because they had failed to love them in the process. A minister might complain saying, "They would not receive the doctrine I taught; they were always opposing it, always caviling at it, and have often caused my heart to ache." But Fuller responded, "Did you teach them in love? Did you bear and forbear with them? If they have gone astray like lost sheep, have you searched after them with a desire to restore them?"[66] But if a pastor's instruction proceeded from the heart, it would endear him to the people. Fuller clarified that one should never sacrifice truth in the pursuit of affection, but too often a sound message was delivered from a cold heart: "Still your faithfulness must be tempered with love. There is such a thing as unfeeling fidelity—and preaching *at* the people, rather than *to* them.[67]

Pastors should be content with their flock, even if small or composed of a lower cross section of society. Cultivating mutual love called for a calm contentment in his present station, with confidence in his heavenly reward. Fuller rebuked the haughty spirit that consumed itself with "gathering a respectable congregation." Even the smallest church had eternal worth and caried a lofty stewardship before God. Fuller challenged the pride that craved applause more than love: "We should not study to please men so much as to please God. If we please him, we shall please all who love him, and, as to others, they are not on any account worthy of being pleased at the expense of displeasing God."[68] The heart that craved applause more than the love of God and his people had destroyed many ministers. Fuller charged his hearers to keep the ultimate end in mind: "You *may* sit down when *God* says, 'Well done!' for then your trust will be discharged; but it is at your peril that you rest satisfied with anything short of this. Keep *that* reward in view, and you will not, I trust, be unfaithful in the service of your Lord."[69] As a pastor, Fuller knew these temptations well, and he offered his vision of pastoral love as a hopeful remedy and as a source of renewal for pastoral ministry.

Fuller also spoke to churches to inspire them to love their pastor. In an ordination sermon based on Psalm 68:18, and its Christological application in Ephesians 4:8, Fuller argued that Christ gave ministers to the church as a gift, with an emphasis on *gift*. If ministers are a heavenly gift then the church should treasure them.[70] Fuller addressed the congregation saying, "Ministers are *received for* and are *given* to you by Christ" and "if you *love* Christ, you will make much of your minister, on account of his being *his*

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[65] Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements," 1:496–97.

[66] Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements," 1:498.

[67] Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements," 1:499. Italics are original.

[68] Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements," 1:499.

[69] Fuller, "The Work and Encouragements," 1:500. Italics are original.

[70] Fuller, "Importance of Christian Ministers Considered as the Gift of Christ" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:521.

gift."[71] Members should show their love by committed attendance and by generous giving, and in a way that is "not as done to him, but to Christ." In love, they should pursue peace in the congregation and "shun those things that tend to provoke the Lord to withdraw his gifts, and to cease to dwell among you."[72] In an ordination sermon based on 3 John 4, Fuller summarized his point well: "If the truth thus dwells in you . . . you will love your *pastor*, for the truth's sake which he preaches; and if you love him, you will make a point of attending his ministry, of contributing to his support, and of consulting his peace and happiness in every possible way."[73] Gratitude and a love of truth will inspire a church to love their pastor. In another sermon, Fuller raised the obvious point that pastors were human and would make mistakes, and so he charged the church to love their pastor by being gracious to him in light of his imperfections. They should pray for him and assume the best in him.[74]

The goal of reciprocal love also applied to the members, one to another. On one occasion, Fuller told a church succinctly, "Be careful to cultivate a spirit of love."[75] He encouraged members to give careful thought to their attitudes with the aim to "cultivate a humble savoury spirit" toward one another.[76] If they displayed love with an affectionate spirit toward each another, unity would be the sure result. Fuller elevated sincerity to first importance and he argued that love was a faithful guide for the life of the local church: "The great art of church government is to love in sincerity."[77] Although Fuller was not the type to be hesitant to offer correction, he counseled churches that love would guide them well: "Love will dictate what is proper on most occasions. It will do more than a thousand rules; and all rules without it are nothing."[78] Rather than overrule God's commandments for the church, love will help the church to fulfill them. With a zealous pursuit of this virtue, both pastor and church could enjoy the deeper internal good of Christian love expressed in the fellowship and ministry of the local church.

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE FOR GOD

As a minister aspired to love his people well and to cultivate their love, it would be a serious misstep to neglect the calling to love God first. As one who was invested in the formation of pastors, Fuller lamented the phenomenon of ministers who labored tirelessly to love and serve their people but who neglected the greater commandment to love God and

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[71] Fuller, "Importance of Christian Ministers," 1:521. Italics are original.

