

12-2007

## Discerning the Covenant Renewal Model

Randy Robert Butler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

---

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

DISCERNING THE COVENANT RENEWAL MODEL

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY  
LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

BY

RANDY ROBERT BUTLER

PORTLAND, OREGON

DECEMBER 2007

PORTLAND CENTER LIBRARY  
GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY  
PORTLAND, OR. 97223

Copyright 2007 by Randy R. Butler

All Rights Reserved

# DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE



**RANDY ROBERT BUTLER**

**DATE: OCTOBER 30, 2007**

**TITLE:**

**DISCERNING THE COVENANT RENEWAL MODEL**

***WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ  
THIS PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN  
SCOPE AND QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN  
LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION DEGREE***

   
SIGNATURE DATE

   
SIGNATURE DATE



**GEORGE FOX  
EVANGELICAL SEMINARY**

## **Acknowledgements**

The following people helped me in some way in this project:

My wife, Joanie: my partner, mate, coach, and best friend. We have been together for more than 26 years in marriage, meeting at George Fox University, (then College). She is the one responsible for encouraging me to give this program a try. I love her with all my heart.

My daughter, Kristi, who graduated from George Fox University in 2006 and has helped with computer details on numerous occasions. I could not have completed this program without her assistance. Likewise, I wish to acknowledge her husband, Charles, who graduated from George Fox University in 2005. I absolutely could not have completed this program without his computer knowledge. He is responsible for formatting this dissertation. I love them with all my heart.

My friend, Paul Lopez, who always had my computer ready to go for class each semester. He took care of my computer needs over the past two years of school.

My college students at church, who often times served as my test lab for work in this program.

My congregation at Salem Evangelical Church. They prayed for me countless times over the past two years while in this program.

My doctoral program cohorts, who have become family to me. I will greatly miss their companionship. I pray God's richest blessing in their lives.

My professors, whom I consider brilliant! They lovingly, with incredible intelligence, guided my mind and heart to transformation. I am deeply indebted to them for their labor of love.

My retreat leader, professor, and friend, Dr. MaryKate Morse, for her patience with me. She inherited a stubborn mule. I trust I am less stubborn in her eyes at this writing. She shaped my life more than she will ever know.

George Fox Evangelical Seminary for its vision for this program. I was transformed by this great institution 30 years ago. This time around, it has had an even greater impact on my life. The people at GFES are my family.

Dr. Arthur Roberts, for taking time from his schedule to guide me through my dissertation. He has been my mentor and friend since our first meeting 30 years ago.

Paula Hampton, my editor, who took this project and polished it beautifully. I am most grateful.

My parents, who have been my cheerleaders throughout my entire life. Thanks for pointing me to Jesus! I love you.

Randy Alcorn, for his influence in my life. Without him, I would probably be in a cave somewhere a sobbing mess. His help in my time of need deserves more gratitude than I can give him in my lifetime on earth.

My God, for guiding me each step of the way. He is the one responsible for my completion of this program. All the glory belongs to Him. I love God with all my heart!

Finally, this dissertation and the completion of this program have been motivated by my loving memory of my son, Kevin. I love him with all my heart. This dissertation has been my attempt to discover ways to better know the God Kevin is enjoying right now in heaven.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
My Story.....	2
The Journey Back to Life.....	6
Considering the Problem.....	10
Planning for a Solution.....	12
Statement of the Problem.....	14
Preparing for a Solution.....	15
Proposal.....	16
Scope of the Dissertation.....	17
The Rest of the Story.....	19
2. BIBLICAL DISCERNMENT.....	21
Introduction.....	21
Discern.....	24
Discernment.....	29
Discerning.....	34
Discerned.....	37
Conclusion.....	38
3. THE QUAKER INFLUENCE: D. ELTON TRUEBLOOD, “TRANSITIONAL PROPHET” OF THE 20 <sup>th</sup> CENTURY.....	42
Historical Overview.....	43
D. Elton Trueblood on Discernment as Vocation.....	49
D. Elton Trueblood on Discernment as Community.....	52
D. Elton Trueblood on Discernment as Witness.....	56
The Baton is Passed: Schaeffer, One More Link to the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.....	60
4. SPIRITUALITY AS DISCERNING THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: MOVING FROM PENAL SUBSTITUTION TO COVENANT RENEWAL..	65
Wesley’s Christian Perfection: A Sample of the Penal Substitution Model.....	67
The Impact of John Wesley on the Modern Church.....	69
Caring for Others: A Sample of the Relational Holiness Model.....	75
Deep Change.....	76
Discerning the Holy Spirit.....	79
Relational Holiness Model.....	81
Concluding Remarks on the Relational Holiness Model.....	84
Introduction to the Covenant Renewal Model.....	84
Dr. Larry Shelton and the Covenant Renewal Model.....	86
The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Covenant Renewal Model.....	89
The Role of Discernment in the Covenant Renewal Model.....	90
Conclusions on the Covenant Renewal Model.....	92

5. DISCERNING THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GUIDED BY SCRIPTURE: THE WRITINGS OF RANDY ALCORN.....	94
Alcorn on Scripture.....	95
Alcorn on Grace and Truth.....	98
Alcorn on Purity.....	100
Alcorn on Rewards.....	101
Alcorn on Money.....	105
Alcorn on Heaven.....	111
Concluding Thoughts on Randy Alcorn.....	119
6. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AS COVENANT.....	121
Introduction to Spiritual Formation.....	121
Covenant is a Relationship.....	122
Covenant is Discernment.....	126
Covenant and Scripture.....	129
Covenant and the Holy Spirit.....	131
The Mind and the Holy Spirit.....	133
Covenant: Making the Shift.....	134
Covenant Conclusions.....	137
Covenant by Shelton.....	137
APPENDIX A.....	146
APPENDIX B.....	154
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	165



## GLOSSARY

\*Please note: these are my definitions as I use them in this dissertation. Some I define more in the project, some less. Some I define by authors, some I do not. My descriptions below will give you a proper context for their use in the text.

**atonement.** The suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The atonement was the redemptive, reconciling work of Jesus Christ on the cross on my behalf.

**community.** Any local church. Any group of Christians who gather together in the name of Christ. All Christians making up the Body of Christ.

**covenant.** A relationship based on a mutual agreement.

**covenant model.** A relationship between God and mankind. The model is the relationship God desired with the Israelites.

**covenant renewal model.** A relationship between God and mankind through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. This model is the New Covenant revealed in the New Testament.

**discernment.** Having the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to know what to do in any situation. Making the right choice.

**factionalism.** A quarreling spirit that divides.

**modern.** Any person who comes from the age of rationalism, who is guided by absolute truths as the ultimate solution in this life.

**modern Christian.** Any Christian who has a heritage of dos, don'ts, creeds, and doctrines as their DNA. A person who values reason over faith, rationalism over relationship.

**modern church.** Any congregation who places their highest emphasis on Christ as the one who paid the penalty for sin instead of seeing Christ as family and friend.

**penal model.** A relationship between God and mankind based solely on Christ as the one who paid the price for sin. It is contractual in nature. It is a business deal.

**penal substitution model.** A relationship between God and mankind through the death of Jesus on the cross, who took my place and took my sin upon Him because I am incapable of fixing the sin problem.

**postmodern.** One who rejects rationalism and reason. One who is defiant of authority. One who claims that “king is law” rather than “law is king”. Void of definition.

**postmodern Christian.** One who does not acknowledge the authority of Scripture. One who follows few rules and is the final authority. One who denies absolute truth. One who says there is no agreed upon Christian worldview. One who says the only law that matters is the law within. Defiant of authority.

**postmodern church.** Churches that are in conflict with the modern church. A part of the emerging church. Not desiring to be pinned down to any belief systems. They are going somewhere, they just do not know where. All they know is, they do not like where they have come from.

**relational holiness.** First, it is a relationship with Jesus Christ that desires to be holy as God is holy. Second, holiness is manifested by helping mankind, i.e. the poor, the sick, the homeless. Third, advocates for social justice.

**witness.** Anybody who calls himself or herself a Christian is a witness by my definition.

**vocation.** Your main work. How one earns a living.



## **Abstract**

Modern Christians in the United States are products of both their environment and their past. In a time when “cultural relevancy” is the buzz word, there appears to be a desperate attempt to “get it right” with God. Moderns have jumped from fads to fashions to forms, all in an attempt to find a connection with God.

Yet there appears to be restlessness within the body of Christ. There is also division within the body of Christ. With the rise of postmodern Christians and the emerging church, modern Christians are left scratching their heads, searching for answers to questions that never existed a generation ago. At least, questions that were not as prevalent and time-sensitive as what they appear to be today.

The problems for modern Christians are basic. They are not new problems; nevertheless, they loom large in churches today. Where did all the people go? What did we do wrong? Why don't the young people want to go to church with us anymore?

We need a both-and approach rather than an either-or approach as modern Christians. We panic as though we are in the all-or-nothing round of church history. Modern Christians need to make a paradigm shift, not find a new God! Our emphasis on a 200-year-old penal relationship with God is not wrong, but it is incomplete.

To address this problem, I propose to direct modern Christians to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by scripture, which will move them from a penal relationship with God to a covenant relationship with God. The former still holds true, while the latter becomes the foundation for modern Christians.

In chapter two, we address the biblical model for discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. The thrust is discernment, and its cognates such as hearing and listening.

In chapter three, we will uncover Quaker history as a model for discernment in the church today, focusing upon a 20<sup>th</sup> century “transitional prophet,” D. Elton Trueblood.

In chapter four, we will show the transition from the Penal Substitution Model to the Covenant Renewal Model using the Relational Model as a bridge between the two. Our destination is the Covenant Renewal Model, though the Relational Model brings great satisfaction.

In chapter five, we will explore the writings of Randy Alcorn as a model for the proper use of scripture as our guide as we discern the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we summarize our solution in chapter six, demonstrating spiritual formation as exemplifying a covenant relationship with God.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **My Story**

This is my story. It is very personal. Ultimately, it is a story that came down to a dialogue between God and me. It is a story that left me half dead. Yet this story is not about the half of me that is dead; it is the story of the half that lives! This is the first time my story has been in print. The reader may be able to grasp to some degree the depth of my loss. At the same time, I hope readers experience my newness of life. One thing the reader cannot see is the tears that fell while I wrote my story.

In January 2003 my life was turned upside-down, inside-out, and otherwise seemed over. I came home from work to greet my family. When I reached the place where I was to greet my 16-year-old son, Kevin, I found him unconscious. I rode in the ambulance to the hospital in shock, praying, crying, stunned. One hundred hours later my son was in heaven. He never regained consciousness.

During our 100-hour stay in the hospital, the hospital turned into a prayer meeting, our church prayed without ceasing, and later we would discover that thousands of people around the world were praying for us.

But this story is not about Kevin. It is a story about my journey with God in the months that followed this tragedy. It is a story that at this writing is not complete. Nonetheless, it is a story I trust will bring my reader to a place in God that I found to be nearly indescribable, but without having to experience the loss that I have experienced!

In the months that followed Kevin's death, I can honestly tell you that I never once felt angry at God. But I did feel as though God deeply hurt me. I never viewed this tragedy as God punishing me, but I was deeply hurt because I knew God had the power to prevent this tragedy but chose not to.

Each morning I struggled to crawl out of bed and stagger into the shower, turn on the hot water, sit down, and just cry. For months this would be my pattern. I began formulating three questions I asked God each morning in a place where it was just Him and me. A place where, with the water running and the door shut, my wife and daughter could not hear the crying, the screaming, and the questions yelled out at God from the deepest anguish in my soul.

It is important to insert at this juncture a brief history of my life. I have been a pastor for 27 years. I grew up in the church. It is all that I have ever known. Since boyhood, the only thing I ever wanted to do in life was be a preacher. I never strayed far from God, as I knew that would not be pleasing to Him. Besides, I had always been afraid of going to hell. As a good Wesleyan, filled with the fear of backsliding with every sin, I often went to bed at night scared to death that I had done something during the day that would void my entrance into heaven. I regularly responded to the invitation given during the Sunday sermon, went forward to an altar of prayer and started all over, just because I was so afraid of going to hell.

After a marvelous undergraduate experience at George Fox College and further study at Western Evangelical Seminary, my wife, Joan, and I embarked on a life of ministry together. In July of 1986 we were assigned to the church that I serve to this day. God had given me a perfect wife, a perfect daughter, Kristi, and a perfect

son, Kevin. I had a perfect job, a perfect family, and a ministry that for 21 years saw God's blessing and anointing upon it. Our family went to Disneyland at least yearly; we bought annual passes based on our frequency in the park. Our ministry was a Disneyland experience. And so was our family. I was truly a blessed man. I had come to believe that this was the reward God gave to those who were faithful to Him. It turns out God does not owe us anything. Everything we have is a gift from God, on loan from God. These years were truly heaven on earth for me.

Then we lost Kevin, and my morning showers became anguished talks with God. As I stated earlier, there were three questions that I screamed at God every morning for the better part of four months. The first question I screamed at God through my pain was, "What were you thinking?" The second question I hurled at God was, "Is this the best you can do for me?" And the third question I asked God in my despair was, "Do you really expect me to show up every Sunday and tell everyone how great you are?"

My theological world had been turned upside-down. No, my theology had been reduced to rubble. I was a pastor without a theology. My question would become, "Was I a pastor without a God?"

I am learning that God is very patient with us. At least, He is very patient with me! God is a gentleman. He never interrupts us! God waited until I was through screaming, crying, and yelling at Him. In the silence I began to hear the voice of God. The water coming from the shower became silent. My tears mingled with the water hitting my chest. And then, without any announcement, when I became silent, God spoke to my soul. He had an answer for each of my three questions. Friends tried

consoling me over the months that followed our tragedy. I was given a multitude of books, by people trying to help me in my deep loss and my even deeper grief. But it was God who ultimately spoke to me in the darkness. I am learning that whenever life is dark, God makes an appearance.

My story, this project, my entrance into this doctoral program is a result of God speaking peace to my broken heart and my wounded soul. This is where my story really begins.

As I became silent more often than not before God in the months that followed, God addressed my first question clearly. I asked God, “What were you thinking?” God answered, “I was thinking of what I experienced with my son.” I really did not care for that answer at first, because in my thought process, I snapped back at God, “Yes, but you got your son back in three days.”

I began to discover God would answer in a similar fashion my other two questions as well. Every time God spoke to me He took me back to the cross. I didn’t want to go to the cross. I wanted my son back. There is a silence and a darkness of the soul. There is likewise, a silence beyond the silence, and darkness beyond the darkness of the soul. This is where my journey took me. All roads lead to the cross. While I was gaining peace, I still did not see what God was doing in me. We rarely do.

Likewise, God began giving me His answer to my second question, “Is this the best that you can do for me?” He answered, “I was thinking of what I experienced with my son.” Again, this was not the answer I hoped to hear. Honestly, I had no idea what I needed. Grief is like that. Nothing makes sense. Yet, God’s answer began to



give me peace in my soul. All roads lead to the cross! I still was not interested in the cross. I wanted my son back!

God answered my third question the same as the first two. I said to God, “Do you really expect me to show up every Sunday and tell everyone how great you are?” God answered, “I was thinking of what I experienced with my son.” God was making it clear to me that all roads lead to the cross. I didn’t want the cross, I wanted my son back! I was gaining peace for my soul and healing for my broken heart, yet I still did not comprehend what God was saying to me. Sometimes, we don’t understand what God is saying. The comfort comes not in understanding, but just knowing that God is there. That has been my experience.

### **The Journey Back to Life**

Three months passed, and somehow we lived life without Kevin. My cousin, a professor at George Fox University, told me that my college professor whom I majored under was releasing a book on heaven. My cousin thought I might be helped by the book. With fear and trembling I called my former professor and asked about his new book. Dr. Arthur Roberts graciously asked if I would be interested in coming to visit him at his home. I accepted his invitation. I was a desperate man, and a broken father.

I arrived at his home on the central Oregon coast traveling from Salem, Oregon. I had no idea what to expect. We had not really talked in 25 years, though from the pulpit I occasionally mentioned his influence in my life. He and his wife warmly received me into their home. I listened to his every word, something I wished I would have done better 25 years earlier! He spoke to me as the brilliant professor I

remembered from college. But more importantly, Dr. Roberts spoke as a pastor to my heart, a father to my humanity, and a friend to my soul. Needless to say, I read his book, *Exploring Heaven*<sup>1</sup> as soon as I got back home to Salem. I have read it numerous times since our meeting together in his home.

Shortly after my time with the Robertses, a pastor friend told me about a class being offered at a local seminary by a man named Randy Alcorn. I had never heard of him! The class included five days of intense lecture and study. I figured, “Why not?” So I signed up, and showed up. That week became a turning point in my life. By then, four questions concerning my son bugged me to no end. The first was “Is Kevin safe?” The second question I asked—sometimes hourly—was “What is he doing?” My third question was “Is Kevin having fun?” And the fourth question racing through my mind on a daily basis was “Could God take care of Kevin as well as I did?” This fourth question may sound silly, but not if you knew the relationship we had. We played cribbage every night. We gave one another back rubs and foot rubs daily. We were unbelievably close.

Three days into Randy Alcorn’s class on heaven, I sat in a session and simply wept. I wept because I missed my son. I wept because I was learning how marvelous heaven is. I wept because God was entering into the dark caves of my soul and was shedding light by His very presence. He was reassuring me that everything was fine. He was telling me that, “You have not lost your son. He is safely home. He will be waiting for you!” Wow!

---

<sup>1</sup> Arthur O. Roberts, *Exploring Heaven* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003).

The week with Alcorn came to a close and I was given a lifeline to my son. I knew heaven was real and that it was marvelous. I knew that my son was in heaven and that there was nothing to worry about. Beyond that, I did not know much about heaven; it was a place I would enjoy someday, but just not now. I had never studied about heaven before.

This was yet another turning point in my journey back to life. I received Scriptures to study and books from Randy Alcorn to read. I devoured everything that I could get my hands on. I taught about heaven in church. I elucidated the book of Revelation for what it really is: a book about Jesus, not so much a book about the end times. I spent hours studying about the place where my son now lived and where I would one day I join him.

During this season of discovery, something began to happen in my heart. I began to get closer to God as I shifted my attention away from Kevin and onto the subject of eternity. I e-mailed Randy Alcorn and asked if I could meet with him. He graciously agreed. A transformation was being birthed within my heart. The more time I spent thinking about eternity, the more healing came to my soul. In fact, for the first time in months I felt I no longer needed artificial life support to sustain me. I was experiencing God. He became personal. I began to think thoughts I had never thought before. God was taking me on a journey from death to life. Real life!

By 2005 my wife felt I needed something to fill the void in my life and she encouraged me to go back to school. She knew that George Fox College had transformed my life as a young man. She hoped that people there could help me now, 25 years later. On a dare, I called George Fox Evangelical Seminary and reached Dr.

Conniry, the director of the Doctor of Ministry program. The registration deadline had passed, and I figured I had no chance of getting into the program. To my surprise, I was accepted. The past two years have been an acceleration of my journey back to life. From 2003 to 2005 God put flesh back on my dead bones. But the professors and the reading at George Fox Evangelical Seminary breathed life into my lungs. The transformation that began with a tragedy became God's way of showing Himself to me. I had given God all of me over the years. What was missing was that I didn't have all of Him. I still may not have all of God, but I have more of Him, and it is very good!

Over the past two years I have been formulating the process of change that I have undergone since January 2003. I have come to the conclusion that there are many people who love God, who have given their lives to Him, but have, like me, fallen short of experiencing Him. This project and the chapters that follow are an attempt to lead the reader from a theology that says "I will see Jesus when I get to heaven," to a theology that says "I will see Jesus when I get to heaven, but I can also experience Him right now." This has been my experience over the past four years. In a textbook assigned in this program, *Studying Congregations*, the authors state, "Practical theologians will listen for the stories people tell most readily about themselves."<sup>2</sup> This story, this project, is about my journey. I hope to encourage others who walk a similar path.

---

<sup>2</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations, a New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 33.

In another textbook assigned in this program, *What Type Am I?*, the author, Renee Baron, states, “Midlife can bring about profound changes in people.”<sup>3</sup> While some would say that what I am going through can simply be attributed to a midlife crisis, I would argue that what I am going through has nothing to do with a season of life Americans call midlife, the time when life is questioned and rules no longer matter. I believe I am going through what God calls “transformation.” Buckingham and Clifton write in their book, *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, “Delusion plus denial is a lethal combination.”<sup>4</sup> I would argue that I am neither experiencing delusion nor denial. No, I am going through what God calls “transformation.” I invite the reader to join me in this marvelous journey. You have your own story. I trust my story motivates you to begin your journey. For me, it’s been a journey back to life!

### **Considering the Problem**

There are many modern Christians who, like myself, experience Christianity, but rarely experience God. The modern church has maintained a steady diet of dos don’ts, and “right doctrine.” I know moderns and the modern church well. I am a modern. The message received from the modern church has been a constant message of living life through lists. Moderns have embraced rational Christianity over relational Christianity. The process of transformation is not easy to calculate, yet it always adds up. Robert Mulholland, in his book, *Invitation to a Journey*, states, “We

---

<sup>3</sup> Renee Baron, *What Type Am I? Discover Who You Really Are* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Group, 1998), 153.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Buckingham & Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 128.

must give God permission to do the work God wants to do with us right there, because transformation will not be forced upon us.”<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes moderns take the path of least resistance because it is easier than working through the tough issues of life. To this statement Joan Chittister states, “We cannot expect life to be without struggle, perhaps. We cannot expect life to be perfect. But we can expect to see life come from death.”<sup>6</sup> This is my hope and prayer for the reader and all moderns who have found Christianity less than exceptional. I agree with Jim Hancock in his book, *Posers, Fakers, and Wannabees*, “Christ is alive right now and death is dead for good.”<sup>7</sup> God desires through His Son Jesus Christ to give life to those who are spiritually dead. Indeed, Robert Quinn has it right in *Deep Change*, “The problem is not ‘out there’ but inside each one of us.”<sup>8</sup> It is my desire to help the reader move into a journey of spiritual vitality. C. Gene Wilkes, in *Jesus on Leadership*, states, “Jesus came to show us the heart of God.”<sup>9</sup>

In order for us as modern Christians to experience God, we must stop talking about ourselves. The problem is we have failed to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture. This failure in discernment has left modern Christians with little more than absolute truths as a basis for Christianity. The mantel is lined with trophies of truth. Yet the hearth of the heart is vacant of God. Modern Christians have settled

---

<sup>5</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 38.

<sup>6</sup> Joan Chittister, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 191.

<sup>7</sup> Jim Hancock, *Posers, Fakers, & Wannabes (Unmasking the Real You)* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003), 118.

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Quinn, *Deep Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 101.

<sup>9</sup> C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 168.

for a penal atonement relationship with God, when in fact God offers a covenant relationship with us. God desires to reveal Himself to us. Like the Israelites, we tend to focus on ourselves, and not Him. Kenneth Leech writes in his book, *Experiencing God*, “The history of Israel is in a sense the history of God.”<sup>10</sup> As you read from my narrative, when I became silent and took the attention off me, it was then that God put the spotlight on Him. This project puts the spotlight on God; of which we are the beneficiaries.

### **Planning for a Solution**

The transformation required in this project requires careful planning with attention given to spiritual solutions created by secular problems. Peter Steinke writes in his book, *How Your Church Family Works*, “Too often congregations trade their beliefs for safety in numbers, their convictions for immediate solutions, and their values for survival.”<sup>11</sup> This project is not about simple solutions and immediate results. This project demands a deep change of the soul. It will mean a different approach to Scriptures. Samuel Rima states in his book, *Leading from the Inside Out*, “The scripture reading that is done for the purpose of soul care is done slowly, expectantly, and repeatedly.”<sup>12</sup> This project will show how Randy Alcorn encourages and models the use of Scripture in this process of transformation of the soul. Likewise, I will show that a covenant relationship with God is never outside of the

---

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Leech, *Experiencing God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 65.

<sup>11</sup> Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works* (An Albin Institute Publication, 2002), 125.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel D. Rima, *Leading from the inside Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 137.

Bible. Chittister states, “We listen to scripture, in other words, to shield us from lesser motives.”<sup>13</sup> The modern often times has settled for lesser motives. The Bible always leads us to God.

This project plans as a solution the full use of discernment. Stacy Rinehart states, “The world is hungry for depth, substance, and true character-genuine evidence of the gospel taking root in human lives.”<sup>14</sup> This kind of depth comes only as the reader discerns the voice of the Holy Spirit guided by Scripture. It is not to be temporal discernment. My intent is discernment for life. Bradley Holt says, “The quest to discern does not finish until we have completed the race.”<sup>15</sup>

My plan for a solution is to lead the reader towards a holy silence before God. As I stated in my narrative, it was in the silence that I heard God speak to me. Wilkes writes, “Quiet waiting results in a strong heart.”<sup>16</sup> Chittister states, “Silence invites us to depth.”<sup>17</sup> I will call the reader to silence that includes contemplation. I learned in my reading from Thomas Merton, “Let us never forget that the ordinary way to contemplation lies through a desert without trees and without beauty and without water.”<sup>18</sup> This is the path to which the reader is led through this project. It is a journey from death to life for modern Christians. This journey is not to be feared or shunned;

---

<sup>13</sup> Chittister, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Stacy T. Rinehart, *Upside Down, the Paradox of Servant Leadership* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1998), 134.

<sup>15</sup> Bradley P. Holt, *Thirsty for God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 114.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkes, 49.

<sup>17</sup> Chittister, 169.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: Abbey of Gethsemani, Inc., 1961), 235.



it is to be embraced and experienced. It has been for me a journey in which my thirsty soul has found a spring of water: cool, refreshing, and satisfying.

### **Statement of the Problem**

My research problem is to show the shortcomings of the Penal Substitution Model. This model resembles a business transaction more than a covenant relationship with the living God of creation. The modern church knows that something is wrong, but has yet to properly identify the crisis. I will argue that it is a crisis of relationship. The modern church has built institutions to the glory of God at the expense of an intimate relationship with God. We have been building churches, not relationships!

My practical problem to solve, then, becomes the need to demonstrate for the modern church the benefits of moving towards the Covenant Renewal Model with God. As Holt puts it, “Go on a pilgrimage.”<sup>19</sup> I invite the reader on a pilgrimage. A very exciting one, I might add!

According to Merton, as we journey we will discover this about God: “He comes down from heaven and finds us.”<sup>20</sup> This has been my experience. It is likely you will experience something similar. According to Ray Anderson, God is always working from the future. “The Spirit that comes to the church comes out of the future, not the past.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, God knows how the book ends, so we are told to trust him before our story comes to its conclusion. Understanding this paradigm, Boyatzis,

---

<sup>19</sup> Holt, 208.

<sup>20</sup> Merton, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2001), 105.

Goleman, and McKee write, “Tapping into that kind of insight can come more easily if a leader makes a habit of retreating to a quiet place to reflect on a regular basis.”<sup>22</sup>

The ultimate goal is summed up by John R. Tyson, in his work, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality*, speaking about Meister Eckhart: “He sought, through various practices and reflections, to detach the soul from temporal things and affections, so that in stillness and silence, and in grace and love, the human soul could find union with God.”<sup>23</sup> The journey you now embark on is a journey that finds union with God.

### **Preparing for a Solution**

The reader must first have an open view on the work and role of the Holy Spirit. Raymond Brown states, “The Spirit emerges clearly as a personal presence—the ongoing presence of Jesus while he is absent from earth and with the Father in heaven.”<sup>24</sup> Here lies our starting point for transformation. One must be accepting of an active role of the Holy Spirit in the world today. Henry Nouwen writes, “But I am also getting in touch with the mystery that leadership, for a large part, means to be led.”<sup>25</sup> That is, to be led by the Holy Spirit.

The second important ground rule is to acknowledge the role of Scripture in the world today. In a book assigned in Module 2, called *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, the authors state, “We must realize that consistent exposure to scripture

---

<sup>22</sup> Richard Boyatzis, Daniel Goleman, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership, Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), 205.

<sup>23</sup> John R. Tyson, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 177.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Church the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 106.

<sup>25</sup> Henri J.M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 57.

will provide us with the most accurate self-knowledge available to us.”<sup>26</sup> I am in complete agreement with this statement. This is a crucial non-negotiable in this project. The reader must have a high view of Scripture. A high view of Scripture will enable the reader to more readily enter into union with God, which is the point of this project. Rima, in another book assigned in our course work, *Rethinking the Successful Church*, states, “Either we believe the Bible or we don’t.”<sup>27</sup>

In *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*, the authors state, “The plight of imagination in our culture cries out for redemption.”<sup>28</sup> This is ultimately what the purpose of this project presents: redemption defined as covenant, not merely redemption defined as penal. In a marvelous manual we studied in this program, *Studying Congregations*, the authors state, “To paraphrase the prologue of John’s Gospel, the vision must become flesh in the congregation’s life, full (we hope) of grace and truth.”<sup>29</sup> It is my hope that you experience God in the flesh as you read this project.

### **Proposal**

I propose that although the Penal Substitution Model can lead to a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, can build a bridge from the Penal Substitution Model to the Covenant

---

<sup>26</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, Sr. and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 191.

<sup>27</sup> Samuel D. Rima, *Rethinking the Successful Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 137.

<sup>28</sup> Otto Kroeger Roy M. Oswald, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership* (The Alban Institute, Inc., 1998), 105.

<sup>29</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, 187.

Renewal Model. Further, I propose that this bridge has the potential for merging the modern church to the postmodern church and bring together two groups that are currently experiencing conflict with one another.

### **Scope of the Dissertation**

To address this problem and prove my claim, I propose the following chapters for the reader's consideration. The second chapter will show that discernment from the Holy Spirit flows from a relationship with God that is covenantal in nature. I will show examples in Scripture of those who heard from God, those who were close to God. The evidence will show that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit generally follows an intimate relationship with God. This will encourage moderns to focus on union with God.

The third chapter will highlight history. I will show briefly, through the Puritans and Quakers, foundations for discernment. I will then move the reader to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and focus on D. Elton Trueblood as a "transitional prophet" of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I will show his position on discernment as vocation, discernment as witness, and discernment as community. I will use a limited number of writers including Schaeffer, Nuttall, and Brueggeman to show the importance of preserving the past in order to secure a healthy future for moderns. I will show that Trueblood and others experienced and taught discernment as a social change agent, which ultimately is incarnational in both form and function.

The fourth chapter will discuss spirituality. It will feature the results of discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit guided by Scripture. I will show the movement from my tribal heritage in Wesley's model of Christian perfection (which adopts a

form of the penal model), to relational holiness becoming the bridge to our ultimate destination which is the Covenant Renewal Model. I will show the process for deep change that can move a modern from penal substitution to covenant renewal. Relational holiness forms the bridge. It is not the destination, but a desirous place to live in the journey.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation features the importance of what is meant in my claim, “guided by Scripture.” I find it imperative that the reader understand the centrality of Scripture in the process of discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. I will use the writings of Randy Alcorn to demonstrate the importance of Scripture in this process. I will highlight Alcorn’s themes of grace and truth, purity, rewards, money, and heaven to make my point.

The final chapter—the conclusion—will be a model for the reader to consider what spiritual transformation as covenant will look like. The conclusion will show the reader where moderns are encouraged to live and show a path that will enable the church to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a path that will bring together moderns and postmoderns. Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, I believe, leads to a covenant relationship with God. I believe the outcome will bring the members of the church together in harmony with one another because they are in union with God.

Three books helped form and mold this dissertation, and deserve recognition:

*A Manual for Writers*<sup>30</sup>, *The Craft of Research*<sup>31</sup>, and *The Elements of Style*<sup>32</sup>.

Without guidance from these three books, this dissertation could not be completed.

### **The Rest of the Story**

On the human side, my wife, Joan, has been the single greatest influence in my journey back to life. She best summed up our journey by reminding me that “life is the wilderness.” She would add further, “We do not reach the promised land until we are called home to heaven.” This viewpoint was pivotal in my journey from death to life. I had to make an enormous paradigm shift in my theology. I kept trying to experience the Promised Land in this life. When I made the shift, the channel was cleared for me to experience God in a covenant relationship. *Life is the wilderness*. I now can accept that fact, because it was in the wilderness that I found God!

In college Dr. Roberts was my mentor. I shared early in my introduction about our reunion soon after Kevin went to heaven. My wife and I began going to basketball games at George Fox University, trying to restart our lives, shortly after Kevin’s home-going. To my surprise, at each home game there sat the Robertses. We said hello and visited briefly between games. I believe by God’s leading, Dr. Roberts showed an interest in my work and going back to school. Through a series of circumstances, Dr. Roberts has become my mentor once again, serving as my primary advisor for this dissertation. This time around the relationship is sweeter than a bucket

---

<sup>30</sup> Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 7th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Gregory G. Colomb Wayne C. Booth, Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003)

<sup>32</sup> William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (Needham Heights, MA: A Pearson Education Company, 2000).

of honey. At crucial stages of my adult life, God has placed Arthur Roberts in my life.

I am deeply indebted to God and Arthur. Both are my friends!

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL DISCERNMENT

#### Introduction

There are multiple uses for the word discernment. My research has helped me discover how this word is multi-dimensional. My use of the word—for the purposes of this project—is always to frame discernment within the setting of the Bible. All Scripture references in this project are from the *New American Standard Bible*.

This version of the Bible honors the closest rendering of the original languages of the text. As stated in the preface of the Lockman Foundation 1995 New American Standard Bible,

The AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION (1901) has been highly regarded for its scholarship and accuracy. A product of both British and American scholarship, it has frequently been used as a standard for other translations. It is still recognized as a valuable tool for study of the Scriptures. The NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE has sought to preserve these and other lasting values of the ASV.<sup>1</sup>

The translation I have chosen includes 38 forms of the word *discern* in the Bible. The four forms in this particular translation are: *discern* (used 16 times), *discernment* (11), *discerning* (9), and *discerned* (2).

Focusing the reader's mind on the subject of discernment is foundational to my claim in this project. Professor Conniry of George Fox Evangelical Seminary states, "Individual discernment focuses on matters pertaining to personal faith."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this project desires to enhance the personal faith of the reader. Conniry states,

---

<sup>1</sup> *New American Standard Bible: The Holy Bible*, (Iowa Falls: World Publishing, 1995), viii.

<sup>2</sup> Charles J. Conniry, Jr. "Discernment: Corporate and Individual Considerations," *Quaker Religious Thought* 106-107, November (2006), 15.



“At times, the disciple is confronted by the need for greater personal intimacy with God. At other times, one is faced with the need to choose between one path and another. Discernment in such instances essentially functions as personal guidance.”<sup>3</sup> This is the setting for my project: to help the reader discover discernment within the context of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, always guided by Scripture. Conniry offers an important warning: “While it is appropriate for disciples to apprehend God’s way as individuals, it is important as well to guard against an overestimation of one’s ability to discern God’s voice.”<sup>4</sup> One must always guard against a temptation to sensationalize “hearing the voice of God.” More likely than not, God’s voice has already gone forth through the Scriptures. Our task is to hear that which has already been spoken! Bruce Bishop states, “True spiritual weight is recognized in the moment, as the Holy Spirit confirms the truth of the words by Scripture and within the hearts of others.”<sup>5</sup> Thus a second danger is listening to others rather than listening to God. God often does speak to us within the greater community of believers; however, the believers’ voices must never trump the voice of God! Professor Paul Anderson states, “Again, the life that is submitted to God and willing to be instructed and corrected by the clear meaning of Scripture is the place to be regarding biblical aspects of spiritual discernment.”<sup>6</sup> This introduction prepares the reader to move to

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Bishop, "Discernment: Corporate and Individual Perspectives," *Quaker Religious Thought* 106-107, November (2006), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Anderson, "The Meeting for Worship in Which Business Is Conducted: Quaker Decision Making Process as a Factor of Spiritual Discernment," *Quaker Religious Thought* 106-107, November (2006), 35.

the raw Scriptures and take them as a whole rather than in part to formulate a better understanding of just how God speaks to people.

Webster defines the word *discern* as, “1. to separate (a thing) mentally from another or others, recognize as separate or different. 2. to perceive or recognize; make out clearly.”<sup>7</sup> I believe the reader, having read all 38 renderings of the word *discern*, will discover a pattern and be able to define with specificity what is meant by hearing the voice of God. It is an exciting and rewarding journey.

One note to the reader is important to make before embarking on this journey with God. Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, requires two things: relationship and obedience. Without a love for God and a desire to obey His Word, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit is an exercise in futility!

After citing each use of the word central to this chapter, I will make a brief statement on its meaning in the passage cited. It is vitally important to understand discernment within the whole of the Bible. I will bring this chapter to a close with a brief look at Hebrews, which is a culminating exposition of discernment throughout Scripture.

Often, there is a desire to allegorize—or to look for a figurative meaning—in a passage of Scripture. I ask the reader to discipline his or her mind to see that with a good translation a literal, face-value meaning is adequate and accurate!

Further, the reader will discover that this study will always look to the New Testament for the “fleshing out” of its meaning.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1966), 416.

## Discern

Deuteronomy states, “Would that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would discern their future” (Deuteronomy 32:29). This verse emphasizes a connection between discernment, wisdom, and understanding. We know that prayer is the avenue by which these are often manifested. Wilkes states from his book, *Jesus on Leadership*, “I also believe Jesus spent time in prayer to receive direction and clarity for his mission.”<sup>8</sup>

2 Samuel reads, “Then your maidservant said, ‘Please let the word of my lord the king be comforting, for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and evil. And may the Lord your God be with you’” (2 Samuel 14:17). This verse indicates a purpose for discernment which is to know the difference between good and evil.

1 Kings states, “So give your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?” (1 Kings 3:9). This verse shows that to discern requires an understanding heart. An understanding heart coupled with discernment makes for good judgments. On this subject Professor Roberts has stated, “Study the text prayerfully. If the Holy Spirit teaches you, your reading will enable the Spirit to teach others.”<sup>9</sup> This is a good word to consider as I develop each passage in this chapter.

The book of Job states, “It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice.” (Job 4:16). In this

---

<sup>8</sup> Wilkes, 200.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur O. Roberts, "Reading the Bible in Public Worship," (2001), 1.

setting the reader will note that to discern is not always to see, but that discernment comes when one hears. When one hears, then one has demonstrated the strength of listening. Again, Roberts states, “You love God, so listen carefully to what He says, whether in the book of nature or the book of Scripture, whether that voice comes through the church, your reading, or in your own times of prayer.”<sup>10</sup> The obvious point? Listen!

Again in the book of Job we find, “Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern calamities?” (Job 6:30). Just as the palate of our mouth is able to distinguish between different foods, so we are to discern through differentiation with understanding, and thereby recognize the dangers that may be present in a situation.

In one other passage in Job, we find, “That you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?” (Job 38:20). Direction—that is, which way God wants us to follow Him—is gained through a discerning heart and mind. In writing *The Power of Listening*, Bush states, “Does collaboration have a future? Yes, it does, but it calls us to a journey together in a Spirit-filled listening mode.”<sup>11</sup> Luis Bush makes the point that this journey is not one of isolation but one that functions within community. I will develop the theme of discernment as community in chapter three.

The Psalmist said, “Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.” (Psalm 19:12). I believe discernment is hard work. But it is work that will help the reader distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.

---

<sup>10</sup> Arthur O. Roberts, “How to Read the Bible,” Yachats Community Presbyterian Church (Yachats: 2003), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Luis Bush, “The Power of Listening,” *Missiology* 33, no. 1 (2005), 26.

From the book of Proverbs we gain this insight: “To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding” (Proverbs 1:2). Again, we are beginning to see the “relatives” of discernment. This “family” would include instruction and understanding.

Another place in Proverbs states, “Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 2:5). This passage teaches us that discernment will lead to a discovery of knowledge. Later the same passage states, “Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course” (Proverbs 2:9). Discernment will help the reader distinguish between what is righteous and what is unrighteous. Discernment will help the reader distinguish between what is just and that what is unjust. In developing discernment, focus on learning to listen. In his book *Created for Purpose*, Post states, “It all happened because I listened to that quiet voice, and acted on it. The rest simply unfolded.”<sup>12</sup> The rest simply unfolded for Ron Post because he had already established the two things I stated in the introduction necessary for discernment; relationship and obedience. Post was prepared to hear the voice of God because he was already listening.

Proverbs 14 reads, “Leave the presence of a fool, or you will not discern the words of knowledge” (Proverbs 14:7). This verse shows how being influenced by fools can hinder discernment. Henry Nouwen addresses this situation: “When spirituality becomes spiritualization, life in the body becomes carnality.”<sup>13</sup> I strongly

---

<sup>12</sup> Ron Post, *Created for Purpose* (Eagle Creek: Coffee House Publishers, 1999), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Nouwen, 48.

urge the reader, when trying to figure out what God wants you to do, to listen to people who themselves possess the ability to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Isaiah we read, “The mind of the hasty will discern the truth, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak clearly” (Isaiah 32:4). We discover in this passage that recognizing truth is a bi-product of discernment.

In Ezekiel we read, “Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean” (Ezekiel 44:23). This context of discernment shows the reader how to recognize the difference between what is clean what is not. On this subject, Professor Roberts brings clarity, “The spiritual force attendant upon the awakening of modern science gave way to immediate talks of business and commerce, or whatever, so that reason stood autonomous, needing neither immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit nor Scripture.”<sup>14</sup> Roberts shows the reader, quite powerfully, that one can discern without discerning. That is to say, one can use reason without invoking God. My claim requires the invoking of God. With razor sharp-accuracy Roberts divides the difference between discernment that comes from reason alone and discernment that comes from God.

In the book of Daniel we read, “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress” (Daniel 9:25). Discernment enables the reader to recognize prophecy in Scripture. It enables the reader to recognize Jesus Christ! Both the Old

---

<sup>14</sup> Arthur O. Roberts, “Weeds among the Wheat,” *Shrewsbury Lecture* (Shrewsbury, NJ: John Woolman Press, Inc., 1965), 7-8.

Testament and the New Testament always and forever point to Jesus Christ. In a *Christianity Today* article, we find, “The aim of formation is conformity to and union with Christ.”<sup>15</sup> Discernment is not an end in itself; discernment is the gift God uses in us so that we can find union with His Son, Jesus Christ. There is a purpose for discernment; it is wrapped up in a covenant relationship with God. This will sound louder and louder as the reader moves deeper into this journey.

In the New Testament we find these words, “And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:13). Jesus illustrates the need to discern from something common to all: the sky. Just as one can recognize weather patterns by looking into the sky, Jesus tells His listeners that one can look for the obvious in the signs of the times. The irony is, He was and is the sign! It’s as if Jesus’ followers missed the level-five tornado warning and were swept away because they failed to discern. On the subject of spiritual formation as it relates to this verse, Evan Howard writes, “Spiritual formation speaks of a shaping process with reference to the spiritual dimension of a person’s life. Christian spiritual formation thus refers to the process by which believers become more fully conformed and united to Christ.”<sup>16</sup> Howard strengthens my claim that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, leads the reader to a covenant relationship with God. Howard calls this “spiritual formation.” Please observe the key to spiritual formation; it is a process not a formula. This is a crucial point for the purposes of this project.

---

<sup>15</sup> Evan Howard, “Three Temptations of Spiritual Formation,” *Christianity Today*, December 9, 2002 2002, 48.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

Then, in the book of Hebrews, we read, “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). Process is very important to discernment. Discernment requires a training of the senses which comes through being disciplined. This passage teaches that to discern is to be mature. Related to this, Olson, in *Christianity Today*, writes, “Too many evangelicals accommodate to the therapeutic mindset of the culture and reduce proclamation to self-help tips.”<sup>17</sup> The constant struggle in our journey with God is to avoid the infiltration of culture into our lives, culture which takes us away from God. Spiritual formation includes spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity comes from regularly discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture.

### **Discernment**

As stated earlier in this chapter, the *New American Standard Bible* uses the word *discernment* 11 times. Webster defines discernment as, “1. a discerning. 2. the power of discerning; keen perception or judgment; insight; acumen.”<sup>18</sup> Discernment is likewise defined in Scripture by the contexts in which it is used.

1 Samuel states, “...and blessed be your discernment and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand” (1 Samuel 25:33). This Scripture teaches that discernment is a blessing from God. Highlighting this point with an article previously cited in this chapter from *Christianity Today*, Roger E. Olson writes, “Evangelical traditionalists need to acknowledge more readily than is their tendency that the Holy Spirit is still at work

---

<sup>17</sup> Roger E. Olson, “The Tradition Temptation,” *Christianity Today*, November 2003, 52.

<sup>18</sup> Webster's, 416.



among the faithful people of God, leading them to deeper insights into God's Word that may sometimes correct ancient, medieval, and even Reformation beliefs and practices."<sup>19</sup> Olson is telling us that God is always on the move with His people. God is forever revealing Himself to mankind.

In 1 Kings we read, "God said to him, 'Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice...'" (1 Kings 3:11). Solomon made discernment his highest priority. He could have asked for anything else under the sun, but he chose discernment. Further in this passage we read, "Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore" (1 Kings 4:29). It is apparent that God desires to help us. He wants us to know what He wants for our lives and this world. In this passage we find a relationship between wisdom and discernment. Thinking is joined to discernment as well. Anderson, in *The Shape of Practical Theology*, writes, "The church does not 'push' the kingdom into the world through its own institutional and pragmatic strategies. Rather it is 'pulled' into the world as it follows the praxis of the Spirit."<sup>20</sup> God is continually pulling us towards Himself by His Spirit. This is a blessing!

In Job we read, "He deprives the trusted ones of speech and takes away discernment of the elders" (Job 12:20). This verse is crucial because it brings to discussion an essential point about discernment. Discernment is not a given, lifetime

---

<sup>19</sup> Olson, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology*, 195.

guarantee from God. It is conditioned on what I stated earlier in this chapter: relationship and obedience.

The Psalmist wrote, “Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth” (Psalm 2:10). We discover that, like our muscles—which in order to be useful must be exercised—discernment must be exercised often. This is what God desires from us. Again in the Psalms we read, “Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments” (Psalm 119:66). This reference shows the direct connection between discernment and the Scriptures. Discernment from God is found within the Scriptures. This is a crucial point in the development of my claim. However, it is not just as simple as reading the Bible. In the book, *Scripture and Discernment*, Luke Timothy Johnson writes, “It is important to recognize that Scripture is not a single voice, but is itself a complex conversation.”<sup>21</sup> This statement demonstrates the need for total reliance on the Spirit of God and the Word of God, total reliance that comes from a loving relationship with God lived out in obedience to God.

The book of Proverbs states, “For if I cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding” (Proverbs 2:3). This shows that to discern is to understand. Again, this comes via relationship and obedience. Howard writes, “While powerful experiences of God contribute significantly to our continuing formation, conformity with Christ comes ultimately only through a lifetime of obedience and the grace of

---

<sup>21</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment, Decision Making in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 155.

the Spirit: Christian spiritual formation.”<sup>22</sup> Howard demonstrates that discernment always points to conformity with Jesus Christ.

Isaiah states, “When its limbs are dry, they are broken off, women come make a fire with them, for they are not a people of discernment, therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them, and their Creator will not be gracious to them” (Isaiah 27:11).

Discernment is about making wise choices. Every group requires a leader. Nations require leadership. What is needed in leadership is the ability to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, always guided by Scripture. Again Howard writes, “I love participating with believers who are hearing, seeing, and feeling God. But being touched is not necessarily being formed.”<sup>23</sup> The reader and the church of God must never settle for counterfeit Christianity. The church ought always to have a discerning spirit. The health of the church rests on this issue. Failing to discern is to fail God.

A little later on in Isaiah we read, “Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed” (Isaiah 29:14). Discernment comes not from the will of man, rather from the will and good pleasure of God.

In Daniel we read, “Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king’s bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon” (Daniel 2:14). We learn in this passage that there is a relationship

---

<sup>22</sup> Howard, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 49.

between discernment and discretion. Discretion is missing in the church today. Is it possible that is because there is a lack of discernment, too?

In the New Testament, we read in Philippians, “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment” (Philippians 1:9). Discernment in this passage is connected to love, something to be prayed for. I have expounded discernment within the context of spiritual formation because it is indeed important in this process stated previously. Howard states, “Spiritual formation involves an intentional pursuit of God inspired by the leading of the Spirit, informed by the speaking of the Spirit, and empowered by the work of the Spirit; Christian spiritual formation.”<sup>24</sup> This work of the Holy Spirit is the work of discernment.

On several occasions in this chapter, I have stated the importance of relationship. On this subject Howard writes, “Nevertheless, our growth in the things of God is not merely a matter of biblical character, but more profoundly a matter of spiritual relationship.”<sup>25</sup> I have likewise stated that discernment needs to be seen in light of New Testament teaching. Howard concurs, “Christian spiritual formation is the transformation of our spirit through the Spirit of Christ.”<sup>26</sup> And lastly, Howard insists, “The source of transformation is the Spirit of Christ.”<sup>27</sup>

The reader is beginning to receive a holistic approach to discernment in Scripture. It becomes exciting when one begins to see the connection between

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

discernment and our relationship to God. The next portion of this chapter deals with a third form of the word *discern*: *discerning*. I will highlight the nine references to it as I have the previous two forms.

### **Discerning**

Webster defines *discerning* as, “1. keenly perceptive; shrewd; astute.”<sup>28</sup> We begin our references with Genesis: “Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:33). Those outside of Christianity are looking for discerning voices, too. Indeed, Christianity has something of great value to offer the world on this theme. In this same passage we find, “So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has informed you of all of this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are’” (Genesis 41:39). Even people outside of Christianity can recognize God working through people. This was the case in this passage of Scripture. On this subject, Larry Crabb writes, “Visions are discerned.”<sup>29</sup> Joseph’s visions—or rather, the ability to discern the dreams of Pharaoh—came through discerning. God gave to Joseph visions of what was to come. This came about through his ability to discern. In *Studying Congregations*, we read, “Doing theology is about thinking, but it must also be understood that it is fueled by imagination and memory.”<sup>30</sup> The gifts of imagination and memory belonged to Joseph. Those gifts helped him discern dreams.

---

<sup>28</sup> Webster's, 416.

<sup>29</sup> Larry Crabb, *Connecting, a Radical New Vision* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 135.

<sup>30</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, 27.

Further development of the word *discerning* is found in the book of Deuteronomy: “Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads” (Deuteronomy 1:13). God makes clear what He is looking for in leaders. God is looking for those who walk close to Him in relationship and obedience. (The reader will later in this project recognize this as the Covenant Renewal Model). Monika Hellwig forecasts what is to be required and desired in Christian spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She lists four characteristics, among which one of them states, “It needs to be thoughtful and discerning.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1 Kings we find this wise counsel: “Behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you” (1 Kings 3:12). Discernment is likewise an issue of the heart. Discernment is not simply a skill acquired by vain repetition. Rather, discernment comes from a right relationship with God. It comes from the heart!

The book of Proverbs tells us, “On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding” (Proverbs 10:13). This passage teaches us that life can be painful if we fail to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture. And again in Proverbs we read, “He who keeps the law is a discerning son, But he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father” (Proverbs 28:7). Again, we see that discernment requires adherence to the Bible. In an article I quoted earlier, Bush writes, “Almost three years ago I began a journey in the listening mode. It was born out of a simple desire to hear what God was saying to his

---

<sup>31</sup> Monika Hellwig, "Spirituality in the New Millennium," *Momentum*, April/May 1998, 7.

people.”<sup>32</sup> I believe there is overwhelming evidence that God still speaks to His people. And the way God communicates is through the Bible.

In Ecclesiastes we read, “I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all” (Ecclesiastes 9:11). This verse teaches the reader not to stop with discernment. Discernment is to lead us into a covenant relationship with God. That is forever!

In this next passage we see that discerning gives one the ability to sift through knowledge turning it from clutter, chaos, and confusion into complete clarity. This is found in Daniel 1: “...youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king’s court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans” (Daniel 1:4).

In Hosea we read from the prophet, “Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, And the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them.” (Hosea 14:9). Discernment is to have knowledge, or to know. Professor Roberts writes, “The Quakers held doggedly for both, Scripture being the outward rule, Spirit the inward; Spirit is the fountain, Scripture the stream.”<sup>33</sup> Roberts would add, “Historically, Quaker religious optimism rests on two theological foundations; 1) the unity of God’s revelation in Spirit and in Scripture, and 2) the unity of the outward

---

<sup>32</sup> Bush, 19.

<sup>33</sup> Roberts, "Weeds among the Wheat," 19.

and inward Christ.”<sup>34</sup> When speaking on the subject of discernment as truth, Roberts points us in the proper direction for interpreting or “discerning” that which is truth. Ultimately, this shapes how spiritual renewal takes place. Roberts writes, “Scripture reading brings spiritual renewal.”<sup>35</sup> One also gains from this practice discipline necessary for a covenant relationship with God. Roberts states, “Scripture reading contributes to spiritual discipline.”<sup>36</sup>

There are two remaining passages of Scripture using a form of the word *discern*. The remaining two verses complete the 38 verses used by the *New American Standard Bible*. I believe the reader has a better understanding of the context in which I will use discernment in my claim and what is meant throughout the remainder of this project.

### **Discerned**

1 Samuel uses the word *discerned* in the following manner, “So the Lord called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Then Eli discerned that the Lord was calling the boy” (1 Samuel 3:8). This is an important passage of Scripture because contextually, and as application to the reader’s life, this verse is a great model to embrace. This is how discernment is to work in our everyday lives. Bush writes, “Listening after all, is hard work.”<sup>37</sup> To discern the voice of God is to listen to the voice of God.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>35</sup> Roberts, “Reading the Bible in Public Worship,” 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>37</sup> Bush, 18.



Our last verse comes from Proverbs 7, “And I saw among the naïve, And discerned among the youths a young man lacking sense” (Proverbs 7:7). In this instance, to discern is the ability to be able to tell the difference between two options and make a good decision. This certainly is central to discernment. Darrell L. Guder, writing the *Missional Church*, states, “Discernment is a process of sorting, distinguishing, evaluating, and sifting among competing stimuli, demands, longings, desires, needs, and influences, in order to determine which are of God and which are not.”<sup>38</sup>

The reader now has a Biblical understanding of discernment. Take this now and use it to build towards the ultimate conclusion of this project which will be the Covenant Renewal Model. Before leaving this chapter, I will conclude with statements about the book of Hebrews. This book articulates how covenant relationships form a context for Biblical discernment.

### **Conclusion**

The book of Hebrews shows Christians how to read and study the Old Testament. The Old Testament is a series of covenants that God makes with humanity. The ultimate covenant is with Jesus Christ in the New Testament. In the Old Testament God was regularly “showing up” on earth to make Himself known to His people, in order to redeem that which was lost in the Garden. It is a story about redemption. What was lost was a very personal relationship between God and man. The story of the Old Testament is in actuality a story about a search and rescue mission. It can equally be considered a document of *search and recovery*. God desires

---

<sup>38</sup> Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 172.

to renew the covenant with you and me through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is what the book of Hebrews shows the reader.

Guder rightly states, “Rather, Scripture is the Holy Spirit’s powerful tool to guide our formation in the mission community that God has called us to be.”<sup>39</sup> The book of Hebrews is a summary of God reaching down to man to restore and renew that which had become lifeless. It is Ezekiel 37 in modern day language. It is God telling us “I love you” through His matchless gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. In his book, *Simply Christian*, N.T. Wright records, “We know God through what he has done in creation, in Israel, and supremely in Jesus, and what he has done in his people and in the world through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>40</sup>

It is in the book of Hebrews that we see Luther’s “priesthood of all believers.” It is in the book of Hebrews that we see “the Word becoming flesh.” It is in the book of Hebrews that we see what I write about in chapter three using the words of Trueblood, “the company of the committed.” It is in Hebrews 12 that we are told about the “cloud of witnesses.” It is this imagery that tells us of a God who desires intimacy with those who will accept His Son Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Indeed, Hebrews is a “voice from heaven” calling out to mankind with a still small voice that at times has the volume of a modern day concert. Loudly, plainly, repeatedly, God is calling to the world, “I love you.”