[72] Fuller, "Importance of Christian Ministers," 1:522.

[73] Fuller, "Churches Walking," 1:530.

[74] Fuller, "Churches Should Exhibit the Light of the Gospel" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:531–33.

[75] Fuller, "A Peaceful Disposition" in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:535.

[76] Fuller, "Churches Should Exhibit," 1:534.

[77] Fuller, "Churches Should Exhibit," 1:534.

[78] Fuller, "Ministers and Churches," 1:545.

to delight in his love. The virtue of love to which pastors rightly aspired should be grounded in the God who is love.

Fuller provided some practical steps to help pastors stoke the fire of their hearts toward God. In a sermon based on John 5:35, Fuller exhorted ministers to apply themselves to cultivating "holy love." As important as it was to gain "holy wisdom," ministers should also long to "burn with ardent love."[79] To begin with, Fuller advised ministers to read about exemplary saints from the past: "*Read the lives of good men*—the lives of such men as God has distinguished for gifts, and graces, and usefulness."[80] Although no figure save Christ was sinless, such stories inspired believers to emulate great figures of the past, which also had the effect of stirring one's heart for the God that they served. But above all, it was in the holy Scriptures that God's people found their deepest and most edifying fellowship. It was there that they heard the voice of God and the most gracious message that he sent to them. The was the surest source of communion with the transcendent God of heaven. Fuller proclaimed that the reading of Scripture "will set our hearts on fire."[81] Nothing else had such potential to foster holy love. In a sermon on 1 Corinthians 3:9, Fuller encouraged that God was near to those who sought him: "If we be with God, God is with us; and that is the greatest encouragement we can have." This love, something much deeper than warm feelings or good intentions, was the Christian's delight. It was worthy of the attention that Fuller ascribed to it and more.

As another part of pursuing this love, Fuller called ministers to self-evaluation. Self-analysis should include the breadth of one's life and doctrine, but Fuller called for giving special attention to the heart. Even in the eighteenth century, the busyness of ministry and life could distract one from pursuing love of God as the essential virtue that Fuller believed it was. In this way, the minister needed to be a Christian first and a pastor second: "*Live the life of a Christian*, as well as of a minister. Read as one, preach as one, converse as one to *be profited*, as well as to profit others."[82] Fuller addressed the temptation for ministers, "to handle Divine truth as ministers, rather than as Christians—for others, rather than for ourselves."[83] Preachers should never assume that their own act of preaching automatically benefited them. Like those who heard it, they too must receive it in faith. Fuller warned that the minister's study of Scripture must be more than a source for material to give for others. It must be a source for feeding the minister himself. Pastors should take care to avoid the pitfall in which familiarity with the Bible breeds indifference to it. Pastors must reserve regular times for private communion with God as a source for intimacy and empowerment: "Walking with God in the closet is a grand means, with his blessing, of illuminating our minds and warming our hearts. When Moses

[79] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:481.
[80] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:482. Italics are original.
[81] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:482.
[82] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:482. Italics are original.
[83] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:482.

came down from the mount, his face shone bright, and his heart burned with zeal for the honour of God and the good of his people."[84] Fuller did not presume that ministers would necessarily relive Moses's experience on the mountain, but the same God who spoke to Moses continued to commune with his people, especially through the word and prayer. If pastors were going to love their people well, they needed the fruit of their own devotional life which more than anything else was both an expression and a source of Godward love.

Love of God necessarily included holy obedience. The act of love on the part of the created toward the Creator produced a life of obedience. Fuller exhorted, "Hold forth the word of life, not only by precept, but by a *holy practice*." Fuller warned would-be pastors that without holiness "in vain will be all our pretensions to being 'burning and shining lights.'"[85] In this pursuit, Fuller charged pastors to be full of the Spirit. In an ordination sermon based on Acts 11:24, Fuller used Barnabas as one such example.[86] Being full of the Spirit would strengthen the believer's bond with God and protect against the world's influence. Too many had fallen "under the influence of the love of this world" to become "*drunken* with its cares or pleasures."[87] Fuller summarized his point well: "If we are destitute of the Holy Spirit, we are blind to the loveliness of the Divine character, and destitute of any true love to God in our hearts; and if destitute of this, we shall not be able to see the reasonableness of that law which requires love to him with all the heart."[88] Always trusting in the perfect work of Christ and the grace therein, every Christian, but especially those called to shepherd God's people should pursue holiness as an act of love toward God.