The book of Hebrews is a book of completion, of fulfillment in Jesus Christ. What had been broken is no longer broken. The question for the reader to consider

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>40</sup> N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian* (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2006), 150.

would be, “Why do modern Christians live in such selfish isolation?” Through the book of Hebrews Christ calls out to the modern, “I show myself in community, and it is in the context of the community that you will be made whole.”

The book of Hebrews begins by stating, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world” (Hebrews 1:1-2). Discernment is hearing, listening, obeying and responding to the voice that calls out, “I love you and want a relationship with you.” It is not a voice that calls out to tell us what terrible sinners we are—though we are. Hebrews is a book that calls the heart to God’s heart.

We have in Hebrews 3 these powerful words: “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling...” (Hebrews 3:1). You and I are privileged to be partakers of this marvelous invitation. It is an invitation to eternal intimacy with God. That is what discernment is all about. And as you read on in this project, this is what you will ultimately discover: the Covenant Renewal Model, intimacy with God!

Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, is an invitation to be with God forever. In Hebrews 10 we are invited to move in this direction, today, right now! Hebrews 10 states, “Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh...” (Hebrews 10:19-20). This is the invitation announcement that God has given the Bride of Christ. We are indeed “joint heirs” with Jesus Christ. We have been “bought with a price.” We have been bought with a price because God desires to restore our relationship with Him! Therefore we are

admonished in Hebrews 10 to “draw near with a sincere heart” (v.22). We are admonished to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (v.23). We are admonished to “consider how stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (v.24). And we are admonished “not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together” (v.25). God desires to have a relationship with individuals within community. That is how He lived in covenant with Israel and that is how He desires to live in covenant with the church.

In Hebrews 11 we are given rich insight into our heritage in the faith. We are reminded about God’s power to renew and restore relationships. We are reminded that God is always there, leading and guiding us to Himself. Indeed He is the Shepherd, and He knows us by name. That is the nature of covenant. It is personal and intimate.

I close this chapter looking at the Biblical contextualization of discernment with this grand conclusion in Hebrews 13, “Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **THE QUAKER INFLUENCE: D. ELTON TRUEBLOOD, “TRANSITIONAL PROPHET” OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

I am not a Quaker. But—through careful research and study—I have been heavily influenced by Quaker thought and blessed by the Quaker heritage. This chapter is pivotal for my dissertation in that it is foundational to both discernment and the Covenant Renewal Model.

I will focus some on the life of George Fox and some on contemporary Quaker writers, but will spend the majority of time in this chapter with the writing of D. Elton Trueblood. Trueblood, who wrote many of his books in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, wrote prophetically for our day. He is a Quaker whose voice must be heard in this dissertation.

I will give an overview of church history beginning with the Puritans and George Fox. I will continue to trace the historical pattern set forth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with revivalism and the reform it fostered in society. I will then transition to Trueblood as he addresses vocation, community, and witness. I will conclude with the writings of Francis Schaeffer, who followed Trueblood, not as a Quaker, but as a continuing prophetic voice concurring with Quaker thought on issues relating to the Holy Spirit, the use of Scripture, and the covenant relationship with God.

Discernment is defined by Trueblood’s use of vocation, community, and witness. Each of these elements is evidence supporting my claim stated in this project.

## Historical Overview

Some important information on George Fox comes from Geoffrey E. Nuttall, who wrote *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*. In his book Nuttall evaluates the debate that existed between Fox and Baxter during the Puritan movement between 1650 and 1660: “With the Quakers the situation was different. As we have seen, Fox did not claim that the Holy Spirit had revealed anything to him which was not recorded in the Bible, or which superseded its teaching.”<sup>1</sup> Nuttall continues by observing another statement credited to George Fox: “The work of the Holy Spirit in connection with Scripture is thus twofold: the Spirit both inspired its writers and enlightens its hearers or readers.”<sup>2</sup> To this Nuttall would add, “The normal, central emphasis throughout Puritanism is upon the closest conjunction of Spirit and Word, a conjunction such as is indicated by the texts quoted at the beginning of this chapter.”<sup>3</sup> Trueblood wrote in his book, *The Incendiary Fellowship*, “Even George Fox, who sought to draw men to acquaintance with Christ in the living present, was clearly inspired by the Scriptures and was said to know most of its passages by heart.”<sup>4</sup>

Nuttall says much in his book about the Puritan’s desire to walk close to God. “Puritan writers refer frequently to the fact that Jesus’ earthly life was in closest

---

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>4</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 56-57.

dependence upon God's Spirit."<sup>5</sup> There was a major dispute, according to Nuttall, between Puritans and Quakers. "This dispute over sin brings us to what was the fundamental difference between the Quakers and the Puritans, the difference which arose over a Quaker conviction that the Holy Spirit was in every man."<sup>6</sup> To which Nuttall later makes his conclusion, "In so far as the New Testament remains the ideal for the life, if not for the letter, of Christianity, it is imperative that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit should receive attention in theology, and that the presence of the Holy Spirit should, above all else, be sought in Christian faith and experience."<sup>7</sup> Dr. Carole Spencer states it accordingly, "Perhaps, too few Evangelicals realize that the quest for holiness is the mystical quest for union with God common to all Christian spirituality, and is an integral dynamic of Quaker religious experience across the branches."<sup>8</sup>

Ronald D. Worden, in an article in *Quaker Religious Thought*, states on George Fox and the Holy Spirit, "On the other hand, he placed the greatest importance upon direct, immediate revelation, the speaking of the Holy Spirit of the Light of Christ within his heart."<sup>9</sup> Nuttall would add on the element of prayer in this argument, "It is in prayer, pre-eminently, that we see, taking effect, the Godward aspect of the Spirit's witness."<sup>10</sup> Nuttall would say further on Fox and the Holy Spirit,

---

<sup>5</sup> Nuttall, 145.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>8</sup> Carole Spencer, "The American Holiness Movement: Why Did It Captivate Nineteenth-Century Quakers?" *Quaker Religious Thought* 28, No. 4, no. 90 (1998), 28.

<sup>9</sup> Ronald Worden, "George Fox's Use of the Bible," *Quaker Religious Thought* 30, No. 3, no. 97 (2001), 9.

<sup>10</sup> Nuttall, 62.

“Accompanying this dynamic principle of pressing on, through and beyond all outward and imprisoning forms, to attain to the full liberty of the Holy Spirit, was a powerful eschatological consciousness.”<sup>11</sup>

It is important to identify certain terms unique to Quakers that make reference to the Holy Spirit. Professor Roberts clarifies the usage of words within Quakerism as often there was confusion on what others thought early Friends meant: “Early Friends referenced their usage of the term Spirit to Jesus Christ. This was the case whether they used the term Christ, or metaphors such as Light and Seed, or the word Spirit.”<sup>12</sup> Mary Moehlman, who writes in *Quaker Religious Thought*, adds, “Quakers have called this Light variously—the Light of Christ within, the inward or inner Light, the Spirit of God or Christ, the Seed, Grace—and a host of other names.”<sup>13</sup> The point of clarifying terms is not to take away from the essence of Quaker thought. Roberts states, “No one can become smug about the Light of Christ. Immediate revelation increases rather than decreases awe before the Lord.”<sup>14</sup> This thought is central to understanding the Quaker position on the Holy Spirit. A contemporary Quaker scholar, Dr. Paul Anderson states it this way, “The reader is thus called to appreciate what the Bible is saying, as well as what it is not saying, and above all to listen for the

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur O. Roberts, “A Quaker Understanding of Jesus Christ,” *Quaker Religious Thought* 29 No. 3, no. 93 (1999), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Moehlman, “Children of the Covenant Children of the Light,” *Quaker Religious Thought* 24, No. 2, no. 72 (1989-1990), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Roberts, “A Quaker Understanding of Jesus Christ,” 14.



inspiring word that comes from its inspiring source, the Holy Spirit.”<sup>15</sup> This goes to the heart of Quaker thought and the foundation which was built by George Fox.

Generalizing the work of the Holy Spirit, Nuttall says, “In postulating the Spirit of God in every man, including the heathen and sinners, the Quakers, therefore, were right.”<sup>16</sup> Others would follow in Fox’s footsteps. One such man was John Woolman. Trueblood said of Woolman, “John Woolman is worth remembering because, more than most Christians, he kept his inner and outer life together.”<sup>17</sup> I was so inspired by what Trueblood wrote of Woolman that I bought an 1837 edition of his journal and found a wealth of insight. Early on in his journal he wrote, “I kept steadily to meetings; spent first-days afternoon chiefly in reading the scriptures and other good books; and was early convinced in my mind, that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator...”<sup>18</sup> I thought it imperative for the reader to see the early spiritual formation of this grand Quaker, as the reader may be curious throughout this project where to begin in personal spiritual formation.

Following George Fox were a number of other important figures central to my claim, which states that, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, will move the reader away from a penal model to a covenant model. One is John Wesley, who I write about in chapter four. Stanley Hauerwas, author of *Character*

---

<sup>15</sup> Paul Anderson, "Editorial Essay: Is There a Quaker Hermeneutic?" *Quaker Religious Thought* 30, No. 3, no. 97 (2001), 8.

<sup>16</sup> Nuttall, 174.

<sup>17</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The New Man for Our Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 55.

<sup>18</sup> John Woolman, *Woolman's Works* (Philadelphia: T. E. Chapman, 1837), 18.

*and the Christian Life*, writes, “For Wesley was insistent that works count for little apart from the inner change of the man.”<sup>19</sup> Note the continual emphasis on the inner man throughout this chapter. Hauerwas would add to this on a subject made famous by Wesley: sanctification. “To be sanctified is to have our character determined by our basic commitments and beliefs about God.”<sup>20</sup>

Hauerwas would say of three giants of the faith, “The emphasis Calvin, Wesley, and Edwards put on the necessity of good works, the imitation of the obedience of Christ, and the third use of the law often makes it appear that they come very close to falling into a kind of legalism.”<sup>21</sup> I address this observation in chapter 4, as this concern of legalism is one of the driving forces behind this project. Herein, we see the Quakers as different from those who slipped into a form of legalism.

Moving the argument forward to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Timothy L. Smith, author of *Revivalism and Social Reform*, does an admirable job capturing the essence of Christianity in an era when modernism was in full bloom. On the subject of revivalism Smith states, “An important by-product of revivalism’s triumph over Calvinism was that American theology stood increasingly upon the practical, empirical foundation of Christian experience.”<sup>22</sup> In his book, Smith discusses revivalism and social reforms that surrounded the time periods of the Civil War in the United States. The social reform that was birthed from revivalism is a marvelous

---

<sup>19</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1985), 197.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>22</sup> Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 92.

segue to the remainder of this chapter focusing on the writings of Trueblood as a prophet for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians. Smith adds, “Out of the heart of revival Christianity came by mid-century a platform more widely acceptable and realistically concerned with alleviating social evil.”<sup>23</sup> Smith observes, “What was needed to accomplish these ends was more and purer piety.”<sup>24</sup>

However noble the cause and effect of revivals and revivalism in America in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, something very unfortunate developed later in the century, which is noted by Smith: “Preaching which called for a morally transforming regeneration and a life of practical service likewise made evangelical faith palatable to liberal Christians.”<sup>25</sup> This aligning with liberal Christians, while good on the surface and good for social reform, would take Christians and the church away from discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, away from Scripture, and away from a relationship with God demonstrated by our Quaker friends.

As a transition to the next three sections of this chapter focusing on the work of Trueblood, Walter Brueggemann, author of, *Hopeful Imagination*, makes this observation taken from an argument by Gilkey: “Gilkey argues that the overriding spiritual and cultural fact in our generation is the end of the Enlightenment, which is a model of life concerned for control through knowledge, scientific, economic, political, psychological, that is now ending.”<sup>26</sup> This statement was written in 1986.

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 17.

In every generation God raises up men and women who are visionaries, prophets in times of spiritual confusion and darkness. D. Elton Trueblood was, and I believe is, God's man for our time, who, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century wrote with remarkable accuracy a path for us to travel into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the path of discernment and covenant renewal I argue in this project.

#### **D. Elton Trueblood on Discernment as Vocation**

It is both an honor and a privilege to use material from such a great man as D. Elton Trueblood. Trueblood was a descendant from a rich Quaker heritage going all the way back to 1682. Upon receiving his PhD he worked as chaplain at Stanford University from 1936-1945. Sensing a call from God, Trueblood was led to Earlham College where he would serve out the remainder of his career. Trueblood is a noted author, theologian, philosopher, preacher, intellectual, and professor. His qualifications serve well the thrust of this chapter. As earlier stated, I have called him a prophet for our day, which will be evident in the pages that follow.

Trueblood was a firm believer in the teachings and experiences of George Fox, William Penn, and John Woolman. He makes frequent mention of these men and others in his books. Trueblood believed in the "inward light" as did Fox. Trueblood would flesh out in his books what it means to be guided by the inward light of Christ.

On the subject of vocation as an evidence of being led by the Holy Spirit, or as Quakers would put it, being guided by the light of Christ, Trueblood writes, "The word 'vocation' has been debased in the modern world by being made synonymous with 'occupation,' but it is one of the gains of our time that the old word is beginning

to regain its original meaning of ‘calling.’”<sup>27</sup> Related to this topic and lending weight as to its validity, Trueblood quotes another noted Quaker scholar, Dr. Arthur Roberts of George Fox University, “We can be grateful to Arthur Roberts for warning against the danger of fraudulence in our service theme. Though he makes the point by asking questions, it is clear that he believes that the chief form of service for most Christians must be found in the normal vocations of life.”<sup>28</sup>

Trueblood defines further his meaning of vocation in the Christian context by stating, “The vocation of the Christian is threefold: he is called to pray, to serve, and to think, and he is called to do all three together.”<sup>29</sup> Trueblood did not separate his Christianity from his secular vocation. For Trueblood, vocation is Christianity! He would add, “Historically, Christianity has glorified work and has given to the modern world the marvelous idea of vocation.”<sup>30</sup> So to interpret Trueblood accurately, this is the equivalent today of what we would call “full-time Christian service.” We have narrowed the definition to exclude anything outside the work of the church. But Trueblood is inclusive, not exclusive; to him vocation is the work of the church, not something that is done outside the scope of the church. This is enormous for our 21<sup>st</sup> century culture. If we can make this paradigm shift, a floodgate of new possibilities opens for the church.

Trueblood was not the only voice of his day. There have been others who have agreed with his paradigm on vocation. H. Richard Niebuhr, in his book, *Christ*

---

<sup>27</sup> Elton Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 63.

<sup>28</sup> Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Trueblood, *The New Man for Our Time*, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961),

*and Culture*, writes, “No increase of scientific and technical knowledge can renew the spirit within us; but the right spirit will impel us to seek knowledge and skill in our special vocations in the world in order that we may render service.”<sup>31</sup> Trueblood would phrase it accordingly: “The pietist is one who stresses chiefly the roots; the activist is one who stresses chiefly the fruits. Service without devotion is rootless; devotion without service is fruitless.”<sup>32</sup> Trueblood would add, “A Christian is asked to include in his life both piety and service.”<sup>33</sup> Trueblood viewed vocation as an outflow of an inner life. In this, God’s Spirit is always calling the Christian to His will within the daily routines of life: vocation.

Trueblood addresses the role of the church in vocation as well. He has sharp admonitions for the church and the message given to the laity on the subject of vocation. He states in no uncertain terms, “This is because the task of the church is the penetration of all of life.”<sup>34</sup> Trueblood calls the church to rephrase its language to, “The ministry of work.”<sup>35</sup> Trueblood would insist, “There is still much to do if we are to make the ordinary carpenter believe that he has a holy calling.”<sup>36</sup> I must confess, this philosophy has changed my vocabulary in my ministry. I am making an enormous paradigm shift in this area. I challenge my readers to consider similar changes for their lives, too!

---

<sup>31</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1951), 176.

<sup>32</sup> Trueblood, *The New Man for Our Time*, 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The Yoke of Christ* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 40.

<sup>35</sup> Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation*, 79.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

Trueblood was adamant about the subject of vocation as a part of Christ living in us and working in our daily lives. He was fanatical about Christians understanding that daily routine is just as much a calling from God as the preacher standing in the pulpit on Sunday. For Trueblood, the acting out of vocation is evidence of the Spirit at work in the life of the inner man. He would say, “Invade the weekday.”<sup>37</sup> Trueblood summarizes it best by stating, “A Christian may conclude a job, but he cannot leave a cause.”<sup>38</sup> Such a cause is to be yoked with Christ.

#### **D. Elton Trueblood on Discernment as Community**

It is critical to understand that any dimension of discernment must be understood in the context of community. Brueggemann, in his work, *Hopeful Imagination*, says of the Israelites in the days of Isaiah, “The central task of 2 Isaiah is to invite people home, to create a sense of that prospect of hope.”<sup>39</sup> Mary Moehlman writes, “The sign of the covenant is a people gathered by God into obedience to the Light.”<sup>40</sup>

For Trueblood, community begins with Christ and then immediately, simultaneously spreads to other believers. He writes, “We need a new sense of life’s meaning to end our mood of futility, and this comes only by a saving faith. The faith in turn, is nurtured by a special kind of fellowship in which Christ himself is the central member.”<sup>41</sup> This is what is meant when today’s church leaders talk about

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>39</sup> Brueggemann, 111.

<sup>40</sup> Moehlman, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Elton Trueblood, *Alternative to Futility* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), 124.

being incarnational. Trueblood has already laid out for us a model to follow, one that is not new, just forgotten!

Trueblood stands against modern thought, which is individualistic and self-serving. He always presses for the individual to be complete within community. He writes, “Any man who has begun to understand the weakness of individualism knows that he needs something to buttress his feeble little life.”<sup>42</sup> Written in a time when our country was at war with the world, Trueblood articulates a path for his day and a path for our day as many battle not a war with the world, but a war within the heart.

In Trueblood’s book, *The Company of the Committed*, he writes concerning the role of the Holy Spirit, central to this project within the context of community, “Little is gained without the Spirit, and the Spirit cannot be maintained by separated individuals. Therefore the church or something like it must be cherished, criticized, nourished, and reformed.”<sup>43</sup> Here Trueblood links the individual with the Spirit, and both of these to the people of God from a historical perspective. “In the early Christian community the people sang, not from convention, but from a joy which overflowed. Life for these people was no longer a problem to solve but a glory to discern.”<sup>44</sup> This is the perspective needed for the church today. Trueblood connects the link between individualism and the community by making the light of Christ the focus for all.

---

<sup>42</sup> David Elton Trueblood, *The Logic of Belief* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 71.

<sup>43</sup> Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Trueblood, *Alternative to Futility*, 31.



Trueblood masterfully links the community with vocation, as for him it is all one, not separate components. He writes, “There, then, is our clue. The Christian Faith must rediscover its own essential genius, which is the union of the secular and the sacred, of matter and spirit, the common and the divine.”<sup>45</sup> Herein lays the blend of discernment of the Spirit, vocation, and community. Trueblood is able to show the unique dependency of each component needing the other for survival.

Trueblood likewise speaks directly to the church. He writes, “We know something important about the Christian Church when we know that it is clearly intended to be a company.”<sup>46</sup> He likewise, believed that church was not to be reduced to one hour a week with God which is in line with his statements on vocation. He writes, “If we wish to have a really important religion we must make a complete break with the one-hour-a-week concept.”<sup>47</sup> This thought by itself is certainly not new, but within the context of the themes of this chapter, there is a depth here that will help move the reader from where we are to where Trueblood is directing us to be. While there are many today who say the church is the enemy, Trueblood would counter by saying, “Life is simpler if we are not required to participate.”<sup>48</sup> The yoke of Christ at times may be burdensome, but so was the cross. It appears that burdens are a part of being yoked with Christ. And the church should not stray from this truth.

We cannot separate ourselves from the church, because to do so is to separate ourselves from Christ. It is to reduce the atoning work of Christ. And it voids the new

---

<sup>45</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The Common Ventures of Life* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 35.

<sup>46</sup> Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 45.

<sup>47</sup> Trueblood, *The Common Ventures of Life*, 20.

<sup>48</sup> Trueblood, *The Yoke of Christ*, 139.

covenant God has given to the church. Moehlman writes, “Covenant is best understood as a relationship.”<sup>49</sup> And it is not to be a relationship of isolation. God intended for this relationship to be lived out among one another. For it is in one another that we see Christ.

I began this chapter with Brueggemann, and I come back to him again, for he writes, “The exile of the contemporary American church is that we are bombarded by definitions of reality that are fundamentally alien to the gospel, definitions of reality that come from the military-industrial-scientific empire, which may be characterized as ‘consumer capitalism.’”<sup>50</sup> What I have done in this chapter, thus far, is to introduce the reader to the language of Christ, to the language of the Bible. If the words of Trueblood seem foreign, it is only because we have wandered so far away from the truth without knowing it. Those things happen in the life of the church. Trueblood is a man for his time and I argue a man for our time as well! Brueggemann writes, “We build low-roofed churches which foster horizontal fellowship but which have brought the sky down to human proportion.”<sup>51</sup>

I summarize this portion of this chapter with a statement that may leave the reader stunned, but upon further reflection, may seem extraordinarily prophetic: “Our main mission field today, so far as America is concerned, is within the church membership itself.”<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Moehlman, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Brueggemann, 92.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>52</sup> Trueblood, *The Yoke of Christ*, 52.

### D. Elton Trueblood on Discernment as Witness

There are many statements for which Trueblood can be remembered. But in my opinion, there is one that stands above the rest. It is the starting point and the theme for this portion of this chapter. Trueblood writes, “The terrible danger of our time consists in the fact that ours is a cut-flower civilization. Beautiful as cut flowers may be, and much as we may use our ingenuity to keep them looking fresh for a while, they will eventually die, and they die because they are severed from their sustaining roots.”<sup>53</sup> The cut-flower civilization metaphor could well be applied to the Church. Is it possible that the church is just as guilty as the rest of civilization? Trueblood would respond, “While paganism is something which we have always had in one form or another, it has now become evangelical.”<sup>54</sup> If true, what are possible solutions?

Trueblood addresses the predicament in which the church finds itself: trying to balance faith in science and faith in God. The former requires evidence, the latter demands discerning the Spirit guided by Scripture. Trueblood again helps move this argument forward by stating, “Science can help us to know the facts in most situations and it can help us to perform intended tasks, but it cannot tell us what we ought to do.”<sup>55</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, author of *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, writes on this same subject, “We cannot turn the covenant of grace into a contract.”<sup>56</sup> And in

---

<sup>53</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The Predicament of Modern Man* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 59.

<sup>54</sup> Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship*, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Trueblood, *The Predicament of Modern Man*, 39.

<sup>56</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 85.

*Foolishness to the Greeks* he states, “But how, as men and women who do possess this knowledge, how can we speak of a genuine encounter between the gospel and our culture?”<sup>57</sup> And yet again in his former book Newbigin writes, “The Church thus does not claim to possess absolute truth: it claims to know where to point for guidance (both in thought and in action) for the common search for truth.”<sup>58</sup> These statements help both reader and writer move to the core of discernment as witness. Witness is personal. Witness is not based on a set of formulas or propositions, it is personal. Witness is not contractual in nature, it is covenantal in nature.

Witness must also include at its core the atoning work of Christ. In a series of four short articles, Dr. Arthur Roberts summarizes the importance of the atonement in relationship to witness. He states in a June 2002 article on atonement as ransom, “Christ is our Savior in respect to sin, our Lord in respect to righteousness (justice).”<sup>59</sup> Roberts develops the atonement theme further when he writes the following month on atonement as satisfying divine honor: “Sin is judged and righteousness raised up.”<sup>60</sup> And then again, in August of 2002, Roberts writes on atonement as substitution: “Gethsemane is watered with real tears. Jesus is one of us.”<sup>61</sup> Roberts then concludes by defining atonement as moral influence: “Love is

---

<sup>57</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 43.

<sup>58</sup> Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 163.

<sup>59</sup> Arthur Roberts, *Atonement as Ransom* (Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2002, accessed June 2002), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Arthur Roberts, *Atonement as Satisfying Divine Honor* (Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2002, accessed July 2002), 1.

<sup>61</sup> Arthur Roberts, *Atonement as Substitution* (Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2002, accessed August 2002), 1.

energy, and suffering love the strongest.”<sup>62</sup> Each of these components speaks to the subject of and the need for witness. To discern the voice of the Holy Spirit is to demonstrate witness.

Dr. Trueblood incorporates witness into all aspects of Christian living, but always seems to bring it around to the church. He makes a scathing—yet true—assertion: “Though the New Testament describes a hot fire, we prefer the damp wick.”<sup>63</sup> It is as though Trueblood reached the people of his day and speaks to the people of our day by taking us all back to the church of yesterday. He writes, “Old science, even that of two or three generations ago, almost always seems to us to be bad science, but old religion may be good religion, indeed.”<sup>64</sup>

Trueblood takes the life lived for Christ as witness seriously, thus his strong statements on the subject, “An empty, meaningless faith, a faith not taken seriously, may thus be actually worse than none.”<sup>65</sup> Trueblood repeatedly takes the reader back to the foundation for living this life—whether in vocation, community, or witness—with one central theme: “Modern man can be helped immeasurably by the realization that at the heart of all of that is, stands not mere power, but a Person.”<sup>66</sup> And in fact, this takes the reader back to the beginning of this chapter where we began with George Fox. Trueblood gives the reader continuity, something lacking in the church

---

<sup>62</sup> Arthur Roberts, *Atonement as Moral Influence* (Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2002, accessed September 2002), 1.

<sup>63</sup> Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship*, 26.

<sup>64</sup> David Elton Trueblood, *Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 137-138.

<sup>65</sup> Elton Trueblood, *Foundations for Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), 34.

<sup>66</sup> Trueblood, *The New Man for Our Time*, 119.

today due to ignorance or neglect of church history and heritage. Further, Trueblood gives the reader perspective, something lacking in the church today, hidden in myriad trends, fashions, and fads. A man referred to often by Trueblood in his writing is William Temple, who on this subject of witness writes, “The heart of Religion is not an opinion about God, such as Philosophy might reach as the conclusion of its argument; it is a personal relationship with God.”<sup>67</sup> This quote links much of what has been said thus far to what will be said in subsequent chapters as to the need and nature of a covenant with God. It is in this covenant with God that witness emerges.

Witness is active and participatory. It is inclusive not exclusive. It is personal and corporate. It is to be seen with the church as well as those who are not church. Trueblood writes, “What we seek is the total penetration of our total culture by the total gospel.”<sup>68</sup> Brueggemann writes on observations in the life of Jeremiah the prophet, “This God is a vital, free conversation partner to whom Jeremiah can speak candidly and who surely is free to say anything back to Jeremiah.”<sup>69</sup> Brueggemann adds, “Jeremiah keeps listening.”<sup>70</sup> This is a key to witness, which is listening to the voice of God as He speaks through Scripture. The reader is admonished to keep listening. Here lies the secret to a covenant relationship with God!

As the reader listens to the voice of the Spirit, the reader will be moved to respond externally after confirmation within. Niebuhr, writing about the Gospel of John, observes, “He is concerned throughout his book with the transformation by the

---

<sup>67</sup> William Temple, *Nature Man and God* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1935), 54.

<sup>68</sup> Trueblood, *Alternative to Futility*, 120.

<sup>69</sup> Brueggemann, 14.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

Spirit of Christ of the Spirit that expresses itself in external acts of religion.”<sup>71</sup> On this subject of witness, Trueblood gives us a final word; witness must be authentic and genuine if it is to be anything at all. Trueblood concludes, “The third commandment does not condemn those who fail to believe; it condemns those who believe and do nothing about it.”<sup>72</sup>

### **The Baton is Passed: Schaeffer, One More Link to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

For Trueblood’s claims to be true and timeless—at least for our time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—others from different tribes must proclaim similar truths. Francis A. Schaeffer is qualified to conclude my historical findings furthering my claim because he was a noted Presbyterian pastor, theologian, philosopher, and author. He is one who walked the middle of the road, and desperately hoped to save the church from itself and from a pluralistic society laced with humanism on every front. Schaeffer attempted to move the church from secularism to the sacred without reverting back to the old ways of legalism.