CONCLUSION

In the busyness, and often business-oriented, ministry of the twenty-first century, many pastors function without consciously aspiring toward virtues that in times past have significantly shaped the vision of the Christian ministry. Intellectual virtues, for example, that in times past helped to make pastors theological leaders in society have widely been neglected since the turn of the last century. The Christian virtue of love likewise warrants attention, and by looking at an eighteenth-century Particular Baptist, we find a remarkable contrast to a common picture of pastoral ministry today. In Fuller's estimation, love was the preeminent virtue for pastors, which merited the prominence that he gave it in the formation of ministers in his native England. As an eighteenth-century Baptist, Andrew Fuller was more biblicist than classicist. A well-studied theologian, he was not ignorant of the classics, but he preferred to use biblical terms and categories both in

[84] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:482.

[85] Fuller, "Spiritual Knowledge," 1:482.

[86] Fuller, "The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister Illustrated by the Character and Success of Barnabas," in *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller,* 1:135–44.

[87] Fuller, "The Qualifications," 1:138.

[88] Fuller, "The Qualifications," 1:139.

his theological construction and his preaching.[89] His work lacks some of the deeper philosophical reflection of virtue theory, but his rich spirituality and biblically-shaped pastoral theology of love offers a fascinating angle to explore in a time when virtue formation is receiving renewed attention.

Fuller painted a picture of excellence in ministry that placed love above all else. He regarded love as the essential virtue for pastoral ministry and the key to faithful and fruitful ministry. Excellence in ministry could be judged by how well one has loved his church and cultivated love within it. If excellence required love, then the training of pastors should give significant attention to the formation of this virtue. Answering how this should be done on a practical level today raises more questions than answers, but the renewed attention to virtue formation provides some hope for fresh consideration, which I expect will draw inspiration from the wealth of resources in church history. On the most basic level, Fuller demonstrates how a Christ-modeled love should undergird the whole of pastoral ministry. On this most basic level, the point is refreshingly simple to grasp.

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[89] For the best source on Fuller's theological method, see Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, 37–64.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Tom Greggs. *The Breadth of Salvation: Rediscovering the Fullness of God's Saving Work*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021. xvi + 124 pp. $21.99, paper.

For most of my Christian life I have sought—from my Baptist, moderately Reformed, evangelical perspective—to understand the Bible's teaching on the relationship between God's universal and particular saving work, that is, what God has done to save all and what God does in applying salvation to some. I have done this academically (primarily in the areas of the intent and extent of the atonement), but even more as a pastor, as I'm convinced that the way we understand this relationship impacts our understanding of the gospel, the church, and how we should minister and witness the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Throughout church history there has been a tendency either to overemphasize God's universal saving work to the detriment of his particular saving work, or vice-versa, and denominations and believers today continue to do the same thing in both ways. In my church and academic circles, I have found the struggle to be how to appreciate God's universal saving work without embracing universalism, often with the result that his universal saving work is either misunderstood or deemphasized.

Tom Greggs, the Marischal Chair of Divinity at the University of Aberdeen, recognizes this same struggle, and it has been a major area of his research and writing throughout his career, beginning with his work on Barth, Origen, and universal salvation. *The Breadth of Salvation* is a brief work seeking to counter and correct views of salvation and God's grace that are too narrow and limiting, keeping us from grasping all that God is doing in the church and in the world. Its four chapters explore the breadth of the ways that we can model and understand salvation, the breadth of salvation in the church and Christian relationships, the breadth of salvation's scope and God's grace for the world, and the breadth of repentance, or how people respond to the saving grace of God. Greggs is an evangelical Methodist and appeals to his church and ministry experience in his writing.

The first chapter illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of the entire book. The focus of the chapter is the breadth of imagery in Scripture describing God's salvation in Jesus Christ, and the corresponding breadth of theological models of the atonement. Greggs has two concerns: that too narrow a focus on only one image or one model of salvation can cause us to miss what the other images and models could teach us, and that such a narrow focus can cause us to act as if the model itself and not Jesus Christ in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension is the basis of salvation. He makes his case with a brief explanation of what theologies of the atonement are meant to do, which is to point to the one in Scripture who alone saves us, highlighting the work of John Calvin and Thomas Aquinas as examples of theologians who do this. He then surveys several biblical images of salvation and the theological models of the atonement built upon those images, demonstrating how none of them capture all of what

God is doing in salvation. He ends the chapter with an explanation of the biblical narrative of Jesus's passion that actually saves us, the gospel itself, showing how it cannot be reduced to a single model or image.