Schaeffer summarized the history of and the effects of the Enlightenment in our era, “The Utopian dream of Enlightenment can be summed up by five words: reason, nature, happiness, progress and liberty. It was thoroughly secular in its thinking.”<sup>73</sup> Like Trueblood, Schaeffer desired for the church to regain its sense of the sacred while shaking off at least 200 years of secular humanism manifesting itself in an age of pluralism. On the subject of pluralism, Schaeffer writes, “Pluralism has

---

<sup>71</sup> Niebuhr, 203.

<sup>72</sup> Trueblood, *Foundations for Reconstruction*, 32.

<sup>73</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell Co., 1976), 121.

come to mean that everything is acceptable.”<sup>74</sup> For Schaeffer and for Trueblood this was simply unacceptable. My intent in this chapter has been to show evidences through quality of definition what direction the reader should steer.

Schaeffer had something to say about rationalism as well in his work, *The Church before the Watching World*. “According to rationalism, as I am using the term here, man can understand the universe by beginning from himself without any resource to outside knowledge, specifically outside knowledge of the revelation of God.”<sup>75</sup> For Schaeffer, like Trueblood, revelation comes from God. And God speaks via His Spirit and His Word. To which Schaeffer says, “In contrast, if I have the Holy Spirit as my integration point and through him as the agent of the Trinity I am in communion with the whole Trinity, I can have joy and peace, and a song.”<sup>76</sup> In this statement we see harmony and a smoothness of transition from Trueblood to Schaeffer.

Schaeffer likewise addressed the legalism which has held a choke-hold on the church for at least 200 years: “His dealing with man is also not primarily legal, though there are proper legal aspects to it which are founded and rooted in God’s own character.”<sup>77</sup> Schaeffer makes a case for the covenant relationship I argue for in this project. While there are aspects of the atonement that are legal in nature, the primary essence of the atonement is not a contractual arrangement between God and man;

---

<sup>74</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1981), 46.

<sup>75</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church before the Waiting World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 15.

<sup>76</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1973), 42.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.



rather it is a relationship that is intended to be personal and intimate! That is why Schaeffer would say to the same effect, “The same is true in our love for God. The result can be external, but love itself is always internal.”<sup>78</sup>

Schaeffer does not want the reader to miss his central theme which is a relationship with the living God, over anything else that Christianity may have to offer. He plainly states, which supports my claim in this project in the following manner, “In other words, God draws two factors of reality together here: the factor of our being with Christ when we die, and the factor that at the present time, with equal certainty, if we have accepted Christ as Savior, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>79</sup> This statement was one of the central driving forces behind my interest in this project. I was one of those waiting until I got to heaven before the party would begin. Through extensive reading and waiting on God, I am learning the party has already begun, I just didn’t understand the invitation. This project is intended to help others find their way to God, to better interpret the invitation! The issue is not modern vs. postmodern, emerging churches vs. those that are not emerging. The central need of our day as pointed out by George Fox and John Woolman is a covenant relationship with God. D. Elton Trueblood has, through numerous citations, shown us the way to flesh out the covenant with God. Schaeffer articulates its necessity.

Schaeffer addresses a point held by Quakers, if taken in the proper context. He states, “However, eventually the Christian life and true spirituality are not to be seen

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 53.

as outward at all, but inward.”<sup>80</sup> Indeed, it is the well of Christ within us that produces life for others. Schaeffer and Trueblood bring each of us to a place of decision, a place which, in order to change the world, begins within the heart of every believer. Schaeffer writes, “The communion, or the communication, of the Holy Spirit speaks of the Holy Spirit as the agent of the Trinity, wherein Christ could promise in John 14 not only that Christ would not leave us as orphans, but that both he and the Father would come to us.”<sup>81</sup> This is the essence of discernment as vocation, discernment as community, and discernment as witness.

Schaeffer addresses another concern to the church: humanism. Schaeffer saw this as a threat to the church; in fact he saw this as an enemy that has already claimed casualties. He writes, “The liberals elevate their own humanistic theories to a position above the Word of God, the revealed communication of God to men.”<sup>82</sup> This is a real problem for Schaeffer. He has strong warnings for the church when it comes to the disease of humanism. He sees it as a violation of God’s revealed truth through the Scriptures. He states, “It must be understood that the new humanism and the new theology have no concept of the truth.”<sup>83</sup> For Schaeffer, humanism was a threat to the Bible. He saw humanism as an enemy of the truth. He viewed humanism as a move away from a covenant relationship with the living God. Showing his disgust for

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>82</sup> Schaeffer, *The Church before the Waiting World*, 53.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 66.

humanism he would add, “Humanism, with its lack of any final base for values or law, always leads to chaos.”<sup>84</sup>

Schaeffer recognized that ultimately, Christianity comes down to love; love that comes from within because God lives within the human heart by His Spirit. For Schaeffer and Trueblood, this is the essence of the Christian faith. I conclude with Schaeffer in his own words, “I want to say with all my heart that as we struggle in the midst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the importance of observable love must come into our message.”<sup>85</sup> What is true for the 20<sup>th</sup> century is certainly true for our century. Covenant boils down to love; love that comes from an intimate personal relationship with God. If discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, leads to any other conclusion, then errors were made along the way.

I close this rich chapter with the words of D. Elton Trueblood. Trueblood understood well that unlike the church of today, which puts so much of its focus on man, Trueblood knows this is our downfall. Christianity is not about us as much as it is about our good God. Trueblood states, “The Bible is a record of God’s unique dealings with men, but it is not, for the most part, a book about good men.”<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, 29.

<sup>85</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), 34.

<sup>86</sup> Elton Trueblood, *Signs of Hope in a Century of Despair* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 56.

## CHAPTER 4

### SPIRITUALITY AS DISCERNING THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: MOVING FROM PENAL SUBSTITUTION TO COVENANT RENEWAL

My heritage as a modern is related to John Wesley. John Wesley's teaching on "Christian perfection" has served as my model my entire Christian journey. I am grateful for my heritage which is of the holiness tradition. Richard Foster articulates my tradition in his work, *Streams of Living Water*. Foster defines holiness as "the ability to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done. It means being 'response-able,' able to respond appropriately to the demands of life."<sup>1</sup> Foster adds, "So a holy life simply is a life that works."<sup>2</sup> And while I agree with his statement, it falls far short of our final destination in this chapter with the Covenant Renewal Model. I have been taught with many other modern Christians that our goal in life is to get to heaven. And while that is true, there is more to knowing God than fire insurance from hell!

Moderns have been held captive by church teachings, focusing on dos, don'ts and lists. I am a product of such teaching. I have embraced the Penal Substitution Model my entire life. But in recent years, I have had within my soul an intense hunger for friendship with God. I had not been able to name or describe this yearning until I became part of the doctoral program at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. The covenant model has been the longing of my soul.

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 82.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 82.

Foster says, “Holiness is not rules and regulations. Elaborate lists of dos and don’ts miss the point of a life hidden with God in Christ. No single standard of behavior is dictated by the word holy. All external legalisms fail to capture the heart of holy living and holy dying.”<sup>3</sup> Foster made this statement because that is exactly what I and hosts of moderns have experienced in our Christianity: rules and regulations! Admittedly, Wesley and my predecessors intended to create a community of believers that would experience a covenant with God. Foster summarizes his thoughts on the holiness tradition by stating, “How, then do we deal with the perils in the Holiness Tradition? By replacing legalism with love. By replacing Pelagianism with grace. By replacing perfectionism with growth.”<sup>4</sup>

My heritage as a modern has been reduced primarily to rules and regulations. While I concede that the Penal Substitution Model is scriptural, it is incomplete in that it fails to focus fully on a covenant relationship with God.

In this chapter I will show the process of moving from the Penal Substitution Model—traditionally embraced by moderns—to the Covenant Renewal Model intended to be embraced by all Christians. However, the gap between these two models is so wide, I am using a Relational Holiness Model, embraced by postmoderns as a means to my final destination of covenant renewal. I will show the process of change, all the while keeping in mind that the driving force leading to the Covenant Renewal Model comes from discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 94.

### **Wesley's Christian Perfection: a Sample of the Penal Substitution Model**

The journey of John Wesley has been a credit to Christianity. His life is well-documented. In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, a book written in response to confusion on his teaching of Christian perfection, Wesley writes: "Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium."<sup>5</sup> Wesley would go on to write, "I generally considered religion as a uniform following of Christ, an entire inward and outward conformity to our Master."<sup>6</sup> Wesley said, "Nor was I afraid of anything more than of bending this rule to the experience of myself, or of other men; of allowing myself in any the least disconformity to our grand Exemplar."<sup>7</sup> To Wesley's credit, his aim was a covenant relationship with God. Years of erosion have buried his original intent.

Wesley developed his theology by stating, "I concluded in these words: 'Here is the sum of the perfect law, the circumcision of the heart.'"<sup>8</sup> Wesley would frame such thoughts with the following being his development on Christian perfection, "But 'whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are justly of good report,' he thinks, speaks and acts, adorning the doctrine of God our

---

<sup>5</sup> John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, no date), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 5.

Savior in all things.”<sup>9</sup> To which he came to the conclusion, “These are the very words wherein I largely declared, for the first time, my sentiments of Christian Perfection.”<sup>10</sup>

Later in Wesley’s book he makes a revealing claim: “So, that, whether our present doctrine be right or wrong, it is however, the same which we taught from the beginning.”<sup>11</sup> Wesley makes a great emphasis on doctrine, saying little about a relationship with God. To his defense, he was responding to his critics on specific issues of attack. Wesley confesses that while he is right, he could be wrong in what he believed. Wesley added, “The best means of resisting the devil is to destroy whatever of the world remains in us, in order to raise for God upon its ruins, a building all of love.”<sup>12</sup> Wesley puts a tremendous amount of weight on the evil that is within us, rather than the relationship with God that is within us. Wesley seems to focus on sin clouding his beliefs on covenant. His thoughts on love point towards a demonstration of our love for God by how good we can be to prove that we really love God. For a modern, proving love has been a major focus. It is a penal model focus by its very nature. I argue in this chapter for moderns to consider moving away from this mode of thinking and living. It leads to bondage, not freedom. It leads to legalism, not grace. It leads to fear, not friendship.

Wesley concludes his defense to his critics in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, by saying, “Yea, we do believe that he will in this world so ‘cleanse the

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 84.

thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name.”<sup>13</sup> I claim that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, will move the Christian away from a penal model mindset to a covenant renewal mindset. I believe this was the original intent of Wesley.

### **The Impact of John Wesley on the Modern Church**

John Wesley has left a lasting impression on the church today. Richard Watson in 1832 said of Wesley, “No man more honestly sought truth than Mr. Wesley, and none more rigidly tried all systems by the law and the testimony. As to the authority he was a ‘man of one book.’”<sup>14</sup> This quote exposes the methodology of John Wesley. While I appreciate his love for the Bible and his love for God, he does not spend much time talking about our friendship with God.

More contemporary than Watson is the work of Mildred Bangs Wynkoop who says of Wesley, “We are indebted to John Wesley for rediscovering and revitalizing the doctrine of perfection. The perfection which God demands, said he, is the perfection of love. Sanctification is perfect love.”<sup>15</sup> Wynkoop praises Wesley for resurrecting a doctrine, along with a relationship with Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, doctrine has dominated over relationship. In her book, *A Theology of Love*, Wynkoop writes, “This understanding of moral obligates believers to an ever deepening moral experience which is as necessary to soteriology as the grace which is given us by God

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Watson, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1832), 172.

<sup>15</sup> Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *An Existential Interpretation of the Doctrine of Holiness* (Portland, OR: Western Evangelical Seminary, 1955), 3.



through Christ.”<sup>16</sup> This is where Christian perfection has led: moral legalism. That is rarely the intent, yet the fact is, that is where Christian perfection ends up. Even more strongly stated, Wynkoop says, “Hatred of sin is to be a permanent element of our Christian lives. We do not graduate from this. The whole weight of moral life rests on this.”<sup>17</sup> This statement has the Penal Substitution Model written all over it. Wesley’s Christian perfection constantly leaves us with a focus on sin rather than a focus on a friendship with God through Jesus Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit. I believe Wesley advocated for the covenant model. Yet, his writings and preaching were evangelistic which by nature focus much of the time on sin.

There are others who interpret Wesley, such as Paul Mickey who writes, “Clearly in matters of revelation the Scriptures stand above human experience to inform and form teaching and hermeneutical task of the church. We are servants of the Word of God; we are not its masters.”<sup>18</sup> Perhaps this rendering of Wesley leans towards a view of Scripture at the expense of a primary focus on the God of Scripture. This view fails to focus on discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Norval Hadley, in his book, *Sin and the Sanctified*, states, “Besides studying the Bible, one should read holiness literature if he would be kept fresh in the experience.”<sup>19</sup> Hadley’s comment leaves me wondering: Why not a stronger emphasis on the leading of the Holy Spirit?

---

<sup>16</sup> Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love : The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), 183

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 345.

<sup>18</sup> Paul A. Mickey, *Essentials of Wesleyan Theology: A Contemporary Affirmation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 97.

<sup>19</sup> Norval Hadley, *Sin and the Sanctified* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1980), 82.

Howard A. Snyder says in a journal article, “But for Wesley the deeper issue was the moral disease of sin that needed healing by God’s grace.”<sup>20</sup> This lends further support to Wesley’s focus on what is wrong with my relationship with God, rather than what is right. Such a focus on sin can become negative in nature.

In comparing modernism to postmodernism, Chad Short, in an article using Wesley’s influence on modernism says, “For John Wesley, experience had its place, but experience never took precedence over scripture.”<sup>21</sup> Wesley’s focus on Scripture appears to be at the expense of a focus on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Donald Thorsen adds, “...but scripture alone remains Wesley’s final source of religious authority.”<sup>22</sup> If I were to talk with Wesley today, I truly doubt he would mean to exclude discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the direction those following Wesley have gone is to exclude in a modern mindset, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. The modern church has reduced our relationship with God to a business deal which is exemplarily of the Penal Substitution Model.

Others have interpreted Wesley with a focus on morality, which definitely carries with it a tone of legalism. George Peck states, “But as he is a moral being, his highest perfect must consist in likeness to his great Author in his moral character—it must consist in ‘the beauty of holiness.’”<sup>23</sup> Here again, it is implied, if I am moral,

---

<sup>20</sup> Howard A. Snyder, “The Babylonian Captivity of Wesleyan Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 1 (2004), 27.

<sup>21</sup> Chad Short, “Wesleyan Theology and the Postmodern Quest for Meaning and Identity,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (2004), 225.

<sup>22</sup> Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1990), 77.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. George Peck D. D., *The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (New York: G. Lane and P. P. Sanford, 1842), 27.

then I must love God. As I fulfill the requirements in Scripture under the categories of morality, then I have proven my love for God. This is again a characteristic of the Penal Substitution Model. Charles G. Finney states, “You see why you have not a revival. It is only because you do not want one.”<sup>24</sup> Finney, a Christian leader, builds a case for revival based on what man can do in his power. If I properly execute my part of the business transaction, then God is obligated to fulfill His portion of the deal. This can lead to lots of wonderful things, but still leaves out discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. Are we to follow the prescriptions of church leaders, or the Holy Spirit?

Again, I am building a case exposing the misunderstanding with Christian perfection. It is a misunderstanding that gives more weight to the penal model than to the covenant model. John E. Stanley writes, “Wesleyanism understands sin as a relational malady; thus love can be the restoring medicine that heals social, as well as personal relationships.”<sup>25</sup> Please note that within this sampling of the Penal Substitution Model there are signs of the Covenant Renewal Model; yet they are not strong enough to warrant support.

There is a striking record, recorded in the *Minutes*, from 1770, where Wesley states, “We are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing God, according to our works; according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward

---

<sup>24</sup> Charles G. Finney, *Revivals of Religion* (Virginia Beach, VA: CBN University Press, 1978), 31.

<sup>25</sup> John E. Stanley, “A Theology of Urban Ministry, Supported by the Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (2003), 158.

behavior.”<sup>26</sup> This mindset definitely requires a Penal Substitution Model. It is a fear-motivated mindset that leaves the Christian so consumed with what he or she has done wrong, that there is little time to focus on a covenant relationship with God.

The best I can say about the Penal Substitution Model, using Wesley’s Christian perfection as a sample, are the words of William Greathouse: “Entire sanctification is not a magical act which changes the substance of our souls; it is a moral crisis which restores us to a Christ-centered existence.”<sup>27</sup> Even at that, the word *entire* leaves me worried that if in some way I have fallen short of that experience by definition, then I could never have a covenant relationship with God. So the best I can settle for is a position of penal substitution.

And so the examples of the Penal Substitution Model are seemingly endless using Wesley’s Christian perfection as a sample. Wesley Tracy says, “Sin is a lethal cancer that sabotages spiritual formation and holiness. Its contamination floods the spiritual environment.”<sup>28</sup> Allan Coppedge writes, “Wesley was apparently anxious not to give the impression that justified believers had no relationship with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>29</sup> This kind of thinking infers that only certain Christians at a certain level can discern the voice of the Holy Spirit. If you cannot hear the voice of the Holy Spirit,

---

<sup>26</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 241.

<sup>27</sup> William M. Greathouse, *From the Apostles to Wesley: Christian Perfection in Historical Perspective* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979), 114.

<sup>28</sup> E. Dee Freeborn, Janine Tartaglia, and Morris A. Weigelt, *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 27.

<sup>29</sup> Allan Coppedge, *John Wesley in Theological Debate* (Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1987), 252.

one should be grateful for the Penal Substitution Model, because it is better than nothing!

Because my claim deals specifically with discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, I want to leave you with several more quotes concerning Wesley and the Penal Substitution Model, hoping that the modern reader of this chapter will have a hunger to move in the direction of the Covenant Renewal Model. On Wesley and conscience Coppedge states, “There is a sharp functional distinction in Wesley’s mind between natural conscience, which everyone has, and Christian conscience, which is instructed by Scripture, grace, and God’s saving work.”<sup>30</sup> This is maddening to a modern who desires to hear the voice of Holy Spirit. Once again, it does not appear to be about a covenant relationship, rather a business deal, which is the hallmark of the Penal Substitution Model.

If W.H. Fitchett has it right, then his observation of Wesley and others who are modern in their thinking, by default embrace a penal model: “Wesley himself explains what may be called the philosophy of Methodist history by saying that ‘everything arose just as the occasion required.’”<sup>31</sup> In a modern world, the Penal Substitution Model may have been the very best for that time in history. In today’s postmodern world I argue that today’s occasion demands a new model, a Covenant Renewal Model.

I will close this portion of Chapter 4 with a quote from H. Ray Dunning on Wesley: “Thus it was that the rules and methods were prudential means which were

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>31</sup> W. H. Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century* (New York: The Abingdon Press), 423.

ordained toward achieving this ‘ruling habit of mind,’ this complete ‘recovery of divine likeness.’”<sup>32</sup> The Penal Substitution Model is about rules over a relationship. My examples on Wesley’s theology of Christian perfection showcase the mindset of moderns and the Penal Substitution Model. The reader now has a sample and a reference point, allowing a modern to move towards the Covenant Renewal Model. My claim continues to be that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, will move the reader from a penal model to a covenant model.

### **Caring for Others: a Sample of the Relational Holiness Model**

If there were no Covenant Renewal Model in my project, what I am about to describe would be a marked improvement over the Penal Substitution Model. The Relational Holiness Model is very familiar territory for the postmodern. It is a move away from individualism and a move towards people who need help and love. The Relational Holiness Model is what followers of Christ ought to be implementing in their journey. However, I am challenging the reader to discern the voice of the Spirit and one will find one’s self living the covenant model. The penal model and the relational model, while useful, lack the strength of the covenant model.

The Relational Holiness Model demonstrates discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Penal Substitution Model focuses on conviction by the Holy Spirit. To move from one model to the next requires a process of deep change. That, too, will be addressed in this chapter.

---

<sup>32</sup> H. Ray Dunning, "Ethics in a Wesleyan Context," *The Wesleyan Theological Society* 5, no. 1 (1970), 8.

## **Penal Substitution Model vs. Relational Holiness Model**

The Penal Substitution Model includes: dos, don'ts and doctrines; following the letter of the law governed by lists; extreme order and structure; restrictive joy; limited grace; motivated by fear; personal piety; and conviction of the Holy Spirit. Now compare that model with the Relational Holiness Model that includes: caring for people in need; a freedom to follow the spirit of the law motivated by love, not lists; some order and structure; joy that is more frequent than not; unlimited grace; motivation by friendship; a concern for others over my own personal piety; driven by a leading of the Holy Spirit.

The key word in this section is the word *relational*. Moving from the Penal Substitution Model to the Relational Holiness Model is a major paradigm shift for a modern. In most instances it is not a natural transition. However, once the change begins to occur, transition becomes transformation. It is an incredible metamorphosis of the heart and soul. In order for there to be transformation there must be change. Consider the following section on change as a tool to move you from one model to the next.

### **Deep Change**

Robert E. Quinn addresses deep change in his book *Building the Bridge*, stating, "When we make deep change and enter the fundamental state of leadership, we see a different world. We also behave differently. The world then reacts differently."<sup>33</sup> I am suggesting that there is a need for moderns to confront the need for a deep change of the heart. Quinn states later in his book, "That's what a deep

---

<sup>33</sup> Robert E. Quinn, *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 23.

change is all about; the renewal and the replenishment of self and the enlargement of others.”<sup>34</sup> The Relational Holiness Model is really all about the enlargement of others. It is a paradigm shift for a modern to move from individualism to caring for others. The real problem for change within a modern’s mindset is the issue of control, which Quinn addresses, “During a transformation, we cannot be in control.”<sup>35</sup> This is where discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, plays such an enormous role for the modern. It is no longer about prescriptions; it is about discernment. Prescriptions give us a sense of entitlement and control. Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, is a complete surrender to His voice.

On the subject of change—especially as we are talking about such sweeping changes within the modern church—it must be noted that change does not happen overnight; otherwise this subject matter would not be such a big deal. But it is a very big deal! To that, Jim Collins adds, “Like the Wooden dynasty, lasting transformations from good to great follow a general pattern of buildup followed by breakthrough.”<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the process I articulate in this chapter is something that has been building in my life for years. I am certain there are a host of moderns who feel the same way that I feel. Please note that, like John Wooden and his run as basketball coach at U.C.L.A., my spiritual formation took place over many years. Further, the name of Collins’ book is *Good to Great*. I do not mean to infer in this chapter that the modern church is bad or that the Penal Substitution Model is bad. I simply propose

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>36</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Jim Collins, 2001), 172.



something better! The modern church has carried us for at least 200 years. Collins states, “People want to feel the excitement of being involved in something that flat out works.”<sup>37</sup> I argue that moderns who are obsessed with success should be eager to move to the Covenant Renewal Model given a measure of assurance that it works. This project is aimed at moderns who are willing to experience such an experience. Likewise, the Relational Holiness Model works nicely too; though that is not the climax of the journey in this chapter. The Relational Holiness Model for a modern is new, it is fresh, it is alive, and it is contagious! It begins with a renewal in Christ. Christian Schwarz, an expert on measuring church health, states, “The believers must first be gripped by a new devotion to Jesus.”<sup>38</sup> This new devotion to Christ must go beyond personal piety, in that there must be an identification with the early church leaders in Acts where they stood their ground and said, “for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). The Relational Holiness Model is interpersonal while the Penal Substitution Model is individualistic. The Relational Holiness Model is meant to be shared not as a set of propositions, but as a purposeful relationship with Jesus and others. Schwarz captures this mood by saying, “The quality characteristic ‘passionate spirituality’ demonstrates empirically the theological core of the matter in church growth; the life of faith as a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ.”<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (Boulder, CO: Jim Collins, 2005), 24.

<sup>38</sup> Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (St. Charles: ChurchSmart Resources, 2000), 107.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

It is crucial that the paradigm shift that I argue in this chapter be something that endures. To this end Collins writes, “The only way to remain great is to keep applying the fundamental principles that made you great.”<sup>40</sup> In the context of this chapter, the greatness I speak about is Jesus in me, in a new and fresh way. And that new and fresh way will immediately transfer to the lives of others. That is the heart of the Relational Holiness Model. I am in strong agreement with Larry Crabb in his book, *Connecting*, where he states, “It’s about time to go beneath the moralism that assumes the church’s job is done when it instructs people in biblical principles and then exhorts them to do right.”<sup>41</sup> Crabb has just articulated a characteristic of the Penal Substitution Model. Crabb is saying that enough is enough, and that it is time to move into the deeper truths of God, primarily a relationship with Him and with others. In this section, I have given you, the reader, insight into the deep change that is required to move from one model to the next. As in other portions of this project, much has been said about discernment as that is the claim I am arguing throughout this work. But to put discernment in context in conjunction with deep change, and in conjunction with the process to move from the Penal Substitution Model to the Covenant Renewal Model using the Relational Holiness Model as a bridge between the two, I turn your attention to several comments on discernment.

### **Discerning the Holy Spirit**

Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit is essential for the reader in this process of moving from one model to the next. Bruce Bishop states, “Learning to

---

<sup>40</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 108.

<sup>41</sup> Crabb, xvi.

apprehend the voice of God in our lives opens us up to God's leadings, as well as a deeper experience of God's presence. God is continually speaking to us, even if it is simply to whisper that we are loved."<sup>42</sup> He goes on to say, "In any experience of looking for God's leading, and especially when we are just beginning, we must always check our personal leadings with Scripture and the faith community—both historically and in the present."<sup>43</sup> For Bishop, the focus is on hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit as the foundation for discernment. Professor Conniry of George Fox Evangelical Seminary adds, "...and to underscore that fact that Christian community plays an essential role in almost every instance of discernment."<sup>44</sup> I believe Conniry means that Christian community, while not equal with discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, ought to be integrated into discernment to affirm what the Holy Spirit is saying. This is vital given the common statement by many who would say they have never heard the voice of God, and if they did, would not be able to know for sure if it was God speaking.

A further development on discernment would include the thoughts of Professor Paul Anderson, of George Fox University. "Indeed, spiritual revival and renewal only break out when space is created wherein to respond with spontaneity to the immediate promptings of the Holy Spirit."<sup>45</sup> Anderson, Conniry, and Bishop give us insight into the mystery from which the modern can move from one model to the

---

<sup>42</sup> Bishop, 18.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>44</sup> Charles J. Conniry, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Anderson, "The Meeting for Worship in Which Business Is Conducted: Quaker Decision Making Process as a Factor of Spiritual Discernment," 27.

next. Anderson concludes this portion on discernment by stating, “The question, therefore, is how to prepare ourselves to be in a position to be led by Christ—effectively and dynamically—when we are so fallen beings subject to error, sin and selfishness.”<sup>46</sup> Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, supported by community is a healthy process for deep change. This is the process I am challenging the reader to pursue.

The next portion of this chapter is dedicated to describing the Relational Holiness Model.

### **Relational Holiness Model**

Oord and Lodahl, co-authors of *Relational Holiness*, write the following: “The postmodern idea of a moment-by-moment existence provides the key to a contemporary Christian conception of life.”<sup>47</sup> This thought on Christian living is a partial framework of what relational holiness looks like. They go on to say, “We also want a truth for which we can live and die. Without it, life has no ultimate meaning. Without this truth, we have no purpose, no significant values, and no hope. We want a truth that gives us a reason to exist.”<sup>48</sup> This goes to the heart of the Relational Holiness Model. It shows the reader what it looks like to move from a position of propositional truths bound in legalism, to a living, breathing type of holiness that is relational and alive.

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Jay Oord and Michael Lodahl, *Relational Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 34.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 69.

In the book, *The Language of the Emerging Church*, the authors state, “Taken to the extreme, believing that can lead us into a false security, suggesting that as long as we hold to correct ‘beliefs,’ opinions, or doctrinal formulations, we’re in like Flynn, safe at home, and otherwise certifiably okay.”<sup>49</sup> They add, “You can believe something and not act on it. Authentic Christianity is a full faith, not thin beliefs.”<sup>50</sup> What I have stated thus far on books defining the Relational Holiness Model led me in my research to a person who has lived a life of relational holiness. Ron Post, founder of Northwest Medical Teams, is the epitome of the Relational Holiness Model I express in this chapter. Let me state, however, that while I argue for a move to the Covenant Renewal Model for the modern church, what Ron Post has accomplished reflects not only the Relational Holiness Model, but, in Ron’s life, the Covenant Renewal Model as well. With that said, the danger of helping others as an expression of loving God, is to get so caught up in caring for others that one forgets to develop the Covenant Renewal Model within his or her own heart. That is why I ask the reader to move all the way over to the Covenant Renewal Model.