Greggs's concerns in this chapter are legitimate. Too narrow a focus on one biblical image of salvation to the exclusion of others can cause us to miss all of God's purposes in salvation, and perhaps unwittingly even limit his grace. Models of the atonement have been presented as the gospel themselves instead of focusing on the actual events of Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection. However, Greggs never offers concrete examples of how this has happened or comes right out and says exactly who he is critiquing. Greggs's emphasis on the breadth of the Bible's imagery describing salvation is helpful and thought-provoking, as are his explanations of the biblical truth present in each atonement model. However, Greggs treats the breadth of the biblical images and the multiplication of theological models as if they are the same thing, generalizing when more nuance would be appropriate. He emphasizes the need to see both images and models as complimentary to one another, highlighting different aspects of salvation. Certainly, the biblical images are all necessary and complementary, but this is not necessarily true with the theological models, no matter how historic or influential they are. He does acknowledge that some models might be more helpful than others but doesn't demonstrate this. As I read, each section left me wanting more, and my takeaway was that this chapter alone could have been a book (a book I would gladly read!).

Similar strengths and weaknesses persist throughout the remaining chapters. Chapter two's emphasis, on living out salvation as the church, our Spirit-filled humanity as the body of Christ, is much-needed and deserves a much longer treatment. Chapter three has some excellent reflections on understanding how God's grace is at work throughout the world, but also veers too close to universalism. Greggs repeatedly clarifies he is not a universalist but does not take the time to adequately respond to concerns of how his positions could lead there. Chapter four offers some helpful thoughts on repentance and the nature of the gospel in the Gospels, but also raises some provocative questions that are not answered. The book doesn't mean to be polemical, and it is clearly an introduction to these vast topics, but each chapter left me with unanswered questions, wanting more. Nevertheless, it is a thought-provoking, ecclesial work that will help sharpen your thinking about the gospel and God's grace while helping you to ask the right questions on how the universal and particular saving work of God relate to one another.

Gary L. Shultz Jr.
First Baptist Church
Tallahassee, Florida

David W. Fagerberg. *Liturgical Mysticism.* Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2019. 171 pp. $28.48, hardcover.

David W. Fagerberg of the University of Notre Dame is our generation's Alexander Schmemann or Aidan Kavanagh when it comes to liturgical theology. Fagerburg unlocks for us the depth of the triune God's activity in, through, and by the liturgy, the liturgical community, and the liturgical life.

This present volume culminates his previous works: *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?* (Hillenbrand Books, 2012) and *On Liturgical Asceticism* (The Catholic University of America Press, 2013). He sums up the relationship of liturgical theology, liturgical asceticism, and liturgical mysticism in this way:

> *Liturgical asceticism* kneads both body and soul with that resurrection power; *liturgical mysticism* looks fixedly at the mystery, who is Christ risen; and *liturgical theology* illuminates our world and our place in it. Liturgical mysticism is the Trinitarian mystery, mediated by sacramental liturgy and hypostasized as personal Liturgy, to anchor the substance of our lives (149, emphasis original).

Where liturgical asceticism has to do with the disciplined, lifelong, consistent apprenticing of the mind and heart to devotion to God, liturgical mysticism connects what is happening in our lives to the triune God. Fagerberg puts it precisely:

> To my ears, this is a fine definition of liturgical mysticism: the Paschal mystery hypostasizing in our hearts. Liturgy's business is to celebrate the Paschal mystery, and when it does, the mystery hypostasizes in us, descends to us, takes up its home in us, becomes the substance of our lives . . . Christ's God-manhood is the prototype of the icon we are mystically becoming (78).

Fagerberg awakens us to the power of the mysteries of God when the gathered worshipping community prays to the Lord, praises God, hears the Words of Institution, celebrates and receives the Eucharist/Lord's Table/Communion, sees and touches and receives the baptismal waters. This is far from the individualistic, quick fixes that pass for "worship" with smoke, lights, and screens where we watch our clocks to get to the fellowship hour. Fagerberg is calling our attention to the dense texture of the relational dynamic between the triune God relating with and engaging believers in worship, to believers responding in their lives as the mind and heart of Christ are being inscribed upon believers, and to the people we are becoming to the glory of God. In this way, all of life—the entirety of our

life—is worship, is liturgical, is as Jacob's ladder, a continuous heaven-earth descent and ascent.