Ron Post, in his book, *Created for Purpose*, states, “In forming this mission, I was seeking purpose in my life. I would find it by helping others. A life without purpose is empty...I was going to come face to face with my Jesus, who would look at me through the eyes of ‘the least of these’ (Matthew 25).”<sup>51</sup> Wow! Here is a man who has lived what I—and I trust my reader—want to experience in Jesus Christ.

---

<sup>49</sup> Jerry Haselmayer, Brian D. McLaren, and Leonard Sweet, *The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 43.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>51</sup> Post, 33.

Post reinforces these words with his comment, “The only gifts that God will accept are the deeds we have done for others.”<sup>52</sup> Post makes it abundantly clear that if I am attached to Christ then I am attached to others, especially those in need. This is the Relational Holiness Model.

Post develops the theme of purpose throughout his book. Indeed, he fleshes out the theme of purpose years before the Rick Warrens of this world. He helps us see what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Post states, “God speaks to us through our hearts, which is the core of our being. When our hearts are in God’s control, they are trustworthy. God showed me that by abiding in Him, I can discover the course He wants me to follow, and God’s way will always succeed.”<sup>53</sup> What Post is describing is discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is a powerful testimony to pass on to the modern church for consideration. It will move moderns from a position of defending the past, to a new and healthy future for the church.

Post summarizes his life and relational holiness by concluding in his book, “If heaven is my destination then I need to care for the same things God cares for. The most important thing to God beyond my relationship with Jesus Christ, are his people. Therefore he wants me to help care for them.”<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 58-9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 180.

### **Concluding Remarks on the Relational Holiness Model**

Moving from the Penal Substitution Model to the Relational Holiness Model is not burdensome or even risky; it is a joy. I am growing in my walk with Christ today at a rate that is deeper and better than anything I can recall in my life. As a modern, I am experiencing a very deep change in my spiritual formation. I am embracing—and am asking moderns to embrace with me—the words spoken in *The Language of the Emerging Church*, “Changing our name may be tempting, but it won’t help. We will need to change ourselves and decide what we believe a good Christian really is, and then seek by God’s grace, to actually become those kinds of people, thus rebuilding trust in our brand.”<sup>55</sup> I am arguing that a good Christian is one who is experiencing a renewed covenant with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Introduction to the Covenant Renewal Model**

A great starting point for the Covenant Renewal Model is found in Ezekiel 36: “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe my ordinances” (Ezekiel 36:26-27). This passage of scripture is the heart of the Covenant Renewal Model. While other models have merit, my research has led me to this model for moderns to embrace. Professor Anderson states on the subject of argumentation, “However, the soundness of an argument depends on the veracity of

---

<sup>55</sup> Leonard Sweet, 52-3.

the premises and the validity of its reasoning.”<sup>56</sup> The premise and the reasoning of the Covenant Renewal Model give it weight for the reader’s consideration.

Robert Greer says in his book, *Mapping Postmodernism*, “Because of its complicity with modernism, systematic theology—in both its liberal and conservative traditions—reduced our ability to hear the voice of God.”<sup>57</sup> I have included this quote to show the position moderns are in within the context of the models I am demonstrating in this chapter. Leonard Sweet adds, “Modernity was preoccupied with correct beliefs and believing, but only in a narrowly defined sense. For moderns, so enthralled with rational conceptual correctness, ‘believe’ was normally married to the conjunction ‘that,’ rather than the preposition ‘in.’”<sup>58</sup> Donald Miller would say, “Our ‘behavior’ will not be changed long with self-discipline, but fall in love and a human will accomplish what he never thought possible.”<sup>59</sup> This is precisely the point Professor Shelton makes in his argument for the Covenant Renewal Model. It is a model motivated and sustained by love.

Proper beliefs, according to the Covenant Renewal Model, are not enough to sustain it. This model is motivated by love. Miller points us in that trajectory by saying, “I think the most important thing that happens within Christianity is when a

---

<sup>56</sup> Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 103.

<sup>57</sup> Robert C. Greer, *Mapping Postmodernism, a Survey of Christian Options* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 20.

<sup>58</sup> Leonard Sweet, 42.

<sup>59</sup> Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 86.



person falls in love with Jesus.”<sup>60</sup> It is in this Covenant Renewal Model that breath is given to this newness of life in Jesus Christ. I concur with Crabb, in his book *Connecting*, “I want to move away from the pressure to live up to a set of prescribed standards, and I don’t want to keep trying to repair whatever damage our backgrounds may have caused.”<sup>61</sup>

Upon further development of discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit which is woven in the fabric of the Covenant Renewal Model, Anderson states, “If Christ is alive; he desires to lead his church. If Christ desires to lead his church, his will should be sought. If his will can be sought, it can be discerned; and if it can be discerned, it deserves to be obeyed. This is nothing more than the basic Christian life...”<sup>62</sup> The authors in *Relational Holiness* write, “When God is thought not capable of friendship, God is typically not considered relational.”<sup>63</sup> They continue, “This experience of divine love, in turn, is precisely what the Holy Spirit inspires within us.”<sup>64</sup> The one responsible for introducing me to the Covenant Renewal Model is Professor Shelton.

### **Dr. Larry Shelton and the Covenant Renewal Model**

Dr. Larry Shelton has written a book that serves as a tremendous help to the modern church. His audience certainly is not restricted to moderns; yet I as a modern grasped the concepts of his book and through his writing have been able to make a

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>61</sup> Crabb, xiv.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson, “The Meeting for Worship in Which Business Is Conducted: Quaker Decision Making Process as a Factor of Spiritual Discernment,” 45.

<sup>63</sup> Lodahl, 80.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 100.

needed paradigm shift from the Penal Substitution Model to the Covenant Renewal Model. I urge the modern reader not to miss the fresh signs of Shelton's research in his book, *Cross and Covenant*. I am committed to arguing for Shelton's position. In discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit I am led to the door of his work. Dr. Shelton writes, "The covenant community life of Israel derives from the overarching covenant relationship between God and the community, a relationship the church now shares."<sup>65</sup> Shelton adds, "However, the faithful are no longer motivated by duty or obligation, but by obedience to their inward knowledge of God—a knowledge which transforms the Law from an external standard that legislates moral action into an internal spiritual attitude of God's Law written upon their hearts."<sup>66</sup> Shelton articulates the move away from the Penal Substitution Model to the Covenant Renewal Model. Contrasting these two models he states, "Sin is not a thing to be removed, but a brokenness of self that must be recreated and healed through union with Christ in the resurrection."<sup>67</sup> In a further explanation, Shelton writes, "Further, since all sin is essentially relational, the means of overcoming the curse of sin must be personal and relational. The sacrifice for example, is an endeavor to remove the barrier between God and the person created by sin."<sup>68</sup>

On the subject of the Law, something even moderns are now dismissing in their theology, Shelton addresses a solution for where moderns find themselves,

---

<sup>65</sup> R. Larry Shelton, *Cross & Covenant, Interpreting the Atonement for 21st Century Mission* (Tyrone, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 42.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 41.

“Rather than the Law reflecting God’s directions for maintaining right covenant relationships within the community of faith, it became a system of penitential accounting tables of just and meritorious rewards and equivalent retributions and penalties.”<sup>69</sup> Moderns have lived under this framework for many years. Moderns have been obedient without having the relationship with God Shelton advocates. Shelton goes on to say, “While forensic theism sees the cross as a payment of penalty, creative love theism views it as the historical expression of God’s own suffering heart for humanity.”<sup>70</sup> Shelton gives to us the framework for the Covenant Renewal Model, and shows the reader the weakness in the Penal Substitution Model.

Shelton develops the heart of the Covenant Renewal Model by saying, “And the covenant is not just another legal contract that must inexorably drive home its legal sanction. It is personal.”<sup>71</sup> This is a definite move away from the business deal found in the Penal Substitution Model. Shelton develops the meaning of sacrifice within his model of covenant as well, “A sacrifice is not drudgery or penalty imposed because of God’s displeasure. It is a life-saving, life-giving opportunity and privilege to restore a living relationship with the God of creation.”<sup>72</sup> Moderns can begin to see the value of the Covenant Renewal Model over the other two discussed in this chapter.

I conclude this introduction to the Covenant Renewal Model by adding from Shelton in his own words: “Thus his sacrifice is far deeper and more personal than

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 31.

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

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 63.

simply settling accounts. The problem Christ confronts in his sacrifice is one of broken relationships that need healing, not simply a breach of contract that needs legal redress. His sacrifice is a passionate expression of his profound love for and identification with humanity.”<sup>73</sup> Having outlined the Covenant Renewal Model, I argue it is superior to other models moderns have embraced.

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Covenant Renewal Model**

The application of the Covenant Renewal Model must have as its life-giving source the Holy Spirit. Without a proper understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in the Covenant Renewal Model, Ezekiel 36:26 becomes unattainable. This model requires a Trinitarian approach. In my experience as a modern, it is easy to leave the Holy Spirit out of the picture. To this Greer states, “Hence, it is not enough to know the Word, one must also know the Spirit—for it is the Spirit who artistically paints and gives individual expression of the Word.”<sup>74</sup> Greer has stated the case rightly, in that, the Bible without the Holy Spirit is like the cross without Jesus! Moderns have put much emphasis on reading the Bible, rarely mentioning discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. This has been my experience. Moyer states in his book, *What They Had We Need*, “We need to avoid crazy things and, in order to do that, we must constantly read the Word, constantly pray for discernment and keep ourselves reasonable by using just plain old common sense.”<sup>75</sup> This is a problem in modern churches today. We have misplaced the Holy Spirit with common sense that isn’t very good sense.

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>74</sup> Greer, 209.

<sup>75</sup> Rodger Moyer, *What They Had We Need* (Salem: Schmul Publishing Co., 2005), 95.

Shelton captures this need in referencing Cranfield in the *Cross and Covenant*, “Cranfield points out that the Law is misused without the Spirit, for it remains only an external letter rendered ineffective by human sinfulness.”<sup>76</sup>

Karl Barth, on the Holy Spirit from his *Dogmatics in Outline*, states, “To have inner ears for the Word of Christ, to become thankful for His work and at the same time responsible for the message about Him, and, lastly, to take confidence in men for Christ’s sake—that is the freedom which we obtain, when Christ breathes on us, when He sends us His Holy Spirit.”<sup>77</sup> Barth captures the necessity of the Holy Spirit and the relationship to the Covenant Renewal Model.

### **The Role of Discernment in the Covenant Renewal Model**

On the subject of discernment, Bruce Bishop writes, “Hearing the voice is the process of spiritual discernment, and whether it is for personal growth, a personal decision, or a group decision, the process involves two movements: attentiveness and differentiation.”<sup>78</sup> Discernment is that part of the relationship with God that the modern church is struggling with today. The often-heard questions within the modern era provide evidence of this statement. “What is God’s will for my life?” Or, “I have never heard God speak directly to me.” So the modern church falls back on lists, propositions, and absolute truths to shore up what is lacking in discernment. It results in a business deal, a trademark of the Penal Substitution Model.

---

<sup>76</sup> Shelton, 89.

<sup>77</sup> Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: Macmillan Company, 1949), 139.

<sup>78</sup> Bishop, 18.

Conniry writes on the subject of discernment the following in *Quaker Religious Thought*: “My assignment is to consider Christian spiritual discernment, which I define as a distinguishable assortment of processes by which Christians attempt to perceive and understand ‘God’s way’ in the light of a particular set of circumstances.”<sup>79</sup> This definition of discernment certainly would include specifically discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, for the purposes of the Covenant Renewal Model. Bishop says, “Spiritual discernment is a spiritual gift given to some, and an art that can be developed by all.”<sup>80</sup> The modern has over the years neglected the development of discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit; defaulting to, as previously stated, a business deal with God. Christianity is easier that way.

While my targeted audience is moderns, postmoderns should find this model attractive as well. On the subject of discernment, in light of postmodernism, Greer states, “The Holy Spirit gives us the instruction and guidance we cannot give ourselves. In this respect, the Holy Spirit is the Yes to God’s Word. He not only speaks to us but also in us.”<sup>81</sup> This is a powerful truth for all Christians—both modern and postmodern—to embrace! The word to the postmodern church, emerging from the modern church would be, “What is needed, then, is a renewed awareness that the church’s continuity and coherence centers in the Word and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>82</sup>

For the modern church, the admonition is the same as that to the postmodern church, according to Grenz and Franke who wrote, *Beyond Foundationalism*: “The

---

<sup>79</sup> Charles J. Conniry, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Bishop, 24.

<sup>81</sup> Greer, 103.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 198.

goal of our reading the text, therefore is to hear the Spirit's voice forming us into that community."<sup>83</sup> The marvelous reality of the Covenant Renewal Model is that it works for both moderns and postmoderns.

### **Conclusions on the Covenant Renewal Model**

I am amazed at how far from God the modern church is. Barth stated, "When we speak of the Holy Spirit, we have to do with the men who belong to Jesus Christ in the special way that they have the freedom to recognize His Word, His work, His message in a definite way and also to hope on their part the best for all men."<sup>84</sup> It is with this understanding that we rediscover that God has been looking for us ever since that day He was walking in the Garden and called out to Adam, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). I believe that has been the central question God has been asking the modern church. As a modern, I am hearing His voice. Are you the reader hearing His voice?

Anderson says, "First, the Johannine witness comes to us explicitly from the perspective of post-resurrection consciousness. Several times the point is made that the disciples did not 'understand' the action or words of Jesus at the time, but later after the resurrection, they understood it fully what he was getting at (Jn 2.22;12.16)."<sup>85</sup> Leonard Sweet, in *Summoned to Lead*, tells this story: "A professor at a ripe old age was still studying, reading, and learning as if he were a first-year student. In response to someone's 'Why?' he responded, 'I would rather my students

---

<sup>83</sup> John R. Franke and Stanley J. Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism, Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 91.

<sup>84</sup> Barth, 138.

<sup>85</sup> Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, 59.

drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool.”<sup>86</sup> Sweet would add, “Faith is the art of hearing the invisible. Hope is the art of believing the invisible. Love is the art of trusting the invisible.”<sup>87</sup> The Covenant Renewal Model captures all three: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of the three is love! Jesus proclaims in John’s Gospel, “You are My friends, if you do what I command you” (John 15:14). Jesus summarizes the Covenant Renewal Model better than all of us put together and boils it down to a single word: *friend*. This is the journey I invite the modern church to experience.

---

<sup>86</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 129.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.



**CHAPTER 5**  
**DISCERNING THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GUIDED BY**  
**SCRIPTURE:**  
**THE WRITINGS OF RANDY ALCORN**

It is imperative that, in making my claim, I avoid moving away from the foundation of discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. Scripture is the foundation upon which discernment from the Holy Spirit rests. My claim leaves little room for discernment outside of Scripture. There are two extremes: one is to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit without any Scripture at all, and the second is to read Scripture as the voice of the Holy Spirit with no sense of need for Spirit-guided discernment. Randy Alcorn is an award-winning author who demonstrates a balance between these two extremes. Alcorn is a model moderns can embrace with confidence, supporting my claim that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit must be guided by Scripture.

I as a modern have had little training or teaching on subjects dealing with money, heaven, grace, purity, and rewards. In my formal training these subjects were overlooked. In my pastoral ministry I had reduced them to propositional truths that were less than appealing. But Alcorn brings an eternal perspective that makes discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, come alive on these subjects! Using his writing on money, heaven, grace, purity, and rewards, I will demonstrate how the reader can learn to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, from an eternal perspective.

The truths Alcorn writes about from Scripture have always been there for the reader to glean; what has been missing is discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit within Scripture.

### **Alcorn on Scripture**

In his bestselling book *Heaven*, Alcorn writes,

Another reason people assume Heaven is boring is that their Christian lives are boring. That's not God's fault; it's their own. God calls us to follow him in an adventure that should put us on life's edge. He's infinite in creativity, goodness, beauty, and power. If we're experiencing the invigorating stirrings of God's Spirit, trusting him to fill our lives with divine appointments, experiencing the childlike delights of his gracious daily kindnesses, then we'll know that God is exciting and Heaven is exhilarating. People who love God crave his companionship.<sup>1</sup>

Alcorn writes, "The information Scripture provides us about the world to come is substantial, with enough detail to help us envision it, but not so much to make us think we can fully comprehend it."<sup>2</sup> He adds, "Scripture does not leave us in the dark about our resurrection bodies."<sup>3</sup> Throughout this chapter I will delineate Alcorn's use of Scripture to articulate his understanding of money, heaven, grace, purity, and rewards. These are subjects that have made him widely known because he has combined discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit with discerning Scripture. Luke Timothy Johnson, in his work *Scripture and Discernment*, writes, "The Word of God in Scripture, therefore, is an essential aspect of the church's discernment in decision

---

<sup>1</sup> Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2004), 395.

<sup>2</sup> Randy Alcorn, *In Light of Eternity* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 114.

making.”<sup>4</sup> The church, if it is to be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, must incorporate discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit with Scripture as its guide.

Alcorn sees continuity between life on earth and life in heaven when he reads Scripture. “We must teach ourselves to embrace the principle of continuity of people and the earth in the coming resurrection that Scripture teaches.”<sup>5</sup> In the book, *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, Mass and O'Donnell write, “Already referred to in I John 4:1-3 in an inchoate way, the practice of spiritual discernment was developed by later theologians with the sophistication that came with experience.”<sup>6</sup> Randy Alcorn is a contemporary theologian from whose experience we can learn from in discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture.

On the importance of the spiritual heritage we leave our children, Alcorn writes, “Our greatest legacy to our children is to help them develop their inner lives, their spiritual selves, and their hearts for God.”<sup>7</sup> Alcorn writes in his book, *The Law of Rewards*, “Conversion and the filling of the Holy Spirit are supernatural experiences that produce supernatural responses-whether in the first century or the twenty-first.”<sup>8</sup> He also writes in his book *The Purity Principle*, “...but if you act supernaturally, drawing on the power of the indwelling Christ, you'll enjoy great

---

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 131.

<sup>6</sup> Robin Mass & Gabriel O'Donnell, *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 26-27.

<sup>7</sup> Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2003), 405.

<sup>8</sup> Randy Alcorn, *The Law of Rewards* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2003), 5.

personal benefits, now and later.”<sup>9</sup> This is how Randy Alcorn thinks, and how he combines his theological understanding with Scripture. His mind is always working from an eternal perspective. He writes in *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, “To escape the gravity of materialism we desperately need to redirect our minds toward heaven.”<sup>10</sup> Yet, Alcorn always moves between an eternal perspective and the Scripture which guides his theology. He writes in *50 Days of Heaven*, “But a biblical perspective corrected our natural misperceptions.”<sup>11</sup> Maas and O’Donnell support Alcorn’s position, “Only the Word communicates the Spirit.”<sup>12</sup>

Specifically on the Holy Spirit, Randy Alcorn writes from his book, *The Purity Principle*, “Your sanctified mind, fed on God’s Word, nourished by His Spirit, polices your thought life. It says yes to what pleases Christ and no to what doesn’t.”<sup>13</sup> Alcorn further writes in *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, “Meanwhile, the voice of God—unheard amid the clamor of our possessions—is telling us that even if materialism did bring happiness in this life, which it clearly does not, it would leave us woefully unprepared for the next.”<sup>14</sup> Alcorn moves fluidly between discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit and articulating Scripture, always with an eternal perspective in mind. It is as though Alcorn has an ear in Scripture and an ear in heaven. On the subject of reflective listening, Peter Scazzero in his book, *The Emotionally Healthy*

---

<sup>9</sup> Randy Alcorn, *The Purity Principle* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 160.

<sup>11</sup> Randy Alcorn, *50 Days of Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2006), 250.

<sup>12</sup> O’Donnell, 152.

<sup>13</sup> Alcorn, *The Purity Principle*, 45.

<sup>14</sup> Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 39.

*Church*, writes, “When you are the listener... 1. Put your own agenda on hold.”<sup>15</sup> This is an important part of Alcorn’s ability to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit. Alcorn writes, “I didn’t begin with a vivid imagination of Heaven—exactly the opposite. I studied the Scriptures about Heaven. Only over the years, over the decades, did they infuse my imagination.”<sup>16</sup> Edwin H. Friedman writes, in *Friedman’s Fables*, “Communication does not depend on syntax, or eloquence, or rhetoric, or articulation but on the emotional context in which the message is being heard.”<sup>17</sup>

I would argue that Randy Alcorn is emotionally engaged in his relationship with Jesus Christ. This emotional engagement has helped him to see things in Scripture few have seen. Alcorn’s high view of Scripture enables him to better hear and discern the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is reflected in his writing on many different subjects. He is highly sought after for his insights into such subjects as money and heaven. The remainder of this chapter includes a sampling of Alcorn’s approach towards subjects, based on Scripture that require discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.

### **Alcorn on Grace and Truth**

Alcorn in 2003 wrote a valuable book for the Christian community, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*. In this book he discusses exactly this: the apparent paradox between grace and truth. However, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, Alcorn shows that grace and truth are a marriage rather than a

---

<sup>15</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 182.

<sup>16</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 369.

<sup>17</sup> Edwin H. Friedman, *Friedman’s Fables* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1990), 5.

paradox. He writes, “The Christian life is not based on avoiding the truth but on hearing and submitting to it. The greatest kindness we can offer each other is the truth.”<sup>18</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book, *Life Together*, says it another way: “We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God.”<sup>19</sup> Yielding to the truths of God’s word may be as simple as allowing God to interrupt our preconceived ideals.

Specifically on the relationship between grace and truth, Alcorn writes, “The grace and truth paradox is a paradigm—a way of looking at life. People need the directions of truth to know where to go. Then they need the empowerment of grace to help them get there.”<sup>20</sup> Alcorn discerns grace and truth as inseparable. Alcorn relates this to behavior. “Our job is not simply to help each other feel good, but to help each other be good.”<sup>21</sup> In relationship to a modern’s tendency to fall back on propositional truths, Alcorn adds, “Anytime we talk more about dos and don’ts than about Jesus, something’s wrong.”<sup>22</sup> Rick Warren puts it this way, “The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make us like the Son of God.”<sup>23</sup>

In relationship to the church, grace, and truth, Alcorn writes, “The only ‘church growth formula’ the early church possessed was the body of truth flowing with the blood of grace. They drew thousands to Jesus by being like Jesus.”<sup>24</sup> This is

---

<sup>18</sup> Randy Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 73.

<sup>19</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 99.

<sup>20</sup> Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, 92.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>23</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 186.

<sup>24</sup> Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, 13.

how Randy Alcorn sees grace and truth working together. I argue that this unique approach comes from the ability to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit when guided by Scripture. Randy Alcorn adds the dimension of an eternal perspective as well.

### **Alcorn on Purity**

In 2003 Alcorn released a book on spiritual and sexual purity called, *The Purity Principle*. While there is much he has to say on this subject, my purpose in this chapter is to show the relationship between his view of Scripture on this subject and the ability he has to come to the conclusions that he does because he discerns the voice of the Holy Spirit.

On the subject of purity and being a Christian, Alcorn writes, “I cannot emphasize enough the importance of drawing on the indwelling power of the risen Christ. Self-reformation is not enough. It may bring limited benefits but lead to self-righteousness. The Christian life is more than sin management. It’s divine transformation and enabling to love righteously.”<sup>25</sup> This is a very powerful statement that serves this chapter well. Alcorn, on why we do not draw on the indwelling power of the risen Christ, says, “Busyness wears down our ability to hear the promptings of God’s Spirit, His Word, and His people.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Alcorn is on to one of the principle reasons Christians fail to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, with or without Scripture: We are just too busy to care.

---

<sup>25</sup> Alcorn, *The Purity Principle*, 56.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 56.

Specifically on the subject of sexual purity, Alcorn states, “I must choose between sexual fantasies and intimacy with God.”<sup>27</sup> For Alcorn, his ability to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit includes heeding God’s will about his sexual purity. Is it possible Christians have gone deaf to the voice of the Holy Spirit over this very issue? Alcorn takes it further; for him it is an issue of intimacy with God. Related to sexual purity is the issue of lust, to which Randy writes, “We are creatures of habit—God’s Spirit can empower us to form new habits.”<sup>28</sup> Rick Warren put it a similar way: “The battle for sin is won or lost in your mind.”<sup>29</sup>

Alcorn models the use of Scripture, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, while maintaining an eternal perspective. We will see in the remaining pages of this chapter a further development of the role Alcorn’s eternal perspective plays in his unique views.

### **Alcorn on Rewards**

This is a controversial subject in the church because moderns have been taught that rewards are evil. That would explain why I was never in my life taught on the subject of being judged by my deeds when I got to heaven. Perhaps it was because there was a fear of a deeds-based perception of salvation. Whatever the reason, I was never introduced to the subject of rewards and deeds until reading Randy Alcorn. I argue his use of Scripture on this subject and his ability to discern the voice of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>29</sup> Warren, 210.



Holy Spirit, guided by such Scriptures, will open up the reader's heart to a deepening desire to listen to the voice of God.

Randy Alcorn tells a marvelous story of how God moved him from pastoring to writing fulltime. He writes in *The Law of Rewards*, "In 1990 I was a pastor and on the board of a pregnancy resource center. After searching the Scriptures and praying, I began participating in nonviolent rescues at abortion clinics. I was arrested several times and went to jail for a couple of days. An abortion clinic subsequently won a court judgment against me and others."<sup>30</sup> This is only part of the story. And while Alcorn would love for me to highlight his views on pro-life, martyrdom, missions, and other subjects dear to his heart, but these are not the thrust of this chapter. The thrust of this chapter is to show evidence for the need for a strong view of Scripture when discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Alcorn writes about life itself, setting the stage for a development of rewards. "It's all about perspective. The believer's view of reality should be radically different than the non-believers. We should live differently because we see differently."<sup>31</sup> What is beautiful about Alcorn is that his views bring healing to the soul. His approach to Scripture is not discouraging, but rather, encouraging. Archibald Hart in his book, *Coping with Depression*, writes, "By understanding and developing our values, we build resistance to depression."<sup>32</sup> I argue that Alcorn, with his approach, builds up the whole person. By following the thought process of Alcorn, not only

---

<sup>30</sup> Alcorn, *The Law of Rewards*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>32</sup> Archibald D. Hart, *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions* (Dallas, London, Sydney, Singapore: Word Publishing, 1984), 153.

does the reader gain insight into Scripture and hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, but healing comes to the soul as well. Lewis Smedes, in his book, *Shame and Grace*, writes, “People who cannot believe that only God has the whole world in his hands are candidates for shame they do not deserve.”<sup>33</sup> Alcorn’s unique eternal perspective towards Scripture not only opens the door in hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, but through this avenue provides wholeness to the individual. The church is plagued with depression, shame, guilt, fear, and unworthiness. Randy Alcorn’s approach is a model for the church to follow that will bring wellness and wholeness to the soul.

Alcorn lists in his book, *The Law of Rewards*, eight rewards he has found in Scripture. These eight rewards shape Alcorn’s life and theology and are worthy of the reader’s consideration. Alcorn arrived at these conclusions precisely by discerning the Spirit as he read the Scriptures. “Reward Principle #1: Giving brings greater blessing than receiving.”<sup>34</sup> “Reward Principle #2: When we invest money now in God’s kingdom, we will receive great rewards later in heaven.”<sup>35</sup> “Reward Principle #3: God offers us rewards that are eternal, imperishable, and inexhaustible.”<sup>36</sup> “Reward Principle #4: When we see our lives through the lens of eternity, our attitude toward wealth will change drastically.”<sup>37</sup> “Reward Principle #5: Obeying God is not only right, it’s smart. It will always pay off in the end.”<sup>38</sup> “Reward Principle #6: We will

---

<sup>33</sup> Lewis B. Smedes, *Shame and Grace* (San Francisco: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 19.

<sup>34</sup> Alcorn, *The Law of Rewards*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

have differing levels of reward in heaven, depending on our actions and choices on earth.”<sup>39</sup> I would suggest to the reader this is a huge incentive for discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. “Reward Principle #7: Desiring rewards is a proper motivation for serving Christ.”<sup>40</sup> “Reward Principle #8: We are not to be motivated primarily by earthly power, possessions, and pleasures, yet we are offered all three in heaven if we invest now in God’s kingdom.”<sup>41</sup> You will find these eight principles woven through all Alcorn’s writings. He believes in them very deeply for two reasons: one, because he found them in Scripture, and two, because the Holy Spirit has revealed them to him in his heart and mind. It is through discernment that Randy Alcorn builds his convictions in life.

Alcorn also writes about crowns as rewards. He lists them in his book, *The Law of Rewards*, with detailed references in Scripture to support his claims. He writes, “Crowns as Rewards: 1. The crown of life. 2. The incorruptible crown. 3. The crown of rejoicing. 4. The crown of glory. 5. The crown of righteousness.”<sup>42</sup> Alcorn sees rewards as gifts from God. It is one way God will express his love for us in heaven. The church over the years has vilified rewards. Randy Alcorn puts them within the framework of an eternal perspective. Gerald May, in his work, *Addiction and Grace*, writes, “The course of our lives is precisely as Saint Augustine indicated: our hearts will never rest, nor are they meant to rest, until they rest in God.”<sup>43</sup> May

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>43</sup> Gerald G. May, *Addiction and Grace* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988), 180.

understands our need to find ultimate rest in God and with God. Randy Alcorn moves us in this direction with his ability to discern the Spirit as he reads Scripture.

The remaining two sections are Alcorn's featured works that give the reader an even clearer path to discerning the voice of the Spirit when using Scripture.

### **Alcorn on Money**

Randy Alcorn takes the conversation of money far beyond where the modern church has taken it. I grew up with giving defined as my tithe and my offering. My offering included giving to missionaries. That was the extent of what I was taught on the subject of money. But Alcorn turns the church upside-down with his writing on the subject. Moderns have the same Bible as Alcorn. What did he see that few others saw? Alcorn discerned the voice of the Holy Spirit as he studied his Bible. I have studied extensively the non-fiction writings of Randy Alcorn and am discovering his method of discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. I encourage the reader to learn from Alcorn. The insights shared by Randy Alcorn on money come from hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit as he studied the Scriptures. His writing appears revolutionary, and at times, radical. That is because it did not come from Alcorn, it came from God. That is the point I am making in this chapter: Alcorn is a model for the modern church to follow because his model leads us by discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, Alcorn writes, "Because of the spiritual warfare that surrounds this great subject of money and possessions, if this book is to

be read with eternal benefit, it must be read with prayer.”<sup>44</sup> Because of the strong attachment to the things of earth, Alcorn recognizes the necessity for divine intervention when talking about money. Gerald May in his book, *Addiction and Grace*, adds, “I am certain that no one, no matter how holy is ever completely freed from attachment in this life.”<sup>45</sup> Alcorn attempts to move the reader beyond a compromise with the things of this world, in spite of the strong pull that it has. He uses Scripture to support his reasons for such behavior.

Alcorn takes on the critics—and the modern church—when he states, “Isn’t the truth simply that we’re far more comfortable with the world’s teaching about money and possessions than with Christ’s? Are we really so far removed from the New Testament discipleship that what was once elementary to any true Christian is now foreign to us?”<sup>46</sup> This cuts to the core of the modern church. Mass and O’Donnell state, “Our senses are bombarded with sounds that deafen the heart and the mind. Paradoxically, because of this excessive stimulation, we have difficulty hearing the hearts of others and the Spirit of God.”<sup>47</sup> You get the sense that Alcorn is on to something here in that money may well be one of the noises that is keeping people from hearing the Spirit of God. Alcorn says, “Shouldn’t we just admit the obvious—that the New Testament call to discipleship, compassion, and giving leaves no room for the way many of us are thinking and living?”<sup>48</sup> One of the things I love about

---

<sup>44</sup> Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, xv.

<sup>45</sup> May, 145.

<sup>46</sup> Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 418.

<sup>47</sup> O’Donnell, 74.

<sup>48</sup> Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 419.

Randy Alcorn is that he is not afraid to say hard things; he doesn't worry about what others think. That makes him a trustworthy author.

One of the basic premises that Randy Alcorn lives by on the subject of money—which is also laced throughout his writing—is the statement, “Storing up earthly treasures isn't simply wrong. It's just plain stupid.”<sup>49</sup> I love it! It is highly possible that Randy Alcorn uses the word *stupid* more than most Christian authors. But he is right! Tim Stafford observes of Alcorn in an article in *Christianity Today*, “Studying scripture impressed on him the importance God placed on generosity.”<sup>50</sup> Again and again, I and others observe the strong impact Scripture makes on the spiritual formation of Randy Alcorn.

Another famous phrase that Alcorn uses in a number of his books, articles, and lectures is, “Five minutes after we die, we'll know exactly how we should have lived. But God has given us His Word so we don't have to wait to die to find out.”<sup>51</sup> Again, there is a strong emphasis on knowing the will of God as one knows the Word of God. In an article Alcorn wrote on materialism and possessions he says, “Materialism can only be corrected by a different view of God. This in turn can only come from a belief in and study of the Scriptures, which tell us about God, and which alone give us the context to truly understand the critical God-related subjects of man, money, and possessions.”<sup>52</sup> Alcorn teaches that money affects us in every area of life. He would not argue against materialism because it is wrong, but because it is stupid.

---

<sup>49</sup> Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001), 13.

<sup>50</sup> Tim Stafford, “The Pastor without a Paycheck,” *Christianity Today*, April 2003, 92.

<sup>51</sup> Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, 79.

<sup>52</sup> Randy Alcorn, “Materialism, Man and Morality,” in *Eternal Perspective Ministries* (2006),

In releasing material possessions we have less stress in our lives. We have less to worry about, less to take care of, and more time for the things of God. On the subject of stress related to materialism and busy lifestyles, Dr. Archibald Hart, author of *Adrenaline and Stress*, writes, “You see, the human body is designed for camel travel, but we keep driving it as if it were a supersonic jet.”<sup>53</sup> Richard Foster also writes about possessions and the need for less, not more. In his book, *Celebration of Discipline*,<sup>54</sup> Foster has some great things to say on the subject of simplicity. When we decide to move towards discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, all areas of our lives begin to become whole and renewed. Alcorn has learned the secret that many moderns have not been willing to acknowledge: the correlation between possessions and stress. We have much for which to thank Randy Alcorn.

Alcorn is famous for coupling money and eternity. It is a theme that he often repeats. He states, “Why do these concepts seem foreign to us? Perhaps because we’ve become so preoccupied with our life here that we never stop to think about life in heaven.”<sup>55</sup> He adds, “But when we live with eternity in view, we’ll do many things differently, and those we do the same will be done with transformed perspective—not only teaching and preaching, and witnessing, but also washing dishes and pruning trees and repairing carburetors.”<sup>56</sup> You begin to see that for Alcorn, discerning the

---

<sup>53</sup> Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *Adrenaline and Stress* (Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing, 1995), 40.

<sup>54</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 20th anniversary ed., (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

<sup>55</sup> Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 144.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

voice of Spirit, guided by Scripture, is not for the purpose of developing a belief system; it is for the purpose of living a life pleasing to God! That is why Alcorn states, “The principle is timeless: There is a powerful relationship between our true spiritual condition and our attitude and actions concerning money and possessions.”<sup>57</sup>

It is not Alcorn’s desire to make us all like him. Rather, it appears it is his desire to make us all like Jesus! Alcorn states, “We all have our own call from God.”<sup>58</sup> Please catch the spirit in which Alcorn writes. “I must quickly add that for me the process of discovering God’s will about money and possessions has been exciting and liberating.”<sup>59</sup> Alcorn does not advocate a system, methodology, or even a process. His ability to discern the voice of the Spirit with a strong emphasis on Scripture comes from a hunger to know intimacy with God. It is out of this relationship with God Alcorn moves and exists. There is no letter of the law in Alcorn; rather his writings are filled to overflowing with the spirit of Jesus Christ and the precious Scriptures.

Randy Alcorn sums up his beliefs on money with six principles that he has written about in, *The Treasure Principle*. Those six principles are: “Treasure Principle Key #1: God owns everything. I’m His money manager.”<sup>60</sup> “Treasure Principle Key #2: My heart always goes where I put God’s money.”<sup>61</sup> “Treasure

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>60</sup> Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, 23.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 41.



Principle Key #3: Heaven, not earth, is my home.”<sup>62</sup> “Treasure Principle Key #4: I should live not for the dot but for the line.”<sup>63</sup> (The illustration used in Alcorn’s book on this principle is priceless. It is a small dot on a line that has no end. In the book, of course it has an end. Nonetheless, it represents the continuum of eternity. Alcorn teaches that to live for the dot—which is our very short life on earth—is foolish in comparison to the line, the eternity that has already begun for each one of us. This is a profound truth. I believe this is yet another evidence of what happens when the truths of God’s word are joined with discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.) “Treasure Principle Key #5: Giving is the only antidote to materialism.”<sup>64</sup> “Treasure Principle Key #6: God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving.”<sup>65</sup>

This section on money and possessions is not the normative in modern thought. Alcorn goes against the flow. But because Christ went against the flow, because Alcorn uses massive amounts of Scripture to support his claims, and because he is discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, I would argue that Randy Alcorn is a model worth consideration.

I have saved Alcorn’s best material for the last section of this chapter. Growing up in the church I heard that when I died as a Christian I would go to heaven. Once in a great while I heard that heaven is a great place. My view of heaven included boring church services, floating on clouds, walking on a lot of gold, and

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 73.

living in a big mansion with nothing to do. And worse yet, it would last forever! On the other hand, it beat the alternative: suffering forever in hell! Consequently, I lived most of my life in fear of hell with a dull appreciation for heaven. Worse yet, my seminary training never even addressed the subject of heaven. In 2003 I was introduced to the person and writing of Randy Alcorn through a set of unusual circumstances. As a modern, I had no idea of the world that was about to unfold before me. My final section on Randy Alcorn focuses on his specialty: heaven.

### **Alcorn on Heaven**

The centerpiece of Alcorn's writing is his material on heaven. Few, if any, contemporary authors have captured the essence of what Scripture teaches on heaven like Randy Alcorn. I argue that his unique, often ground-breaking insights have come from discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit with a strong emphasis upon accepting Scripture where it is plainly descriptive and must be interpreted literally. I could write volumes on Alcorn's books on heaven as I have read each of them over and over. I have been frustrated with myself in that I did not see what he saw. I am indebted to this man for showing me the way to view Scripture with an eternal perspective. Now, the Scriptures appear in bright neon when I read on the subject of heaven. This portion of the chapter is intended to show evidences of Alcorn's discerning ear for what the Bible teaches on the subject of heaven. I am only scratching the surface of what Alcorn has written. I strongly urge the reader to read from my bibliography of Alcorn's books.

I had never heard or read with such great detail on heaven prior to an introduction to Randy Alcorn. I had never heard heaven preached with such detail

until reading Alcorn. I had never personally perceived Scripture the way Alcorn sees Scripture. His insights on heaven are evidence that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, when guided by Scripture, will lead to illumination straight from the heart of God.

Alcorn writes, *In Light of Eternity*, “Living in light of eternity means being prepared for the day of your death.”<sup>66</sup> Alcorn is the first author I have read who puts death in perspective for the Christian. He is the first author I have read who helps the reader understand that death is but a transition, not an end.

In an article he writes, “If you lack a passion for heaven, I can almost guarantee it’s because you have a weak, deficient, and distorted theology of heaven...A robust accurate, and biblically-energized view of heaven will bring a new spiritual passion to your life.”<sup>67</sup>

A central verse becomes a theme Alcorn carries throughout his writing on heaven. It comes from Revelation 13:6. Randy sums it up with this statement, “Our enemy slanders three things: God’s person, God’s people, and God’s place—heaven.”<sup>68</sup> Alcorn exposes three lies Satan has held over most Christians. First, Satan wants us to have an incorrect view of God. Second, with an incorrect view of God we are certain to have an incorrect view of heaven. And third, we fail to understand that Satan hates Christians because we get to live where Satan was kicked out: heaven. These are the three primary lies of Satan from whence all other lies exist. Alcorn

---

<sup>66</sup> Alcorn, *In Light of Eternity*, 150.

<sup>67</sup> Randy Alcorn, "Overcoming the Myths About Heaven," in *Eternal Perspective Ministries* (1999), 3.

<sup>68</sup> Alcorn, *In Light of Eternity*, 2.

writes, “We have the very answers the world cries out for, yet our wrong views of God’s person and God’s place silence and distort our message.”<sup>69</sup> Alcorn puts it another way, “Our passion for God and our passion for heaven should be inseparable. The more I learn about God, the more excited I get about heaven. The more I learn about heaven, the more excited I get about God.”<sup>70</sup>

Alcorn painstakingly walks his readers through the Scriptures, showing them how marvelous heaven is going to be. He continually brings his focus back to God and the place God dwells: heaven. Alcorn writes, “We may imagine we want a thousand different things, but God is the one we really long for. His presence brings satisfaction; his absence brings thirst and longing. Our longing for Heaven is a longing for God—a longing that involves not only our inner beings, but our bodies as well.”<sup>71</sup> In this statement, Randy Alcorn gives tremendous support to Dr. Shelton’s Covenant Renewal Model. You will discover there is a strong connection between Alcorn’s views on heaven and Professor Shelton’s views on covenant theology. It is further evidence of the modern’s need to shift from God as a business deal to God in relationship.

Alcorn does a marvelous job of showing the correlation between sin and heaven. He states, “When I meditate on Jesus and my future in Heaven, sin is unappealing. It’s when my mind drifts from that person and that place that sin seems attractive.”<sup>72</sup> Alcorn draws a chord between our view of heaven and the impact it will

---

<sup>69</sup> Alcorn, “Overcoming the Myths About Heaven,” 2.

<sup>70</sup> Alcorn, *In Light of Eternity*, 5.

<sup>71</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 165.

<sup>72</sup> Alcorn, *50 Days of Heaven*, 269.

have on our earthly behavior. He goes on to say, “Thinking that Heaven leads inevitably to pursuing holiness. Our high tolerance for sin testifies to our failure to prepare for heaven.”<sup>73</sup> In other words, Alcorn advocates that if we can make a paradigm shift in our thinking towards the things of heaven, it will have a dramatic impact on our behavior on earth. On this Alcorn states, “God’s plan is that there will be no more gulf between the spiritual and physical needs.”<sup>74</sup> This, too, is supported using the Covenant Renewal Model I defined in chapter four. Alcorn’s use of Scripture and Dr. Shelton’s use of covenant renewal bring the modern Christian to a unified conclusion: My relationship with God has a direct impact on my sin, my Christianity, and my future for all of eternity!

Alcorn excites his readers with the possibilities that exist once we get to heaven. He has strong themes on continuity and connection. Alcorn uses multiple Scriptures to show there is continuity between what we do on earth and our life once in heaven. Further, Alcorn shows the many connections that exist from this life to the next. He discerned these truths from the Holy Spirit as he studied the Scriptures. He writes, “Since none of us learns everything on earth that God would desire us to, rather than abandon the lessons he wanted to teach us, he might allow us once in heaven to review our lives on earth and this time learn everything he intended.”<sup>75</sup> Alcorn discerns possibilities that many Christians have never considered. After reading his views, rereading Scripture becomes very adventuresome and exhilarating.

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>74</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 101.

<sup>75</sup> Randy Alcorn, “Rethinking Our Beliefs About Heaven,” in *Eternal Perspective Ministries* (2006), 3.

Alcorn also speaks about those who have gone before us in heaven. He adds, "Since God is continuously at work on earth, observing saints would have a great deal to praise him for, including people's spiritual transformations (Luke 15:7, 10)."<sup>76</sup> Alcorn believes the Scriptures teach the connection and the continuity between those who are in heaven being permitted to see some of what we experience and our lives on earth before God.

Alcorn is a strong advocate for the Scriptures being often times literal. He speaks strongly against allegorizing passages on heaven. Alcorn often times will distinguish between what is symbolic, allegorical, and figurative against that which is literal. Alcorn believes strongly in preserving the text as written and not allowing theologians to explain texts on eternity with allegorical explanations. On this point he writes, "That we'll forever enjoy a resurrected life on a New Earth isn't true because we want it to be. It's true because God says it is. Paying attention to context and taking other scriptures into account, we need to draw God's truth from the text, not superimpose our preconceived ideas into it."<sup>77</sup> Alcorn writes, "No wonder Satan doesn't want us to learn the truth about Heaven. If we fall in love with the place and look forward to the future that God has for us, we'll fall more in love with God, and we'll be emboldened to follow him with greater resolve and perspective."<sup>78</sup> Alcorn, then, through his use of Scripture with an emphasis on heaven, helps the reader to

---

<sup>76</sup> Randy Alcorn, "Awareness in Heaven of Events on Earth?" in *Eternal Perspective Ministries* (2006), 2.

<sup>77</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 476.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

find ways to move from penal substitution to covenant renewal. His method comes as he discerns the voice of the Holy Spirit when guided by Scripture.

Alcorn believes, “We need a generation of heavenly minded people who see human beings and the earth itself not simply as they are, but as God intends them to be.”<sup>79</sup> Alcorn firmly believes that having an eternal perspective will make Christians more effective in this life, not less effective. Alcorn writes, “Every thought of Heaven should move our hearts toward God, just as every thought of God will move our hearts toward Heaven.”<sup>80</sup> Alcorn experiences the Covenant Renewal Model through his lens of eternity. It is a powerful way for moderns to transition from penal thinking to renewal thinking. It is the difference between knowing I am not going to hell, and experiencing God today as I will experience him in heaven.

I began this section with a statement Alcorn makes about death. Friedman in his book, *Generation to Generation*, states, “Death is the single most important event in family life.”<sup>81</sup> I believe Friedman is right. One way to work through the grieving process is to understand death as Alcorn understands death from Scripture. He writes, “Five minutes after we die, we’ll know exactly how we should have lived. We’ll know how we should had given, prayed, shared our faith, meditated on scripture.”<sup>82</sup> Friedman would reply, “A Family perspective because it is organic in space and

---

<sup>79</sup> Alcorn, *50 Days of Heaven*, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>81</sup> Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation* (New York, London: The Guilford Press, 1985), 168.

<sup>82</sup> Alcorn, *50 Days of Heaven*, 256.

multigenerational in time, helps keep that living, eternal focus on death clear.”<sup>83</sup> To which Alcorn would respond, “We will experience continuity between our current lives and our resurrected lives, with the same memories and relational histories.”<sup>84</sup> The two are saying the same thing, giving support to one another on the subject of death. Alcorn continually comes back to Scripture as the foundation for relevancy of life. It is through his discerning of the Spirit that he is able to put life in an eternal perspective, especially on the subject of death.

On the subject of our relationship with God Alcorn writes, “There will be process in heaven, a continual progression of stimulating discoveries and fresh learning, as we keep grasping more of God.”<sup>85</sup> Alcorn would be misunderstood if the reader were to think all he really cares about is heaven. It is actually quite the opposite. Alcorn recognizes that grasping more of God while on earth will also enable us to grasp that which is to come in our life when in heaven. This is supported by a comment made in Alcorn’s book, *In Light of Eternity*: “The Bible tells us that while men may not remember or care what our lives here have been; God remembers perfectly and cares very much—so much that the door of eternity swings on the hinges of choices made here and now.”<sup>86</sup> So Alcorn is a very strong advocate for a strong relationship with God while on earth. Many moderns have understood Christianity to mean the goal is to “get saved” and then wait until one dies and goes to heaven for the party to begin. Alcorn would argue against such thinking. For

---

<sup>83</sup> Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, 171.

<sup>84</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 117.

<sup>85</sup> Alcorn, *In Light of Eternity*, 79.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.



Alcorn, the party has begun with God. This puts Shelton and Alcorn on the same path of covenant renewal. It is an exciting marriage between the two theologians.

Shedding more light on this subject from an entirely different perspective is Dr. Arthur Roberts, long-time professor of religion and philosophy at George Fox University, who in his book, *Exploring Heaven*, writes, “So, then, earth is a province of heaven, albeit a sin-laden one.”<sup>87</sup> In other words, the covenant relationship with God has a beginning with no end. It is the opportunity for the modern to discover this relationship along with a proper view of heaven so that in some ways, the modern Christian can enjoy the presence of God now and later. Life in God is not intended to be compartmentalized. The covenant between God and man is intended to be enjoyed without interruption. Sin is the interruption. Moderns must stop allowing modernism to be the interruption between themselves and God. Larry Shelton and Randy Alcorn give us a model and a means to make a glorious transition from knowing God in a penal relationship to knowing God in a covenant relationship.

Randy Alcorn lines out—like no author I have ever read before—the five crowns that are possible to receive in heaven based on events on earth. They are worth inserting in this chapter as they are summaries of broad categories Alcorn discusses in his heaven material. They are recorded in his book, *In Light of Eternity*. Alcorn writes,

Five crowns are specifically mentioned as heavenly rewards:

1. The Crown of Life—for faithfulness to Christian persecution or martyrdom (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).
2. The Incorruptible Crown—for determination, discipline, and victory in the Christian life (I Corinthians 9:24-25).

---

<sup>87</sup> Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*, 169.

3. The Crown of Glory—for faithfully representing Christ in a position of spiritual leadership (I Peter 5:1-4).
4. The Crown of Righteousness—for purifying and readying ourselves to meet Christ at his return (2Timothy 4:6-8).
5. The Crown of Rejoicing—for pouring ourselves into others in evangelism and discipleship (I Thessalonians 2:19; Philippians 4:1).<sup>88</sup>

### **Concluding thoughts on Randy Alcorn**

Alcorn writes, “May God give us the grace to live today as citizens of heaven, ambassadors to this foreign soil called earth. May we live today with the perspective that will be ours one moment after we die.”<sup>89</sup> Randy Alcorn is an advocate for heaven, to be sure. Alcorn is also an advocate for enjoying a covenant relationship with God in this life, too. He makes this point clear in his writings. Because he lives with an eternal perspective, his relationship to his God is eternal and uninterrupted. Alcorn has found a way to live in a modern world and love God in a covenant relationship. I have argued that he does this by discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit guided by Scripture. A passage of Scripture that Alcorn uses in several of his books is found in 1 Corinthians: “...but just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.’ For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). Alcorn would argue that Christians have in the past failed to add verse 10 when quoting this portion of Scripture. He believes the church has failed to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit according to what the Scriptures say. Alcorn insists the church live in verse 10. This is a major premise of Alcorn’s for learning about the subjects I have

---

<sup>88</sup> Alcorn, *In Light of Eternity*, 124.

<sup>89</sup> Randy Alcorn, "Heaven: Our Certain Hope," in *Eternal Perspective Ministries* (2007), 4.

argued in this chapter. Each subject comes from Alcorn's diligent study of God's word. Randy Alcorn is an example for the modern, that discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, will lead to an eternal perspective from God's vantage point. It is God's vantage point we should seek after. The reader has also discovered that with Alcorn's approach to Scripture he also develops the covenant model as articulated by Professor Larry Shelton in chapter four. Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit when guided by Scripture leads the reader not to some marvelous business deal, but to a relationship with our marvelous God!

## CHAPTER 6

### SPIRITUAL FORMATION AS COVENANT

#### Introduction

“Spiritual formation is in.”<sup>1</sup> This statement by Evan Howard in a *Christianity Today* article is right on the money. He has observed what others have, too: Spiritual formation is very popular today in religious circles. In this chapter I draw together conclusions that define spiritual formation as more than information. Information affects the mind. But I define spiritual formation beyond what can be reduced to a rational construct of life.

I choose to define spiritual formation in language used by Dallas Willard, who states, “Here’s an amazing truth: Spiritual transformation is the process of forming our inner lives to take on the character of Jesus Himself.”<sup>2</sup> Howard expounds the issue this way, “Christian spiritual formation is not simply fostering the experience of the Spirit but rather a radical formation, a shaping and molding of the believer into conformity with Christ through the Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> This is the context of this chapter. This has been the context for my entire project. Professor Shelton, whom I will cite later in this chapter, calls this a covenant with God. Vigen Guroian writes, “Where spirit and earth mix, God and man meet.”<sup>4</sup> This chapter is a summary of the process that accomplishes a permanent and eternal relationship with God, a process that begins

---

<sup>1</sup> Howard, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), 150.

<sup>3</sup> Howard, 49.

<sup>4</sup> Vigen Guroian, *The Fragrance of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 43.

not when we die and go to heaven, but right now. Spiritual formation as covenant is how I denote this relationship.

### **Covenant is a Relationship**

The very essence of covenant is a relationship. It is not a contractual relationship as much as it is a communal relationship. It is very intimate and personal. I like the way D. Elton Trueblood states it in, *The Yoke of Christ*: “The end is the complete losing of ourselves in the love of God.”<sup>5</sup> This is the essence of covenant. It is nothing more because it does not need to be anything more. And it is nothing less, because losing oneself in the love of God is as good as it gets!

Schaeffer, in *The Church Before the Watching World*, states, “We are at this moment the bride of Christ. And what does our divine bridegroom want from us? He wants not only doctrinal faithfulness, but our love day by day.”<sup>6</sup> The modern Christian has made doctrinal faithfulness the centerpiece of Christianity. Spiritual formation as covenant calls the modern Christian to make a paradigm shift from doctrinal faithfulness as the centerpiece, to covenant, defined by love for God day by day. Doctrinal faithfulness still remains important for the modern Christian. The difference is that doctrinal faithfulness is no longer the focal point of a modern’s Christianity; the centerpiece becomes a covenant with God.

In *The Mark of the Christian*, Schaeffer writes, “What is the final apologetic? ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ This is the final

---

<sup>5</sup> Trueblood, *The Yoke of Christ*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Schaeffer, *The Church before the Watching World*, 59.

apologetic.”<sup>7</sup> This “oneness” with God is the essence of covenant. Spiritual formation as covenant is a releasing of the encumbrances of this world and an attachment to God in intimate relationship. In Hebrews 12 we read, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). The following verse tells us to “fix our eyes on Jesus.” Spiritual formation as covenant means to fix our eyes on Jesus. In *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Mark A. Noll declares, “The gospel properly calls the whole person.”<sup>8</sup> Covenant with God is not a partial commitment to His love. Covenant with God is the deepest of all commitments because it is the deepest of all loves.

Trueblood articulates covenant using marriage as metaphor to help the reader understand the relationship between God and man. “The point of all this is that marriage is not a contract. If it were a contract, it would cease to be in effect for one party once the other party failed to keep his side of the bargain. Instead of a contract, it is a commitment and this is intrinsically religious, since commitment is the crucial step of religious experience.”<sup>9</sup> In *Revival Praying*, Leonard Ravenhill writes, “To be much for God, we must be much with God.”<sup>10</sup> Spiritual formation as covenant calls the reader to a commitment of time with God. Time not spawned out of duty, but out of love.

---

<sup>7</sup> Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 46.

<sup>9</sup> Trueblood, *The Common Ventures of Life*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Leonard Ravenhill, *Revival Praying* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 60.

There are many ways to state the desired outcome of spiritual formation as covenant. In *Preaching to a Postmodern World*, Graham MacPherson Johnston writes, “Religion speaks of rigidity, structure, and institutionalism; whereas, spirituality is about personal growth and wholeness.”<sup>11</sup> Personal growth and wholeness become the foundation for a relationship with God that is covenantal in nature.

Another way to define covenant as relationship is with words from Brian McLaren, “In God we live and grow and have our being. In God’s wind we sway and our leaves dance.”<sup>12</sup> To embrace spiritual formation as a covenant relationship with God is to dance with God. It is a life filled with freedom and joy. It is the life God wants the reader to experience.

For the modern Christian reading this chapter, the shift from “the way it has always been” to something “new and better” may appear risky. My invitation to you, the reader, is to understand this is not a new invitation. It is an invitation as old as the Bible. God invites you and me to dust off the envelope, accept the invitation, and experience His covenantal love. Kenneth Boa writes, “Philippians 3 affirms that true spirituality is not concerned with rules, regulations, and rituals but with the person of Jesus Christ.”<sup>13</sup> This is God’s generous invitation to you, the reader.