Neal D. Presa
Village Community Presbyterian Church
Rancho Santa Fe, CA

Don C. Collett. *Figural Reading and the Old Testament: Theology and Practice*. Baker Academic, 2020. x + 194 pp. $24.00, paper.

The premise of this work is that although the Old Testament "provides the basic grammar for the church's confession on creation, providence, figuration, the nature of biblical inspiration, authorship, Trinity, Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology"—in short, for Christian faith and practice—its witness has been neglected in the modern period, leading to a variety of problems within the Christian church (1–2). To resist this troubling trend, Collett focuses on the relationship between figural reading and the Old Testament's literal sense. By "figure," Collett means "the representative significance of biblical history for all time . . . a figure is something God providentially constructs for the sake of speaking of Himself," including persons like David, events like the Exodus, institutions like the tabernacle, and places such as Zion (46). Figures, then, are closely connected to God's providential ordering of history and a figural reading recognizes the ongoing significance of the various providentially ordered biblical figures for the ongoing life of the church. Figural reading sees our own situation within the ongoing context of providential biblical history.

Figural reading does not run roughshod over the literal sense but is founded upon it. The literal sense, most literally, "refers to the *littera* or 'letter' of the biblical text" (28). In the early church, the literal sense could be "the verbal sense, the authorial sense, or the historical sense," but these are not competing understandings of the literal sense but different aspects of a coherent whole. The literal sense describes persons, events, and institutions that together witness to the providential ordering of history. Figural reading sees these as figures, pointing beyond themselves.

Collett's exploration of the relationship between figural reading and the literal sense proceeds in three parts: "Frameworks," "Exegesis," "Assessment." The argument moves back and forth between close readings of biblical texts and reflections on the hermeneutics and the history of interpretation. Chapter 1 begins with the relationship between Genesis 1 and 2 as pointing to the underlying relationship between the order of creation and providence: "The created order . . . is sustained through time by the divine establishment of providential links or 'affiliations' between rain and wild growth and between human life and cultivated growth . . . God's providential ordering of things in creation shapes the meaning of human

life and existence in the post-creation world" (13–14). With this exegetical framework in place, in chapter 2, Collett turns to the relationship between the literal sense and figural reading from the early church up to the time of the Reformation. He concludes that reading Scripture in a merely historical manner "ignores the purpose for which Scripture was given—namely, to serve as the inspired instrument of the triune God's self-disclosure in Christ by the Spirit" (53). By contrast, figural reading is "the historical extension of a theological judgment authorized by Scripture's own self-witness" (55).

Chapter 3, which is also part two, applies this framework to an extended, concrete exegetical example: the figure of wisdom in Job 28 and Proverbs 8. This example laudably demonstrates the integration of a careful study of syntax and semantics with theological ontology, which exerts "pressure" on our reading. In chapter 4, which forms the bulk of part 3, Collett returns to the history of interpretation, picking up at the Reformation and assessing the various developments of the modern and contemporary periods. In the Reformation, Luther and Calvin saw the literal sense of Scripture as including the grammatical and figural sense. But in the modern period, the literal sense was constricted as it connected to authorial consciousness and historical correspondence. Then, in a series of incisive criticisms, Collett demonstrates that although *sensus plenior,* "Christotelism," and reception history all try to recover the figural sense, they are fatally built on modern presupposition. Chapter 5 is a brief epilogue which contrasts J. P. Gabler's famous appeal for this historical sense as the "control" on the meaning of Scripture with "Nicene reason." On this later approach, "objectivity was possible just insofar as ecclesial reason in the community of faith submits its thoughts to the God of Israel's triune self-disclosure in the two-testament canon of Scripture . . . Canonically contextualized and biblically interpreted, the reality of God's self-disclosure in history thus offers the possibility of objective meaning and a truly critical perspective, though only insofar as we order our thoughts in obedience to Scripture" (162).