It is important to understand that the covenant relationship I speak about is Trinitarian. McLaren writes, “The generous orthodoxy explored in the pages ahead

---

<sup>11</sup> Graham MacPherson Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First-Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 122.

<sup>12</sup> Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2004), 283.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 219.

assumes, for example, that the value of understanding the Trinity is to love and honor and serve the Trinity, and that allegedly right Trinitarian opinions that do not lead to divine adoration are worth little.”<sup>14</sup>

Leech writes, “The heart of the Gospel is the fact that God in Christ has forgiven us our sins, has restored us to fellowship, and has brought us into his kingdom.”<sup>15</sup> What the reader needs to understand is the emphasis on “restored us to fellowship” and “brought us into his kingdom.” A modern Christian has been taught repeatedly that the best is yet to come. The problem with such thinking is that it denies the individual; God desires to be in relationship with individuals right now! Ravenhill asks this question: “In making a request of God, the first thing we have to be sure of is this: Is our relationship right?”<sup>16</sup> Covenant is all about a relationship with God, but it must be a right relationship.

A covenant relationship with God seems foreign because modern Christians are uncomfortable with intimacy. It seems so strange. It is far easier to be rational and follow a set of prescriptive formulas for entrance into heaven. Alcorn writes, “Christ’s emphasis isn’t on making new things but on making old things new. It’s not about inventing the unfamiliar but about restoring and enhancing the familiar.”<sup>17</sup>

Arthur Roberts speaks of a covenant relationship in terms of redemption. He states, “Believers see human redemption as a key to recreating the universe. Redemption is the trigger mechanism for renewal, at least as far as human beings are

---

<sup>14</sup> McLaren, 31.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Leech, *True Prayer* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 129.

<sup>16</sup> Ravenhill, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Alcorn, *Heaven*, 383.



concerned.”<sup>18</sup> Professor Roberts adds, “The covenant dream includes overcoming earthly distortions. I see heaven as a blending of the natural and artificial according to a divine blueprint.”<sup>19</sup>

I close this section on covenant as a relationship with a citation from, *Spiritual Traditions*:

In the same vein, we are accustomed (simplistically) to equating being moral or ‘good’ with adherence to a set of rules arbitrarily set forth either by God or the Church. Seldom do we remember that the rules are in fact the content of a covenantal relationship between God and Israel and that the context of this Divine-human relationship was a prior act of divine deliverance. The Ten Commandments are not rules for the sake of rules; they instruct us in an appropriate lifestyle for a delivered people.<sup>20</sup>

Jim Cymbala, pastor of The Brooklyn Tabernacle, states it bluntly, “If we don’t want to experience God’s closeness here on earth, why would we want to go to heaven anyway?”<sup>21</sup>

### **Covenant is Discernment**

Discernment is a foundational component of covenant. Leech states, “Discernment is one of the key ideas in spirituality.”<sup>22</sup> In this project I have described and defined Biblical discernment for the reader. Understanding discernment sheds light on how covenant operates. Leech says, “Discernment is an extreme sensitivity which results from close listening to the voice of God.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*, 161.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>20</sup> O'Donnell, 167.

<sup>21</sup> Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 58.

<sup>22</sup> Leech, *True Prayer*, 65.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

An author I read in my doctoral program, Kenneth Boa, had good things to say on this subject in his book, *Conformed to His Image*. Boa writes, “The pursuit of wisdom, discernment, understanding, and the knowledge of God (see Proverbs 2) requires not only an appetite but also a willingness to pay the necessary price.”<sup>24</sup> Perhaps, for the modern Christian, it is easier to avoid spiritual formation as covenant. On the other hand, while the journey may be uphill at times, the view when you get to the top is out of this world!

Richard Foster speaks about discernment in terms of meditation. He articulates this thought in, *Celebration of Discipline*. “Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word.”<sup>25</sup> Boa is in agreement with Foster on this point, and adds, “Although it runs against the grain of our surrounding culture, we must learn to practice the art of stillness, of quietness, of listening, and of receiving if we desire to be intimate with God.”<sup>26</sup> Discernment is something our Christian culture overlooks because today Christian culture is about loud worship, busyness with causes, being consumed with one another. Little time is left to meet God in the silence; silent intimacy, silent discernment.

On the subject of discernment Earl Creps writes, “A theology worth smuggling serves the church well because it is based on listening to God rather than just talking and writing about God—the kind of reflection that cultivates intimacy

---

<sup>24</sup> Boa, 77.

<sup>25</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Boa, 167.

with Christ, the core of the missional life.”<sup>27</sup> Creps places a high value on listening. He believes this is lacking today. Why? Because discernment is lacking.

Wright speaks about discernment in terms of hearing God because the reader is in love with God. In other words, discernment is a natural outflow of love for God. He writes, “But hearing God’s voice in scripture isn’t simply a matter of precise, technical expertise. It’s a matter of love—which, as I have already hinted, is the mode of knowing required for living at the intersection between heaven and earth.”<sup>28</sup>

Guder sees discernment from the perspective of how can it be used to determine how Christians are to live differently than those that are not Christian. This is a real issue in the church today. He writes, “An important task of the church is to discern what are those key points at which to be different from the evil of the world.”<sup>29</sup> Perhaps, if the church could focus more on discernment coming out of a covenant relationship with God, consensus on Christian behavior could start unifying the church instead of sharply dividing it, as we are experiencing now.

Boa sees the use of discernment within community. I remind the reader that I wrote about this subject in chapter three, using the writing of Trueblood as a “transitional prophet.” Boa summarizes this section of this chapter by helping move the reader from individualism to community. A real difficulty for modern Christians is to grasp the significance of “togetherness.” Boa writes, “Community can also create an environment of mutual encouragement and hope, since we cannot discern

---

<sup>27</sup> Earl Creps, *Off-Road Disciplines* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 138.

<sup>28</sup> Wright, 189.

<sup>29</sup> Guder, 127.

well in times of discouragement and depression. The gifts of empathic listening as well as words of blessing and affirmation are priceless resources in our quest for godly discernment.”<sup>30</sup>

The covenant model operates not in isolation, but in togetherness. Discernment is an important piece to the covenant model.

### **Covenant and Scripture**

Covenant cannot be understood apart from Scripture. If the reader is to embrace the covenant model, there must be a high view of Scripture. Boa writes, “The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to guide, reprove, and teach the child of God.”<sup>31</sup> For Boa, Scripture is foundational to covenant. It is in the Scriptures that we learn about a covenant relationship. Boa warns believers to heed the Word of God, “When believers do not respond to the warnings of conscience and scripture and to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, they are in bondage to the flesh.”<sup>32</sup>

Richard Foster articulates the importance of Scripture by stating, “The one Spirit will never lead in opposition to the written Word that he inspired. There must always be the outward authority of Scripture as well as the inward authority of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>33</sup> Foster’s point is crucial; it does not permit progressive revelation to trump Scripture. I agree with Johnston, “One task of the biblical communicator will be just getting people to take the Bible seriously again.”<sup>34</sup> This is not an

---

<sup>30</sup> Boa, 433.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>33</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 188.

<sup>34</sup> Johnston, 54.

overstatement. It is at the heart of spiritual formation as covenant. What we do with the Bible will determine what we do with God!

Boa articulates the need to be both Spirit-centered and Word-centered. He writes, “We need both the fire of the Spirit and the light of the Word, but many believers and churches have made this an either-or rather than a both-and by tending to be either Spirit-centered or Word-centered.”<sup>35</sup> Clearly, spiritual formation as covenant requires the reader to be both Spirit-centered and Word centered. Boa states, “A more balanced perspective combines openness to the surprising work of the Spirit with discernment that tests experience in light of the Scriptures and the fruit that it produces.”<sup>36</sup> Boa strengthens this argument by showing the relationship between discernment and the Scriptures.

Boa talks about evangelicals and their tendency to move away from covenant and slide back into a penal model of Christianity. He states, “But when evangelicals study Scripture, they typically look more for precepts and principles than for an encounter with God in the depths of their being.”<sup>37</sup> Spiritual formation as covenant is all about an encounter with God in the depth of our being. Scripture is the tool that helps us to accomplish this relationship. Boa gives the reader a warning about Scripture, “Some students of the Word have come to love the content of truth in the Bible more than the source of that truth.”<sup>38</sup> This is something all Christians must guard against, especially modern Christians.

---

<sup>35</sup> Boa, 295.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 192.

The bottom line when discussing the relationship between covenant and Scripture is to find out what God wants us to do. Ravenhill states, “The Holy Spirit is looking for a body to indwell.”<sup>39</sup> This is spiritual formation as covenant! This is a good way to introduce the next segment of this chapter which speaks to covenant and the Holy Spirit.

### **Covenant and the Holy Spirit**

To speak about covenant without addressing the Holy Spirit would be a gross injustice on the subject. Boa helps us see how we can invite a visitation of the Holy Spirit into our lives. I suggest to the reader that this portion of this chapter is not optional if spiritual formation as covenant is desired in your life. Boa writes,

How do we seek the visitation of the Spirit? While Scripture offers no step-by-step formula, the experience of the saints as well as biblical principles point to certain requisites that prepare the way.

1. Admitting our weakness.
2. Surrendering our will.
3. Confessing our disobedience.
4. Sanctifying our desires.
5. Trusting God’s promise to fill us.<sup>40</sup>

This is a powerful presentation of steps that help us experience a visit by the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is incorrect to speak in terms of a “visitation”. Rather, covenant is not about a visitation, it is about taking up permanent residence.

Johnston, writing about preachers hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, makes this statement, “Either God has spoken and still speaks to the hearts of people or

---

<sup>39</sup> Ravenhill, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Boa, 320-321.

preachers are to be pitied above all.”<sup>41</sup> Yet, this author wonders how many times sermons are preached without a visitation from the Holy Spirit? The modern Christian preacher is in need of more than a visit from the Holy Spirit. The modern Christian preacher needs to be permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit in a covenant relationship.

Jim Cymbala adds light to the connection between covenant and the Holy Spirit by stating, “I cannot say it strongly enough: When we seek God, he will bless us. But when we stop seeking him...all bets are off, no matter who we are.”<sup>42</sup> A covenant relationship is to be a free flowing river, not a stagnant pond. Johnston, on the subject of churches that God blesses, says, “Is it any wonder that churches emphasizing the presence of the Holy Spirit and the experiential outworking of God comprise some of the fastest growing churches around the world?”<sup>43</sup> The focus is not church growth. The focus is a covenant relationship with God. Church growth becomes the natural bi-product of a covenant relationship with God. Jesus Christ must always be the focus. Boa writes, “Any movement that begins with the Holy Spirit ought to end in Christ.”<sup>44</sup>

I bring this portion of this chapter to a close with the following comments from Ravenhill and Foster. Ravenhill writes, “The world boasts of its atomic power; some cults boast of their satanic power; but where are those who boast of the Holy

---

<sup>41</sup> Johnston, 62.

<sup>42</sup> Cymbala, 162.

<sup>43</sup> Johnston, 123.

<sup>44</sup> Boa, 319.

Ghost power?”<sup>45</sup> To speak about the covenant model must include the Holy Spirit. Foster writes, “In our day heaven and earth are on tiptoe waiting for the mergence of a Spirit-led, Spirit-intoxicated, Spirit-empowered people.”<sup>46</sup> This can happen when spiritual formation as covenant is embraced!

### **The Mind and the Holy Spirit**

I want to say a brief word about the mind God has blessed each of us with. The mind is to be used for the glory of God just like anything else in our life. This aspect is often overlooked when speaking about the Holy Spirit and covenant. I fear we have at times reduced evidences of the Holy Spirit to emotional manifestations. There is a very real presence of the Holy Spirit when one chooses to surrender the mind to God.

I write about the use of the mind in chapter three quoting from Trueblood. He believes that in every local church there ought to be a lay seminary. I have taken this into consideration, and I am preparing myself, material, and my church for such a venture in the near future. Richard Farson, author of, *Management of the Absurd*, writes, “Finally, and probably most important of all, education gives managers new ways of thinking, new perspectives.”<sup>47</sup> If education is good for the business world, it certainly will not hurt Christians. Noll says, “The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind.”<sup>48</sup> Spiritual formation as covenant

---

<sup>45</sup> Ravenhill, 20.

<sup>46</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 175.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Farson, *Management of the Absurd* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 156.

<sup>48</sup> Noll, 3.



ought to stimulate the reader to the development of the mind. It, too, is to be surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ!

### **Covenant: Making the Shift**

In chapter one of this project, I related my personal story of tragedy. In this chapter and in this project I have given evidences for the covenant model. I am guiding the reader toward my discovery of a covenant relationship with God. Boa writes, “The occupational hazard of theologians is to become so engrossed in the development of systematic models of understanding that God becomes an abstract intellectual formulation they discuss and write about instead of a living person they love on bended knees.”<sup>49</sup> This is the shift I am asking the reader to make in heart, mind, and soul. Join me in this journey. The water is warm, the Son is shining, and the angels are singing!

There is much at stake in this suggested transition in a covenant with God. It may well be the only solution in a world lacking ethical values, moral integrity, and societal harmony. Howard Thurman writes, “The logic of the development of hatred is death to the Spirit and disintegration of ethical and moral values.”<sup>50</sup> We must move towards spiritual formation as covenant for the good of society, for the good of the church.

The problem in America is our self-centeredness. Robert N. Bellah writes, “Individualism lies at the very core of American culture.”<sup>51</sup> Little has changed in the

---

<sup>49</sup> Boa, 31.

<sup>50</sup> Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 87-88.

<sup>51</sup> Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 142.

21 years since Bellah wrote. Boa writes, “It is easy and comforting to reduce God to a set of biblical propositions and theological inferences rather than a living person who cannot be boxed in, controlled, or manipulated by our agendas.”<sup>52</sup> I remind the reader that spiritual formation as covenant is not man’s invention; rather, it is a gift from God.

Guder writes, “Modernity is the story of this struggle to create society on the basis of objective scientific truth and the construct of the autonomous self.”<sup>53</sup> The modern Christian is in crisis. I am offering a solution to the crisis. I am offering a comprehensive exposition of the covenant model. According to Boa, our heritage states, “Confusing the standards of Christians with Christian standards, many believers think that following a set of dos and don’ts leads to personal holiness.”<sup>54</sup> There are some who will defend this statement as absolute truth. I am offering an alternative: the Covenant Renewal Model.

Guroian has it correct, “Modern people need to be reminded that our humanity is an indivisible oneness of body and soul and that our salvation is no less of the body than of the soul.”<sup>55</sup> Through a covenant with us, God is bringing these together on our behalf. Leech develops this thought by adding, “Most of all we need to see that the essence of sin lies not in the infringement of moral rules but in the fact that it separates us from God.”<sup>56</sup> Spiritual formation as covenant brings together that which

---

<sup>52</sup> Boa, 295.

<sup>53</sup> Guder, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Boa, 119.

<sup>55</sup> Guroian, 108.

<sup>56</sup> Leech, *True Prayer*, 144.

has been torn apart and broken. God is not broken. Mankind is broken. God's solution is covenant!

Foster sums up our need in terms of the Disciplines. He states, "The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us."<sup>57</sup> This is God's ultimate goal for us: transformation! Anthony De Mello makes an important point at this juncture: "You don't change yourself; it's not me changing me. Change takes place through you, in you. That's about the most adequate way I can explain it."<sup>58</sup> God is our change agent. We are simply the vessel.

I conclude this portion of the chapter by suggesting modern Christians move toward covenant in order that we might have something to celebrate once again. This was the pattern of Israel. This ought to be the practice of modern Christians. This ought to be the practice of the modern church: celebration. Foster writes, "Ancient Israel was commanded to gather together three times a year to celebrate the goodness of God."<sup>59</sup> This pattern of celebration takes place within the covenant model. Not because it is commanded, but because it is the natural response. Covenant will move the modern Christian away from focusing upon the hot topics of the day, such as worship styles. Covenant will move the modern Christian away from the allure of attending the hottest seminar in church growth. Covenant will lead the modern Christian to celebration, because he or she will have finally experienced God in a personal, intimate relationship. Why wait for heaven when the relationship we are

---

<sup>57</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony De Mello, *Awareness* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 167.

<sup>59</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 192.

waiting for in heaven is available right now? Covenant is not about style; it is about substance!

### **Covenant Conclusions**

I close this portion of chapter six with two simple, yet profound, statements. The first is from Randy Alcorn. By now, the reader can tell that I have been influenced greatly by Alcorn. He is my friend. I pray for him daily. I know his heart when he states, “More important than leaving your children an inheritance is leaving them a spiritual heritage.”<sup>60</sup> I urge my readers to leave your children a covenant model. This model will endure every culture crisis yet to come. It will endure every church crisis yet to come. The covenant model will endure because it is rooted in the cross of Jesus Christ. In this gift of love God is telling you and me to “come home.”

Second, I leave you an invitation articulated by Ron Post, founder of Northwest Medical Teams: “The Conductor is calling all those who can hear to get on board. The train is never full. There is always room for more. The cost of the ride is a willing heart. The ride is not always comfortable, but the experience is always rewarding, meaningful, and satisfying.”<sup>61</sup> Ron Post is my friend. I have watched him live out this marvelous invitation from God. God is our conductor. He is calling to you and me, “All aboard!”

### **Covenant by Shelton**

This project began with my story of great tragedy. I shared how God used tragedy in my life to move me toward what I define in chapter four as the Covenant

---

<sup>60</sup> Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, 70.

<sup>61</sup> Post, 179.

Renewal Model. In chapter two I defined and described the use of the word *discernment* in Scripture. In chapter three, I showed historically the importance of seeing discernment in vocation, community, and witness. In chapter four, I begin where many modern Christians are living: embracing the Penal Substitution Model. I demonstrate the journey from the Penal Substitution Model to the Relational Holiness Model to the Covenant Renewal Model. In chapter five, I showed the powerful use of Scripture from the writings of Randy Alcorn. And now, in chapter six, I draw these chapters together by showing the dimensions of spiritual formation as covenant.

This chapter would be incomplete if I were to leave out the primary source for this project: Professor Larry Shelton. His book, *Cross and Covenant*, is a seminal book as it relates to this project. Although I quoted him numerous times in chapter four, I am choosing to close this chapter and this project with 23 citations taken in sequential order from Shelton's book. I have saved his best for last. I will make a brief comment on each. I intend for you to see the sequential logic behind the Covenant Renewal Model, as articulated in *Cross and Covenant*. In so doing, I trust the reader will see no reason not to desire spiritual formation as covenant. If so, I will have proved my claim that indeed, discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, will move the reader from the Penal Substitution Model to the Covenant Renewal Model.

Shelton's Scriptural premise for his book is found in Ezekiel 36, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a new heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe

my ordinances.” (Ezekiel 36:26-36). This is a Scriptural mandate for Shelton’s book, *Cross and Covenant*.

Shelton writes on the subject of covenant within the context of community, “The numerous references to these different ministries of God express the covenant concept on the form of community, which finds expression in the community of Israel and its spiritual life of covenant obedience, seen in both personal piety and community religious expression.”<sup>62</sup> On that same subject he adds, “The covenant between God and Abraham is what constituted the community in the first place.”<sup>63</sup> Concluding his thoughts on covenant and community, Shelton states, “It is all about interpersonal obedience, social community, and spiritual intimacy.”<sup>64</sup>

Shelton then develops covenant as God’s idea not so much as payment for sin, but as a desire to restore a broken relationship. Shelton states, “Thus the main idea of covenant renewal was not to demand a particular payment to God, but to repent of the behavior that brought estrangement to the covenant relationship and to humbly and in faith seek God’s forgiveness.”<sup>65</sup>

On the subject of sacrifice, Shelton makes this claim, “The penal substitutionary interpretations of the sacrifices are based on the forensic equality of value between a sacrifice and the life of the person offering it (the punishment must fit the crime”).<sup>66</sup> A premise of Shelton’s book is to show there is no way you or I can

---

<sup>62</sup> Shelton, 27.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 71.

accomplish this. Shelton moves us in another direction with God: covenant. To this Shelton adds, “Thus the concept of covenant reflects an interpersonal relationship rather than an objective impersonal statement of law.”<sup>67</sup>

Shelton does a masterful job of showing us God’s relationship to His Son, Jesus Christ. He states, “When God acts in Christ, he offers himself not an experience or a legal standing.”<sup>68</sup> Shelton is telling the reader that what was seen as the work of Christ in actuality was the work of the Father. The two are inseparable. Shelton describes it this way: “The Father initiates the covenant, Christ empowers and seals it, and the Holy Spirit administers it.”<sup>69</sup> It is crucial in Shelton’s mind to present a Trinitarian approach to the covenant.

Shelton addresses the mindset of the modern Christian and the mindset of Western Christianity by stating, “Indeed, the tendency of Western Christianity to transform the ideas of righteousness and justification into exclusively legal categories seriously threatens to suppress the biblical covenantal relational aspects of salvation language.”<sup>70</sup> He summarizes this concept by stating in a theological context, “The penal view sees the death of Christ as payment of a penalty, thereby enabling God to forgive.”<sup>71</sup>

Shelton is continually driving home in his book the theme of restoration. He says, “The renewed relationship with the covenant God is a real restoration of the

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 131.

covenant union.”<sup>72</sup> As the reader begins to come to grips with the depth of love demonstrated by God to bring us back into union with Him, one wonders what would keep one from such a marvelous invitation.

On the subject of contracts and broken relationships, Shelton states, “The problem Christ confronts in his sacrifice is one of broken relationships that need healing, not simply a breach of contract that needs legal redress.”<sup>73</sup> The modern Christian—and I am one—has had a steady diet of the latter rather than the former. The modern Christian has been pounded with the contract concept that says, “I did something really bad and there is nothing I can do to fix it, and I am so fortunate that Jesus stumbled along into history.” While this is true, it fails to capture the strength of the cross which is God’s intent to repair a broken relationship. That is amazing love!

On a similar vein, Shelton offers the reader an historical perspective going back to the Latin view, which states, “The Latin view, with its penitential system, has allowed sin to become substantialized, or materialized. Salvation is thus reduced to the removal of guilt, rather than understood as the transformation of the person of Christ.”<sup>74</sup> In fairness to the modern Christian, this mindset has been around for a long time. This project and Shelton’s book are bucking the trend of about 300 years of historical precedence.

Shelton writes on the issue surrounding the penalty of sin, “The forensic theories thus see sin as the primary problem and death as a secondary problem, since

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 169.



it is the penalty of sin. They focus, therefore, on how to pay the penalty.”<sup>75</sup> With this statement, the reader is allowed insight into what is incomplete with the Penal Substitution Model.

I spent considerable time discussing John Wesley and his Christian perfection theology in chapter four. Shelton, an expert on Wesleyan theology, supports my claims, and states, “John Wesley’s followers generally developed some form of the governmental theory of atonement in which the atonement is a satisfaction to uphold the rectitude of a moral government rather than to propitiate the offense against the personal dignity and righteousness of God.”<sup>76</sup> Shelton would add further, “Wesley was never able to resolve the tension between the implications of the penal satisfaction or substitution theories and his understanding of the biblical call to holiness and spiritual formation.”<sup>77</sup> Wesley deeply loved God. That is not the issue at hand. My point in chapter four was that his doctrine, over time, led the modern Christian towards a penal model rather than a covenant model with God. Shelton supports this assertion. Thus, many modern Christians have not had the opportunity to move in the direction of the Covenant Renewal Model. This project is an effort to point the reader in that direction. Shelton sees spiritual formation as covenant.

Shelton makes two more dynamic points on the penal view of atonement, showing its incompleteness. First, he states, “One faulty assumption that arises out of an exclusively penal view of atonement is the view that righteousness is a moral

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 193.

quality rather than a relationship.”<sup>78</sup> Upon the heels of the recent death of Jerry Falwell, founder of the “Moral Majority” (which I believe helped the cause of Christ in the political arena), imagine an organization founded on the covenant model, called the “Covenant Majority.” Imagine with me the impact this would have on the church, much less the political landscape of this country. Second, Shelton declares, “It is clear that this forensic penal substitutionary theory has become the default evangelical view on atonement to the neglect of the other rich models.”<sup>79</sup> The purpose of this project has been to respond to my heritage and present the Covenant Renewal Model as a better model to follow in the years to come.

Shelton makes five consecutive statements on the Covenant Renewal Model on page 223. First, “The covenant perspective thus overcomes the debate between imputation and impartation of righteousness because the righteousness of God is expressed as covenant relationship.”<sup>80</sup> This greatly simplifies the different categories theologians have used to articulate the work of Christ on the cross. Shelton simply reduces the categories down to covenant. I like it!

Second, Shelton states, “The reconciled relationship of sinners being ‘rightwised’ with God is in fact a functioning ‘righteousness’ relationship made possible by mediation of Jesus Christ in bringing two alienated parties together in himself. This is atonement.”<sup>81</sup> Shelton sees atonement as a process whereby two

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

parties are brought back together in union with one another. He calls this, “covenantal union,”<sup>82</sup> his third major statement in conclusion.

His fourth conclusion addresses holiness: “Holiness consists of living out the reality of this restored covenant relationship.”<sup>83</sup> I am a modern Christian, raised in the holiness tradition. To have my heritage reduced to this statement is mind boggling. It would be easy to fight it and lean back on the comforts of a list of dos and don’ts. As I have fought through a quagmire of doctrinal bondage, I urge the reader to break through to the other side and join me in the Covenant Renewal Model.

Fifth, Shelton addresses further his own heritage in the holiness tradition and states, “Holiness is the obedience of love, not the coercion and guilt-motivated obedience of the Law. The latter leads to legalism and externalism. The former leads to relational intimacy and obedience out of love for God. It is motivated by gratitude verses duty, freedom verses bondage, grace verses guilt.”<sup>84</sup> Here lies the difference between the penal and covenant models.

I am so glad that I was introduced to this doctoral program at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. In my journey I have been able to make a tremendous paradigm shift from penal to covenant. I have shifted from a penal relationship to a covenant relationship with God. I view spiritual formation as covenant. I do not hate where I have come from. I just like where I am now a whole lot better! Why do modern Christians make loving God so complicated? I close this chapter, this project,

---

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

with a quote from Professor Shelton from our final class together, and his final statement, “This (the covenant model) is second grade, people. How did we get away from it?”

## **Appendix A**

### **A Journey of Joy**

I find it necessary to tell my journey through the educational process I have just experienced. I began this program thinking I would finish with a degree. While a degree is forthcoming, what I did not expect was the experience of heart transformation. Quite literally, my heart has been transformed because of this program. I thought it would be wise to articulate my journey of joy for any modern who is still a skeptic, for any student who is feeling this program might not be worth completing, and for an ocean of others who are in desperate need of a heart transplant. The following is a breakdown of my journey of joy, my heart transplant. (The metaphor of the heart transplant is credited to Dr. Shelton who has had a profound impact on my dissertation and, more importantly, my life).

#### **Professors**

I refer to my professors because they are more than just brilliant scholars. They have given of themselves in such a way that a bond has been created between them, the professors, and me the student. They care, they love, they are kind, they are a class act, they are human and humane, they are godly, they are servants, they are personable, they are brilliant, and they are Christ. They are my professors. (I will name them and what they taught at the end of this appendix).

#### **Guest Professors**

George Fox Evangelical Seminary has assembled a wide range of guest professors for this program. Each guest professor who started a new class I received like a kid in a candy store trying new candies never tasted before. Each piece of new

candy was sweet and unique. The blend of their knowledge paired with the professors from George Fox Evangelical Seminary formed for me the “Dream Team” of education.

### **Support Staff**

The heroes of any organization are the ones who go unnoticed. They are the ones who serve because they understand their calling in life. A host of servants serve the students and professors at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. Sometimes they appear and sometimes they never appear, yet no organization can run as smoothly as this program without such a support staff. In their own right they are brilliant at what they do. This dissertation would not have been possible had it not been for the support staff at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. Your rewards will await you in heaven; even so, I wanted you to receive special thanks from me while I am still on this earth!

### **Reading**

Near the end of this appendix I will disclose the transformation that has taken place with time I currently spend reading compared to the time I spent reading prior to becoming involved in this program. I will never forget receiving the reading list for the first module. I almost quit the program before I began. I had never read so many books in so short a time, ever! The list was a mountain of pages. And, unlike college, there were no pictures! But I was determined to try. Page by page, book by book I began reading, retaining, and learning. Because there was so much to remember, I took notes in the front of each book; in some books more than 200 notes highlighted important points to remember. This turned out to be beneficial when it came time to

write papers. It also proved beneficial in class as I could quickly refer to important points in the book as the lecture unfolded.

As I read, something happened inside of me. I began craving these books. I have now completed all the assigned reading for this program. I am now looking for books to read each day as a whole new world has opened up for me.

### **Writing**

The last time I was in school was 1984. I used a manual typewriter; I set it in my lap with an erasable pencil and erasable paper and typed up many messes. Truly, the world has changed in just a few short years. The first semester I did not know why all those red and green squiggly lines appeared on nearly every line of my papers. I soon discovered from my daughter and son-in-law that the red and green represented my poor spelling and grammar. Thanks to the help of the computer, by module 4 there were far fewer red and green marks on my first drafts.

The assignments I have written have been beneficial to me in my ministry. This program is a practical program, and I am a better pastor because of the writing that has been assigned.

### **Modules**

Two weeks, two times a year out of my busy schedule—you have got to be kidding me! As it turns out, the two-week blocks of face-to-face learning proved to be an oasis for me in my desert wanderings. Though module one began as work, it and the other three modules proved to be times of tremendous refreshment.

## **Cohorts**

Like anything new, there are always questions of how the whole thing will work out. Part of my puzzle was the cohorts who very soon became a part of my academic career. I viewed them at first like companions on the CBS show, *Survivor*. I saw them as the enemy, people to vote off the island of DMIN! I was wrong! I soon discovered my cohorts were not my competition, they were my friends. I pray for them weekly!

## **Retreats**

This little section could be a dissertation all by itself. I remember going to an event at the school months before my program began at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. I asked if I could speak to the person in charge of retreats for this program so that I could explain why my schedule was more important than a silly retreat. I was introduced to Dr. MaryKate Morse. I explained to her my situation. She looked at me—that kind of look you get when you have just been told your mother-in-law is moving in for six months—and she kindly explained to me that the retreats were required! I almost quit the program before it began! I am a type “A” personality, so for me to go to a retreat and sit and do nothing is like telling a child the preacher has 12 more points in his sermon! (By the way, we did many things at each retreat that were very meaningful. There was never a time that I did “nothing.”)

To my total surprise, I liked the first retreat. In fact, I began looking forward to each retreat thereafter. You must understand, prior to this experience I had *never* taken a day away from work for retreat purposes. The retreat experience for me was



brand new, after 25 years of ministry! Dr. Morse deserves a Purple Heart medal for enduring me!

### **Snowed In**

Module three began with five inches of snow. School was officially canceled, but our class met. That afternoon as class was coming to a close, we discussed if there would be class the following day if the snowy cold weather were to continue. We agreed to come to class the next day even if the school announced a closure. My commute to the school might jeopardize my attendance the following day. I considered my options, and chose to spend the night at the school in my classroom! I still feel bad for the security man who found me curled up in a ball in the corner of the room freezing my tail off! He nearly had a heart attack!

I couldn't sleep, so I sat at my desk and began to write in my journal, and continued to write on paper, my thoughts about this wonderful program. During this night—snowed in at George Fox—I realized more fully what this program meant in my life.

### **Dissertation**

I simply want to say thanks to the people at George Fox Evangelical Seminary who have the skills to take people like me and guide them to completion. You are amazing people.

### **Professors as Friends**

One of the great privileges of this program has been to make friends with people I would never otherwise meet in my career. The professors of this program were not only the ones who educated me, but they are my friends, too. I am grateful

for their graciousness in receiving students with such open arms. These people are the real deal!

### **Sadness**

The tears that I am certain to shed the day I receive my degree will not only be tears of joy; there will be tears of sadness. I am already grieving over having to move on from this program. This experience has been a party for me! I have cherished every moment of it.

I went to college because it was expected of me. I went to seminary because it was required if I wanted to have employment. In college, I was too young to care. In seminary, all I wanted to do was to graduate and get a job! But this program was different for me. I did not have to do this program. I did it out of choice. For the first time in my life I was ready to really learn. The sadness comes knowing that this experience is nearly over. It has been priceless in my life!

### **Transformation**

I am a different person having completed this program. God renewed my mind; more importantly, God changed my heart! The following list represents mere fragments of the enormous changes that have taken place in my life. I came to this program hoping to gain information. I leave this program having experienced a transformation!

I am a product of modernism. I am a modern Christian living in a postmodern world. This dissertation is my journey to transformation. Observe now my bullet points of transformation.

1. I lost 13 pounds! An emphasis in this program was to care for the body that one might care for the soul.
2. My blood pressure has dropped 30 points! By changing dramatically my lifestyle I have had marked medical improvements in my life.
3. I enjoy a weekly Sabbath rest. This point was pounded into me semester after semester. I am a new man enjoying God's gift to me: Sabbath rest.
4. I have been journaling every day since September, 14, 2006. I have given this a try, and have found it to be a tremendous tool in transformation.
5. I read at least one hour every day. Prior to this program I may have read two hours a month! I now read up to three hours a day.
6. I sleep at least eight hours a night. I have not seen The Late Show since beginning this program. I am healthier and happier getting more rest. I learned I am not a robot and that God expects me to be human.
7. One hour a night before I go to sleep I shut my mind down.
8. I spend time weekly meditating and time in contemplative prayer.
9. I have set up an office in my home. I will always be a student from this moment on.
10. I have caught my stride. Thanks Dr. Green.

### **Classes and Those Who Breathe Life into Them**

#### **Module 1:**

Dr. Frank Green, DMIN 511...Spirituality and the Personality

Dr. Dan Brunner, DMIN 512...Spiritual Formation in the Minister

Dr. Steve Delamarter, DMIN 513...Introduction to Research and Resources

Dr. Carole Spencer, DMIN 514...History and Theology of Spirituality

**Module 2:**

Dr. Chuck Conniry, DMIN 521...Leadership in Biblical and Theological Perspective

Dr. Samuel D. Rima, DMIN 522...The Person and the Work of the Leader

Dr. Steve Delamarter, DMIN 523...Introduction to Research and Resources

Dr. James R. Mason, DMIN 524...Dynamics of Congregations

**Module 3:**

Dr. Larry Shelton, DMIN 531...Leading the Church in a Postmodern World

Dr. MaryKate Morse, DMIN 532...Developing a Healthy Church

Professor Loren Kerns, DMIN 533...Introduction to Research and Resources

Dr. Leonard Sweet, DMIN 534...Strategic Visioning in the Church

**Module 4:**

Dr. Carole Spencer, DMIN 541...Historical Models of Spiritual Formation in the  
Church

Dr. Dan Brunner, DMIN 542...Spiritual Formation and Discipleship in the Church

Dr. Kent Yinger, DMIN 543...Introduction to Research and Resources

Dr. Jules Glanzer, Dr. Tony Campolo, DMIN 544...The Practice of Spiritual  
Leadership

**Concluding Remarks**

I stated at the beginning of this appendix that for me this has been a journey of joy. I am forever indebted to the people I have listed in this appendix. God bless each one of you richly. Indeed the world can be changed one soul at a time. Thanks for investing in my world, my soul!

## **Appendix B**

The purpose of this appendix is to stimulate thinking and conversation towards the covenant model. Given the deep roots of the Penal Substitution Model within the modern church, the following 95 theses are intended to be starting points, talking points, not conclusions.

Like Luther, my intent is to strengthen the church that already exists, not weaken it or fracture it. I trust I will be more successful at this than was Luther. In all likelihood, these will go no further than those required to read this project. So be it. I will have been true to my convictions. That is enough!

The Scriptures stated are beginning points, not exhaustive. They are intended to stimulate further thought and development of the Covenant Renewal Model.

In writing 95 theses I tried to avoid legalism. I hope I stated views that will lead the reader towards God not away from God. My intent is to provide insights without going so far as to call them definitive propositions. If even one of the 95 leads the reader to the Covenant Renewal Model, I have succeeded.

### **95 Theses for Moderns in a Postmodern World**

#### **Section 1: Factionalism**

1. Factionalism, by default, pits Christians against one another.

#### **Ephesians 4:3, Ephesians 4:13**

2. Factionalism limits the work of the Holy Spirit by dogmatic restrictions.

#### **Acts 1:8, Romans 1:6**

3. Factionalism uses Scripture to manipulate discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.

**Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:105**

4. Factionalism restricts the free worship of God, limiting the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**John 4:23-24, Acts 2:15-21**

5. Factionalism dulls perceptions about a literal heaven and hell.

**John 14:1-6, Luke 16:19-31**

6. Factionalism leads to untenable creedal preferences of one doctrine over another.

**Acts 17:24-25, I Corinthians 9:19-23**

7. Factionalism is ritualistic to a fault and relevance blinding.

**Isaiah 1:10-15, Genesis 4:3-7**

8. Factionalism ordains ritualism over the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**Ezekiel 37:1-6, Luke 5:38**

9. Factionalism is exclusive by nature with membership privileges.

**Matthew 23:16-22, Matthew 5:33-37**

10. Factionalism has life in the flesh, yet lacks life from the Holy Spirit.

**II Chronicles 1:8-13, Revelation 3:8**

**Section 2: Christians**

11. Christians ought not to rely more heavily on political beliefs than on Spirit led beliefs.

**Matthew 22:15-22, John 3:16**

12. Christians have one enemy...Satan! We must stop fighting within!

**I Peter 5:8, John 13:34**

13. Christians frequently value psychology more than the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

**John 14:26-27, Philippians 4:7**

14. Christians sometimes complain about the absence of God in the public arena, yet say little about the Holy Spirit being ignored in the Church.

**Acts 4:20, Acts 4:32-37**

15. Some Christians seem to be more moved by the prayer of Jabez than the prayer of Jesus.

**John 17:11, 13, 15, 17, 21, 24**

16. Some Christians have walked away from the authority of God's voice.

**Exodus 3:14, Hebrews 4:12**

17. Some Christians have embraced purpose-centered thinking over Christ-centered living.

**Philippians 3:7, John 21:15-19**

18. Some Christians show little interest in heaven. This is not of God, it is of Satan!

**Revelation 13:16, Matthew 24:36-41**

19. Some Christians have relativised morality by diluting Scripture.

**II Timothy 4:3-4, Mark 12:24**

20. Some Christians seem more concerned about their pensions than about Christ's provisions.

**Matthew 24:10, Matthew 24:12**

**Section 3: Ministers**

21. Ministers ought to preach in light of eternity, rather than the next round of  
golf!

**John 3:16, II Timothy 4:8**

22. Some ministers have embraced materialism; it is ruining their passion for  
souls!

**II Timothy 3:1-5, II Timothy 4:5**

23. Ministers ought to accept suffering as much as they do prosperity!

**II Corinthians 1:3-7, Acts 9:16**

24. Ministers ought to accept the sick and suffering more than the rich and  
popular!

**II Corinthians 12:9, I Corinthians 2:1-5**

25. Ministers ought to consider praying far more and playing far less!

**I Thessalonians 5:17-18, Ephesians 6:18**

26. Ministers ought to seek fervently a revival of their soul!

**Psalms 51:10-13, Psalm 42:1**

27. Ministers should grasp images of heaven and hell to see as Christ sees the  
world!

**Revelation 20:14-15, Revelation 21:1-7**

28. Ministers ought to rely more on the Holy Spirit and less on consultants!

**Acts 4:5-12, Matthew 17:21**

29. Ministers need to consider worship includes silence!

**Exodus 20:4-6, John 4:19-26**

30. Ministers ought to recognize that spiritual warfare is not the church board!



**Ephesians 6:12, James 4:1-10**

**Section 4: The Church**

31. The church must reinstate Jesus as Lord.

**Revelation 22:13, Acts 2:14-47**

32. The church must become generous givers as the people of God.

**Malachi 3:10, II Corinthians 9:6-7**

33. The church must reinstate the cross; it leads to covenant renewal.

**I Corinthians 1:17, Galatians 6:14**

34. The church must reinstate the altar, as it unifies man to God.

**I Kings 18:20-39, Revelation 8:3**

35. The church must vigorously elevate a Trinitarian paradigm.

**Genesis 1:26, John 16:13-15**

36. The church must vigorously elevate corporate prayer as foundational.

**Luke 19:45-46, II Chronicles 7:12-26**

37. The church must view itself as a hospital not a country club.

**Hebrews 10:19-25, Matthew 11:28-30**

38. The church must uphold a high view of marriage.

**Malachi 2:16, Mark 10:2-9**

39. The church must lift the Bible to a level of complete and total authority.

**II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:20-21**

40. The church must hold Christ up as Lord.

**I Peter 1:25, Malachi 3:6**

**Section 5: Theology**

41. Theology must be Holy Spirit empowered and inspired.

**Romans 1:16, Romans 5:5**

42. Theology must be grace-centered *and* justice-centered.

**Ephesians 2:8-10, I John 1:9**

43. Theology must include relationships both with God and man.

**Mark 12:28-31, John 13:34**

44. Theology must always have as a goal, the new heavens and the new earth.

**Revelation 21:1-6, Revelation 22:1-5**

45. Theology must move away from government-centered to throne-centered.

**Revelation 4, Revelation 5**

46. Theology must reaffirm the Ten Commandments.

**Exodus 20, Mark 10:17-22**

47. Theology must unify the community of believers; not divide.

**Acts 15:1-35, Matthew 9:36-38**

48. Theology must become important to the Church again.

**I Timothy 1:17, Ephesians 3:14-21**

49. Theology must put God at the foundation of all discussion.

**Matthew 6:24, John 1:1-5**

50. Theology must put greater weight on thinking than on feelings.

**II Peter 3:1-2, I Peter 1:13**

## **Section 6: the Holy Scriptures**

51. The Bible is a book of redemptive love—all 66 books.

**Job 19:25-27, Ephesians 1:7-8**

52. The Bible will outlast trends, fashions, and fads; it is eternal.

**I Peter 1:24-25, Revelation 20:15**

53. The Bible has no equal; preach the Word!

**Acts 17:22-23, I Kings 18:19-29**

54. The Bible must be the central text from every pulpit!

**Mark 16:15, Romans 10:14-17**

55. The Bible must be read often by Christians, and it must be obeyed by all!

**Matthew 21:42, Ephesians 3:4**

56. The Bible must be the rule of law so that covenant can thrive.

**II Thessalonians 1:8, I Peter 1:22-23**

57. The Bible is sacred and holy.

**Romans 1:2, II Peter 2:21**

58. The Bible is a direct threat to Satan!

**Matthew 4:1-11, Revelation 20:10**

59. The Bible has every answer for every problem in life.

**Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:25-33**

60. The Bible is absolutely true!

**Psalm 119:160, Galatians 2:5**

#### **Section 7: Christian Culture**

61. Life is sacred and it begins at conception!

**Psalm 139:13-16, Exodus 20:13**

62. Drinking alcohol is a slippery slope. It hurts more than it helps.

**I Thessalonians 5:22, Daniel 1:8**

63. Gambling is a slippery slope. It hurts more than it helps.

**I Thessalonians 5:22, I Timothy 6:9-11**

64. Cussing hinders relationships. It never edifies relationships.

**James 3:9-10, Exodus 20:7**

65. Pornography is an enemy to all Christian culture.

**Galatians 5:16, I John 2:16**

66. Children should obey their parents. This promotes family unity.

**Ephesians 6:1, Colossians 3:20**

67. Our bodies have become the golden calf of the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

**I Corinthians 6:19-20, Mathew 6:25**

68. Busy schedules are destroying families and hurting relationships.

**Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, II Corinthians 11:3**

69. Overeating is a god the church culture cannot ignore much longer.

**Proverbs 23:21, Matthew 6:25**

70. Christians amusing themselves to death are missing out on covenant with  
God.

**Revelation 1:12-20, Isaiah 9:6-7**

#### **Section 8: Non-Christians**

71. Non-Christians are constantly watching Christian interact with God.

**Acts 1:8, John 13:35**

72. Non-Christians need Jesus right now!

**Matthew 7:13, Luke 19:10**

73. Non-Christians may actually be in part spiritually dead Christians!

**Revelation 2:4, Revelation 3:14-22**

74. Non-Christians are skeptical of Christians; it's our problem not theirs!

**James 1:8, II Timothy 3:5**

75. Non-Christians have religion; everybody has religion, even Christians.

**Matthew 5:20, James 1:26**

76. Non-Christians are sometimes more moral than Christians.

**Mark 10:17-22, I Corinthians 5:1-2**

77. Non-Christians are running out of time. Christians need to wake up!

**Matthew 24:22, I Peter 3:15**

78. Non-Christians are the enemy. Untrue, Satan is the enemy!

**Ephesians 6:12, I Peter 5:8**

79. Non-Christians are loved by God the same as Christians; maybe more!

**John 3:16, Romans 5:8**

80. Non-Christians need Christians! Christians need non-Christians!

**Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 22:36-39**

**Section 9: Christian Common Ground**

81. Heaven and being with Christ is better by far.

**Philippians 1:21-23, Revelation 21:3-4**

82. Hell is a real place!

**Matthew 10:28, Matthew 13:41-42**

83. The Christian must stop defining sin apart from Scripture.

**Romans 6:1-4, I John 1:9**

84. Jesus is the centerpiece of our faith! Any alternative other than Christ is  
secondary!

**John 1:12, Philippians 2:9-11**

85. Salvation is the only way to get to heaven!

**John 3:3, Acts 4:12**

86. Sanctification is manifested through covenant.

**I Thessalonians 4:3, I Thessalonians 5:23**

87. Evangelism is not optional for the Christian, for the church!

**Proverbs 11:30, Matthew 5:13-16**

88. Missions are not optional for the Christian, for the church!

**Matthew 28:18-20, Revelation 7:9-10**

#### **Section 10: Scripture on Christian Unity**

89. One body.

**Ephesians 4:4, I Corinthians 12:12**

90. One Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:4, I Corinthians 12:13**

91. One hope.

**Ephesians 4:4, Colossians 1:5**

92. One Lord.

**Ephesians 4:5, John 14:6**

93. One faith.

**Ephesians 4:5, Galatians 2:20**

94. One baptism.

**Ephesians 4:5, Matthew 3:11**

95. One God.

**Ephesians 4:6, Exodus 20:3**

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**

## REFERENCES CITED

- Alcorn, Randy. *In Light of Eternity*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Overcoming the Myths About Heaven." *Eternal Perspective*. Sandy, OR: Eternal Perspective Ministries, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Grace and Truth Paradox*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Law of Rewards*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Purity Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Heaven*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *50 Days of Heaven*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Awareness in Heaven of Events on Earth?" *Eternal Perspective*. Sandy, OR: Eternal Perspective Ministries, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Materialism, Man and Morality." *Eternal Perspective*. Sandy, OR: Eternal Perspective Ministries, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Rethinking Our Beliefs About Heaven." *Eternal Perspective*. Sandy, OR: Eternal Perspective Ministries, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Heaven: Our Certain Hope." *Eternal Perspective*. Sandy, OR: Eternal Perspective Ministries, 2007.
- Ammerman, Nancy T, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney. *Studying Congregations, a New Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Anderson, Paul. "Editorial Essay: Is There a Quaker Hermeneutic?" *Quaker Religious Thought* 30, No. 3, no. 97 (2001): 5-8.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Meeting for Worship in Which Business Is Conducted: Quaker Decision Making Process as a Factor of Spiritual Discernment." *Quaker Religious Thought* 106-107, November (2006): 26-47.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Anderson, Ray S. *The Shape of Practical Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Baron, Renee. *What Type Am I? Discover Who You Really Are*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Group, 1998.
- Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. London: Macmillan Company, 1949.
- Bellah, Robert N. *Habits of the Heart*. New York: Harper & Row, 1986.
- Bishop, Bruce. "Discernment: Corporate and Individual Perspectives." *Quaker Religious Thought* 106-107, November (2006): 18-25.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- Bonheoffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. New York: Harper & Row, 1954.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Boyatzis, Richard, Daniel Goleman, and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership, Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Church the Apostles Left Behind*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Hopeful Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.
- Buckingham, Marcus and Donald O. Clifton. *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. New York: The Free Press, 2001.
- Bush, Luis. "The Power of Listening." *Missiology* 33, no. 1 (2005): 17-28.
- Chittister, Joan. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*. New York: Jim Collins, 2001.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*. Boulder, CO: Jim Collins, 2005.
- Conniry, Charles J., Jr. "Discernment: Corporate and Individual Considerations." *Quaker Religious Thought* 106-107, November (2006): 7-17.
- Coppedge, Allan. *John Wesley in Theological Debate*. Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1987.
- Crabb, Larry. *Connecting, a Radical New Vision*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997.
- Creps, Earl. *Off-Road Disciplines*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Cymbala, Jim. *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.
- De Mello, Anthony. *Awareness*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- Dunning, H. Ray. "Ethics in a Wesleyan Context." *The Wesleyan Theological Society* 5, no. 1 (1970): 3-10.
- Farson, Richard. *Management of the Absurd*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Finney, Charles G. *Revivals of Religion*. Virginia Beach, VA: CBN University Press, 1978.
- Fitchett, W. H. *Wesley and His Century: A Study in Spiritual Forces*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1917.
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline*. 20th anniversary ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Streams of Living Water*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998.
- Freeborn, E. Dee, Janine Tartaglia, Morris A. Weigelt, and Wesley D. Tracy. *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1993.
- Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation*. New York, London: The Guilford Press, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Friedman's Fables*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1990.
- Greathouse, William M. *From the Apostles to Wesley: Christian Perfection in Historical Perspective*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979.

- Greer, Robert C. *Mapping Postmodernism: A Survey of Christian Options*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Grenz, Stanley J. and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism, Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Guder, Darrell L. *Missional Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.
- Guroian, Vigen. *The Fragrance of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006.
- Hadley, Norval. *Sin and the Sanctified*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1980.
- Hancock, Jim. *Posers, Fakers, & Wannabes (Unmasking the Real You)*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003.
- Hart, Archibald D. *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions*. Dallas, London, Sydney, Singapore: Word Publishing, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Adrenaline and Stress*. Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing, 1995.
- Haselmayer, Jerry, Brian D. McLaren, and Leonard Sweet. *The Language of the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *Character and the Christian Life*. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1985.
- Heitzenrater, Richard P. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Hellwig, Monika. "Spirituality in the New Millennium." *Momentum*, April/May 1998, 7-8.
- Holt, Bradley P. *Thirsty for God*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.
- Howard, Evan. "Three Temptations of Spiritual Formation." *Christianity Today*, December 9, 2002, 46-49.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Scripture & Discernment: Decision Making in the Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Johnston, Graham MacPherson. *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First-Century Listeners*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.

- Kroeger, Otto and Roy M. Oswald. *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*. The Alban Institute, Inc., 1998.
- Leech, Kenneth. *True Prayer*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Experiencing God*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Lodahl, Michael and Thomas Jay Oord. *Relational Holiness*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005.
- May, Gerald G. *Addiction and Grace*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988.
- McIntosh, Gary L., Sr. and Samuel D. Rima. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005.
- McLaren, Brian D. *A Generous Orthodoxy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2004.
- Merton, Thomas. *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New York: Abbey of Gethsemani, Inc., 1961.
- Mickey, Paul A. *Essentials of Wesleyan Theology: A Contemporary Affirmation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980.
- Miller, Donald. *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Moehlman, Mary. "Children of the Covenant, Children of the Light." *Quaker Religious Thought* 24, No. 2, no. 72 (1989-1990): 6-21.
- Moyer, Rodger. *What They Had We Need*. Salem: Schmul Publishing Co., 2005.
- Mulholland, Robert M., Jr. *Invitation to a Journey*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Myers, David G. *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.
- New American Standard Bible: The Holy Bible*. Iowa Falls, IA: World Publishing, 1995.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992.

- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- Noll, Mark A. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.
- Nouwen, Henri J.M. *In the Name of Jesus*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996.
- Nuttall, Geoffrey F. *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947.
- Mass, Robin and Gabriel O'Donnell. *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- Olson, Roger E. "The Tradition Temptation." *Christianity Today*, November 2003, 52-55.
- Peck, George D. *The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection*. New York: G. Lane and P. P. Sanford, 1842.
- Post, Ron. *Created for Purpose*. Eagle Creek: Coffee House Publishers, 1999.
- Quinn, Robert E. *Deep Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Ravenhill, Leonard. *Revival Praying*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984.
- Rima, Samuel D. *Leading from the Inside Out*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rethinking the Successful Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002.
- Rinehart, Stacy T. *Upside Down: the Paradox of Servant Leadership*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998.
- Roberts, Arthur O. *Atonement as Moral Influence*. Newberg, OR: Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, [www.nwfriends.org](http://www.nwfriends.org), 2002, accessed 9/02.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Atonement as Ransom*. Newberg, OR: Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, [www.nwfriends.org](http://www.nwfriends.org), 2002, accessed 6/02.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Atonement as Satisfying Divine Honor*. Newberg, OR: Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, [www.nwfriends.org](http://www.nwfriends.org), 2002, accessed 7/02.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Atonement as Substitution*. Newberg, OR: Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, [www.nwfriends.org](http://www.nwfriends.org), 2002, accessed 8/02.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Weeds among the Wheat." In *Shrewsbury Lecture*, 1-22. Shrewsbury, NJ: John Woolman Press, Inc., 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Quaker Understanding of Jesus Christ." *Quaker Religious Thought* 29 No. 3, no. 93 (1999): 9-23.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Reading the Bible in Public Worship." 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Exploring Heaven*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "How to Read the Bible." Yachats Community Presbyterian Church. Yachats, 2003.
- Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Mark of the Christian*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *True Spirituality*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Church before the Waiting World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How Should We Then Live?* Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell Co., 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Christian Manifesto*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1981.
- Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development*. St. Charles: ChurchSmart Resources, 2000.
- Shelton, R. Larry. *Cross & Covenant: Interpreting the Atonement for 21st Century Mission*. Tyrone, GA: Paternoster, 2006.
- Short, Chad. "Wesleyan Theology and the Postmodern Quest for Meaning and Identity." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (2004): 216-245.
- Smedes, Lewis B. *Shame and Grace*. San Francisco: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.
- Smith, Timothy L. *Revivalism and Social Reform*. New York: Harper & Row, 1957.

- Snyder, Howard A. "The Babylonian Captivity of Wesleyan Theology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 1 (2004): 7-34.
- Spencer, Carole. "The American Holiness Movement: Why Did It Captivate Nineteenth-Century Quakers?" *Quaker Religious Thought* 28, No. 4, no. 90 (1998): 19-30.
- Stafford, Tim. "The Pastor without a Paycheck." *Christianity Today*, April 2003, 90-93.
- Stanley, John E. "A Theology of Urban Ministry, Supported by the Wesleyan Quadrilateral." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (2003): 138-159.
- Steinke, Peter L. *How Your Church Family Works*: An Albin Institute Publication, 2002.
- Strunk, William, Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights, MA: A Pearson Education Company, 2000.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Summoned to Lead*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.
- Temple, William. *Nature Man and God*. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1935.
- Thorsen, Donald A. D. *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral : Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.
- Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Trueblood, David Elton. *The Logic of Belief*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Predicament of Modern Man*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Foundations for Reconstruction*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Alternative to Futility*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Common Ventures of Life*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Signs of Hope in a Century of Despair*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Your Other Vocation*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Yoke of Christ*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Company of the Committed*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Incendiary Fellowship*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New Man for Our Time*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers*, 7th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Tyson, John R. *Invitation to Christian Spirituality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Watson, Richard. *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1832.
- Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1966.
- Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, no date.
- Wilkes, C. Gene. *Jesus on Leadership*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998.
- Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005.
- Woolman, John. *Woolman's Works*. Philadelphia: T. E. Chapman, 1837.
- Worden, Ronald. "George Fox's Use of the Bible." *Quaker Religious Thought* 30, No. 3, no. 97 (2001): 9-17.
- Wright, N. T. *Simply Christian*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.
- Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *An Existential Interpretation of the Doctrine of Holiness*. Portland, OR: Western Evangelical Seminary, 1955.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972.