In short, Collett invites us to see ourselves as living in "a world where authorial intention and historical context are part of a larger providential drama by which Scripture's theological sense is rendered" (108). Collett moves easily between Hebrew philology, patristic and medieval theological debates, and contemporary hermeneutics, and some readers may find it difficult to keep up. I have some lingering questions. For example, should we really "variously speak of Scripture's theological sense in terms of its literal sense, grammatical sense, figural sense, allegorical sense, and metaphorical or tropical sense" (48) or should we attempt to maintain some distinctions? Nevertheless, I heartily commend this brilliant study, which I hope will be widely read as it has important implications for how we read especially the Old Testament as a discrete witness to Christ and for how we use Scripture in a liturgical setting.

Nathan Chambers
Wiser Lake Chapel
Lynden, WA

David G. Hunter and Jonathan P. Yates, eds. *Augustine and Tradition: Influences, Contexts, Legacy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021. xix + 481 pp. $80.00, hardcover.

Certain figures are so important in their age that they seem to come to us alone in history, a singular force in their time and milieu. Their influence, their legacy is so significant that it appears as if they almost singlehandedly redirected the course of civilization, theology, or the church. Augustine is one such figure. The theological proverb that "all of Western theology is just a footnote to the theology of Augustine" testifies to the footprint he has left—upon both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions.

This kind of hagiography is always—even as much as it may seem merited in the particular case of the North African bishop—a disservice both to the theologian and to the communion of saints. Even the most powerful and creative theological mind is the product of a complex web of relationships, inherited sources, and formative conflicts. *Augustine and Tradition*, a collection of essays from prominent Augustinian scholars, demonstrates this principle in a way that is helpful not only for understanding Augustine but also for understanding the vocation of the pastor theologian.

The collection is divided into four parts, moving from Augustine's ecclesial and cultural context in North Africa to the philosophical and literary tradition he worked within to his dialogue with the Greek contemporaries and then finally to his contemporaries and immediate successors. The editors have put together an impressive group of Augustine scholars, with John Cavadini, Michael Cameron, and James Wetzel among the contributors. The result of their combined effort is a nuanced portrait of the various ways that Augustine's genius was influenced and formed by a number of different factors and sources.

John Peter Kenney's essay, "Augustine and the Platonists," is an excellent example of what the volume accomplishes. The influence of Platonic philosophy upon Augustine is one of the more contended aspects of his thought, and Kenney's close reading of both Augustine's theology and also the complicated nuances of the Platonic tradition helps the reader to untangle how Augustine both appropriated and critiqued Platonism. Over and against readings of Augustine that claim Platonism compromised his fidelity to Scripture and thus corrupted his theology, Kenney demonstrates that the proper assessment of his relation to Platonism is one of "qualified rejection" (150). Importantly for pastor theologians, it was Augustine's vocation as a pastor and bishop that helped him to this conclusion. Kenney notes an "ecclesial turn" (150) in his thought upon his assuming pastoral responsibilities, and this calling led him to prioritize Scriptural exegesis in his own theological reflection. "Scriptural dialectic became the center of his practice throughout his life as a bishop, preacher, and exegete" (151). The social location of the pastorate was a primary formative influence upon Augustine.

Similarly, John Cavadini's essay on "Augustine and Ambrose" also complicates the "Great Man of History" reading of Augustine. Cavadini not only demonstrates *that* the Bishop of Milan had a lasting influence upon Augustine, but he also shows *how* that influence can be seen. One of the more interesting ways that this is seen is in the lasting importance of Ambrose's catechetical teaching upon Augustine the catechumen. "The most decisive impact Ambrose had on Augustine came from his catechetical and mystagogical instruction" (332). Augustine took this foundational instruction that he received from Ambrose into his pastoral and theological career and continued to deploy it into the various contexts his calling presented him.

Hunter and Yates have produced a wonderful collection of diverse essays in this book. The volume will be of most interest to those who are already familiar with Augustine and who wish to take a more granular look at the various influences upon his thought; some previous knowledge of Augustine is assumed by the essayists. For those who are Augustine scholars, they will find this volume to be an important addition to their libraries because of the nuance and texture it provides for understanding his thought.

Whether or not this volume finds its way into the library of most pastor theologians, in its scope and in its content, *Augustine and Tradition* is a helpful portrait of the vocation that this journal and society works to further. The pastor theologian is in many ways a generalist—a man or woman whose training leads not only to depth but also to breadth, to an ability to make use of a diverse set of influences, sources, and voices for the purpose of shepherding the local flock and presenting beautiful the Bride of Christ. Augustine, this volume demonstrates, is a model for all pastor theologians in his own devotion to this task.

Joseph H. Sherrard
Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church
Signal Mountain, TN